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Chairman: Mr. TAYLHARDAT (Venezuela)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 49 TO 69 AND 151 (continued)

CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS ON DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. HYLTIENIUS (Sweden): I have asked to speak today to introduce draft decision A/C.1/44/L.6 and draft resolution A/C.1/44/L.35.

For a number of years Sweden has introduced a draft resolution in the First Committee on the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. These texts have enjoyed the sponsorship of a large group of non-aligned, Western and socialist States and have, like last year's resolution 43/67, been adopted by consensus.

This year my delegation is introducing only a draft decision - contained in document A/C.1/44/L.6 - in order to maintain this item on the agenda of the General Assembly. We do so because we are not prepared at this session of the Assembly to propose any substantive change in the text of last year's resolution. It was also considered that repetition of the resolution would not add to the strength and authority of the statement adopted unanimously by the General Assembly year after year on the 1980 Convention when it urged all States that had not yet done so to exert their best endeavours to become parties to the Convention and its Protocols, so as ultimately to obtain universality of adherence. The Assembly has also consistently noted the possibilities, under article 8 of the Convention, of considering amendments or additional protocols to it. Next year it will be 10 years since the Convention was concluded.

It is the view of Sweden that it is time to consider whether or not further categories of weapons should be made the object of specific restrictions. In this context my delegation has repeatedly mentioned incendiary weapons and specific anti-personnel laser weapons. My delegation has also suggested a new protocol on

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the use of naval mines, though not necessarily within the framework of the present Convention. It is thus the view of Sweden that there is room for new initiatives for further development of international humanitarian law in this field.

In the mean time we expect the decision to include the item in the provisional agenda of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly to be taken without a vote.

My second responsibility is to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/44/L.35, on "Naval armaments and disarmament". I do so on behalf of Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, China, Finland, the German Democratic Republic, Iceland, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Yugoslavia and Sweden.

The General Assembly last year recalled its request in 1985 to the Disarmament Commission to consider the issues contained in the United Nations study on the naval arms race (A/40/535) with a view to facilitating the identification of possible measures in the field of naval arms reductions and disarmament, pursued within the framework of progress towards general and complete disarmament, as well as confidence-building measures in this field. In so doing the Disarmament Commission was also asked to take other relevant measures into account.

During its 1989 session the Disarmament Commission continued its consideration of the issue. The meetings held resulted in a number of substantive findings and recommendations on the subject. These are contained in a working paper of the Chairman (A/CN.10/134), which met with the approval of all delegations participating in the substantive consultations and which, in their view, could form the basis of further deliberations on the subject.

This working paper was richer in substantive content than the corresponding document of the previous year. Several new substantive working papers were

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submitted in the course of the consultations. The working paper stated that there was

"widespread concurrence of view that, at this stage, confidence-building measures of various kinds, both in the global and the regional context, could be more amenable to further consideration and possible negotiation in the appropriate forums".

A number of possible measures were suggested. Specifically, mention could be made here of

"negotiating a multilateral agreement concerning the prevention of incidents at sea beyond the territorial sea in addition to existing agreements".

Such an agreement is not intended to replace or supersede existing bilateral agreements but should be an important complement to them. A multilateral agreement would go beyond the so-called rules of the road. It would, furthermore, promote homogeneity in the normative system and be an important confidence-building measure.

Another example of concrete measures proposed as a modernization of the laws of sea warfare was the updating of The Hague Convention VIII of 1907 on Laying of Automatic Submarine Contact Mines.

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It was also recognized in the report by the Chairman "that the harmful effects that conflict at sea could have on freedom of navigation and other uses of the sea, in accordance with current international law, for States neutral to or otherwise not involved in an ongoing conflict have been amply demonstrated in recent years. The maintenance of freedom of navigation and other uses of the sea is an important objective for all States neutral to or otherwise not involved in such conflicts."

The item "Naval armaments and disarmament" has been on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission for four years now. The deliberations have led to a deepened understanding of the subject. Concrete measures on which negotiations could be conducted have been defined. Other important issues would need further elaboration by the Disarmament Commission. It is to be hoped that all States concerned will take an active part in developing a common approach to those issues.

Draft resolution A/C.1/44/L.35 is of a procedural nature. In it the Disarmament Commission is requested to continue the substantive consideration of the question at its forthcoming session in 1990 under the agenda item entitled "Naval armaments and disarmament", and to report on its deliberations and recommendations to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session.

On behalf of the sponsors, I wish to commend the draft resolution to the First Committee and recommend that the Committee give it full support.

Mr. GRONDAL (Iceland): According to the draft resolution (A/C.1/44/L.35) introduced by the representative of Sweden, the Disarmament Commission would be requested to continue consideration of the question of the naval arms race and disarmament and to report on its deliberations and recommendations to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session.

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The General Assembly adopted the first resolution on this matter as long ago as 1983. At that time the naval arms race was at its height, and relations between the super-Powers were so tense that talk of naval disarmament was hardly more than wishful thinking.

Now, however, there has been a transformation in super-Power relations, and a spirit of peace and conciliation has spread across continents. Perhaps the summit meeting in Reykjavik three years ago was the turning-point, the beginning of the multilateral disarmament process in which we happily find ourselves.

The super-Powers began with important steps in the field of nuclear arms and are proceeding to greater agreements in that field. It was self-evident that the process of reducing armaments should be started by concentrating on the most dangerous weapons of all. It was equally logical to proceed from there to conventional arms and further confidence-building measures, and this is being done in Europe in a spirit of optimism.

The Government of Iceland has expressed its view that, once the current negotiations in Europe have yielded satisfactory results, confidence-building and arms control should be extended to the seas. The oceans have not received much attention in disarmament negotiations so far, although several treaties apply to the maritime domain.

Some delegations dealt with this subject in their statements in the general debate in this Committee. My delegation is in complete agreement with what the Ambassador of Denmark said:

"Naval armaments and disarmament have gained attention. The role of naval forces must be examined in an overall military and political context and it should be noted that the principle of undiminished security has a special importance with regard to naval disarmament in consequence of well-known

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geographical asymmetries. Openness, transparency and objective information are important for naval as well as for other disarmament areas. A deepened international discussion in appropriate multilateral forums, with a view to establishing the necessary preconditions for further development of confidence- and security-building measures and disarmament, is called for in the area of maritime forces as well." (A/C.1/44/PV.16, p. 50)

The Foreign Minister of Iceland said in his statement to the General Assembly last month:

"There is also a growing understanding that confidence-building at sea must be compatible with the principle of freedom of navigation and must take into account the asymmetrical dependence of different States upon the seas and secure ocean lines of communications." (A/44/PV.19, p. 33)

Disarmament at sea is, of course, closely connected with the strategic arms talks, because a large number of strategic nuclear weapons are placed in submarines. But on the other hand naval armaments are entirely different from continental ones in that navies have the mobility to go all over the world. Capital ships seen in the North Atlantic may well be on their way to the Indian Ocean or the Far East. That problem has a world-wide dimension.

Security and the environment are becoming increasingly interrelated. A large number of naval vessels are propelled by nuclear plants and may carry nuclear weapons. They are floating or submerged nuclear plants that are subject to the same danger of accidents as similar plants on land.

As the Foreign Minister of Iceland and the Foreign Minister of Ireland both pointed out in their statements to the Assembly, these submarines pose a constant threat of a very significant increase in the dangers already existing from radioactive waste in the sea. Recent accidents to nuclear submarines in northern waters are ample proof of that danger.

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It is no coincidence that two island States in the crowded North Atlantic should be calling attention to this danger. A nuclear accident near the rich fishing-grounds would scare consumers from buying the fish, and that would be an economic catastrophe for my country.

The Foreign Ministers of all the Nordic countries discussed that danger at their recent meeting in Iceland. They agreed to appeal to all nuclear Powers to exercise the greatest possible caution in order to reduce the danger of nuclear accidents. This is a matter of training and discipline, but it is also possible to get international guidelines for the safety of sea-borne reactors worked out by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mr. MOREL (France) (interpretation from French): I wish to advise members that my delegation has circulated the text of the statement I made at the informal meeting of the First Committee held on 25 October, informing delegations about progress in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons in Geneva. I communicated that information as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee during its 1989 session. As delegations will see, the document summarizes the points I addressed during the meeting; I felt it would be useful to retain the references to the text of the report as circulated to delegations at the present session.

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Lastly, I would like to say that the informal statement I made in my personal capacity is binding only upon myself.

Having said that, I should now like to turn to agenda item 63 (d), "Conventional disarmament", on which I am speaking on behalf of the State members of the European Community.

Nuclear disarmament is one of the most important priorities for the countries on behalf of whom I am speaking. Thus the Twelve have regularly emphasized that conventional disarmament is essential and must be pursued as a matter of urgency as an integral part of the process of general and complete disarmament, in which all States of the world must take an active part. The process of arms control and disarmament must address both conventional and nuclear weapons, since a balanced reduction in both types of armaments will contribute to strengthening security. One of the highest priorities for the international community must be the search for progress to achieve balanced and verifiable cuts in conventional weapons. The conventional-disarmament process is intended to achieve verifiable arms-control agreements ensuring security at the lowest possible level of forces and weapons alike in order to eliminate threats of surprise attack and correct the imbalance in conventional forces that can act against security and stability.

Conventional weapons have been responsible for the deaths of millions of human beings in conflicts throughout the world. Increasingly powerful weapons continue to be developed world-wide. Expenditure on conventional weapons and forces absorbs a considerable part of budgets all over the world, putting an increasingly heavy burden on the economies of many countries.

Growing recognition of the over-all importance of conventional arms-control and disarmament is to be welcomed. All States, and not only the most heavily armed, should be involved in the conventional-disarmament process, particularly

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through the conclusion of regional agreements. The regional approach is likely to prove the most practical in achieving progress in the foreseeable future.

Conventional-arms control is a matter of particular concern for Europe, where the concentration of troops and weapons is high. In the view of the Twelve, every effort must be made to correct the imbalance in conventional forces in Europe and to create a stable balance of conventional forces at a lower level. We are convinced that the movement under way in Europe with regard to conventional-arms control and security- and confidence-building measures represents a major contribution to the process of comprehensive disarmament.

In addition, the Twelve consider that to strengthen security in Europe a stable and secure balance in conventional forces at a lower level much be reached through the introduction of a new series of confidence- and security-building measures designed to strengthen and build upon measures already agreed upon in the Stockholm Document.

That is why we welcomed the initiation last March of the two rounds of negotiations in Vienna within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). Negotiations on conventional forces in Europe are designed to strengthen stability and security on the continent through a more stable and secure balance of conventional forces at lower levels, thereby making impossible the launching of surprise attacks or the unleashing of large-scale offensive actions. The purpose of the negotiations on security- and confidence-building is to enhance transparency and openness through a fuller knowledge of military activities, thanks to new steps to increase confidence and security. The first sessions were characterized by the constructive approach taken by all participants, which augurs well for subsequent negotiations.

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The question of conventional disarmament must therefore remain one of the priority issues in the multilateral disarmament debate. For that reason the Twelve welcomed the fact that the Disarmament Commission was undertaking a comprehensive study of the problems related to conventional disarmament. We note with regret that at its 1989 session the Disarmament Commission was unable to reach agreement on that question. However, progress was made on a number of essential components of a draft report on conventional report that will, we hope, be completed in 1990. In that connection the Twelve support draft resolution A/C.1/44/L.20, submitted by Denmark and designed to further consideration of that important matter by the Disarmament Commission.

The development of confidence-building measures and a greater openness and transparency in the military sphere, including defence budgets, is an essential component in limiting armaments, both world-wide and on the regional level. In that connection the standardized reporting system of the United Nations is an important factor in the attainment of greater transparency with regard to world military expenditures and the comparison of such data. It would therefore be desirable for the largest possible number of States to furnish such standardized reports to the Secretary-General.

In that connection the Twelve are convinced that the question of arms transfers requires consideration by the international community. They welcome the fact that in General Assembly resolution 43/75 I the Secretary-General was requested to undertake a study of the subject with the assistance of a group of governmental experts.

The Twelve States members of the Community are convinced, as they have made clear in their replies to the Secretary-General on the questionnaire in General Assembly resolution 43/75 G, document A/44/396 of 18 July 1989, that better information on military capabilities would help to alleviate international

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tension and to establish confidence among States at the world, regional and subregional levels. The availability of such data is an important prerequisite of the conclusion of verifiable arms-control and disarmament agreements. The need for a freer flow of objective information on military capabilities has been stressed in General Assembly resolutions, including several sponsored by the Twelve. I might add that the Twelve regularly provide detailed, objective and readily accessible data on those questions.

Mr. von STÜLPNAGEL (Federal Republic of Germany): During the general debate a lot of emphasis has been placed on the issue of chemical weapons, and rightly so. In reviewing the past year one cannot help but note that the global ban on chemical weapons, the elimination of existing chemical-weapon stocks and production facilities and the prohibition of any further manufacture, acquisition, storage, transfer or use of chemical weapons have definitely become a common cause of the whole international community.

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The Paris Conference held in January this year testifies to that: 149 States have expressed their abhorrence of those ghastly weapons and have committed themselves to preventing any recourse to chemical weapons by completely eliminating them.

Following the call of the Paris Conference, the negotiators in Geneva have intensified their efforts to conclude at the earliest date a truly global, comprehensive and effectively verifiable convention. As a result of the 1989 session, the new so-called rolling text of the convention, as presented in the report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly, is recording further solid progress in the negotiations. Although we were not able to achieve the breakthrough we had hoped for after the Paris Conference, we consider the rolling text now to offer a good basis for arriving at speedy and practical solutions to the remaining problems.

Further substantial headway on the outstanding key issues should now be possible. There is a growing sense of urgency, and the international community has become fully aware that a truly global, comprehensive and effectively verifiable ban on chemical weapons is clearly the only way to free mankind once and for all of the scourge of chemical weapons, and also, as Foreign Ministers Baker and Shevardnadze put it at the conclusion of their Wyoming meeting, "the best means to address the threat posed by the spread of chemical weapons on a durable long-term basis".

The sense of urgency, which seems to be shared world-wide, was also felt during the Government-Industry Conference against chemical weapons convened by Australia in Canberra from 18 to 22 September 1989. As the Australian Foreign Minister, Senator Evans, observed in his summary statement, "In bringing the

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convention to conclusion, 1990 is seen by most delegations as a critical year". My country clearly shares that assessment.

My Government sees recent developments as supporting and reaffirming its policy on chemical weapons. We have all along advocated a stepping-up of the work on the elaboration of a global convention and argued for its speediest conclusion.

The conditions for achieving our goal in 1990 are favourable indeed. First, the Paris Conference has brought us the commitment of the entire international community to a global ban on chemical weapons. Secondly, the intensified efforts in the negotiations in Geneva and the solid progress achieved this year have brought us closer to the finalization of the text of the convention. Thirdly, the results of the bilateral United States-Soviet discussions and both sides' agreement on an early exchange of data, questions of verification and the order of destruction of chemical weapons are conducive to transparency and confidence building and should accelerate the solution of some crucial problems in the Geneva negotiations. Fourthly, the successful Canberra Conference, which resulted in the unqualified support of the chemical industry for the Geneva negotiations, will have a favourable impact on the progress of work undertaken there and on preparations for the implementation of the convention. Fifthly, the significant proposals and commitments presented by President Bush to the General Assembly a few weeks ago are aimed at expediting the final destruction of chemical weapons and will give fresh impetus to the Geneva negotiations.

Those facts speak for themselves. However, our common cause also requires common action. Not only those States that are members of the Conference on Disarmament are called upon to live up to their responsibilities. The whole international community must do so. As the States participating in the Paris Conference solemnly declared:

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"All States are requested to make, in an appropriate way, a significant contribution to the negotiations in Geneva by undertaking efforts in the relevant fields. The participating States therefore believe that any State wishing to contribute to those negotiations should be able to do so".

All States without exception can and shall contribute to our common cause and to the objectives set out in the two draft resolutions on the subject of chemical weapons, which we give our full support and hope will be adopted by consensus again this year.

Mr. KIBIDI NGOVUKA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): On behalf of my delegation, I should like to comment on certain specific agenda items.

I should like first to reiterate, Sir, my congratulations on your election to the post of Chairman of the First Committee, a distinction that is matched by your skill, your breadth of diplomatic experience, and your remarkable knowledge of disarmament affairs.

I wish also to say that the delegation of Zaire holds in high esteem all the other members of the Bureau and the Secretariat whose dedication to the cause of disarmament is well known and highly valued. I also wish to emphasize the great merits of Mr. Akashi, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

At this stage in our work, my delegation wishes to speak first on agenda item 51, entitled "Amendment of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water".

There is no doubt that the testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water involves grave hazards to the environment, to the life of human beings and all life in general. Such nuclear tests also sustain a warlike spirit because they carry the germs of nuclear war: if certain nuclear Powers

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frequently test such weapons, it is in order to verify through new technology their death-dealing efficiency and their terrible capacity for mass destruction - as if the sad experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were not enough to convince all of us of the danger of nuclear weapons to the human species and its environment.

Zaire is among the 41 States that have called upon the nuclear Powers and all signatory States of the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty to amend that Treaty. It is regrettable that, notwithstanding the existence of the Treaty, which is an excellent legal framework that should have deterred certain signatory States from resorting on such a large scale to nuclear-weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, those States have often disregarded its relevant clauses. That is why we welcome the new awareness of the international community, which has urgently called for an amendment of the Treaty to make it a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty.

Zaire associated itself with the non-aligned countries at the ninth Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Belgrade from 4 to 7 September 1989, calling for the convening of an international conference in 1990 to convert the present Treaty into a comprehensive treaty on the prohibition of nuclear tests. Zaire will attend that conference with a firm determination to work, in harmony with other countries, towards the success of the conference.

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Notwithstanding the palpable improvement in international relations and the easing of East-West relations, particularly between the United States and the Soviet Union, since the signature and entry into force of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - the road to general and complete disarmament is still long, strewn with obstacles and characterized by mistrust. That is why we feel that the anticipated 1990 conference should confront the conscience of mankind with the imperative need for changes in the concept of international peace and security. Those changes must involve new approaches, indeed a new political philosophy committing the international community to a world of greater solidarity.

The survival of mankind can be achieved only in that way. Either we shall proceed blithely towards world self-destruction with the nuclear and conventional arms race, or we shall build during the coming century a new world of peace, progress and prosperity for all.

Addressing the General Assembly during the general debate on 4 October, Marshal Mobutu Sese Seko, Chairman and founder of the Popular Movement of the Revolution and President of the Republic of Zaire, spoke inter alia about matters pertaining to the environment and the radioactive waste dumped in Africa. He said,

"I recall with emotion my own youth closely intertwined with the majesty of our rivers and the purity of our streams. I also recall our virgin and luxuriant forests from which every morning one heard the call of birds. It is with deep sadness that we witness today the accelerated deterioration of our natural environment under the impact of multiple and repeated aggression."

(A/44/PV.19, p. 18)

(Mr. Kibidi Ngovuko, Zaire)

That brief quotation gives me the opportunity to refer to the question of radioactive waste, which is the subject of agenda item 63 (k), entitled "Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes for hostile purposes". Members will recall that last year African States introduced a draft resolution on that subject, which was adopted with some abstentions. We are introducing a similar draft resolution this year.

We reaffirm that dumping such wastes in Africa or elsewhere is abominable from every point of view. We would like to hope that this year the hesitation of certain countries, who were unwilling to condemn those practices, will have disappeared and that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Africa suffers from a considerable lag in the sphere of economic development for both internal and external reasons, and it would be criminal for certain industrialized countries to exacerbate the situation by dumping radioactive wastes bringing disease, death and the impoverishment of the soil, and therefore large-scale famine and the accelerated deterioration of an already worrisome economic and social situation.

With respect to agenda item 62 on chemical and bacteriological weapons, my country has been following attentively the various stages towards the adoption by States of a universal convention prohibiting the manufacture and stockpiling of chemical and bacteriological weapons.

The delegation of Zaire welcomes as encouraging recent developments with respect to chemical weapons, in particular the Paris Conference on the 1925 Geneva Protocol held in Paris in January, the recent Canberra Conference, and the Soviet-United States undertaking of 23 September 1989 on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons, following the presentation of their proposals for destroying existing stockpiles and the conclusion in Wyoming of an agreement on the exchange of information in the sphere of bilateral negotiations.

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The Republic of Zaire is convinced that 1990 will be marked by the adoption of such a universal convention, which will supplement and remedy the inadequacies of the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I call upon the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. KHERADI (Secretary of the Committee): I should like to inform the Committee that the following countries have become sponsors of the following draft resolutions: A/C.1/44/L.10, Argentina, Myanmar and Romania; A/C.1/44/L.11, Myanmar; A/C.1/44/L.12, Luxembourg; A/C.1/44/L.15, Luxembourg and the Philippines; A/C.1/44/L.21, Democratic Yemen, Lebanon and Yemen; A/C.1/44/L.22, Cameroon; A/C.1/44/L.24, the German Democratic Republic; A/C.1/44/L.25, Thailand, Togo and Uruguay; A/C.1/44/L.27, Malta, New Zealand and Romania; A/C.1/44/L.29, the German Democratic Republic; A/C.1/44/L.34, Costa Rica; A/C.1/44/L.36, Angola and the Philippines; A/C.1/44/L.37, Singapore; A/C.1/44/L.41, the German Democratic Republic; A/C.1/44/L.43, Greece and Romania; A/C.1/44/L.44, Luxembourg and Nigeria; A/C.1/44/L.47, Argentina; A/C.1/44/L.56, Bolivia and the Philippines; A/C.1/44/L.59/Rev.1, the Philippines; and A/C.1/44/L.63, Myanmar and Singapore.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.