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FIRST COMMITTEE  
29th meeting  
held on  
Thursday, 10 November 1977  
at 10.30 a.m.  
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 29TH MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HOLLAI (Hungary)  
(Vice-Chairman)  
later: Mr. BOATEN (Ghana)  
(Chairman)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

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Mr. NEAGU (Romania): On behalf of the delegations of Colombia, India, Liberia, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Rwanda, Senegal, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and my own delegation, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution in document A/C.1/32/L.12, entitled "Economic and social consequences of the armaments race and its extremely harmful effects on world peace and security".

I welcome as sponsors of this draft resolution also the delegations of Jordan and Madagascar.

In its preambular part, the draft resolution, recalling the previous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly under this item, expresses concern that despite the repeated requests by the United Nations for the implementation of effective measures aimed at the cessation of the arms race, the accumulation of armaments has continued to increase, absorbing enormous material and human resources and constituting a grave danger for world peace and security. The preamble refers to the fact that the armaments drive is not compatible with the efforts aimed at establishing a new international economic order and that these efforts imply more than ever the resolute action of all States to achieve the cessation of the arms race and the implementation of effective measures of disarmament, particularly in the nuclear field.

(Mr. Neagu, Romania)

It also states that, disarmament being a matter of grave concern to all States, there is a need for all Governments and peoples to be informed about the situation prevailing in the field of the arms race and disarmament.

In the operative part of the draft resolution, the General Assembly is called upon to welcome

"... with satisfaction the updated report of the Secretary-General on the economic and social consequences of the arms race and of military expenditures" and express the hope "that it will help to focus future disarmament negotiations on nuclear disarmament and on the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control".

The third operative paragraph provides for the submission of the report to next year's special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The draft resolution recommends that the conclusions of the report "be taken into account in future disarmament negotiations".

Taking into account the fact that one of the main objectives of the updated report is to inform all States, as well as world public opinion, about the harmful effects of the armaments drive, the draft resolution "requests the Secretary-General ... to give it the widest possible publicity ...", and recommends to all Governments that they do the same.

The last operative paragraph provides for the possibility that a discussion under the item "Economic and social consequences of the armaments race and its extremely harmful effects on world peace and security" take place at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

The significance which all countries attach to the question of the economic and social consequences of the armaments race and the fact that certain assessments and conclusions of the report have already been extensively quoted in the debate in our Committee demonstrate the large consensus which exists in this Committee on this important matter. The long-established practice of the General Assembly to adopt resolutions on the economic and social consequences of the arms race by consensus gives us the courage to express the hope that the draft resolution which I have the honour to introduce today will also be adopted by consensus.

Mr. VASILYEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): My delegation wishes to express its position on draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.6 on the results of the Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof. One cannot but rejoice at the fact that the authors of this draft resolution have included all the officers of the Review Conference, held this year in Geneva.\*

That draft resolution reflects in a suitable manner, both in the preamble and the operative part, the positive results attained by that Conference. It "Welcomes with satisfaction the positive assessment by the Review Conference of the effectiveness of the Treaty ..." and the good-will of the States Parties. It emphasizes the need to obtain adherence by all States to this Treaty, and in particular nuclear weapons States and those possessing other weapons of mass destruction.

The Byelorussian SSR participated both in the preparatory work of the Review Conference on the effectiveness of the Treaty, and in the Conference itself. In the course of the Conference, the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR pronounced itself, as did an overwhelming majority of States participating in that Conference, in favour of the need for the total demilitarization of the sea-bed, the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof.

On examining the present Treaty, which we consider to be a first step towards a total prohibition of the use of the sea-bed for military purposes, we pronounced ourselves in favour of the elaboration as soon as possible of further measures which would lead to this objective. This question in fact is now ready for resolution and should be settled urgently. This view is reflected in operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, which:

"Requests the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament - in consultation with the States Parties to the Treaty and taking into account the proposals made during the Review Conference and any relevant technological developments -

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\* The Chairman took the Chair.

(Mr. Vasilyev, Byelorussian SSR)

to proceed promptly with consideration of further measures in the field of disarmament for the prevention of an arms race in that environment<sup>11</sup>.

It is our hope that the present session of the General Assembly will contribute to a prompt elaboration of practical measures designed to achieve total demilitarization of the sea-bed and the ocean floor. Agreement on further measures for the demilitarization of the sea-bed could be the subject of a new international agreement, or agreements.

(Mr. Vasilyev,  
Byelorussian SSR)

The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR completely supports the draft resolution in document A/C.1/32/L.6 and shares the view expressed here to the effect that this draft resolution could be adopted on the basis of a consensus.

In the present situation there is urgent need for further efforts prohibiting the development, manufacture and accumulation of chemical weapons and the destruction of the stockpiles. This is an urgent matter. It is no accident that in the course of the current session of the General Assembly many delegations have expressed their deep concern at the fact that so far it has been impossible to draw up an international convention on this question.

The draft resolution in A/C.1/32/L.9, which has been under discussion in this Committee on the question of chemical, bacteriological and biological weapons, is in keeping, we believe, with the views expressed by many delegations, including the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR, since it contains an appeal to all States to press for the earliest solution to the question of an effective prohibition on the development, manufacture and accumulation of all types of these weapons, and their destruction, and a request is addressed to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) to work quickly on drawing up such an agreement. Successful completion of the Committee's work in this area was facilitated by the USSR and American understanding on the need to conclude a treaty to this effect. My delegation believes that this resolution, too, could be adopted on the basis of consensus.

Mr. ABDULAH (Trinidad and Tobago): Mr. Chairman, even at this advanced stage of the deliberations of our Committee, my delegation would wish to express its distinct pleasure at seeing you preside over our discussions. We also wish to extend our congratulations to the other officers of the Committee on their unanimous election.

Since my delegation did not participate in the general debate which has just concluded, we would like at this time, before addressing ourselves specifically to several of the draft resolutions which have been submitted, to

(Mr. Abdullah, Trinidad  
and Tobago)

make some brief remarks on the broader question of the interrelationship between disarmament and international security.

My Government is convinced that general and complete disarmament would constitute a major step towards the realization of the universal goal of peace and security of all nations. There can be, in our opinion, no security for any nation or people if the world at large continues to engage in a massive armaments programme, for such programmes only arouse suspicion and fear and do nothing to relax tensions among nations or to promote mutual trust. We have a duty to ourselves as well as to succeeding generations to build a world free from fear and suspicion, free from the spectre of unbridled aggression and free from the prospect of annihilation. My Government is prepared to work together with other like-minded Governments towards this end. We are firmly of the view that such a world can be made a reality provided Governments make a conscious effort to resolve differences which may arise between them through peaceful means and by scrupulously respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of all States. Greater efforts must also be made by Governments to promote contacts among peoples so that a better understanding can be had of our pluralistic world community. Such contacts would build confidence among peoples and result in the establishment and strengthening of better relations between countries. As Governments, we must also set greater store by the collective security mechanisms of the Charter of the United Nations to deter aggression, and urge that an immediate halt be put to the qualitative and quantitative improvement of weapons of mass destruction whose use we consider to be both illegal as well as immoral.

In an ever increasingly interdependent world the violation of the security of one nation threatens the security of every nation, compelling Governments to invest available resources in military deterrents at the expense of other sectors of national life such as health, housing and education. My Government is not interested in acquiring the tools of war on a large scale. We are, however, desirous of obtaining such tools as will ensure for the people of Trinidad and Tobago advances in their economic and social development. As a Member State of this Organization, we remain convinced that

(Mr. Abdulah, Trinidad  
and Tobago)

respect by States for the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter, together with the effective functioning of the principal organs charged with the maintenance of international peace and security, constitute the best and only guarantee each of us, and in particular small States such as ours, can have for achieving a safe and secure world.

I turn now more specifically to several of the resolutions, all of which in their individual way seek to bring about the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. At this session, the delegation of the Soviet Union has proposed the inclusion of an item entitled "The deepening and consolidation of international détente and prevention of the danger of nuclear war". The draft Declaration in document A/C.1/32/L.1, although containing many elements which are already to be found in other international political instruments, does constitute a further attempt to bring about a code of conduct for States in their international relations which, if adhered to, could create a favourable international climate in which to tackle difficult international security issues such as nuclear and conventional disarmament. The draft resolution in document A/C.1/32/L.2, seeks to bring together, in an appeal to States, many of the diverse means being tried by the international community at present in order to reduce and eliminate the threat of nuclear war. We will support those initiatives of the Soviet Union as a reaffirmation of our political will to work for the relaxation of tension and the removal of the threat of nuclear war.

With respect to the Finnish draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/32/L.3 on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency, my delegation is in a position to support the draft, since it appears to strike a proper balance between the need felt by some countries to utilise the atom for peaceful purposes and the danger of a further proliferation of nuclear weapons - a balance which is in the interest of all States. Operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution reaffirms that States accepting effective non-proliferation restraints have a right to enjoy fully the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. My Government at this time does not consider nuclear energy to be an essential element in the economic

(Mr. Abdulah, Trinidad  
and Tobago)

and social development of Trinidad and Tobago, but supports in principle the right of States to utilize such technology as will assist them in achieving economic and social progress in their own countries.

We would now wish to address ourselves in general to the question of nuclear-free zones, and more particularly to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/32/L.10 concerning the implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. My Government is a party to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco) and consequently subscribes to the philosophy underlying the creation of nuclear-free zones, namely, that they constitute the best available means at present for non-nuclear-weapon States to ensure the total absence of nuclear weapons from their territories. This enhances their mutual security and provides a legal basis for obtaining security assurances from the nuclear Powers never to use nuclear weapons against those States. My delegation has in the past sponsored and will continue to sponsor resolutions which have as their aim the strengthening of the nuclear-free status of Latin America. At this session, however, our concern for the nuclear-free status of Africa - a continent struggling to free itself from the last vestiges of colonialism and racism - prompts my delegation to give our full support to the draft resolution concerning the implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. My Government remains deeply disturbed at reports that South Africa has acquired the capacity to produce nuclear weapons. Since a peaceful nuclear explosion is virtually indistinguishable from an explosion for nuclear-weapon purposes, my delegation would wish to endorse the appeals made in operative paragraphs 4 and 5 to the Security Council and to States regarding South African acquisition of nuclear technology and materials.

(Mr. Abdulah, Trinidad and Tobago)

Moreover, as the rest of Africa is at present comprised of non-nuclear weapon States, my delegation wishes to recall here the declarations made by the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the USSR on 17 June 1968, in which those three Powers declared that:

"... aggression with nuclear weapons, or the threat of such aggression, against a non-nuclear weapon State would create a qualitatively new situation in which the nuclear weapon States which are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council would have to act immediately through the Security Council to take measures necessary to counter such aggression or to remove the threat of aggression in accordance with the United Nations Charter ...". (S/PV.1430)

We are hopeful that the Security Council and Member States will recognize their responsibility and act before the objective circumstances contemplated in these declarations become an ominous reality.

My delegation reserves the right to intervene again in the debate on these and other draft resolutions should we consider it necessary.

The CHAIRMAN: There are no more speakers for this morning. Members may recall that, on my proposal, the Committee decided yesterday to put to the vote the draft resolutions in documents A/C.1/32/L.6 and L.9, under items 51 and 39 respectively. As no member wishes to speak in explanation of vote before the vote, we shall now take a decision.

I understand that the Committee wishes to adopt draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.6 by consensus. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that that is the wish of the Committee.

Draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.6 was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes.

Mr. STAUB (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): In explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.6, the Chilean delegation wishes to place on record its satisfaction that the Conference to review the effectiveness of the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof has unequivocally confirmed the commitment entered into in part V to pursue in good faith the negotiations on further disarmament measures for the prevention of an arms race on the sea-bed and the ocean floor and in the subsoil thereof.

We are also pleased to note that there have been no reported cases of possible violations of the Treaty during the five years in which it has been in force. My delegation continues to believe that the sea-bed and ocean floor beyond the limits of national jurisdiction are reserved for peaceful uses by all States, as provided for in resolution 2749 (XXV).

Likewise, article 141 of the consolidated text prepared by the Law of the Sea Conference reiterates that concept, indicating that the zone is open for exclusively peaceful uses by States. We joined in the consensus as an expression of our support for what we hope will be fruitful negotiations that will once and for all prevent an extension of the arms race to the sea-bed and ocean floor.

Mr. de LAIGLESIA (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): As regards the text of draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.6, which has just been adopted by consensus, I would venture to point out that, had there been a vote, my country would have abstained, because Spain is not a party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of Belgium, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.9.

Mr. ELLIOTT (Belgium): My delegation, speaking on behalf of the nine member States of the European Community, would like to make a few remarks on the subject of chemical weapons.

For many years the international community has been stressing the importance of the conclusion of a treaty banning the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. Numerous resolutions have been adopted on this subject by the Assembly. In our view, the purpose of such a treaty would be the strengthening of the existing ban on the use of chemical

(Mr. Elliott, Belgium)

weapons, contained in the Geneva Protocol of 1925, so as to remove any remaining possibility of chemical warfare. Such a ban would considerably strengthen international security and mutual confidence among States.

I shall not go into too much detail today, but it is clear that the subject is very complicated. This is demonstrated by several concrete proposals - most recently by the British draft treaty - and many working documents on the chemical weapons question that have already been presented.

All the proposals and discussions to date have been very helpful in defining areas of agreement and disagreement and have helped considerably to bring views closer together.

It is indeed clear that on many issues views are no longer very far apart. Negotiations now in progress between the Soviet Union and the United States on a possible joint initiative further strengthen the prospect for a multilateral agreement in the not too distant future. The nine members of the European Community strongly hope that the bilateral talks will soon bear fruit, giving the international community the opportunity to engage in negotiations leading to a generally acceptable agreement. It is our opinion, in view of the complexity of the problems involved, that a complete treaty text is unlikely to be completely worked out before the special session on disarmament. However, it is important that sufficient progress should be achieved in the negotiations so that the outline of the future treaty can be clearly seen.

The nine members of the European Community are of the opinion that a comprehensive ban can now be achieved, comprehensive in scope with respect both to the agents and to the activities to be prohibited. As a minimum, all lethal agents, including binary systems and incapacitants, would have to be covered. With regard to activities, the agreement should include a ban on the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons, as well as providing for the complete destruction of all stockpiles within a time frame to be determined mainly by technical feasibility. It would also prohibit the production and stockpiling of chemical munitions.

(Mr. Elliott, Belgium)

The agreement, however, should not hinder in any way, indeed it should even encourage, protection measures against chemical warfare. Although certainly a number of problems have not yet been solved, we believe that the basis for an agreement on the scope of a treaty exists.

Large differences of opinion still exist on the problems of verifying the implementation of a chemical weapons ban. Fortunately, even on this point there has been some progress in recent years, particularly with regard to the verification of the destruction of stockpiles. Our countries are of the opinion that disarmament measures dealing with an important weapon system must be adequately verified. We feel that otherwise such an accord could not give the necessary assurance to other States that its provisions were being faithfully observed and thus would not sufficiently strengthen international security and confidence.

On the chemical weapon issue, adequate verification of the destruction of stockpiles is, of course, very important. It is, however, not the only activity which must be internationally verified. In our view, it would be somewhat illogical to verify the destruction of old and perhaps unusable chemical weapon stocks while at the same time no adequate verification would exist with respect to the production of new and highly toxic nerve agents. Verification based only on national means is in our opinion clearly not sufficient.

From what I have already said, it will be clear that the nine members of the European Community are hopeful that an agreement can be achieved in the relatively near future to ban chemical weapons - and this to protect mankind from those particular weapons of mass destruction. We pledge our fullest co-operation to achieve that goal. In this connexion, therefore, it is a pleasure for our nine countries to support draft resolution

A/C.1/32/L.9.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has before it the draft resolution in document A/C.1/32/L.9. If I hear no objections I shall take it that the Committee wishes to adopt it by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.9 was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call on representatives who wish to explain their votes.

Mr. YANG (China) (interpretation from Chinese): The Chinese delegation wishes to state that it dissociates itself from the adoption by consensus of draft resolutions A/C.1/32/L.6 and A/C.1/32/L.9. We would request that this statement be included in the verbatim records.

Mr. MISTRAL (France) (interpretation from French): The position of my Government on the substance of draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.9 was clearly set forth in the statement of the representative of Belgium on behalf of the nine member countries of the European Economic Community. Our observations are addressed to a procedural point, specifically to operative paragraph 2 of this draft resolution.

It ought to be perfectly clear that our approval of this draft resolution on the prohibition of chemical weapons will not connote any change on our part towards the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, its methods and its procedures. The reservations of the French Government are well known; they have been stated at length, and it is not my delegation's intention to reiterate them. I would add that the statement I have just made is general in scope, that it applies and will apply in all similar instances, and that our possible acquiescence in any draft resolution is understood to exclude any reference to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

Mr. GARBA (Niger) (interpretation from French): I should like to express the satisfaction of my delegation at least at seeing draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.9 adopted by consensus. However, we should have liked to see, as was the case last year, a paragraph reaffirming the objective of reaching early agreement on an effective ban on the development, manufacture and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and their elimination from the arsenals of all States. We think that such a provision would strengthen the text, by whose terms we hope all peace-loving and freedom-loving States will in future be guided.

The CHAIRMAN: I call now on the representative of Nigeria, who wishes to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.14.

Mr. ADENIJI (Nigeria): In order to advance our work, this morning I shall attempt to introduce, on behalf of the co-sponsors, the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/32/L.14. I am doing so during the course of this Committee's work because it seems to us that the draft resolution is so uncomplicated and straightforward that it should not present much difficulty to my delegation; indeed, I am tempted even to say that the resolution is so straightforward that it requires no introduction. It is entitled "Effective measures to implement the purposes and objectives of the Disarmament Decade".

In effect, the co-sponsors, bearing in mind the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly, have avoided the introduction of any proposals which at this stage may lead to controversy. The draft resolution is merely a logical sequel to the report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) on the action it took on General Assembly resolution 31/68 adopted last year on the same subject, a resolution which in part called on the CCD to adopt a comprehensive disarmament programme. Since the CCD has taken only the first tentative steps towards the fulfilment of that assignment, it seems quite logical to the co-sponsors that the General Assembly should request the CCD to carry on with that unfinished task.

In our view, the draft resolution does not present any conflict between the continuation of the work of the CCD on a comprehensive programme for disarmament on the one hand and, on the other, the proposed agenda item on a programme of action suggested for the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We envisage - and I think that this is now gaining wide acceptance - that the programme of action to be adopted by the special session of the General Assembly if it is to be realistic will be limited, whereas the comprehensive programme for disarmament, as its very title implies, should be all-embracing and general, leading progressively to the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament.

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

While, therefore, the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly will be occupied in elaborating a programme of priorities, the CCD should continue to concern itself with the problem of drawing up the long-term comprehensive programme. In view of the possibility that the work in drawing up a comprehensive programme within the CCD will not be completed before the start of the special session of the General Assembly, provision has been made, in the draft resolution which I am introducing, for the CCD to submit a progress report to that session and, by implication, for the CCD to carry on with its work on that programme even after the special session has been held. Provision has also been made for the report to be submitted to the thirty-third session of the General Assembly, and we hope that that will be done and that, in accordance with our proposal, the General Assembly will retain on its agenda an item entitled "Effective measures to implement the purposes and objectives of the Disarmament Decade".

The preamble to the draft resolution merely reiterates positions taken in the General Assembly - which in the past have indicated a certain disappointment that the purposes and objectives of the Disarmament Decade have not been realized and a certain concern at the continued waste of resources on armaments, with the consequent detrimental effect which that has had on international security and the attainment of the objectives of the new international economic order.

I believe, therefore, that it should be possible for the Committee to adopt this draft resolution by consensus, since, as I said at the beginning of my statement, it really contains no element which could create a problem for any delegation.

May I also say that the decision within the CCD to set up an Ad Hoc Working Group to elaborate the comprehensive programme which is referred to in operative paragraph 1 of the resolution was a decision taken by consensus within the CCD, therefore, it can also be presumed that it is the intention of the members of the CCD that that body should continue its work on the subject. Finally, I should like to add that the delegations of Sweden and of Trinidad and Tobago wish to have the names of their countries added to the list of co-sponsors of the draft resolution.

The PRESIDENT: It may be recalled that yesterday the representative of Mexico requested certain information with regard to the documentation relating to disarmament items. This morning, the Secretariat will give the required information, and I call on Mr. Corradini, Director and Deputy to the Assistant Secretary-General, Centre for Disarmament, to do so.

Mr. CORRADINI (Director and Deputy to the Assistant Secretary-General, Centre for Disarmament): With reference to the question raised yesterday at the 28th meeting of the Committee by the representative of Mexico, I have the honour to state the following.

The three working papers for the Preparatory Committee of the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament, referred to by the representative of Mexico, are in the final stages of preparation. The Secretariat regrets that there has been some delay in the circulation of these documents. Nevertheless, the Secretariat would like to inform the Committee that every possible effort is being made to speed up the finalization and submission of the papers.

First, the paper entitled "A synthesis of the arguments adduced for and against each of the four proposals for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones that have been included in the General Assembly's agenda (Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and the South Pacific) and for and against the proposal for the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, including a subject index and a country index", has already been completed and is being processed for distribution.

Secondly, the paper entitled "A descriptive report on the human and material resources available to the United Nations Secretariat for its work on disarmament and on the organization of that work", is in an advanced stage of preparation. In this connexion, the Secretariat has taken due note of the comments made by the representative of Mexico that because of its nature this should have been the easiest paper to prepare. The Secretariat would just like to mention on this subject that it has taken a long time to arrive at a precise definition of the detailed functions of the newly established United Nations Centre for Disarmament in accordance with the existing administrative regulations and procedures. This process of definition has just been completed and the paper to be submitted will duly reflect the present situation.

As regards the third paper in question, entitled "A list of disarmament and related proposals officially submitted to the United Nations", it should be mentioned that the compilation of the paper was found to require extensive research and drafting because it covers the whole history of the initiatives taken within the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Nevertheless, this paper also is in the final stage.

(Mr. Corradini)

In conclusion, the Secretariat wishes to assure the Committee that every effort is being made to have the three working papers circulated early next week.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank Mr. Corradini for his statement. I hope that members have taken note of his explanation.

Mr. AMERASINGHE (Sri Lanka): I thought that I would assist the work of this Committee by taking advantage of the time that is available this morning to introduce on behalf of its sponsors the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/32/L.11 of 7 November 1977 on the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

This draft resolution has attracted a large number of sponsors from a very wide cross-section of the membership of this Organization.

Initiatives for a special session devoted exclusively to the subject of disarmament go back as far as 1961, to the first summit conference of non-aligned countries held in Belgrade. This special session is a matter of great importance and concerns the entire international community. The fact that it is of such widespread concern was clearly demonstrated by the interest shown in the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session, an interest that came from Member States belonging to all geographical regions, political groups and interests.

The special session has also a particular significance in that it seeks to dispel the notion that disarmament is a sort of a mystery, something esoteric which only a very few privileged individuals are competent to consider and discuss and take decisions on, and that it is beyond the comprehension of smaller nations like mine. It is true that our contribution to disarmament is almost infinitesimal because we have no arms to give up, but we have a special interest in the work of the Disarmament Committee because of the effects that disarmament would have not only on world peace but on the general economic progress and well-being of the entire world.

The demand for a special session was also the result of the disenchantment of the vast majority of Members of this Organization with regard to the lack of progress made by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

(Mr. Amerasinghe, Sri Lanka)

It is impressive to note that, although this Conference of the Committee on Disarmament has been in existence for more than 20 years, in the draft resolution that was just introduced by the representative of Nigeria I found a very interesting operative paragraph:

"Takes note of the decision of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to set up an Ad Hoc Working Group to elaborate a comprehensive programme for disarmament". (A/C.1/32/L.14)

My first reaction to that was, what were they doing all these 20 years and more, now that they have set up an Ad Hoc Working Group to elaborate a comprehensive programme for disarmament? In other words, what they were doing was merely nibbling at the problem.

We hope that this special session will change the direction that disarmament negotiations and efforts have been taking in the past.

We are all aware of the advantage that can be derived from holding special sessions devoted exclusively to special subjects. I have in mind the sixth special session, which gave a new impetus to international economic co-operation and to the solution of world economic problems. I have every confidence that the special session on disarmament will also have a similar result in creating a new awakening among us in regard to the problems of disarmament and giving a new impetus to our efforts in that field.

I do not wish in any way to minimize the difficulties before the special session, but the work that has been put in by the Preparatory Committee gives room for considerable hope that through major co-operation, understanding, good will and the demonstration of a spirit of compromise we will succeed in arriving at a satisfactory conclusion during that special session.

In this context I should like to pay a warm tribute to the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the special session, Ambassador Carlos Ortiz de Rozas, the representative of Argentina. All those of us who have known Ambassador Carlos Ortiz de Rozas during his years at the United Nations need not be at all surprised at the manner in which he guided the work of the Preparatory Committee and we need have no doubts or misgivings regarding the success of that Committee. He presided over its work with the patience, understanding, *good sense and incomparable diplomatic skill* that have always marked him.

(Mr. Amerasinghe, Sri Lanka)

The report of the Preparatory Committee has already been submitted by Ambassador de Rozas, and even a perfunctory examination of it will show that a great deal has been achieved over a wide range of complex issues, particularly in regard to procedural matters.

(Mr. Amerasinghe, Sri Lanka)

The draft resolution before us has no element of controversy in it, and I hope it will be adopted unanimously by this Committee. I am confident that when the Preparatory Committee resumes its work at its next session on 24 January 1978 the spirit of compromise, understanding and goodwill that has marked its deliberations in the past will continue to be demonstrated. I commend this draft resolution to the Committee for its acceptance.

Mr. MARIN (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Mexico wishes to place on record its appreciation for the speed with which the Secretariat has replied to the question put yesterday, and we hope that we shall have the working documents referred to at the beginning of next week as we have just been promised.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to announce that Upper Volta is now a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.10 and Canada, the Ivory Coast, Senegal and the United Republic of Cameroon are now co-sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.11.

Mr. HOUNGAVOU (Benin) (interpretation from French): I wish to point out that my country has become a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.12.

The CHAIRMAN: That will be noted. The Ivory Coast, Sweden, the United Republic of Cameroon and Benin are now co-sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.12, and Sweden is now a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.14.

As there are no speakers for this afternoon's meeting, it will be cancelled. It is my intention to put to the vote tomorrow morning draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.12 under agenda item 33 and draft resolution A/C.1/32/L.14 under agenda item 42.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.