



General Assembly

Seventieth session

First Committee

1st meeting

Wednesday, 7 October 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Introductory statement

The Chair: I would like to begin by extending a very warm welcome to all delegations participating in the work of the First Committee this year. I look forward to working closely with each and every one of them in the weeks ahead. I hope that everyone from New York has recovered from the Sustainable Development Goals summit and the general debate last week and that everyone from Geneva has recovered from jet lag.

As in previous years, we have a full agenda this session, and in fulfilling my responsibility to guide the work of the First Committee to a successful conclusion, I count on the usual cooperation and goodwill of all delegations. I am convinced that we have the commitment needed to conduct our work in a cooperative, efficient and expeditious manner. As the Committee Chair, I will try to be as neutral, technical, transparent and inclusive as possible. My ambitious is to reach consensus of the membership on any procedural issues, as has been the usual practice in this Committee.

Election of Officers

The Chair: I would like to remind delegations that we have one more position of Vice-Chair to fill. As delegations will recall, we did not receive any nomination from the Group of African States to fill that position on 15 June, when other members of the Bureau were elected (see A/C.1/69/PV.25).

It is my pleasure to inform the Committee that the Group of African States has nominated Mr. Abiodun Richards Adejola of Nigeria for the position of Vice-Chair of the First Committee for this session. Since no other candidate has been nominated for this position, may I take it that the Committee wishes to elect by acclamation Mr. Abiodun Richards Adejola of Nigeria to the position of Vice-Chair of the First Committee at its seventieth session?

It was so decided.

The Chair: I warmly congratulate Mr. Adejola on his election. I am confident that I can rely on the support of all members of the Bureau, namely, the three Vice-Chairs: Mr. Abdulaziz AlAjmi of Kuwait, Ms. Lachezara Stoeva of Bulgaria and Mr. Abiodun Richards Adejola of Nigeria, as well as the Rapporteur, Ms. Tasha Young of Belize. I have no doubt that the Committee will benefit tremendously from their collective wisdom. Indeed, we have already done so in our previous meetings with the Bureau. I am also sure that the Committee will continue to receive the full support of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.

Organization of work

The Chair: I wish to note that much of the information I will share with delegations in the course of this meeting is also contained in my letter to all delegations distributed today — it is on members' desks — and is intended to serve as advance reference

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

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for the key points and principles guiding the conduct of the work of the First Committee.

The points made in the letter are not new, and I am sure many delegations will remember having heard previous First Committee Chairs share the same information at organizational meetings or at the beginning of the three phases of the Committee's work. It is my hope that sharing it in advance with delegations this year will help facilitate their preparation for our proceedings in the days ahead.

I now draw the Committee's attention to document A/C.1/70/1, containing a letter from the President of the General Assembly, dated 18 September 2015. The letter highlights the decisions pertaining to the allocation of agenda items to the First Committee, taken by the General Assembly at its 2nd plenary meeting held the same day. At that meeting, the Assembly decided to allocate 21 agenda items — namely, items 5, 88 to 105, 120 and 135 — to the First Committee for consideration during this session, of which 18 (namely, items 88 to 105) relate to disarmament and international security issues.

Agenda item 5 relates to the election of the officers of the Main Committees for the seventy-first session, and I shall further reflect on this item later in my statement today. Under agenda item 120, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, the Committee will consider and take action on its draft programme of work and timetable for the seventy-first session. Item 135, on programme planning, has been allocated to all the Main Committees, as well as the Assembly plenary, in continuing efforts to enhance the discussion of evaluating, planning, budgeting and monitoring reports. The First Committee will take up this item if the Assembly assigns any report to it.

I shall now proceed to highlight the details of the Committee's provisional programme of work and timetable, as outlined in document A/C.1/70/CRP.1, which has been circulated in the conference room today. Its content is identical to the programme adopted in General Assembly decision 69/520 B of 19 June 2015.

As indicated in A/C.1/70/CRP.1, the First Committee will commence its substantive work with its general debate tomorrow, Thursday, 8 October. It will hold a total of 25 substantive meetings and should conclude its work by 9 November, as recommended by the General Committee and approved by the General Assembly at its 2nd plenary meeting.

In keeping with established practice, and as currently reflected in the provisional programme of work, the Committee will conduct its work in three phases, namely, first, the general debate; secondly, thematic discussion; and, thirdly, action on all draft resolutions and decisions. I shall reflect briefly on what we should expect under each segment.

The first phase, general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items, will run from 8 to 16 October, for a total of 7 meetings. During this segment, the Committee will have its usual exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs on the follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its previous sessions and on presentation of reports. This exchange is scheduled for 9 October. Also during the general debate segment, on 15 October, the President of the General Assembly will address the First Committee.

At the end of the general debate, the Committee will devote half a meeting, that is, 90 minutes, to statements by representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in an informal setting, following which delegations will be given the floor to make comments or pose questions to the NGO speakers. Based on informal consultations held by the Chair, the way that meeting will be conducted will be similar to previous years. To maximize the time available to us during the general debate, I propose that we maintain the practice of using a rolling list of speakers, which is currently open to all delegations wishing to take the floor.

I am aware that a considerable number of delegations have already inscribed their names on the list, and I invite those who intend to speak but have not yet inscribed themselves to do so as soon as possible. As indicated in the programme of work, the list of speakers for the general debate will be closed on Friday, 9 October, at 6 p.m.

I would also like to remind all delegations inscribed on the list to keep in mind that a rolling list implies that they should be prepared to take the floor at any time, possibly even one meeting sooner than they had originally planned to speak. To make the most efficient use of the resources allocated to us, I would like to urge all delegations taking the floor to kindly adhere to the Committee's usual practice of limiting their statements to a maximum of 10 minutes when speaking in their national capacity, and 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of groups of delegations. As is customary, the

list will give priority to high-level representatives. The practical old-fashioned gadgets in assisting delegations in their own time management will be distributed — they will be on members' desks tomorrow morning — as gifts from the Chair.

In this regard, I would invite all delegations with relatively long statements to deliver a concise summary of their text and submit the full statement in written form for posting on the First Committee web portal, QuickFirst, if they so desire. For those who need assistance in accessing the web portal, kindly contact the Committee's secretariat.

The second stage of the Committee's work will focus on thematic discussion on specific subjects, as well as the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions. This segment will run from Monday, 19 October, to the morning of Monday, 2 November, for a total of 12 meetings. In line with the Committee's established practice, the details of the programme of work for our thematic segments are contained in the indicative timetable outlined in document A/C.1/70/CRP.2, which has also been circulated in the conference room.

During the second stage of its work, the Committee will take up the respective subject areas listed in the timetable, which constitute the seven clusters on which the Committee has traditionally focused during this phase of its work: nuclear weapons; other weapons of mass destruction; outer space (disarmament aspects); conventional weapons; regional disarmament and security; other disarmament measures and international security; and disarmament machinery. For each of the seven clusters, our proceedings will comprise two parts. The first will begin in a formal mode with a panel or guest speakers, as applicable, followed by an informal questions and answers segment. In that segment, delegations taking the floor will be requested to ask concise questions rather than read statements. The second part will be in a formal mode and will consist of interventions and statements by delegations, including the introduction of draft resolutions and decisions.

In the morning of 19 October, the first day of thematic segment, and in accordance with established practice, the Committee will hold a high-level exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials in the field of arms control and disarmament. To stimulate lively interaction on the current state of affairs in arms control and disarmament

processes, and taking into account delegations' interest in a specific topic at this exchange, I would like to propose that we focus this year on the same sub-theme that was considered last year, namely, "increasing the capacity of international organizations to address weapons of mass destruction". I believe that this topic remains relevant, and we can build on the perspectives shared last year. Following last year's practice, a concept paper on this sub-theme will be circulated in advance.

Also during the thematic segment, the Committee will have panel discussions under Cluster 5, on regional disarmament and security, and Cluster 7, on disarmament machinery. Furthermore, a joint ad hoc meeting of the First Committee and the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, the Fourth Committee, is scheduled for the afternoon of 22 October, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/38, of 2 December 2014, to address possible challenges to space security and sustainability. A note on the way we will conduct these meetings has been posted on QuickFirst. On 29 October, there will be a traditional certificate award ceremony for graduating Disarmament Fellows. The list of speakers for the thematic segment will open on Monday, 12 October, following the closure of the list of speakers for the general debate on Friday, 9 October, as I just mentioned.

As indicated in the programme of work, the deadline for inscription on the thematic discussions speakers' list is Thursday, 22 October, at 6 p.m. Delegations intending to take the floor during this phase should also keep in mind that the time limit for statements made in a member's national capacity is five minutes and, for statements made on behalf of several delegations, the time limit is seven minutes. With delegations' understanding, I intend to apply these time limits respectfully and faithfully, to enable the Committee to complete its work on schedule and avoid the difficulty of time shortage. I therefore urge all delegations wishing to take the floor at this stage to kindly prepare their statements in accordance with the time limits in the interests of all of us.

The third and last segment of the work of the Committee, namely, action on all draft resolutions and decisions, will run from the afternoon of Monday, 2 November, to Monday, 9 November, for a total of six meetings. However, the Committee will aim to conclude its work on Friday, 6 November. Therefore,

the sixth meeting, scheduled for 9 November, will be held only if necessary.

As indicated in the programme of work, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions is Tuesday, 20 October, at 12 noon. Compliance with this deadline will provide sufficient time to delegations for consultations and also ensure the timely issuance of all drafts in all official languages.

The Committee will maintain the practice of submitting draft resolutions and decisions electronically, and the details of this submission process are available on QuickFirst. All submitted drafts will be listed in document A/C.1/70/CRP.3 and grouped under the seven clusters. Those drafts will be issued subsequently as "L" documents, which will have on the title page the list of delegations that signed on as sponsors of the draft prior to its submission to the Secretariat. Delegations that sign on as sponsors after the submission of the draft will be listed in document A/C.1/70/CRP.4 and its revisions. Details on this process are also available on QuickFirst.

I would like to remind all delegations that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Fifth Committee require time to review the programme budget implications of any draft resolution or decision before it can be acted upon by the General Assembly. In accordance with past practice, the General Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to the views expressed by the ACABQ regarding the use of the phrase "within available resources", as set out in document A/54/7. Accordingly, the use of this phrase in draft resolutions and decisions should be avoided.

During the action phase, the Committee will be guided by the informal papers that will be issued by the Secretariat containing the draft resolutions and decisions on which action will be taken each day. These informal papers will be revised by the Secretariat on a daily basis in order to update the drafts that are ready for action at each of the remaining meetings. In this regard, I propose that the Committee retain the procedure it has followed in previous years, by which draft resolutions and decisions are grouped under the clusters I mentioned earlier. Also during the action phase, a draft provisional programme of work and timetable for next year, to be issued under the symbol A/C.1/70/CRP.5, will be circulated for the Committee's consideration and action. Further information will be

provided in due course, in the form of a note prepared by the Secretariat on the traditional ground rules for taking action on draft resolutions and decisions, which will be made available on QuickFirst.

The documents before the Committee this session, including those already issued or forthcoming, are listed in information document A/C.1/70/INF/1. One of the forthcoming documents is a list of participants, which will be issued as A/C.1/70/INF/2. In this regard, delegations are requested to submit the names of their respective members to the Secretariat as soon as possible, and no later than Wednesday, 14 October, at 6 p.m. The names of participants submitted after that deadline will be included in an addendum to be issued after the conclusion of the Committee's work. The Department of Public Information will issue press releases with daily coverage of First Committee proceedings, which will be posted on the United Nations website a few hours after each meeting.

I now give the floor to representatives who wish to take the floor at this time for comments or questions on the information I have provided so far regarding the organization of the Committee's work for this session.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): At this stage, I just wanted to seek clarification. Earlier, Mr. Chair, you said that there would be thematic debates on a number of clusters, and then you said that there would be panel discussions in some thematic clusters. Could you clarify, Sir, which thematic clusters will have panellists speaking before the thematic discussions begin? In addition, at a later stage, I would like to make a comment.

The Chair: The second version of what I read out was correct. I would like to repeat that during the thematic segment the Committee will have panel discussions under Cluster 5, on regional disarmament and security, and Cluster 7, on disarmament machinery.

Mr. Rabatjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to know whether we are considering both documents, A/C.1/70/CRP.1 and A/C.1/70/CRP.2, at this time, or is A/C.1/70/CRP.2 going to be dealt with separately? I would appreciate some clarification on that point.

The Chair: To be absolutely clear, we are now considering A/C.1/70/CRP.1 and subsequently, and separately, we will consider A/C.1/70/CRP.2.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): With regard to cluster 1, on nuclear weapons, there will be an introduction by

the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts. My delegation is of the view that the previous practice has been, specifically with regard to this cluster, that when members make their interventions or statements they are not preceded by a panel.

The second point I wanted to make is that we did not have the opportunity to discuss the matter in detail. I understand the Chair had consulted various regional groups, but the timing of those consultations was unfortunate for every delegation, as we were quite busy with preparations for the high-level visits. In any case, the indicative timetable that was circulated after discussions with the regional groups did not contain this detail. So we do not see any reason for having, under cluster 1, on nuclear weapons, an introduction by the Chair of a particular Group of Governmental Experts.

The report has been circulated, as was mandated by the General Assembly resolution. There is no mandate for the Chair to introduce that report. For these reasons, we do not see any added value, so we propose that Cluster 1 be entirely dedicated to interventions and statements made by Member States.

The Chair: Just to make myself absolutely clear, we are considering A/C.1/70/CRP.1 at the moment. The comment I just heard from the representative of Pakistan relates to A/C.1/70/CRP.2, so I would suggest that he raise that issue when we consider A/C.1/70/CRP.2.

May I take it that the Committee wishes to proceed in accordance with the provisional programme of work and timetable contained in document A/C.1/70/CRP.1?

It was so decided.

The Chair: Before moving to our consideration of A/C.1/70/CRP.2, which was issued on 18 September after completing a silence procedure through the Bureau members, I would like to acknowledge that a proposal was made for organizing an additional panel under cluster 1, on nuclear weapons, of the thematic discussions, with the participation of the President of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a representative of the Humanitarian Initiative group, and the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, who was already listed in the indicative timetable.

Member States were then requested to convey their views with regard to this proposal through the Bureau members. While some delegations expressed

support, there was no consensus for accepting the proposed addition, as others opposed it. As the question of the indicative timetable relates to the basis of the Committee's proceedings, it is important to make every effort to reach consensus. I therefore undertook further consultations with the parties concerned, but there is still no consensus on the proposed addition.

Accordingly, I suggest proceeding with the indicative timetable in A/C.1/70/CRP.2. May I take it that the Committee wishes to proceed in accordance with the indicative timetable for thematic discussions contained in document A/C.1/70/CRP.2?

Mr. Luque Márquez (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will have an opportunity to repeat this during the general debate, but I would already like to offer our support to you, Mr. Chair, and to the Bureau of the Committee.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 33 members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). As the Committee knows, all the States members of CELAC are also parties to the Tlatelolco Treaty, which created a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean. They are also members of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL). We believe that the interactive panels during the Committee session offer an opportunity for the entire membership to exchange views with the panellists, including on the most relevant and timely issues, and not simply for the presentation of reports.

For this reason, during the consultations that were kindly convened by the Chair with our regional group, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC), we requested the participation of the Secretary-General of OPANAL in one of the panels. At today's organizational meeting, the States members of CELAC would like to reiterate this request. We think that the participation of OPANAL in the most appropriate panel would add relevant and timely aspects to the discussion.

At the same time, on another topic, we would like to express our support for the additional panel proposed for cluster 1, on nuclear weapons, that would include a representative of the Humanitarian Initiative.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): Our understanding of the indicative timetable is that it is an informal arrangement designed to facilitate the programme of work of the

Committee and, as such, is not formal. It has become an established practice but in terms of the thematic debates and clusters, it is at least my delegation's understanding that it is a practice that has continued for several years and that it is a flexible arrangement designed, again, to bring a semblance of interactivity and allow for more in-depth discussions in particular areas. However, it is also my delegation's understanding that, with regard to the thematic clusters, from nuclear weapons through all the others, the essential rule is for Member States to speak and express their views.

The idea of panels has varied from one session to another; there has been no consistent practice. As far as our delegation recalls, in terms of cluster 1, on nuclear weapons, there has been no panel in the past, so we expect that practice to continue. As far as the proposal that is in parentheses under cluster 1, on nuclear weapons, is concerned, as we have said before, the report of that particular Group of Governmental Experts has already been introduced and made available to all Member States, and it has already been considered according to the relevant General Assembly resolution. We therefore do not see any added value for the Chair to introduce the report again.

For that reason, we do not agree with the proposal for having a panellist introducing the thematic cluster on nuclear weapons. Member States have and should continue to have the right to speak and articulate their views. If they choose to refer to a particular Group of Governmental Experts, we would defer to that, but we do not see any reason for any Chair of a particular Group of Government Experts to come and introduce that report again.

Mr. Rabatjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): In the programme of work and timetable of the First Committee, A/C.1/70/CRP.1, which we just adopted, there is a provision under the rubric of

“Thematic discussion on specific subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under agenda items, including: (a) Exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials in the field of arms control and disarmament [and] (b) Panel discussions and exchanges with independent experts”.

The programme of work has therefore provided us with a basis for inviting high-level officials in the field of arms control and disarmament and the establishment

of panel discussions. It is not limited to one panel discussion. It is open to several panel discussions, as well as exchanges with independent experts. Therefore, the Committee has the authority to invite independent experts and high-level officials in the field of arms control and disarmament, upon the request and in the light of the views of Member States.

According to previous practice, the Committee has usually established such panel discussions and invited independent experts, taking into account the developments that have taken place since the previous year in the field of arms control and disarmament. In the indicative timetable that the Chair has proposed, under the thematic discussion of cluster 1, on nuclear weapons, there is only one issue, namely, the introduction by the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). We know that that is one development in the field since last year and it needs to be considered. But there have been other developments that, we believe, should also be considered, and the members of the Committee should be allowed to invite independent experts and high-level officials who can address those developments and brief us on them.

I specifically refer to the convening of the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), both of which took place last year. We believe that representatives, the President of the NPT Review Conference and a representative of the Humanitarian Initiative should be invited, as should the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on the FMCT; they should all take part on a panel under cluster 1, on nuclear weapons.

I thank you, Mr. Chair, for your briefing on your consultations with regard to this proposal. But working in the General Assembly, we think that everything should be transparent for every Member State. Accordingly, I would like to propose amendments to your indicative timetable for structuring discussion of a specific subject contained in document A/C.1/70/CRP.2 under cluster 1, on nuclear weapons, in the form of additional text, which would read,

“First, a panel discussion with the participation of the President of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; secondly, a representative of

the Humanitarian Initiative group; and, thirdly, the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty”.

That is our official proposal for a formal amendment to the Chair’s proposed indicative timetable.

In this context, I would also like to express my delegation’s support for the proposal made by the representative of Ecuador, who spoke on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Davison (Canada): As this is the first time I take the floor, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship, and signal the full support of our delegation for you during the course of these meetings.

I would like to address specifically the issue of the proposed presentation by the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty and say that, as far as we are aware, it is standard practice for Chairs of Groups of Governmental Experts to report on the work of their group, and that, in this particular instance, the added benefit is that it would take place in an interactive meeting and the Chair of the Group would have an opportunity to respond to questions from members of the First Committee. We therefore definitely support keeping this on the agenda — as it currently is.

Mr. Gallhofer (Austria): I, too, would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship. We also very much look forward to working together with you. I will try to be brief.

First, we support the proposal made by the representative of Ecuador, who spoke on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, for the inclusion of Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean; we think that is a very good initiative. Secondly, and here I can also be brief thanks to the very eloquent statement of my colleague from the Islamic Republic of Iran. We think that his is a very good and timely proposal, given the developments that have taken place in the last year. We would therefore fully support the inclusion of the proposed amendment.

Ms. Guitton (France) (*spoke in French*): Since this is the first time I am addressing the First Committee, I would first like to congratulate you, Sir, to wish you every success in your stewardship of our work and to assure you of our full support for your efforts.

I would like to support the proposal introduced in document A/C.1/70/CRP.2 for two reasons. The first is that taken together, its elements reflect the General Assembly’s various mandates and correspond to the established practice of presentations by the various groups of governmental experts within the framework of the panels set up for each cluster. In the circumstances, I think it vital, as the representative of Canada has already emphasized, that the chairship of the Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty should have an opportunity to express itself fully.

On the other hand, I would argue against giving the floor to representatives wishing to discuss issues related to humanitarian consequences. The General Assembly has not directly approved any kind of mandate on that subject, and that being the case, Sir, I suggest that we stick to the programme you have presented and strive to reach a consensus on the proposal.

Mr. Adejola (Nigeria): I would just like to add my voice to the idea proposed by the representative of Iran. We included it in our proceedings within the Group of African States, and the conclusion was that we would support it. We would therefore like to see the humanitarian issues discussed.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the rest of the Bureau, on your election at this session. You can count on the full support of the United States delegation.

It seems to me that the most practical way forward would be to embrace the proposal presented to us this morning in document A/C.1/70/CRP.2. As it is, my understanding, coming as I do from Washington, D.C., is that the proposal has been vetted with Member States for some days now through Bureau consultations. I know that my Mission here in New York has been following the process very closely, and in Washington, D.C., we have been receiving reports on how the consultations have been developing.

I think the process has been fairly open and straightforward, and in the absence of a consensus on amending what we have before us — and with the general debate and the Committee’s proceedings beginning tomorrow — I am not sure that at the eleventh hour it would be wise to upset the apple cart, so to speak, and unravel what I believe is a balanced proposal before us that will allow all issues to be discussed and Member States’ various priorities to be reflected in what I am

sure will be a very deep dive during the thematic debate discussions. From the perspective of the United States delegation, therefore, I think what we have before us in A/C.1/70/CRP.2 is the most effective and efficient way forward.

The Chair: I have a couple of comments. First, I would like to point out that I heard no negative comments on the representative of Ecuador's proposal concerning the Secretary General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. Secondly, speaking more generally about document A/C.1/70/CRP.2, particularly the nuclear cluster, I see that at the moment there is no consensus, and I would like to propose that we continue consultations in the hope of reaching agreement and adopting A/C.1/70/CRP.2 by consensus within the week. To that end, tomorrow afternoon at 3 we will hold informal consultations to try to achieve consensus. The venue will be communicated by the Secretary.

In order to make full use of the time and facilities allocated to the First Committee, I intend to begin our meetings promptly at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., and to end at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m., respectively. I hope I can count on delegations' support and cooperation in that regard. Before we adjourn, I would like once again to draw the Committee's attention to agenda item 5, entitled "Election of the officers of the Main Committees", and to rule 99 (a) of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

"All the Main Committees shall, at least three months before the opening of the session, elect a Chairman. Elections of the other officers provided for in rule 103 shall be held at the latest by the end of the first week of the session."

In that connection, the General Assembly, in its decision 68/505, of 1 October 2013, approved an interim arrangement for the rotation of the Chairs of the Main Committees at its next five sessions, including 2014 and 2015, which we have already seen. In accordance with that decision, the Chair of the First Committee will come from the Group of African States for the seventy-first session of the Assembly in 2016; from the Group of Asia-Pacific States for the seventy-second session, in 2017; and from the Group of Eastern European States in the seventy-third session, in 2018.

Furthermore, in its resolution 69/321, of 11 September 2015, the General Assembly encouraged the Main Committees to hold elections for their Bureaus at

least three months before the opening of the session, and preferably up to six months in advance of each session, and called on the regional groups to proceed with relevant nominations in a timely manner and in accordance with the interim arrangements adopted in the General Assembly and contained in decision 68/505.

In the light of those decisions, I would like to propose that the First Committee consider this item sometime in the resumed part of the seventieth session in 2016. If there is no objection, may I take it that the Committee wishes to proceed accordingly on this point?

It was so decided.

Mr. Luque Márquez (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): In my national capacity, I would first like to express my delegation's appreciation for the opportunity to continue with consultations on the makeup of the panels and on how we would like to see the thematic debates develop. As we all know, there is really no invisible hand in the market, and nor should there be an invisible hand involved in traditions so that we do not really know where they begin and so that it appears impossible for anyone to change them. It is important that States be able to regain control of what we are doing here.

For example, we all know, since it is in the rules of procedure, that we need a quorum to begin a meeting. But we the States Members have decided that no specific quorum is really needed, although in practice we have not implemented this. Again, also in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the States can decide how to deal with panels.

That said, we are ready to have consultations tomorrow afternoon. Perhaps it would have been a good idea to go ahead with them for the rest of this morning, because I think we do have the room we need in which to continue consultations, but of course, Sir, that is your decision. I have a specific request for tomorrow to you, Sir, and the Secretariat, that we hold the informal consultations in a suitable meeting room. Such consultations are often held in one of the letter rooms, which are small and do not have enough seats. The consultations should also be as transparent as possible, which implies that we should be able to accommodate all 193 States if they wish to participate. So for tomorrow's consultations I would like to request that we have a room that is adequate for all those who wish to participate, if not perhaps for all 193 Members.

The Chair: The comments of the representative of Ecuador concerning the size of the room for consultations are duly noted.

I would now like to draw the Committee's attention to document A/C.1/70/INF/4, which contains the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 69/321, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, as highlighted in the first report of the General Committee for the seventieth session (A/70/250), considered by the Assembly at its second plenary meeting, on 18 September. In paragraph 19 of resolution 69/321, the General Assembly

“[r]equests each Main Committee to further discuss its working methods at the beginning of every session, and in this regard invites the Chairs of the Main Committees to brief the Ad Hoc Working Group [on the Revitalization of the General Assembly] during the seventieth session on any best practices and lessons learned with a view to improving working methods, as appropriate”.

Taking this into account, and as noted in my letters to delegations, I would like to invite all Member States to share their thoughts and views on the Committee's working methods during the course of its work. We have made a good start with the informal consultations we held with regional and political groups in September, and I welcome more perspectives and comments from delegations at any time.

I now give the floor to representatives who wish to take the floor for comments or questions on this aspect.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): At this stage I just have two comments. Regarding the issue of the revitalization

and rationalization of the working methods of the various Committees, as far as the First Committee is concerned we have followed various steps aimed at rationalizing and improving its working methods, but we have resisted some progress.

From my delegation's point of view, the overriding objectives have been enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Committee, but when we try to assess and examine the indicators of success with those objectives, they are not very encouraging. Ten years ago, we introduced the various clusters with the goal of achieving interactivity and more focused statements. What we ended up with was more statements in each cluster and with the problem of time management still with us. Ironically, what we have seen over time is that more and more time is being spent on debate, whether in the general debate or in the various clusters. While there may have been some progress in terms of efficiency, the Committee's effectiveness remains a very open question.

At this stage, I just wanted to make that comment. We look forward to having more time for discussion and debate of this very important topic whenever you deem it appropriate, Sir, whether at the beginning, in the middle or towards the end of our session.

The Chair: In accordance with its programme of work and timetable, the Committee will meet again tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock sharp in this conference room to begin its substantive work with a general debate. I look forward to working closely with all delegations in the coming weeks.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.