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Chairman: Mr. Piero VINCI (Italy).

AGENDA ITEM 26

Examination of the question of the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, underlying the high seas beyond the limits of present national jurisdiction, and the use of their resources in the interests of mankind: report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee to Study the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction (*continued*) (A/7230, A/C.1/973, A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2, L.426/Rev.1 and Add.1, L.427 and Corr.1, L.429/Rev.2 and Add.1 to 3, L.430, L.431/Rev.1, L.432/Rev.1 and Add.1, L.433 and Corr.1, L.434/Rev.1, L.435, L.436, L.437 and Add.1 and 2, L.438, L.439, L.440)

1. Mr. MESTIRI (Tunisia) (*translated from French*): At our last meeting, I stated that there was some hope of reaching an agreement on the various proposals before the Committee, in particular with regard to document A/C.1/L.426/Rev.1 and Add.1, which contains amendments. I am happy to report that this hope has been realized and that we are now in a position to speak of progress, indeed, considerable progress. Nevertheless, the group of seventy-seven over which I have the honour to preside—and which, in fact, numbers eighty-three delegations—has not yet finished its consultations.

2. However, these consultations may be concluded within a short time. How long might this take? The most pessimistic members have spoken of a week, and even longer; others have taken a somewhat less pessimistic view and have suggested that we should request adjournment until tomorrow morning; however, the vast majority is optimistic and feels that we can request simply a suspension of two hours, in other words, until 5 or 5.15 p.m. The group of seventy-seven would use this time to pursue its consultations and, possibly, reach an agreement.

3. In accordance with rule 119 of the rules of procedure, therefore, I am requesting that this meeting should be suspended.

4. The group will meet forthwith in this room. Before concluding, I wish to state that several delegations have urged me to inform the members of the Committee that we believe that despite appearances to the contrary, these adjournments and suspensions do enable us to gain time, and that in any case the Committee is gaining more time by them than it is losing.

5. I am therefore making a formal proposal pursuant to article 119 on behalf of the group of seventy-seven.

6. The CHAIRMAN: The representative of Tunisia has moved a motion, pursuant to rule 119 of the rules of procedure, that the meeting be suspended until 5.15 p.m., in order that consultations may continue. The motion may not be debated. We can proceed either by consent or by vote. If I hear no objection, we can perhaps proceed without a vote and suspend the meeting until 5.15 p.m.

It was so agreed.

The meeting was suspended at 3.45 p.m. and resumed at 6.5 p.m.

7. The CHAIRMAN: Before calling upon the representative of Tunisia, who has asked to be allowed to speak, I should like to inform the Committee that the Democratic Republic of the Congo has become a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2. The number of the co-sponsors is now sixty-five.

8. Mr. Mestiri (Tunisia) (*translated from French*): It would have given me great pleasure to have been able to announce at this meeting that the group of seventy-seven had reached total and absolute agreement. This is not the case, although consensus has been reached on one point, which concerns the amendments proposed in document A/C.1/L.426/Rev.1 and Add.1. My colleague, the representative of Thailand, will give you further details on the arrangement we have agreed upon.

9. With regard to another point, that concerning the membership of the standing committee on the peaceful uses of the sea-bed which is envisaged in draft resolution A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2, we have not had time to discuss it, but I am sure that I am expressing the views of all the members of our group when I say that we attach the greatest importance to the questions dealing with membership of the said committee, appointment procedures, regional distribution, etc. We hope that nothing will be decided in this connexion before intensive consultations have been held among all the groups in our Committee.

10. Mr. PANYARACHUN (Thailand): As rightly pointed out by the representative of Tunisia, who has been acting as chairman of the group of seventy-seven in the past few days, at our last meeting which ended about half an hour ago the group as a whole was not able to reach a unanimous decision on the line of approach that has been suggested by a certain delegation, but on the other hand, after some very extensive exchanges of views and consideration of the matter, I have been authorized by a number of delegations which were represented in our meetings to say that there is definitely an overwhelming majority support of the line of approach that I shall attempt to outline to the First Committee. May I say from the very outset that we appreciate the co-operation of the other members of the First Committee for giving us time to consider the matter. We appreciate their sense of co-operation and mutual accommodation and we owe it to them that we have been able to reach some kind of consensus in our meeting. As may be recalled, the subject matter which prevented the First Committee from proceeding to vote on the various draft resolutions on the sea-bed arises from the existence of amendments proposed by the delegations of Kuwait, Niger, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela in document A/C.1/L.426/Rev.1 and Add.1.

11. At our meetings on Friday there had been many appeals made by various representatives to the four delegations concerned to withdraw their amendments because, even though they might have been acceptable in substance to the majority of the membership, many of us felt that, since the original co-sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2 had undertaken very long, delicate and laborious negotiations with the socialist group, the introduction of the amendments contained in document A/C.1/L.426/Rev.1 and Add.1 might unwittingly upset the balance and the common efforts of all the regional groups in regard to that draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2.

12. The representative of Tanzania was good enough to suggest [1603rd meeting] an adjournment of the First Committee so that a meeting of the group of seventy-seven could be convened to consider the whole matter as regards the line of approach we should adopt as a group.

13. As I said before, with the exception of only one or two delegations that were present in the meetings in the group of seventy-seven, all of us agreed that the substance of the amendments in document A/C.1/L.426/Rev.1 and Add.1 should be maintained. However, in order to get us out of this impasse and so as not to affect the voting on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2, we felt that another line of approach should be attempted. The consensus of the group of seventy-seven—if I may use the word consensus, as I said, with only the opposition of one or two delegations in our meeting—was that perhaps we might be able to turn the amendments of Kuwait, Venezuela, and two other delegations into a draft procedural resolution which could be kept separate from the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2. The idea is to try to make it easier for those delegations which may not agree with the idea as enunciated in the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/L.426/Rev.1 and Add.1 not to oppose the draft procedural resolution.

14. I must apologize for the fact that I have not been able to submit the text to the Secretariat for circulation because we have been pressed by the time made available to us, but, if I may, I should like to read out at dictation speed the wording of the draft resolution that some thirty delegations are prepared to co-sponsor and submit to the First Committee:

“The General Assembly,

“Having examined the item entitled ‘Examination of the question of the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, underlying the high seas beyond the limits of present national jurisdiction, and the use of their resources in the interests of mankind’,

“Reaffirming that the exploration and exploitation of the resources of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof of the area should be carried out for the benefit of mankind as a whole, taking into special consideration the interests and needs of the developing countries,

“Recalling that international co-operation in this field is of paramount importance,”

“Bearing in mind its resolution . . .”

here we have left a gap for the resolution number to be inserted afterwards. After the gap we say:

“ . . . (XXIII) establishing the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction, and the mandate entrusted to it,”

15. Then we have two operative paragraphs. The first operative paragraph reads:

“Requests the Secretary-General to undertake a study on the question of establishing in due time appropriate international machinery for the promotion of the exploration and exploitation of the resources of this area, and the use of these resources in the interests of mankind, irrespective of geographical location of States, and taking into special consideration the interests and needs of the developing countries, and to submit a report thereon to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction for consideration during one of its sessions in 1969.”

16. Operative paragraph 2 reads:

“Calls upon the Committee . . .”

that is to say, the committee that would be set up under the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2

“to submit a report on this question to the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly.”¹

17. Before I make an attempt to give a brief explanation of the reasons which moved some thirty delegations to submit this draft resolution, I should like to read out the names which have been given to me of the delegations which are prepared to co-sponsor this draft resolution. I am very happy to say that the four delegations that co-sponsored the amendments contained in document A/C.1/

¹ Subsequently circulated as document A/C.1/L.441.

L.426/Rev.1 and Add.1 have agreed to this text and have kindly agreed to co-sponsor our new draft procedural resolution.

18. The names of the delegations that are co-sponsoring this draft resolution are: Barbados, Brazil, Cameroon, Congo (Democratic Republic of), Costa Rica, Cyprus, Dahomey, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Niger, Peru, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela and Yemen.

19. I am not sure whether representatives have been able to take down the text of the draft resolution that I read out, but should anybody have any question I would be prepared to welcome his meeting with me during the course of this afternoon.

20. As you can see, this group of thirty co-sponsors represents various geographical groupings, as well as different political and economic interests; but I should like to emphasize at this juncture that they are all developing countries, bound by the common interests of the developing countries.

21. I have been given a note that Mauritius also has agreed to co-sponsor this draft resolution; that brings the total to thirty-one.

22. In regard to the text of the draft resolution, the first preambular paragraph is a very innocuous one: we merely refer to the title of the item. The second preambular paragraph is, in fact, more or less the same wording as the seventh preambular paragraph of A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2; it is merely a reaffirmation of the principle that has been accepted by practically all, if not all the delegations in this room. The third preambular paragraph is designed to make an accommodation with some delegations which would like to see the concept of international co-operation emphasized in our draft; and we feel that the insertion of the concept of international co-operation in the third preambular paragraph—to the effect that international co-operation in this field is of paramount importance—would take care of the problem. The fourth preambular paragraph, of course, refers to the draft resolution, which I hope will be adopted very soon, establishing the committee, as well as referring to its mandate, as appears in operative paragraph 2 of A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2.

23. Now, operative paragraph 1, in my view, is an improvement over the text of the amendment proposed by Kuwait, Niger, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, but the substance remains practically the same. The only difference is that, instead of presenting this amendment in connexion with draft resolution A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2, we tried to find a way of getting around the problem by not linking this particular idea to the actual mandate to be entrusted to the Committee; and we feel that this is a big concession on the part of the four co-sponsors of A/C.1/L.426/Rev.1 and Add.1. We are very happy that they have agreed to this change of line of approach, of merely asking the Secretary-General to undertake a study.

24. As regards certain wording in that paragraph, I believe we were merely trying to conform to the expression and

the language which had already appeared in many other paragraphs in the various draft resolutions relating to the sea-bed item.

25. Operative paragraph 2 merely asks the Committee to submit a report on this question to the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

26. We co-sponsors of this draft resolution know perfectly well that it is not a perfect draft; perhaps it can be improved from the language point of view as well as from the substantive point of view. But we feel that at least this represents the consensus of the group of seventy-seven and that it does reflect every point of view which was represented in our committee meetings.

27. I must apologize again for not having this text ready for distribution, but I hope that I read it slowly enough for everybody to take it down.

28. I do not know what procedure the Chairman, intends to follow this afternoon, but I should like to assume that there would be no voting on any draft resolution today. But, whatever happens, the co-sponsors of our draft resolution would prefer that it be voted upon in the same meeting as A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2, because there is, if not a direct link, definitely an indirect link between that text and the draft resolution that I presented to the Committee for its consideration this afternoon.

29. I hope I will not be accused of usurping the authority of the Chairman of the group of seventy-seven, but I should like to say, strictly on behalf of my own delegation, that in the discussions we had in the group of seventy-seven several delegations expressed their opinion that it might be in the interests of all concerned to have clear ideas as regards the committee which is to be set up by A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2. Some delegations expressed the view that they would like to have a clearer idea as regards the composition and membership of the committee. My delegation does not have strong views on this matter, but I would very much hope that the Committee would take note of that particular view and that, in the Chairman's search for the right solution in regard to composition and membership, he would make every attempt to bear that particular view in mind.

30. Mr. MENDELEVICH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): The question which the First Committee is now considering, and which it is attacking with considerable energy, patience, ingenuity and perseverance, is one which is bound to have weighty consequences and be of increasing significance for the maintenance of peace and security.

31. We therefore find it natural that many delegations should continue to ponder their position and to weigh carefully the points relating to the various draft resolutions before us. New draft resolutions are still appearing. The representative of Thailand has just introduced on behalf of its sponsors a draft resolution which delegations will certainly have to study closely before they can decide what position to take on it.

32. Amendments and additions to the various draft resolutions are also being submitted; thus at the very end of

the preceding meeting the Mexican representative submitted amendments [A/C.1/L.439] to draft resolution A/C.1/L.429/Rev.2.

33. The USSR delegation, too, is still pondering the problem of the sea-bed and the ocean floor. While the group of seventy-seven delegations met here and other consultations were being held, we turned once again to what we are profoundly convinced is the core, the very heart of the question of the sea-bed and the ocean floor. We turned once again to the military aspect of the problem; we carefully analysed all that was said in this regard in the *Ad Hoc* Committee and also in the general debate in the First Committee, and we once again consulted our experts.

34. We should like to state clearly and unambiguously that the more we study this question and the better we understand it, the more we are convinced that prohibition of military use must extend to the entire area of the sea-bed and the ocean floor which lies beyond the limits of the territorial waters of coastal States. The more deeply we study the various military, political and legal aspects of this problem, the more convinced we are that in prohibiting military uses of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and reserving them exclusively for peaceful uses we cannot be satisfied with imposing such a prohibition only beyond the limits of present national jurisdiction.

35. If I may be permitted to explain our reasoning once again, perhaps it will bring some of our colleagues, representatives of States Members of the United Nations, over to our side. We hope that it will because, to repeat, the more deeply we study this question the more we are convinced that it is in the general interest—certainly not in the interest of any one group of States, but in the general interest—not to introduce any ambiguity or vagueness into this aspect of the matter, and to say clearly and definitely from the very outset, in the resolution establishing the standing committee on the sea-bed and the ocean floor, that what is wanted is a prohibition of military uses of the sea-bed and the ocean floor beyond the limits of the territorial waters of the coastal States.

36. Why did I mention ambiguity and vagueness? Because the very concept of national jurisdiction as it applies to the considerable and, strictly speaking, undefined as to extent, part of the ocean floor which is called the continental shelf, as governed by the 1958 Convention on the Continental Shelf,² is not unambiguous. Under that Convention, this part of the sea-bed and the ocean floor is under the partial jurisdiction of States—partial in the sense that States have the right, an inalienable right, to explore and exploit natural resources within the limits of their continental shelf. The sovereign rights of States with regard to the continental shelf end there. Their jurisdiction does not automatically extend to military matters. In that respect, from the legal point of view the continental shelf is in the same position as the rest of the sea-bed and the ocean floor beyond the limits of the territorial waters of coastal States.

37. Within the limits of their territorial waters, the sea-bed and the ocean floor are the property of the States concerned. Within the limits of their territorial waters they

are entitled to set up such military devices as they may wish and they are also entitled to forbid every other State to install its military devices or facilities there. In this respect the situation is entirely clear.

38. Where the continental shelf is concerned, the 1958 Convention neither forbids nor allows States to use their part of the continental shelf for military purposes and does not explicitly forbid—although it does not allow—any State to make use of the continental shelf of another State for military purposes. That is the root of the matter, for although the concept “continental shelf” seems to be part of the concept “limits of national jurisdiction”, the application of national jurisdiction to it is limited and does not include military matters.

39. Consequently, if we should prohibit military uses of the sea-bed and the ocean floor beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, we would, as it were, be permitting the use of the continental shelf for military purposes. We would seem to be reconciling ourselves to the possibility that the continental shelf may be used for military purposes. But in that case—and it is the case—we can expect one extremely important and dangerous consequence.

40. For we know very well that the outer boundaries of the continental shelf are not defined precisely by any international treaties, and that the Convention on the Continental Shelf in its first article sets two criteria to define the extent of the continental shelf of any State: the first is an arithmetical one (a depth of 200 metres) and the second is the accessibility of natural resources.

41. But if we exclude the continental shelf from the area prohibited for military use, if we speak of prohibition “beyond the limits of national jurisdiction”, any prohibition of the use of the sea-bed and the ocean floor for military purposes will be completely invalid, since, the extent of the continental shelf not having been precisely defined, this prohibition will not apply to a very considerable and equally undefined part of the sea-bed and the ocean floor. What part would that be? Precisely the part where military installations could be set up, because in that part of the sea-bed and the ocean floor which is not yet accessible to man it is practically impossible to set up military installations and any prohibition that would apply to it would be purely academic. What is important is to prohibit the setting up of military installations in that part of the sea-bed and the ocean floor which is accessible to man. But that, of course, is the continental shelf.

42. Consequently, if we exclude the continental shelf from our prohibition, we will fail to cover the very area which is likely to be used for military purposes. Incidentally, this is plain from the documentation submitted to us by the Secretariat. I will not cite from it at length, as delegations can read it for themselves.

43. Moreover, if we except the continental shelf from the prohibition, we will in fact place the fate of the entire matter in the hands of those States which are opposed to a clearer definition of the outer limits of the continental shelf. They may persist in their opposition, and by virtue of that fact area after area of the sea-bed and the ocean floor will become usable for military purposes.

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 499, 1964, No. 7302.

44. This is no mere loophole, this wrecks the entire undertaking. In using such strong language, I am casting no aspersions on anyone; I am prepared to believe that this is a case not of bad faith but of inadequate understanding on the part of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2. Precisely because I believe that this is a case of imperfect understanding rather than bad faith, I am making one more attempt to explain how dangerous it would be to reject the proposal repeatedly advanced by the Soviet Union prohibiting military uses of the sea-bed and the ocean floor beyond the limits of the territorial waters of coastal States.

45. Such a prohibition is essential if the entire undertaking is not to become meaningless and produce a dangerous illusion or rather, a delusion. We would tell ourselves that we had accomplished a serious and important task, that we had really prohibited military uses of the sea-bed and the ocean floor by employing such high-flown language as "beyond the limits of national jurisdiction", while in fact such prohibition could be interpreted as a permission to use for military purposes precisely those parts of the sea-bed and the ocean floor which can so be used.

46. I would not dwell so long on this question if it were to be examined only by the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament. The USSR Government has, of course, submitted its proposals on the matter to that Committee, and presumes that they will be discussed by experts.

47. I am, however, mindful of the fact that under draft resolution A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2 the committee on the sea-bed and the ocean floor will also give some attention to this matter. We must not create a double standard. It would be extremely dangerous if we were to do so by examining one set of proposals in the Eighteen-Nation Committee and another set, fraught with uncertain and extremely dangerous consequences, in the committee on the sea-bed and the ocean floor.

48. We must state clearly and definitely what area is to be reserved exclusively for peaceful purposes. I am deeply convinced that this can in no way impair the interests of African or Asian countries. I am certain that it is in their interests to strengthen their security and to make sure that the continental shelf is not used by powerful States for military purposes. They themselves, for the most part, cannot use the continental shelf for such purposes, not having great military might, but it can be so used by others, to the detriment of their most vital security interests. I believe that what I have said applies fully to the countries of Latin America as well—I refuse to think that the Latin American countries are prepared to execute a complicated manoeuvre which would enable other, militarily powerful States to use their continental shelf for military purposes. I refuse to believe that they can have any such aims, attitudes or intentions. I have every respect for their national dignity.

49. I am equally certain that our proposal in no way injures the interests of the neutral European States. The best proof of that is the recent statement of the Swedish representative [*1596th meeting*], who very lucidly and cogently argued that we must prohibit the use of the sea-bed and the ocean floor for military purposes beyond the limits of territorial waters.

50. Whose interests, then, would not be served by our proposal? I would not like to think that it impairs anyone's interests. If it does, however, these can only be the interests of States whose plans are not peaceful—only those States which might wish to use the continental shelf, both their own and that of others, for military installations in preparation for another world war—in preparation for aggression. Their interests, and theirs alone, would be served by the phrasing now being used in the resolution, phrasing which my delegation strongly believes should be changed.

51. We hope, however, that no State will oppose our proposals. We also hope to be able to convince those States which I mentioned last. But if anyone who has given serious thought to the matter and grasped its essence does object, the only possible explanation would be that the State he represents is serving another, which is interested in the possibility of military use. We have, of course, been told—and told a number of times in the course of consultations—that it would be difficult to use the phrase "beyond the limits of territorial waters" in a specific resolution because that phrase does not occur in the heading of the item.

52. This consideration strikes me as entirely formalistic. If we weigh the considerations which my delegation has explained today and of whose value it is deeply convinced—not only for the Soviet Union, not only for the socialist countries but for the overwhelming majority of States—against this purely formal consideration, it is obvious which will carry the greater weight: it will be the essence of the subject, rather than the formality.

53. We attach great importance to this question. No ambiguity must be injected into it by any document relating in any way, directly or indirectly, to the use of the sea-bed and the ocean floor for military purposes.

54. This is why, having carefully weighed all the factors involved and pondered the entire subject once again, we are submitting an amendment to sub-paragraph 2 (c) of draft resolution A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2.

55. From the verbal point of view, it is a very small amendment. For clarity, I will read it in English as well as in Russian. Sub-paragraph 2 (c) now reads:

"To study further the reservation of this area exclusively for peaceful purposes, taking into account studies and international negotiations being undertaken in the field of disarmament;"

The words "of this area" refer to the phrase "the sea-bed and the ocean floor beyond the limits of national jurisdiction". We propose that the words "this area" should be replaced by "the sea-bed and the ocean floor beyond the limits of territorial waters". The sub-paragraph will then read:

"To study further the reservation of the sea-bed and the ocean floor beyond the limits of territorial waters exclusively for peaceful purposes, taking into account studies and international negotiations being undertaken in the field of disarmament."

56. That is the meaning of our amendment.

57. May I say once again that we are convinced that this amendment does not impair any national interests. On the contrary, its one and only purpose is to serve the security interests of all States, the interests of peace on earth and of relaxation of international tension. It does not serve the interests of any one State or group of States. It expresses our concern for all States, except possibly those which would like to use the continental shelf for military purposes. The Soviet Union has no such desire. It is ready to renounce the right which it now holds to use the sea-bed and the ocean floor for military purposes. It is ready to renounce this right if everyone else does so. It does not want the sea-bed or the ocean floor, including the continental shelf, to be used for military purposes. I urge all delegations to give serious thought to our amendment and to support it in the spirit of goodwill, not as a compromise, not for the sake of reaching a dubious agreement, but because of what it actually means, for its meaning is important to all of us and will grow in importance as time goes on.

58. The CHAIRMAN: The question has been put to me as to how I would suggest that we proceed with our work. I will not conceal the fact that before we resumed our meeting I had the feeling—even the hope—that there was a strong chance that we could proceed to the vote on at least some of the draft resolutions before us concerning item 26. But even at that stage I felt and understood that there were new developments; and of course, having heard the three statements that have been made, members will understand that not only is it impossible to proceed to any vote today but also that there is not much chance that we can do so tomorrow.

59. Therefore, in the light of this, I should like to make clear what my idea is. I shall start by summing up the situation as I see it.

60. The representative of Tunisia informed us of the progress achieved in one direction, and this was confirmed by the representative of Thailand, who, on his part and on behalf of certain others, has also introduced a new draft resolution. Obviously, all the members of the First Committee must have the opportunity to receive that new draft resolution in writing and to study it before they can vote on it. We should also bear in mind the remarks made by the representatives of Tunisia and Thailand that further consultations are necessary to try to reach agreement on another important aspect of draft resolution A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2, namely the matter of the composition of the proposed standing committee.

61. In these circumstances, and having consulted many members of the Committee before we resumed our meeting, I would propose that, in accordance with what was agreed the other day, we begin our debate tomorrow morning on the disarmament items. It is my hope—and I am sure it is shared by the members—that we shall be able to resume the consideration of the draft resolutions and amendments on item 26, including the last one submitted by the representative of the Soviet Union, and vote on them later this week, possibly on Thursday.

62. On my side, I would make an appeal to all members, especially those of the various regional groups, and to the

co-sponsors of the various draft resolutions, to intensify their consultations in an effort to settle the questions still pending so that we can dispose of the item completely before the end of the week. On my part, of course, I shall be available to all Chairmen of the Groups and to all individual representatives, to help them in those efforts.

63. I would ask the Committee whether my suggestion is acceptable.

64. Mr. AMERASINGHE (Ceylon): I should like to have one point clarified. The Chairman said—and quite correctly—that we cannot proceed to vote on these draft resolutions and amendments immediately because some of them are not yet before us in writing. It is not yet clear to me, however, whether, before the voting actually takes place an opportunity will be given to the members of this Committee to discuss the amendments. At least one important amendment has just been moved by the representative of the Soviet Union. I presume, therefore, that in the course of the week we shall have an opportunity of discussing the amendments and draft resolution moved by the representative of Thailand on behalf of thirty co-sponsors, before we actually proceed to the vote.

65. The CHAIRMAN: To the question put by the representative of Ceylon I would reply in the affirmative; I think that is the right interpretation.

66. I take it, then, that this is the decision taken by the Committee.

It was so decided.

67. The CHAIRMAN: Members will recall that at the 1588th meeting of the First Committee it was decided that, after completing the consideration of item 26, the Committee would take up the items relating to disarmament, namely items 27, 28, 29, 94 and 96. I realize, and we are all aware, that we have not completed the consideration of item 26. But in the light of the decision just now taken, we can now move on to consideration of the disarmament items.

68. When we decided on the order of items of our agenda we agreed that the priority for the five items relating to disarmament would be decided later. I have had extensive consultations on this point and it is my understanding that there is general agreement that we should deal with those items as we have done in previous years, namely, that we should have one general debate covering all the items, with the understanding that members are free to make a single statement covering all the items or separate statements on separate items. This, I believe, will enable us to deal with the items in the most practical and efficient manner.

69. May I take it that this proposal also is acceptable to the Committee in which case we shall commence our next meeting tomorrow morning with the general debate on the disarmament items.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 7.5 p.m.