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FIRST COMMITTEE
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at 11 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SECOND MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ALATAS (Indonesia)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: At the outset of our work, I should like to extend a warm welcome to all delegations to the First Committee at this fortieth session of the General Assembly.

I take this opportunity to express my profound appreciation to all Members of the United Nations for the honour they have conferred upon me and my country by electing me to the chairmanship of this important forum. I am deeply indebted to all of them for the trust and confidence they have thus placed in me.

Let me also say how much I appreciated the generous words spoken by the representative of Brazil, Ambassador George Maciel, when he nominated me to the chairmanship of this Committee on behalf of its Chairman at the last session. I understand that Ambassador Souza e Silva cannot be with us at this time, but I am certain that I am reflecting the wish of all members when I ask Ambassador Maciel to convey to Ambassador Souza e Silva our congratulations and our gratitude for the exemplary manner in which he presided over our deliberations at the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

As I undertake my duties, it is gratifying for me to know that I can count on the co-operation of all members of the Committee as well as on the valuable experience and competence of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jan Martenson, of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs, Mr. Viacheslav Ustinov, and of Mr. Sohrab Kheradi, Secretary of the Committee, and his colleagues in the Secretariat. For my part, I am fully aware of the great responsibility thrust on me as I endeavour to follow in the footsteps of my worthy predecessors, the previous Chairmen of the General Assembly's First Committee, who have acquitted themselves of their tasks with great skill and the utmost dedication and impartiality.

(The Chairman)

This Committee is faced annually with the awesome task of trying to fulfil the expectations of the international community with regard to the vital questions of disarmament and international security. Unfortunately, the record of our achievements has not always measured up to those expectations. Yet this has not been for the want of a genuine effort on our part, but has rather been a reflection of the realities of a world fraught with tension, mutual distrust and insecurity. As we begin our work, therefore, let us approach our task with even greater determination and with political will commensurate with the task, so as to be able to make a real contribution to achieving the goal of a world devoid of the threat of war and of the devastating arms race, and where peace, common security and prosperity will prevail in their stead.

The agenda for today's meeting concerns the election of the Committee's Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur, and the organization of the work of the Committee for the current session. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the agenda is adopted.

The agenda was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: Before proceeding to the first item on our agenda, may I draw the attention of members to the decision of the General Assembly, taken at its 1935th meeting, held on 22 September 1971, concerning the procedure regarding the election of officers of the Main Committees. By the terms of that decision, nominations of candidates should be limited to one statement for each candidate, after which the Committee should immediately proceed to the election. The Committee will follow that procedure today.

ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN

Mr. PENA VKA (Czechoslovakia) (interpretation from Russian): First of all, Sir, I wish to congratulate you sincerely on your election to the responsible post of Chairman of the First Committee. We are confident that under your able

(Mr. Penavka, Czechoslovakia)

leadership the Committee will be enabled to work constructively and fruitfully.

Today I take great pleasure in nominating to the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee Ambassador Carlos Lechuga Hevia, permanent representative of a friendly non-aligned country, Cuba, to the international organizations at Geneva. Ambassador Lechuga Hevia is a prominent member of his country's diplomatic corps. He has a long record of responsible work at high diplomatic and political level, both in his country and abroad. It is hardly necessary for me to give a detailed account of his record of service. The name of Ambassador Lechuga Hevia is well known to all those involved in disarmament and international security affairs at the United Nations. I shall merely recall that in 1959 he was appointed as an Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of his country. His association with the United Nations, first in New York and then in Geneva, dates back to 1962. Ambassador Lechuga Hevia has accumulated a wealth of experience in international negotiations on the subject matter of the work of the First Committee, as from 1971 to 1978 he served as representative of Cuba to the international organizations at Geneva, and as Secretary to the Political Committee at the non-aligned Conference held at Havana in 1979. In 1981 he was appointed as Cuba's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Portugal, and in 1983 returned to Geneva as the permanent representative of his country to the international organizations there, including the Conference on Disarmament.

Ambassador Lechuga Hevia's thorough knowledge of the subject matter of the agenda of this Committee and his dedication to his work are also to be seen in his appointment to membership of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies.

On the basis of all the foregoing, there are very good reasons to conclude that Ambassador Lechuga Hevia is an excellent candidate for the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee, and I feel confident that the Committee will unanimously endorse his candidacy.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Czechoslovakia for his statement nominating Ambassador Carlos Lechuga Hevia of Cuba, for the post of Vice-Chairman. I should also like to thank him for his kind remarks addressed to me. I wish to convey through him the Committee's sincere appreciation to Ambassador Milous Vejvoda for his valuable contribution to the work of the Committee in his capacity as Vice-Chairman during last year's session.

There being no other nomination, I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and with established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Ambassador Carlos Lechuga Hevia of Cuba elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

Mr. Carlos Lechuga Hevia (Cuba) was elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to convey to Ambassador Carlos Lechuga my warmest congratulations on the distinction that has been conferred upon him and assure him of my confidence that we shall co-operate in a harmonious manner so that we can jointly discharge the responsibilities incumbent upon us.

Regarding the election of the second Vice-Chairman, I should like to inform members of the Committee that due to ongoing consultations, the election of our second Vice-Chairman will take place at a later meeting.

ELECTION OF THE RAPPORTEUR

Mr. KESSELY (Chad) (interpretation from French): Sir, I should like first of all to congratulate you most sincerely on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I share completely the views of the preceding speaker that, thanks to your skill, qualifications and experience as a diplomat, our work will be successful.

I also wish to convey my congratulations to Ambassador Carlos Lechuga Hevia of Cuba, who has just been elected Vice-Chairman. Lastly, I should to express my best

(Mr. Kessely, Chad)

wishes to the Secretariat, especially to Mr. Kheradi, without whose assistance our work would be in vain.

It is my honour and pleasure to submit the candidacy of Mr. Yannis Souliatis for the post of Rapporteur of the First Committee. Mr. Souliatis, who is now Special Counsellor to the Foreign Ministry of Greece, is an experienced academic and internationalist. After having completed his studies at the Athens Political Science School, Mr. Souliatis travelled to France where he obtained the law school diploma, the international studies diploma and a doctorate in law. After his studies, Mr. Souliatis became an assistant professor at the Law School of Nice, a post which he held until 1977. At the same time he was a researcher at the French Centre for Scientific Research. In that capacity he participated in many round table discussions and seminars on international law. He also published a large number of articles in French journals on constitutional law, human rights, the law of the sea and international law. Among those articles, we might highlight many works on disarmament, such as on the legal status of the Disarmament Commission, chemical weapons, the first special session of the United Nations on disarmament and the deliberative bodies on disarmament and the Anglo-Greek Dictionary on Disarmament, to mention just a few.

In 1977, Mr. Souliatis joined the Foreign Ministry of Greece. Since 1978 he has been a member of the Greek delegation to every session of the General Assembly, in the course of which he has regularly been on the First Committee. He also participated in the two special sessions of the General Assembly on disarmament and in all the meetings of the Disarmament Commission.

Bearing in mind all of these qualifications, it seems to me that Mr. Souliatis is in the best possible position to fulfil the role of Rapporteur of the First Committee. I therefore nominate him for election to that post.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Chad for the nomination of Mr. Yannis Souliatis of Greece for election to the post of Rapporteur of the First Committee. I would also like to thank him for his kind words addressed to me. I am certain that I am expressing the sentiments of the entire membership of the Committee when I offer our thanks to him for his important contribution to the work of the First Committee during the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Members of the Committee have just heard the representative of Chad nominate Mr. Yannis Souliatis for the post of Rapporteur. As there are no other nominations, I take it that the Committee wishes to follow the same procedure as before and dispense with the secret ballot, and declare Mr. Yannis Souliatis elected Rapporteur of the First Committee by acclamation.

Mr. Yannis Souliatis (Greece) was elected Rapporteur of the First Committee by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to express my cordial congratulations to the representative of Greece upon his election as Rapporteur of the First Committee, and I invite him now to take the place reserved for him at the podium.

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

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

I hope that this rule will be applied and respected today and in the future, and I shall be personally grateful to delegations if they could also dispense with that customary passage at the beginning of their statements. I now call on the representative of Brazil.

Mr. MACIEL (Brazil): Mr. Chairman, first I should like to thank you for the kind words you have addressed to Ambassador de Souza e Silva, and I shall not fail to convey them to him. As you have said, Mr. de Souza e Silva, the former Chairman of this Committee in 1984, was unable to come to New York this year to participate in our meetings on disarmament and international security, as he has been detained elsewhere. I do not expect that he will be in a position to help us in our current endeavours. This, of course, will deprive the Brazilian delegation of his valuable contribution and it will increase the burden on my shoulders. But I feel relieved to have the company of Minister Sergio Duarte, who is well-known by all members and who also comes from Geneva. He will be doing most of the work of the Brazilian delegation in this Committee, and will be arriving over the weekend.

(Mr. Maciel, Brazil)

On the other hand, the absence of my friend and colleague Mr. Souza e Silva gave me the welcome opportunity, Sir, to nominate you at the first meeting of the Committee, chaired by Ambassador de Piniés, President of the General Assembly. Now that you have been elected to that difficult post, I am aware of my responsibility in having nominated you. However, I am sure you will do a wonderful job. I have known you for a long time, and I have no doubt that you have the skill and ability successfully to perform the task entrusted to you. It is not an easy task, as we all know, but the members of the Committee have given you a demonstration of their confidence, and I would say of their hope, by electing you by acclamation. I am sure that all our colleagues will give you all their assistance, and I can guarantee that my delegation will give you unqualified support in the discharge of your responsibilities. I hope that members of the Committee will especially support your efforts to have the Committee adopt rational working methods. In that respect, I recall that my colleague Mr. Souza e Silva took an initiative last year which I hope may be useful this year.

I also express my most sincere congratulations to Ambassador Carlos Lechuga of Cuba, an old friend of mine, on his election to the post of Vice-Chairman. I am certain that he has the personal and professional qualifications to assist you and us effectively in the difficult work ahead of us.

I also wish to congratulate Mr. Yannis Souliatis, of Greece, who has been elected Rapporteur. He will have a very delicate function to perform, but we have full confidence in his capabilities and his dedication.

As in the past, we shall depend very much on the secretariat. I am sure that had Mr. Souza e Silva been present today he would have been very glad to register his gratitude for the help we received last year from, among others, Mr. Martenson, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Ustinov, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs, and Mr. Kheradi, the

(Mr. Maciel, Brazil)

Committee's Secretary. I can only associate myself with those sentiments of recognition and gratitude.

Mr. Chairman, I am sincerely happy to see you presiding over our deliberations, because I know from our long association how much you are capable of achieving. I am sincerely hopeful that the Committee, meeting during the fortieth session of the General Assembly, may be in a favourable position this time to take a step forward in the field of disarmament and international security. If we can create here an atmosphere of good will and mutual understanding, and if the planned conversations between the big Powers are successful, even at a modest level, our hopes will not have been vain. For a world that has long witnessed disagreement and dangerous confrontations that will be a blessing.

On behalf of all the members of the Committee, I wish you all success, Sir, as our Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the officers of the Committee, as well as on my own behalf, I thank the representative of Brazil for his kind words to the Vice-Chairman, the rapporteur and me. I also thank him for the co-operation he has pledged to extend to the officers and the Committee in their work in the days ahead.

I now call on the representative of Cuba, Ambassador Oscar Oramas Oliva.

Mr. ORAMAS OLIVA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): I cordially congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We are convinced that your qualities as an experienced diplomat guarantee the success of our difficult and complex work.

On behalf of my country, I wish to thank all members for having elected Ambassador Carlos Lechuga Hevia Vice-Chairman of this important Committee. We regard his election as an expression of confidence in our country and its tireless,

(Mr. Oramas Oliva, Cuba)

steadfast efforts to contribute to peace, and we accept it in that spirit. Ambassador Lechuga will work with devotion to secure a successful outcome of the Committee's work, at a time when the world is living in a state of tension, caused by the arms race and the attempts to militarize outer space.

I wish also to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to the Rapporteur.

We again thank all members of the Committee and assure them that Ambassador Lechuga will work tirelessly for the cause of disarmament and peace. Let me also assure you, Mr. Chairman, that he will support you fully and unconditionally in your important work.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank Ambassador Oramas Oliva for the kind words he addressed to me. I look forward to co-operating closely with Ambassador Lechuga, whom I have known for a long time. I am sure I can count on his assistance and co-operation.

I now call on the representative of Greece, our Rapporteur, Mr. Yannis Souliatis.

Mr. SOULIATIS (Greece) (interpretation from French): First, Sir, I sincerely congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Your outstanding diplomatic skills and your competence will ensure the success of our Committee's work. Thus the Committee will this year, as we celebrate the fortieth anniversary of our Organization, achieve positive results in the reduction of weapons and towards achieving disarmament.

I also extend my warmest congratulations to Ambassador Lechuga, of Cuba, who has just been elected Vice-Chairman.

I wish to express my most sincere gratitude to you, Sir, and to all the members of the Committee for the honour you have bestowed on me by electing me

(Mr. Souliatis, Greece)

Rapporteur. My election is not only an honour for me but is especially a tribute to my country, whose tireless efforts for general and complete disarmament are well known.

I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, and all the other members of the Committee of my complete co-operation and dedication - and my enthusiasm - in carrying out the task entrusted to me. I shall do my best to justify the trust placed in me by the Committee by making my contribution, however modest, to the success of our work.

In conclusion, I should like to thank my colleague from Chad for his extremely kind words about me and for the very eloquent way in which he nominated me to be Rapporteur.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Rapporteur for his generous remarks and for his expression of readiness to co-operate with me and the other officers of the Committee. I am certain that I am expressing not only my own view but also that of the Vice-Chairman when I say that we all look forward to close co-operation with him during the current session.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/C.1/40/1 and A/C.1/40/3)

The CHAIRMAN: I draw the attention of representatives to document A/C.1/40/1 dated 20 September 1985 containing the letter dated 20 September 1985 addressed to me by the President of the General Assembly and informing me that the General Committee at its third plenary meeting decided to allocate 27 items to the First Committee for its consideration.

According to established practice, the First Committee begins its work only after the conclusion of the general debate in the plenary meetings. Furthermore, the General Assembly has recommended 6 December as a target date for the conclusion of the work of the Main Committees.

These parameters leave the First Committee with a period extending from 14 October to 6 December 1985, during which the Committee would need to complete the very substantial task ahead of us.

The Committee will have at its disposal a maximum of 76 meetings in which to consider the agenda items before it.

After conducting a series of extensive informal consultations with a number of individual delegations and representatives of the regional groups, I have arrived at the proposed programme of work and time-table as contained in document A/C.1/40/3, which I hope the Committee will be in a position to adopt today.

As indicated in the proposed programme of work, the Committee would first take up the agenda items relating to disarmament, namely, agenda items 48 to 69 and agenda item 145. With respect to these agenda items, my proposal is to devote the period from 14 October to 22 November, or a maximum of 58 meetings, to a general debate, consideration of and action on items 48 to 69 and 145. This period would be divided as follows: from 14 to 25 October the Committee would carry on a general debate on those agenda items. From 28 October to 8 November delegations

(The Chairman)

would have an opportunity to make statements on any specific agenda items, or groups of agenda items, among those comprising the disarmament category. This would, of course, not preclude the right of any delegation to make a statement of a general character during the period devoted to specific statements.

I stress that for those two phases of the Committee's work, delegations will have at their disposal a maximum of 38 meetings.

Representatives will notice that in the programme of work that I have outlined so far, I am proposing that the Committee meet throughout the entire period of the fortieth anniversary of the commemorative proceedings of the General Assembly, except for 24 October, the day on which the commemoration will culminate with a solemn ceremony. Although I am fully aware of the pressure of additional duties and needs to which delegations may be subjected, especially during the period of 21 to 25 October, the heavy workload ahead of us in the First Committee and the time available for its completion does not offer us a more practical or easier alternative. However, I wish to reassure members that the number of meetings incorporated in our work schedule for this period will provide us with some flexibility to make further adjustments if and when this is felt to be necessary. At the same time I wish to point out that it will be my intention to convene meetings of the Committee, including in the period I have just referred to, only when a sufficient number of speakers are inscribed. I believe that as a general rule we should have no less than four speakers for a particular meeting so that we can optimize the utilization of our time and resources.

The deadline for the submission of draft resolutions would be 7 November at 6 p.m. Delegations are strongly encouraged to submit and introduce their draft resolutions as early as possible, even during the period of the general debate, so that statements on specific agenda items may also address the texts already introduced. I invite delegations to submit those draft resolutions that would contain programme budget implications as early as possible in order to meet the

(The Chairman)

mandatory deadline set by the General Assembly for the submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions with financial implications - which is 1 December 1985.

The period from 11 to 22 November would then be devoted to consideration of and action upon draft resolutions on all disarmament agenda items submitted to the Committee. I believe that the time allotted for this phase of our work provides sufficient time for delegations to consider the draft resolutions and to undertake the necessary consultations, so as to ensure that the texts finally adopted reflect the maximum possible degree of consensus.

A very useful voting procedure involving grouping of resolutions by clusters has evolved during the last two years. In view of the generally favourable response accorded to such a procedure, it will be my intention to retain it during this session and in due time I shall be presenting specific proposals on this matter.

After completing its action on all the disarmament items the Committee would then proceed to take up agenda item 70, which deals with the question of Antarctica. We would devote to that agenda item the period from 25 to 29 November - excluding 28 November, which is an official United Nations holiday - a total of eight meetings for the general debate, consideration of and action on the draft resolution or resolutions under that agenda item.

The deadline for submission of draft resolutions under that agenda item would be 26 November at 6 p.m.

Finally, during the week of the First Committee's work from 2 to 6 December, we will deal with the other international security agenda items, namely, item 71 entitled "Strengthening of security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region"; item 72 entitled "Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security"; and item 73 entitled "Implementation of

(The Chairman)

the collective security provisions of the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security".

A total of 10 meetings would thus be available for the general debate, and for consideration of and action on the draft resolutions under those agenda items and I believe, as past experience has demonstrated, that this should again provide adequate time for consultations among delegations before action is taken by the Committee on those items.

The deadline for submission of draft resolutions under international security items would be 4 December at 6 p.m.

(The Chairman)

Thus we would dispose of all the agenda items allocated to the First Committee within the available time.

If I may be permitted to make a final remark with respect to the proposed programme of work and timetable, it is to underline that the requisite degree of flexibility should be maintained in our use of the time and resources available to us, so that we may more effectively utilize such resources with a view to ensuring a successful outcome of our endeavours.

Unless I hear anything to the contrary, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to adopt the proposed programme of work and timetable contained in document A/C.1/40/3.

It was so decided.

Mr. ROCHE (Canada): First, on behalf of the Canadian delegation, I should like to express our warmest congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, along with our best wishes and the assurance of our complete support of your efforts.

I have asked to be allowed to speak to make a comment and ask a question.

First, the programme of work that you have outlined seems to us to be perfectly acceptable and we note your use of the word "flexibility" with respect to certain adjustments that might be made in respect of the debating time, particularly your note that you will allow statements of a general character to be made in the period reserved, more or less, for statements of a specific character. So, we welcome the programme and particularly your use of the word "flexibility" in any adjustments that might have to be made.

We of course support your continuation of the cluster system for voting. We think it has worked well and favour its continuance.

With reference to the last voting days mentioned for consideration of and voting on draft resolutions dealing with items 48-69 and 145, I wonder if your use of the word "flexibility" would apply also to the date 22 November. In other words,

(Mr. Roche, Canada)

my question is whether or not the Secretariat would be in a position, perhaps later, to make a determination that you might want to finish the voting the first day or two of the following week, in which case there might be a little slippage on the time allotted to Antarctica and so on. I would like to ask you to consider whether or not flexibility might also be applied to the last voting day, 22 November.

The CHAIRMAN: I appreciate Ambassador Roche's general support for the proposed programme of work.

In reply to his question, indeed the key word is "flexibility" as far as the dates are concerned for the first and second phases of our debates. As to flexibility with regard to consideration of and action on draft resolutions, I suggest that we shall have to see how things work out. However, we have tried to project carefully the timetable so as to ensure that, while taking into account last year's practice and experience, we will have sufficient time for the submission of and action on draft resolutions - with perhaps flexibility for certain draft resolutions which in the past have always shown a tendency to come last because they will need the agreement of more than one member. Here I am referring to certain draft resolutions which in the past proved to be of that nature.

I should like to say, however, that as a general rule I wish to stick to the dates indicated as far as possible, because, as can be seen, if we have a slippage into the next week, starting on Monday, 25 November, we would indeed have some flexibility but not very much. I hope that my answer is sufficient for the time being.

Mr. BARNETT (Jamaica): We, too, join in congratulating you,

Mr. Chairman, and the other officers of the Committee on your unanimous election.

We did not wish to interrupt the adoption of the programme of work to which we have no objection whatever. We merely wish to ask the Chairman the following question to which we may be able to get an appropriate response: does the Chairman see within his competence and power the ability to monitor the number of draft resolutions that the Committee will have to consider during the course of the session? I pose the question recalling the number of draft resolutions that the Committee has had to consider during the past two sessions and the desire - certainly on the part of my delegation - that we do not go through the same agony this year and in subsequent years. We wonder, therefore, whether the Chairman can exercise some control over the number of draft resolutions submitted for the Committee's consideration.

The CHAIRMAN: The representative of Jamaica has asked whether the Chairman has the competence and power to monitor the number of draft resolutions. As phrased, the question can be answered only in the negative, because it is the sovereign right of all delegations or groups of delegations to submit draft resolutions. However, we take note of the spirit in which he has asked the question, that is, expressing his concern - if I understood him correctly - over the growing number of draft resolutions submitted in the Committee.

(The Chairman)

I should simply like to tell the representative that, as Chairman, I of course consider it my duty to try to smooth the procedures by which our Committee works and that, if I have the opportunity to do so, I will of course also assist in finding out whether we can have certain resolutions merged or combined. To that extent, the Committee Chairman may perhaps play a small role, but I can only repeat that it is up to Committee members, who have the sovereign right to put forward the draft resolutions that they consider important, to bring these draft resolutions to the Committee.

If there are no further comments or questions, I shall consider that the Committee adopts the programme of work and timetable contained in document A/C.1/40/3.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to draw the attention of the Committee to the rules and recommendations set by the General Assembly affecting the work of the Main Committees, particularly those contained in document A/INF/136/Rev.1 and decision 34/401, especially those provisions dealing with the explanations of vote, the right of reply, budgetary and financial questions and the work of the Main Committees, which I intend to apply with the co-operation of all members of the Committee.

In order fully to utilize the time available to the Committee and to avoid the loss of time arising from starting meetings late or ending them early, I shall, again with the co-operation of members of the Committee, convene meetings of the First Committee promptly at 10.30 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. and shall endeavour to close the meetings at 1.00 p.m., and 6.00 p.m., respectively.

In order to give members of the Committee ample opportunity to inscribe their names on the list of speakers, I shall open the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament agenda items as of today. Some delegations have already

(The Chairman)

signified their intention to speak and the Secretariat has taken note of those requests. I urge delegations to inscribe their names on the list of speakers before the Committee begins its substantive work. The list of speakers will be closed on 16 October at 6.00 p.m.

In order to facilitate the task of the officers of the Committee as well as that of the Secretariat, members of the Committee should submit draft resolutions as far in advance as possible so as to provide sufficient time for consultations.

The Secretariat has asked me to request members of the Committee to note that draft resolutions, amendments and co-sponsorships should be given in writing to the Secretariat in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding. Requests for the use of conference rooms for group meetings should also be given in writing to the Secretariat.

It would also be appreciated if delegations would provide the Conference Officers with 20 copies of a statement when a prepared text is to be delivered, for the use of the technical services, in addition to the copies required for distribution to delegations.

Before I conclude my remarks, I think it is necessary that I refer to one other matter. As members of the Committee are all undoubtedly aware, the Committee is privileged to have been the beneficiary of valuable suggestions made by previous Committee Chairmen concerning various aspects of the Committee's organization of work.

As a result of those suggestions, certain innovative measures have been incorporated into the proceedings of the Committee, including those presented by Ambassador Vraalsen of Norway, who was our Chairman at the thirty-eighth session of the Committee.

Members of the Committee will recall that at the concluding meeting of last year's session, the Chairman of the Committee, Ambassador Souza e Silva, circulated

(The Chairman)

a working paper, contained in document A/C.1/39/9, in which he reported on the results of his consultations and presented his views and suggestions concerning a possible rearrangement of the annual agenda of the First Committee. Ambassador Souza e Silva further suggested that the paper be transmitted to capitals with the comments of delegations and that the Committee take up the matter again at this year's session.

As incoming Chairman, I am of course duty bound to follow up on this matter and to undertake the necessary consultations with individual delegations as well as groups of delegations. I have accordingly taken advantage of suitable opportunities to pursue this question, both in Geneva during a recent visit there and here in New York. It is my intention to conduct further informal consultations on the subject and, at an appropriate stage towards the end of the session - or, if warranted, even earlier - to report to the Committee on the outcome of my endeavours.

If no delegation wishes to make any further observations or remarks at this time, I propose to adjourn the meeting. Before doing so, I wish to remind members of the Committee that, as already decided, our next meeting will be held on Monday, 14 October, at 10.30 a.m., at which time the Committee will embark on its substantive work.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.