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Agenda item 70

QUESTION OF ANTARCTICA

Report of the First CommitteeRapporteur: Dimitris PLATIS (Greece)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The item entitled "Question of Antarctica" was included in the provisional agenda of the forty-fourth session in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 43/83 A and B of 7 December 1988.
2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 22 September 1989, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.
3. The First Committee considered the item at its 42nd to 46th meetings, from 20 to 22 November 1989 (A/C.1/44/PV.42-46).
4. In connection with item 70, the First Committee had before it the following documents:
 - (a) Report of the Secretary-General on the question of Antarctica (A/44/518);
 - (b) Report of the Secretary-General on the question of Antarctica (A/44/586);
 - (c) Letter dated 13 February 1989 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the text of a statement on the question of Antarctica on behalf of the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Ghana, Kenya, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Uganda and Zambia (A/44/125);

(d) Letter dated 6 July 1989 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the text of the press release issued by the President of the Preparatory Meeting of the XVth Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting held at Paris from 9 to 13 May 1989 (A/44/383);

(e) Letter dated 19 July 1989 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Zimbabwe to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the final documents of the Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries held at Harare from 17 to 19 May 1989 (A/44/409-S/20743 and Corr.1 and 2);

(f) Letter dated 22 September 1989 from the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the final documents of the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Belgrade from 4 to 7 September 1989 (A/44/551-S/20870);

(g) Letter dated 26 October from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the text of the communiqué adopted by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting on 24 October 1989 (A/44/689-S/20921).

II. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS

A. Draft resolution A/C.1/44/L.68

5. On 17 November, Lesotho, on behalf of the members of the African Group of States, submitted a draft resolution entitled "Question of Antarctica" (A/C.1/44/L.68). It was introduced by the representative of Lesotho at the 43rd meeting, on 21 November.

6. At the 46th meeting, on 22 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/44/L.68 by a roll-call vote of 94 to none, with 6 abstentions (see para. 9, draft resolution A). The voting was as follows: 1/

1/ The following 34 delegations announced that they were not participating in the vote: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay.

Subsequently, the delegations of Colombia, Nicaragua, and Democratic Yemen indicated that they had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic Kampuchea, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Botswana, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malawi, Mauritius, Portugal.

B. Draft resolution A/C.1/44/L.69

7. On 20 November, Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Congo, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Kuwait, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Uganda, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe submitted a draft resolution entitled "Question of Antarctica" (A/C.1/44/L.69), which was later also sponsored by Iran (Islamic Republic of) and United Republic of Tanzania. The draft resolution was introduced by the representative of Malaysia at the 46th meeting on 22 November.

8. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/44/L.69 by a roll-call vote of 85 to none, with 7 abstentions (see para. 9, draft resolution B). The voting was as follows: 2/

2/ The following 42 delegations announced that they were not participating in the vote: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Greece, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Viet Nam.

In favour: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Democratic Kampuchea, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: None.

Abstaining: China, Fiji, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malawi, Portugal, Turkey.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

9. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following resolutions:

Question of Antarctica

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 43/83 B of 7 December 1988,

Having considered the item entitled "Question of Antarctica",

Noting with regret that the racist apartheid régime of South Africa, which has been suspended from participation in the General Assembly of the United Nations, has continued to participate in the meetings of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties,

Recalling the resolution adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its fiftieth ordinary session, held at Addis Ababa from 17 to 22 July 1989, 3/

3/ See A/44/603, annex I.

Recalling also the relevant paragraphs of the final documents adopted by the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Belgrade from 4 to 7 September 1989, 4/

Recalling further that the Antarctic Treaty 5/ is, by its terms, intended to further the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations,

Noting that the policy of apartheid practised by the racist minority régime of South Africa, which has been universally condemned, constitutes a threat to regional and international peace and security,

1. Views with concern the continuing participation of the apartheid régime of South Africa in the meetings of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties;
2. Appeals once again to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to take urgent measures to exclude the racist apartheid régime of South Africa from participation in the meetings of the Consultative Parties at the earliest possible date;
3. Invites the States parties to the Antarctic Treaty to inform the Secretary-General of the actions taken regarding the provisions of the present resolution;
4. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a report in this regard to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session;
5. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-fifth session the item entitled "Question of Antarctica".

B

The General Assembly,

Having considered the item entitled "Question of Antarctica",

Recalling its resolutions 38/77 of 15 December 1983, 39/152 of 17 December 1984, 40/156 A and B of 16 December 1985, 41/88 A and B of 4 December 1986, 42/46 A and B of 30 November 1987 and 43/83 A and B of 7 December 1988,

Recalling also the relevant paragraphs of the Political Declaration adopted by the Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government of

4/ See A/44/551-S/20870, annex.

5/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 402, No. 5778.

Non-Aligned Countries, held at Harare from 1 to 6 September 1986, 6/ and the resolution on Antarctica adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its forty-second ordinary session, held at Addis Ababa from 10 to 17 July 1985, 7/ as well as the relevant paragraphs of the decision of the Council of Ministers of the League of Arab States held at Tunis on 17 and 18 September 1986 and resolution 25/5-P(IS) adopted by the Fifth Islamic Summit Conference of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held at Kuwait from 26 to 29 January 1987, 8/ the relevant paragraphs of the final documents adopted by the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Belgrade from 4 to 7 September 1989 9/ and the communiqué issued by Commonwealth Heads of Government at Kuala Lumpur on 24 October 1989, 10/

Taking into account the debates on this item held since its thirty-eighth session,

Welcoming the increasing awareness of and interest in Antarctica shown by the international community,

Convinced of the advantages to the whole of mankind of a better knowledge of Antarctica,

Affirming its conviction that, in the interest of all mankind, Antarctica should continue for ever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and that it should not become the scene or object of international discord,

Reaffirming the principle that the international community is entitled to information covering all aspects of Antarctica and that the United Nations should be made the repository for all such information in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 41/88 A, 42/46 B and 43/83 A,

Conscious of the particular significance of Antarctica to the international community in terms, inter alia, of international peace and security, environment, its effects on global climatic conditions, economy and scientific research,

Conscious also of the interrelationship between Antarctica and the physical, chemical and biological processes that regulate the total Earth system,

6/ A/41/697-S/18392, annex, sect. I, paras. 198-202.

7/ A/40/666, annex II, resolution CM/Res.988 (XLII).

8/ See A/42/178-S/18753, annex II.

9/ See A/44/551-S/20870, annex.

10/ See A/44/689-S/20921, annex.

Reaffirming that the management and use of Antarctica should be conducted in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and of promoting international co-operation for the benefit of mankind as a whole,

Affirming the necessity of ensuring, in the interest of all mankind, comprehensive environmental protection and conservation of the Antarctic environment and its dependent and associated ecosystems through negotiations, with the full participation of all members of the international community,

Conscious of the environmental degradation that prospecting and mining in and around Antarctica would pose to the Antarctic and global environment and ecosystems,

Convinced of the need to prevent or minimize any impact of human activity resulting from the large number of scientific stations and expeditions in Antarctica on the environment and its dependent and associated ecosystems,

Taking into account all aspects pertaining to all areas covered by the Antarctic Treaty system,

Taking note with appreciation of the reports of the Secretary-General on the question of Antarctica, 11/

1. Expresses its regret that, despite the numerous resolutions in which it has called upon the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to invite the Secretary-General or his representative to their meetings, including their consultative meetings, the Secretary-General was not invited to the Antarctic Treaty Preparatory Meeting or the XVth Consultative Meeting, held in Paris from 9 to 13 May and from 9 to 20 October 1989, respectively;
2. Reiterates its call upon the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to invite the Secretary-General or his representative to all meetings of the Treaty parties, including their consultative meetings;
3. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a report on his evaluations thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session;
4. Expresses the conviction that, in view of the significant impact that Antarctica exerts on the global environment and ecosystems, any régime to be established for the protection and conservation of the Antarctic environment and its dependent and associated ecosystems, in order to be for the benefit of mankind as a whole and in order to gain the universal acceptability necessary to ensure full compliance and enforcement, must be negotiated with the full participation of all members of the international community;

11/ A/44/518 and A/44/586.

5. Urges all members of the international community to support all efforts to ban prospecting and mining in and around Antarctica and to ensure that all activities should be exclusively used for the purpose of peaceful scientific investigation and that all such activities should ensure the maintenance of international peace and security in Antarctica and the protection of its environment and should be for the benefit of all mankind;

6. Expresses its conviction that the establishment, through negotiations with the full participation of all members of the international community, of Antarctica as a nature reserve or a world park would ensure the protection and conservation of its environment and its dependent and associated ecosystems for the benefit of all mankind;

7. Also expresses its conviction, in view of the large number of scientific stations and expeditions, that international scientific research should be enhanced through the establishment of international stations devoted to scientific investigations of global significance, regulated by stringent environmental safeguards, so as to avoid or minimize any adverse impact of human activities on the environment and dependent and associated ecosystems of Antarctica;

8. Urges all States Members of the United Nations to co-operate with the Secretary-General and to continue consultations on all aspects relating to Antarctica;

9. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-fifth session the item entitled "Question of Antarctica".
