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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 10 December 1973, at 3 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. BORCH

(Denmark)

Rapporteur:

Mr. de SOTO

(Peru)

- Implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security /39/ (continued)
- International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space /30/ (continued)
- Preparation of an international convention on principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting /31/ (continued)
- Programme of work

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73-71316/A

AGENDA ITEM 39 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY (A/C.1/L.670)

The CHAIRMAN: The result of the vote this morning shows that only 66 members participated in it, and it appears that there were no members in the room who did not participate in the vote. Rule 110 provides that

"... The presence of a majority of the members shall be required for any decision to be taken".

Thus, the quorum envisaged in rule 110 was not present when we voted this morning. I therefore suggest that we now repeat the vote on the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.670.

As there appear to be no objections, I declare that we are at the voting stage in accordance with rule 130 of the rules of procedure. I shall now call on any representatives who wish to explain their votes before the voting.

Mr. van der KLAUW (Netherlands): My delegation is second to none in realizing the necessity and importance of strengthening international security. We are fully aware that international security and peace are still threatened and endangered in many places in the world. The Netherlands therefore took an active part in formulating the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security, adopted at the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly, which contains all the conditions necessary for the maintenance of peace and security. Since the twenty-fifth session, however, the General Assembly has annually adopted resolutions with regard to the implementation of the Declaration. Those resolutions have consistently emphasized certain principles mentioned in the Declaration and have failed to mention others that are no less important. In the view of my delegation, those resolutions do not respect the careful balance arrived at in the Declaration itself and, therefore, do not serve the maintenance of international peace and security. Consequently, as on previous occasions, my delegation will abstain in the vote on the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.670.

The CHAIRMAN: I now put to the vote again the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.670.

The draft resolution was adopted by 69 votes to 2, with 17 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN: It appears that no representatives wish to explain their votes after the voting. It is, of course, understood that all the explanations of vote made this morning either before or after we voted on this same draft resolution apply to the vote we have just taken and will be fully reflected in the verbatim record of this morning's meeting.

We have thus concluded the voting on the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.670.

AGENDA ITEMS 30 and 31 (continued)

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (A/C.1/L.669, L.671)
PREPARATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE USE BY
STATES OF ARTIFICIAL EARTH SATELLITES FOR DIRECT TELEVISION BROADCASTING
(A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1, L.671)

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of Austria to introduce the amendments that have been made in the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.669. The revised text is now before the Committee in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1.

Mr. CHRISTIANI (Austria): I should like briefly to inform the Committee about those paragraphs in the draft resolution that have been revised.

First of all, as can be seen, six additional delegations -- the Federal Republic of Germany, Indonesia, Jamaica, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan -- have joined in sponsoring the text.

Now, as far as the preamble is concerned, there are two changes: we have a new third preambular paragraph, which was put in at the request and suggestion of the delegation of Poland; and we have replaced the paragraph that was formerly the seventh preambular paragraph by a new paragraph, which will be found on page 2 of document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1 -- it begins with the words "Bearing in mind". This change in the seventh preambular paragraph is closely related to the change in operative paragraph 28. As you indicated this morning, Mr. Chairman, consultations have been going on during the past few days between the co-sponsors, on the one hand, and a number of interested delegations, on the other, on the question of the enlargement of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I am happy to report that complete agreement was reached, and this agreement is reflected in operative paragraph 28 and in the new paragraph that is now the eighth paragraph of the preamble.

May I express the hope of the co-sponsors that the revised draft will command general support and be adopted by consensus.

The CHAIRMAN: I would draw the attention of members of the Committee to document A/C.1/L.671, "Preparation of an international convention on principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcast: statement by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 155 of the rules of procedure". In the third line of paragraph 2(b), "Training workshop, \$34,000", the Committee is requested to delete the words "or Canada".

Mr. KUSUMASMORO (Indonesia): As a co-sponsor of the draft resolution now before us, Indonesia would not ordinarily have asked for the floor in order to express its views on any of its particular aspects.

At this time, however, my delegation would like to comment on one provision of the proposed amended version of operative paragraph 28. It is the hope of the Indonesian delegation that the President of the General Assembly and the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space will act in the most expeditious manner possible in conducting their consultations with regional groups and in designating the additional members who are to serve on the Committee.

Although the section of the amended operative paragraph concerning these appointments stipulates that they are to be made not later than 15 May 1974, an earlier action on this question would undoubtedly do much to facilitate the work of the Committee as well as the preparation for the submission of its report to the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly. If the Committee is to undertake such important initiatives as the extension of remote sensing activities, the importance of which several speakers have emphasized during the course of our discussion, it will be best if those actions can be taken in the most expeditious manner possible. This will be contingent upon the speedy appointment of new States to the Committee. It is for these reasons that my delegation urges that the designation of the additional members take place as soon as the necessary consultations are completed.

Mr. PALACIOS TREVINO (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): With regard to the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1, my delegation would like to make the following clarification. In the English text of operative paragraph 5 the phrase "as a matter of highest priority" appears, whereas in operative paragraph 6, in the second line, the phrase "as a matter of high priority" is used. In the Spanish text, both these phrases are translated with the same words, although it is obvious that "highest priority" is not the same as "high priority". I would therefore ask the Secretariat to make the necessary correction in the Spanish text in order to have it conform with the English text, so that the phrase "as a matter of highest priority" in operative paragraph 5 is translated by "come materia de la más alta prioridad" or some similar phrase and, the phrase "as a matter of high priority" in operative paragraph 6 by "come materia de suma prioridad" or its equivalent.

The CHAIRMAN: I take it that the Secretariat will act upon the request made by the representative of Mexico.

Mr. REBAGLIATI (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): I shall be very brief. First of all, I should like to congratulate the co-sponsors of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.669 and also those that have become sponsors of the revised version. We understand full well the effort that has been made and we are happy that in this way a solution has been found which will facilitate the addition of new members, taking into account the principle of equitable geographic distribution and the need to bring into the Committee developing countries which have joined the Organization since 1961.

As the representative of Indonesia said, we would also like to express our hope that the question of the designation of the nine additional members will be resolved as soon as possible. We should like to draw attention to the fact that the first meeting of a subsidiary body of the Committee on Outer Space is scheduled for 11 February 1974. My delegation considers that an ideal goal for the designation of these nine members to be completed would be a date prior to that which I have just mentioned so that they would be able to participate in all the meetings that the Outer Space Committee and its subsidiary bodies may hold in the coming year.

We do not in any way wish to limit our support for the draft resolution with the comments we have made: on the contrary, we wish to express our support for the entire draft resolution. We recognize its merits and the compromises that have been reached, and we wish once more to express the hope given to us by the fruitful work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

Mrs. JOKA-BANGURA (Sierra Leone): My delegation would like to make brief comments on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1.

I should like to congratulate the authors of what can be rightly described both as an outward-looking and forward-looking draft resolution. This draft resolution has taken into account the various reports of the subsidiary organs of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

We share the concern expressed in operative paragraph 2 for the need for States to give early consideration to ratifying or acceding to the necessary international agreements connected with the exploration and use of outer space.

We appreciate the efforts made so far by the Legal Sub-Committee in connexion with the draft treaty on the moon and express the hope that greater progress will be made in the coming year and that the draft convention on registration will be completed. We are confident that much progress will also be made by the Legal Sub-Committee in elaborating the principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting and on the question of the legal implications of earth resources survey by remote sensing satellites.

In operative paragraph 9 special reference is made to the role and functions of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. My delegation believes that it will be appropriate here to pay a special tribute to the United Kingdom delegation, which has presented a working paper outlining the future role and functions of the Sub-Committee to act as a focal point for the review and co-ordination of the United Nations programme on space applications, to review the work of subsidiary working groups -- for example, the United Nations Working Group on Remote Sensing of the Earth by Satellite -- to identify areas with regard to the scientific and technical aspects of the peaceful uses of outer space and of space technology which are of special interest to Members, particularly the developing countries, in order that these areas may be given more detailed consideration and, lastly, to assist the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in the study of measures for the promotion of international co-operation in outer space activities affected by scientific and technical developments. We believe that this is a good reason for the continuation of the work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee.

(Mr. Joka-Bangura, Sierra Leone)

My delegation is pleased to note the inclusion of operative paragraphs 10 to 12 which refer to the questionnaire on remote sensing and hopes that Member States will respond promptly so as to enhance the work of the task force which will be responsible for identifying and reporting on the alternatives for the dissemination and optimum utilization of environmental and resources data. It is my delegation's hope that the work of the task force will not only involve all States in the question of the peaceful uses of outer space but also awaken the interest of developing and non-space Powers to the benefits of space application. This success can be brought about only by the active co-operation of all concerned.

Let me comment briefly on the amended operative paragraph 28 regarding the enlargement of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

(Mrs. Joka-Bangura, Sierra Leone)

My delegation believes that a larger representation of developing countries on the Committee is necessary if the benefits of space applications and space exploration are to be shared by them. However, my delegation does not advocate that proportional geographical representation should be applied to a Committee which is mainly concerned with practical matters. We believe that all States actively engaged in space research and application must be represented on the Committee irrespective of the principle of geographical representation because their services and their experiences and contribution to the work of the Committee year after year are indispensable.

This is why my delegation regrets that sufficient time has not been given for further consultation within the Committee and probable formulation of guidelines for representation on the Committee. My delegation would have favoured a process of rotational representation on a specified basis probably by the non-space Powers so that all would have an opportunity of participation in the work of the Committee. We should also have liked to see a permanent representation on the Committee of those Members whose contribution to the work of the Committee are invaluable and indispensable. My delegation wishes that more time had been given to the consideration of the question of enlargement after the idea had been accepted. However, we will go along with the decision that has now been taken.

As my delegation had referred earlier to this draft resolution as comprehensive and forward looking, it is our hope that it will receive the support of all the members of this Committee. It is in this spirit that my delegation will be honoured to be included among the co-sponsors.

Mr. CHAKRAVARTY (India): My delegation would like to express its views regarding the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1. This draft resolution was formulated after considerable discussions and negotiations with those members of the Outer Space Committee, that indicated an interest in this matter. I do not wish, therefore, to deal with the contents of each paragraph of this rather long draft resolution consisting of some 30 paragraphs.

(Mr. Chakravarty, India)

I should, however, like to express my views on two specific paragraphs in this respect. Operative paragraph 6 recommends that the Legal Sub-Committee should consider at its next session, as a matter of priority, the question of elaborating principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting, taking due account of the interdisciplinary character of the subject and of the work of the Working Group on Direct Broadcast Satellites. When the Legal Sub-Committee takes into account the interdisciplinary character of the subject, my delegation hopes that it will also take into account the technical provisions and the co-ordination procedures as laid down by the International Telecommunications Union. The International Telecommunications Union alone is the competent body at present to consider and to decide on possible interference potential of any new space service to an existing space service or a terrestrial service. The question of spillover, technical constraints and the co-ordination procedures for ensuring international agreement on related matters would, I presume, be considered before bringing up any legal constraints.

Regarding operative paragraph 7, we feel that the Legal Sub-Committee should have been asked to formulate a declaration of basic principles for the operation of earth satellites and not confine itself only to giving its views on legal implications of earth resources survey by remote sensing satellites.

The present draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1 has been arrived at after prolonged and patient negotiations with which my delegation was also associated. We support this draft resolution and will vote in favour of it if it is put to a vote.

The CHAIRMAN: No other representative wishes to speak on the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1.

(The Chairman)

May I remind members of the Committee that the representative of Sierra Leone, in her statement, asked to be included as a co-sponsor of this draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1 and advise them also that the delegation of Sudan has requested me to announce that Sudan too has become a co-sponsor.

I take it that the Committee is ready to proceed to a vote on the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1, and accordingly I announce the beginning of the vote on the draft resolution, in accordance with rule 130.

I shall call now on those representatives who wish to explain their votes before the vote.

Mr. GH AUS (Afghanistan): The delegation of Afghanistan will vote in favour of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1. My delegation wishes to avail itself of this opportunity to welcome the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and notes with satisfaction the progress achieved by that body and its Sub-Committees in discharging their responsibilities with regard to various tasks entrusted to them. Taking into consideration the extreme complexities of the subjects dealt with by the Committee and its Sub-Committees, the progress achieved has been indeed quite heartening.

As has been noted in operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, the Legal Sub-Committee and the Committee itself were able to take significant steps towards the completion of the draft treaty relating to the moon and the draft convention on the registration of objects launched into space. We hope that these draft documents can be completed as soon as possible and can be submitted to the General Assembly at its forthcoming session.

I wish to state that my delegation believes that the draft treaty relating to the moon should apply to other celestial bodies until such time as other specific treaties concerning them directly are elaborated and enforced.

The legal régime concerning the natural resources of the moon should be based on the accepted principle that those resources constitute the common heritage of mankind and that their exploitation should be undertaken for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of mankind as a whole.

(Mr. Ghaus, Afghanistan)

We are in agreement with many other delegations that the practical uses of space science and technology for the development of the developing countries is constantly growing. International co-operation with regard to the application of space technology to the development needs of the developing countries should be further promoted. The accomplishments of science and technology in this new field of human endeavour should be shared with the developing countries in such a way as to enable them to take advantage of these achievements for accelerating their social and economic development.

(Mr. Ghaus, Afghanistan)

The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee of the Outer Space Committee can play a useful role in co-ordinating these efforts and in channelling the practical applications of space technology to the developing countries. We hope that the Legal Sub-Committee can at its next session complete the elaboration of the principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting, an important subject which was included last year in the agenda of the General Assembly on the initiative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The use of artificial satellites for direct television broadcasting holds promising possibilities for using outer space science and technology to promote friendly relations among nations. In the years to come, the exchange of cultural and educational values through this media will undoubtedly enhance understanding among peoples. In elaborating the principles that will regulate the use of artificial satellites for direct television broadcasting, it is necessary that due consideration should be given to the sovereign rights of Member States and to the principle of freedom of the flow of information and ideas in conformity with international law and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The work of the Outer Space Committee should be increasingly geared towards transferring the benefits of space science and technology to the developing countries. It is therefore important that the Outer Space Committee be enlarged and that a greater number of developing countries be associated with its work. We are happy that operative paragraph 28 of the draft resolution now under consideration has been revised along these lines.

Should a separate vote be taken on operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1, my delegation, consistent with the position it adopted last year in this regard, will abstain from voting on it because, in our view, the Legal Sub-Committee should have been requested to consider, as a matter of high priority, principles governing the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting with a view to concluding a draft convention on the subject instead of an agreement or agreements as it presently appears in the document before us.

Mr. YANGO (Philippines): My delegation wishes to explain briefly its support of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1. This draft resolution shows the status of the work being undertaken by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in promoting international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. It establishes priorities for the organization of work of the Committee and indicates the problem areas with respect to its future endeavours. It is an omnibus draft resolution of even greater scope than those of previous years, which my delegation had consistently supported.

My delegation wishes to acknowledge its appreciation to all the co-sponsors of the draft resolution, and particularly to the delegation of Austria, for the inclusion of operative paragraph 26, reiterating the General Assembly's request to the World Meteorological Organization to pursue actively the implementation of its tropical cyclone project, while looking forward to its report thereon in accordance with resolution 2914 (XXVII), concerning international action for the mitigation of the harmful effects of storms. It will be recalled that General Assembly resolution 2914 (XXVII), upon the initiative of the Philippines last year, was adopted unanimously by the General Assembly. The Typhoon Committee of the World Meteorological Organization and the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East is based in Manila, and international action for the mitigation of the harmful effects of storms is a continuing concern of my country. My delegation is appreciative of and gratified by the efforts of WMO in this connexion and it is our hope that WMO will further intensify its endeavours and come up with a report on its tropical cyclone project for the consideration of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the General Assembly at their sessions next year.

With respect to the increase in the membership of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, my delegation is in favour of an appropriate increase based on the principle of equitable geographical distribution, which has been widely supported in the general debate. This increase will provide an opportunity particularly to the developing countries to serve in the Committee and contribute to its work. My delegation is prepared to co-operate in this regard.

The CHAIRMAN: There are no further names inscribed on my list of representatives wishing to explain their votes before the vote. I therefore propose that the Committee proceed to vote on the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1. A separate vote has been requested on operative paragraph 28.

Paragraph 28 was adopted by 77 votes to 9, with 2 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of Madagascar on a point of clarification.

Mr. RASOLONDRAIBE (Madagascar): The French text of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1 contains two operative paragraphs 28. My delegation voted on the second operative paragraph 28, which relates to increasing the membership of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and not on the other paragraph.

The CHAIRMAN: The paragraph that the members of the Committee just adopted is the operative paragraph 28 which reads:

"Decides to enlarge the membership of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and requests the President of the General Assembly ..." and so forth.

We shall now vote on the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1 as a whole.

The draft resolution as a whole was adopted by 83 votes to none, with 10 abstentions.

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

Mr. S. N. SMIRNOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): In connexion with the adoption of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1, the Soviet delegation would like to give the following explanation of vote.

The Soviet delegation adheres to the view that a solution of the problem of expanding any organ of the United Nations requires the most attentive study. As appears from the report of the Outer Space Committee, this question was not studied by the Committee itself, and divergent views were expressed in the Committee during the discussion of this question. The Committee did not present any agreed recommendation on this matter to the General Assembly.

A number of delegations in the course of the discussion of this question in the Outer Space Committee and in the course of the preparation of the Committee's report indicated that the Outer Space Committee itself should receive instructions to discuss this question and find appropriate ways and means of resolving it satisfactorily. Therefore the Soviet delegation considered it correct and sensible to adopt the approach of the co-sponsors to this question as reflected in paragraph 28 of document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1. This paragraph contains an instruction to the Outer Space Committee to carry out a study of the question and to formulate concrete proposals. In the view of the Soviet delegation, the question of expanding the Outer Space Committee could be considered with greater advantage at the next session of the General Assembly on the basis of a well-thought-out and comprehensive discussion of recommendations in the Outer Space Committee itself.

The Soviet delegation in principle has no objection to a certain expansion of the Outer Space Committee. However it was unable to agree with the unjustified haste in attempting to resolve this question at this session of the General Assembly. Therefore the Soviet delegation voted against paragraph 28 of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1 and was obliged to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution as a whole.

Mrs. BORODOWSKY (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Cuba recognizes the very laudable efforts made by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. However, we note with some regret that the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1 shows that the Committee has not as yet prepared the principles that are to govern the use by States of artificial earth satellites for direct television broadcasting, despite the fact that resolution 2966 (XXVII) -- of which my country was a co-sponsor -- was adopted at the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly. That resolution proposed that as soon as possible a study should be made of this matter in that Committee, which would also base itself on the draft convention submitted by the Soviet Union at the last session. It was for that reason and because we consider that this step was amply debated that my delegation was forced to abstain on this draft resolution.

Mr. ROSE (German Democratic Republic): My delegation abstained from voting on paragraph 28 of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/L.669/Rev.1 and on the draft resolution as a whole. I wish to explain that my delegation is very much in favour of the enlargement of the Committee, which we think is necessary for the continuation of the fruitful work of that body, but precisely because of our deep interest in the further improvement of the activities of the Committee, we feel that an examination of the question by the Committee itself should take place. That is why we should have preferred a decision which envisaged such an examination of this question and a report by the Committee to the next session of the General Assembly. Paragraph 28 as it reads now, does not in our view, fully meet that necessity.

I would repeat what I said some days ago in this Committee, that my delegation supports all the tasks laid down in the resolution as far as the Outer Space Committee is concerned and I would once again declare our readiness to participate actively in the work of the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Since there are no further explanations of vote, I declare that the Committee has now concluded its deliberations on agenda items 30 and 31.

AGENDA ITEM 39 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY (A/C.1/L.670, 672)

The CHAIRMAN: I would draw the attention of members of the Committee to the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.672 under this which has been submitted by the delegations of Cyprus, Kenya and Malta.

I call on the representative of Cyprus to introduce the draft resolution.

Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus): I feel I must first apologize to you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee for having submitted this draft resolution, which we consider to be very important, so late. The delay was beyond our control.

The Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security is an important instrument in that it draws attention to the essential meaning and content of international security as contained in the Charter.

(Mr. Rossides, Cyprus)

Among the first provisions of the Charter are those relating to the maintenance of international peace and security by collective measures. Next comes the promotion of respect for human rights and better standards of life, as provided in the preamble. The Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security, following the lines of the Charter itself, is directed towards the military and political security of States from any attack or intervention by any other State, thereby protecting life and freedom and all that follows from the right to life and freedom of its citizens.

Now, however, during the last few years, a new awareness has arisen of a global danger to the life and the security of life of all nations and peoples, of a common danger, the danger of the destruction of the environment which is the very source of life on this planet. The planet cannot support life if it reaches a state of extreme deterioration, and we have already reached the limits of that situation, as was pertinently pointed out in those words by

Mr. Maurice Strong, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme:

"There is persuasive evidence that we have reached the outer limits to the physical capacity of the natural environment to carry the burdens of the present and projected human activities which are already impinging on some of those limits."

It is obvious that we have to respect those limits in the sense of protecting life and the security of life of all nations and peoples.

It is also a reality that the problem of war and peace which, as I indicated, is given priority in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter, has now become in the last analysis a problem of environment. For it is the danger the radioactive contamination of the environment and its destruction as the result of nuclear explosions in the case of a major war that has made a major war unthinkable and impossible now. The destructive effect of the nuclear weapon, even if it destroyed millions instead of thousands at a time, would not have altered the conditions of life because, after all, there would be other millions to continue life on this planet; but it is the destruction of the environment that would prevent the continuance of life and the survival of man on this planet that makes war such a dreaded occurrence in our time.

(Mr. Rossides, Cyprus)

This is a problem that has to be considered not merely as a problem of welfare, as a problem of convenience or as an economic situation that is to be dealt with only by the Second Committee; it is a problem of survival, and as a problem of survival it has its place on the agenda of this Committee of the General Assembly. It is a problem of survival depending, of course, on the conduct of man; and as it depends on the conduct of man it enters the sphere of international security.

Recently there have been indications that this problem is becoming more and more -- and more rapidly -- dangerous. Converging situations all attack the environment. For example, it is feared that the energy crisis is becoming an environment problem, for the first casualty of the energy crisis has been the environment. The first thought of nations to meet the energy crisis was immediately to relax all standards that were considered absolutely necessary for protecting the environment. They were immediately relaxed and put aside before anything else was done -- before any rationing, or any Sunday restrictions or anything else was introduced to meet the energy crisis. It was the environment that was attacked because there was not a sufficient awareness of the problem.

I do not in any way consider it unnatural; it is very natural. It is such a new problem. It is not easy for man to adjust himself to situations. Of course, adjustment is in the nature of man. He has adjusted to many situations in the progress of civilization before he reached the present stage, but it has taken time. Never before has there been such rapid change and such fundamental and radical change that has created completely new conditions of life to which we are not accustomed. We live in the momentum of the past. And it seems that we cannot react to these situations unless we are shaken by a catastrophe. So why not try to see if we can do it without a catastrophe in time?

If the progress of man were to be considered from the very beginning of time, it could be divided into two main periods, two main eras -- the pre-atomic era and the atomic era. What is involved in the atomic era is that man has for the first time in his life on this planet acquired the power to destroy the environment and the very essence of life here. Therefore it is now necessary to deal with the problem of international security in the sense of a new world

(Mr. Rossides, Cyprus)

that has been created by nuclear weapons, and this situation calls for a readjustment of our consideration of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security.

When the Charter was adopted there was no problem of the environment, nor the same power of man to destroy his environment and his source of life. When the Declaration was adopted it was before world awareness of the question of the environment, which is the result of the Stockholm Conference and Declaration. So now we have this awareness and we must consider the problem in this sense, that is, in the sense that we have a concept of global security structured by the United Nations. This security structure should consist of three parts. The first is international security in the military and political sense, as envisaged in the Charter and in the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security in the accepted sense of protection from armed attack against the life and freedom and all the benefits of a nation. The second aspect, which is equally important, is economic security, which has emerged in the world as a very grave problem. This was also envisaged in the Charter, and therefore the Declaration has been extended to cover economic security. But the third aspect is environmental security which also has to be brought in, in order to complete the three-part aspect of international security. We believe that environmental security has to become a part of the structure of a permanent security system by the United Nations, the system that we are trying to establish.

(Mr. Rossides, Cyprus)

Therefore, my delegation and those of Kenya and Malta have submitted this draft resolution, which reads:

"The General Assembly ...

"Considering the present stage of awareness regarding the growing dangers from the deterioration of the physical environment and the new threats posed thereby to the life and security of the peoples of all nations,

"Having regard to the connexion of this new danger with the question of international security and its strengthening,

"Realizing that at the time when the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security was adopted there was not sufficient world awareness..." -- but now, since the Stockholm Conference, there is this awareness...

"1. Affirms that international security in the present realities of our contemporary world necessarily includes the security of nations and peoples from serious dangers threatening their physical environment -- the very source of their life;

"2. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare, with the co-operation of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environmental Programme, a study on the relation of the environmental aspect of security to the whole problem involved in the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security and submit a relevant report to the General Assembly at its next session."

That is the purport of our draft resolution; it is not our intention to impose anything on anyone. We consider this a very important problem to which we must be alerted and which must be brought to the fore as soon as possible, so that consideration may be given to this aspect, which has become the most vital aspect in present-day human life.

However, since this draft resolution was submitted, a number of delegations have approached me saying that it is too late for them to obtain the necessary instructions on this vital problem, and they have appealed to us not to press our draft resolution to the vote since it would be difficult for them to vote without having received full instructions. None of them

(Mr. Rossides, Cyprus)

regards this draft resolution as unimportant; all of them consider it important, and that is why they want to obtain instructions. Hence, either the vote on this draft resolution would have to be postponed to the end of the session to allow them time to get instructions or we would have to agree to postpone its consideration until next year to allow ample time for its full consideration. We want to pay due regard to the views expressed by a number of delegations, and we are therefore prepared to accept either course, because we realize the importance of the subject.

Mr. van der KLAUW (Netherlands): The whole question of the human environment is, I think, a question of serious concern to all of us. It certainly is to my Government, which has taken an active part in all these discussions, in various forums, on this question. I think that we can be grateful to Ambassador Rossides and the other two sponsors for having again brought this matter to our attention; it is a matter that we shall have to consider repeatedly and, as I have said, in various forums. Naturally, the questions arises whether it would not be better discussed in the context of questions in the Second Committee. There are many different problems involved. There is some relationship with the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security, but I think Ambassador Rossides is quite right in saying that when we discussed that Declaration in 1970 this problem was not plaguing the world, as it is now plaguing us in all our discussions. I think we must study very carefully whether we should discuss the question here or in the Second Committee. In view of the number of problems involved it would

(Mr. van der Klaauw, Netherlands)

indeed be my delegation's preference to postpone this draft resolution to the next session of the General Assembly as well as the whole question of where to discuss it.

I am very grateful for Ambassador Rossides' remarks in this respect; they are indeed very helpful to us in tackling a very serious problem. I would suggest that it should certainly be mentioned in the report to the General Assembly that this serious question was raised here, and, as I have said, we should be grateful to Ambassador Rossides for having raised it.

Mr. RYDBECK (Sweden): I share the views just expressed by our colleague from the Netherlands that Ambassador Rossides has performed a service to us in calling attention to the relation between the protection of the environment and the vital problems of the survival and security of the human race. As a matter of fact, I do not think that the matter we are now considering throws any doubt on this basic truth; what we are discussing now is how the United Nations should deal with it. My delegation is not prepared to take a stand on that right now and, therefore, we are also very grateful to Ambassador Rossides for being willing to have this matter deferred either to the end of this session or to the next session of the General Assembly. I think that there is at least one argument in favour of letting it rest until next year: the executive body of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) will hold its first real substantive session in Nairobi next spring, and I think that it might produce useful material and views to enable us to take a stand on Ambassador Rossides' proposals, either in this Committee or possibly in some other United Nations committee. My delegation would therefore greatly appreciate it if the sponsors would be prepared to let the matter rest as it is until next year, when we will have a better background to take it up here or elsewhere in the United Nations.

Meanwhile, I associate myself again with the representative of the Netherlands in expressing great appreciation to Ambassador Rossides and the other sponsors for having brought this vital aspect of international security to our attention.

Mr. JAMIESON (United Kingdom): I should like also to associate myself with the two previous speakers in paying a tribute to Ambassador Rossides and his co-sponsors for bringing this matter up. The question of the environment is undoubtedly one of the most important subjects before the United Nations; it is something which affects our life in a very direct way.

I would also agree with much of what lies behind this draft resolution. It is undoubtedly true that there are growing dangers from the deterioration of the physical environment, and there are new threats posed by it. It is also true that in 1970, when the Declaration was adopted, there was not as much knowledge as there is now, and it is true that thanks to the activities of the United Nations on the environment our knowledge is now greater.

At the same time, I myself, on a very personal basis -- and I am without instructions on this -- am just wondering whether it would be altogether wise to adopt this draft resolution this year. I say this because we already have machinery for considering all questions in relation to the environment, and although the environment is something which affects us all and, therefore, has to be tackled on a global basis, not all of the dangers are dangers that might be called international and therefore potentially damaging to international relations. And I think if we try to isolate these latter questions for treatment in this Committee in connexion with the question of international security, is there not perhaps some danger that we would be acting in a counter-productive sense -- because we might be detracting from what I might call the "all-in" concept of the question of the environment?

Those are very preliminary observations, but they do lead me to think that perhaps we should all ponder this matter in the course of this coming year, and I therefore would appeal to the co-sponsors to adopt the second of the alternatives which Ambassador Rossides suggested -- that is, not to press for a vote on this subject during the present session.

I would take it, however -- at least this is my understanding -- that the presentation of the draft resolution will be reflected in the report of this Committee, and the text will be included therein. I think that is only right, because it is an important question which has been raised.

Mr. CHAKRAVARTY (India): The points covered in the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.672 refer to a very important matter, namely, the effect of the environment on international security. The preservation of the environment, its destruction, or tampering with it can affect international security in various ways, and these implications need very careful study.

Since this draft resolution has been submitted only today, my delegation at least would need time for consultations and for considering these points in greater depth. Ambassador Rossides himself has already indicated that he would be willing to postpone consideration of this draft resolution either to the end of this session or to the twenty-ninth General Assembly session. My delegation's preference is the latter course, as that would give adequate time for careful consideration of this very important matter.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the representative of Cyprus wish to respond to the appeals addressed to him by various speakers for postponement of consideration of this draft resolution until the next General Assembly session?

Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus): I said in my introduction of the draft resolution that I wished to know the feeling of the Committee -- whether members would prefer deferring this matter to next year rather than taking it up at the end of this session. It does seem there is not sufficient time now for this Committee to deal with the subject as amply as it should be dealt with. Therefore, I would be inclined to accept the suggestion that we postpone it until next year, thereby complying with the wishes of the speakers who have preceded me.

In this connexion, I would be happy if, as suggested by the representative of the Netherlands, this matter were mentioned in the report of the First Committee so that by next year the various delegations could have a grasp of the problem and thus be able to deal with it with a better understanding of its meaning and content.

The CHAIRMAN: If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Committee agrees not to pursue its debate on the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.672 or to vote on that draft this year, on the understanding that the fact that the question has been introduced by the representative of Cyprus will be reflected in our report to the Assembly and that the text of the draft resolution on the subject will be reproduced therein.

It was so decided.

Mr. SIKAULU (Zambia): With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I should like to state that my delegation was absent during the voting on the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.670, of which, as is well known, Zambia was a co-sponsor. I wish to state for the record that had my delegation been present it would have voted in favour of it.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has now concluded its consideration of agenda item 39.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee now has only one item pending -- item 32, on the World Disarmament Conference. I take it that all members are aware, from the information they have received from the chairmen of the regional groups, of the status of the consultations that have been taking place on this item. I understand that those consultations now concern exclusively the composition of the Preparatory Committee. I may say that I have urged that the consultations be concluded before a draft resolution is submitted to this Committee, since I believe that in the long run that will save time. I would add that that appears to be the opinion of the chairmen of the regional groups as well.

Although I cannot of course say now exactly when the consultations will be concluded, I feel that there is reason for optimism that an agreement will be reached. It is obvious, however, that the Committee will not be able to take up this question tomorrow, and I would therefore ask members to consult the Journal for an announcement of the date when the Committee will be convened to deal with this last item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY



PROVISIONAL

A/C.1/PV.1983
10 December 1973

ENGLISH

Twenty-eighth Session

FIRST COMMITTEE

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 10 December 1973, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. BORCH

(Denmark)

Rapporteur:

Mr. de SOTO

(Peru)

- Implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security /39/ (continued)
- Programme of work

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