



General Assembly

Seventy-sixth session

First Committee

1st meeting

Thursday, 30 September 2021, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Hilale(Morocco)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

manner in which he conducted the proceedings of the First Committee at its seventy-fifth session.

Agenda item 5

Election of the officers of the Main Committees

Election of the Chair and the Bureau of the First Committee

The Chair (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to extend a warm and sincere welcome to all delegations participating, whether in person or virtually, in the deliberations of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session.

I should also like to avail myself of this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation to all Member States for the privilege and distinction they have bestowed upon my country, and on me personally, through my election as Chair of this very important Committee of the General Assembly.

I am indeed honoured and deeply indebted to all members for the trust and confidence placed in me. I wish to assure all delegations that I shall do my utmost to discharge my responsibilities in a manner so as to ensure that our work is carried out efficiently and that our endeavours meet with success, God willing. I hope our deliberations will be guided by a spirit of consensus and understanding.

Before proceeding to the matters at hand, I am sure that I speak on behalf of the entire membership of the Committee in extending our congratulations to Ambassador Agustín Santos Maraver, Permanent Representative of Spain, for the skilful and effective

I should also like to pay tribute to the other members of the previous Bureau for all their hard work in ensuring the success of the session despite the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. I am committed to working very closely with the other members of the current Bureau to continue seeking appropriate solutions for the Committee.

Before proceeding further, I would like to remind delegations that the Committee has to fill one more position of Vice-Chair following the election of Bureau members on 7 June 2021.

It is my pleasure to inform the Committee that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States has nominated Mr. Andres Fiallo of Ecuador for the remaining position of Vice-Chair of the First Committee for this session. Since no other candidate has been nominated for that position, may I take it that the Committee wishes to elect by acclamation Mr. Andres Fiallo of Ecuador to the position of Vice-Chair of the First Committee at its seventy-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Committee, I congratulate Mr. Andres Fiallo. I look forward to working closely with him as well as the other Vice-Chairs — Mr. Amir Hamzah Mohd Nasir of Malaysia and Mr. Saša Milanović of Bosnia and Herzegovina — as well as the Rapporteur, Ms. Sanna Leena Orava of Finland. I am pleased to report that, over the past weeks, we have developed a strong collegial and

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professional approach to our work, which undoubtedly augurs well for this session of the Committee. I have no doubt that the Committee will benefit tremendously from the collective wisdom, experience, know-how and diplomatic skill of these representatives.

At this time, I would also like to recognize the support of the Secretariat, in particular the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.

Organization of work

The Chair (*spoke in French*): The COVID-19 pandemic continues to represent a serious health threat for the Committee. While progress has been made since last year, including greater access to vaccines, the continued high rates of infection and death oblige us to be conservative when it comes to arrangements for the Committee's current session.

This extraordinary situation calls for a responsible approach to protect the health and safety of everyone, without compromising business continuity, while building on the progress made since 2020 and enabling the First Committee to discharge its mandate in support of the General Assembly. In that spirit, the Bureau of the First Committee has worked tirelessly over the past weeks to finalize the proposed programme of work for 2021, as contained in documents A/C.1/76/CRP.1 and A/C.1/76/CRP.2.

I have engaged in extensive consultations with delegations individually and collectively, including through their representatives on the Bureau, with the purpose of framing a realistic and flexible approach that allows all of us to advance the work of the Committee in the most inclusive and transparent way, while ensuring the participation of all Member States on an equal footing. I welcome the feedback provided by States at the virtual briefing I convened last Monday.

It cannot be overemphasized that the modalities proposed are temporary and exceptional measures in response to an exceptional situation and the extraordinary circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and in no way establish a precedent for the work of the Committee.

The Committee has before it document A/C.1/76/1, which contains the 19 agenda items allocated to the Committee by the General Assembly, at its second plenary meeting, on 17 September 2021 (see A/76/

PV.2). The Committee also has before it documents A/C.1/76/CRP.1 and A/C.1/76/CRP.2, which contain, respectively, the Committee's proposed programme of work and timetable for 2021, reflecting the modalities proposed by the Bureau, and a draft indicative timetable for the structured discussion of specific subjects on the adopted thematic approach on disarmament and international security agenda items.

Before taking up those documents one by one, with the Committee's indulgence, I should like to make some procedural remarks concerning the conduct of the Committee's work. I should also like to draw the Committee's attention to the relevant rules and recommendations of the General Assembly regarding the work of the Main Committees, as contained in the report of the General Committee in document A/76/250.

In order to make full use of the time and conference services made available to the Committee during these challenging times, with the cooperation and support of all members, I shall convene the meetings of the Committee at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. sharp. Similarly, I shall adjourn the meetings punctually at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m., respectively. I therefore appeal to all speakers, especially the first three speakers at a given meeting, to kindly be present in the conference room on time. In that connection, I sincerely hope that all delegations will make a special effort during this session to enable the Committee to maintain, or even improve, its record in the utilization of scarce conference facilities.

I should like to remind members that the General Assembly has decided to continue its practice during this session of waiving the requirement that at least one quarter of the members be present to declare Main Committee meetings open and permit the debate to proceed. The Assembly made that recommendation on the understanding that such a departure from the rules did not involve any permanent change in the provisions of rules 67 and 108 of its rules of procedure.

Regarding this year's general debate, which will begin next Monday, 4 October, it is proposed that statements be delivered in person or as pre-recorded submissions. It is further proposed that national statements be limited to five minutes and group statements to seven minutes. Longer statements can be posted to the e-Statement portal. Delegations are reminded that pre-recorded statements must be submitted to the Secretariat for technical review at least four working days prior to presentation.

Given the wish of States to revert to the Committee's established working methods, traditional thematic discussions will resume this year. Given the time constraints, it is proposed that statements be presented in person, written form or as pre-recorded statements while limited to five minutes, after which microphones will be automatically disabled. That rule will be applied to all speakers without exception. I trust that members will respect that limit and understand should their microphone be cut off before the end of their statement.

Only in-person statements will be included in the verbatim record. Written submissions to the Secretariat will be included in a compendium to be issued as an official document of the Committee, in the language of submission. The seven clusters on which the Committee has traditionally focused during the thematic phase of its work in previous years are as follows: "Nuclear weapons", "Other weapons of mass destruction", "Outer space (disarmament aspects)", "Conventional weapons", "Other disarmament measures and international security", "Regional disarmament and security" and "Disarmament machinery". It is nonetheless proposed for this year that statements be made on combined thematic clusters rather than on each of the seven clusters individually.

On the question of explanations of vote, rights of reply and points of order, in view of the extraordinary circumstances under which the First Committee will meet this session, the Bureau has proposed the following measures on an exceptional basis and without in any way creating a precedent.

First, it is proposed that statements in the exercise of the right of reply do not exceed five minutes for the first intervention and three minutes for the second intervention. Statements in the exercise of right of reply delivered in person will continue to be included in the verbatim record and will continue to be heard at the end of each meeting or at the end of the day, if two meetings are scheduled for a given day. Given the extraordinary circumstances, it is proposed that statements in exercise of the right of reply also be submitted in written form, for inclusion in a compendium to be issued as an information document that will reproduce the statement in the language of submission. Furthermore, it is proposed that, when responding to a written submission, statements in the exercise of the right of reply also be submitted in written form.

Secondly, it is proposed that explanations of vote in person be limited to five minutes. Explanations of vote presented in person will continue to be included in the verbatim record. Longer statements will be reflected on the e-Statements portal. The deadline for the submission of written statements on the thematic clusters is 22 October 2021.

I would like to assure the Committee that I intend to ensure that the customary diplomatic courtesies are maintained in all aspects of the work of the Committee, including the written statements.

May I take it that the Committee wishes to proceed in accordance with the proposed modalities that I just outlined?

It was so decided.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): I should now like to draw the attention of the members of the Committee to the agenda items allocated to the Committee as contained in document A/C.1/76/1.

Some portions of the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which is to be considered directly in plenary meeting under agenda item 92, deal with the subject matter of agenda item 100, entitled "General and complete disarmament". I have been informed that the Assembly will consider the report of IAEA on Wednesday, 17 November 2021.

Secondly, agenda item 123, entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly", is allocated to the First Committee for the purpose of discussing its working methods as well as considering and taking action on its tentative programme of work for the Committee's next session, in 2022. In that connection, the attention of the Committee is invited to a note by the Secretariat contained in document A/C.1/76/INF/4, which includes information on the rotation of the Chairs of the Committee in accordance with resolution 72/313.

Finally, agenda item 139, entitled "Programme planning", is allocated to all the Main Committees and the plenary of the General Assembly in order to enhance the discussion of evaluation, planning, budgeting and monitoring reports. So far, I have not received any information concerning that item.

I will now proceed to highlight a few details relating to the Committee's proposed programme of work and timetable, as outlined in document A/C.1/76/CRP.1. As indicated therein, the First Committee will commence

its substantive work on Monday, 4 October. It will hold a total of 18 substantive meetings in person, including five meetings for action on draft resolutions and decisions. All statements will be made by delegations from their seats. The Committee is expected to conclude its work by 5 November.

In accordance with established practice and as reflected in the provisional programme of work for this session, the First Committee will conduct its work in three phases. The first phase will be dedicated to the general debate on all agenda items, the second to a thematic discussion on specific subjects and the third to taking action on all draft proposals. I shall elaborate briefly on what to expect under each phase.

The first phase, devoted to the general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items, will run from 4 to 13 October, for a total of six meetings. We are still awaiting confirmation of the date that the President of the General Assembly will address the Committee given his travel schedule outside of New York.

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. As in previous years, inscription on the list of speakers is through the e-speaker tool on the e-deleGATE portal. I am aware that a significant number of delegations have already inscribed their names on the list, and I invite those who intend to speak but have not yet registered 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 Tuesday, 5 October, at 6 p.m. I would also like to remind all delegations inscribed on the rolling list to keep in mind 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 — it can never be repeated enough — to kindly respect the time limits for statements: five minutes when speaking in a national capacity and seven minutes when speaking on behalf of a group of delegations. I urge the Committee to respect those time limits to address genuine time-management concerns expressed by delegations over the years, and particularly during this year's extraordinary situation. Delegations with relatively long statements are strongly encouraged to

deliver a concise summary of their text and to submit the full statement in written form for posting on e-Statements.

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 submitted under the Committee's agenda items. That segment will run from the morning of Wednesday, 13 October, to Friday, 22 October, for a total of seven meetings.

In line with the Committee's established practice, the details of the programme of work for our thematic segment are contained in the indicative timetable outlined in document A/C.1/76/CRP.2. This year, it is proposed that statements be made on combined clusters rather than on each of the seven clusters individually.

The list of speakers for the thematic segment will open on Tuesday, 5 October, at 6 p.m. via the e-speaker tool for the First Committee on the e-deleGATE web portal. As indicated on the programme of work, the deadline for inscription on the list of speakers for the thematic discussions is Tuesday, 12 October, at 6 p.m. All delegations wishing to take the floor during that segment of our work are therefore urged to make every effort to inscribe on the list of speakers before that deadline.

During the thematic segment, delegations taking the floor are strongly encouraged to limit statements in their national capacity to five minutes, and statements on behalf of a group of countries should not exceed seven minutes. With the Committee's understanding, I intend to apply those time limits faithfully to enable the Committee to complete its work on schedule. Once again, I urge all delegations wishing to take the floor at this stage to kindly prepare their statements in accordance with the specified time limits.

There will be three virtual informal meetings via Zoom, of two hours in duration, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., for interactive dialogues on specific subjects, which will be convened on Friday, 8 October, Friday, 15 October and Thursday, 21 October. Those virtual informal meetings will include an exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs on the follow-up to draft resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at its previous sessions and the presentation of reports, an exchange with civil society and panel discussions with independent experts and other high-level officials proposed by the regional

groups. Further details on those virtual meetings, which will be provided with interpretation in the six official languages, are contained in document A/C.1/76/CRP.2.

The third and last segment of the work of the Committee, namely, action on all draft resolutions and draft decisions, will run from Wednesday, 27 October, morning and afternoon, to Wednesday, 3 November, for a total of five meetings.

As indicated in the programme of work, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions is Thursday, 14 October, at noon. Compliance with that deadline will ensure the timely issuance of all drafts in all official languages.

All proposals will be acted upon at in-person meetings, following the usual four-step process: general statements under each cluster; explanations of vote or position before action; action on the drafts; and explanations of vote or position after action.

Taking into account the lessons learned from the Committee's experience over the years on the need for the early determination of the programme budget implications of draft resolutions and decisions before the Committee, sponsors and co-sponsors organizing informal consultations on their drafts are encouraged to engage Secretariat officials in the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Committee Secretary for guidance.

At the same time, I would like to remind all delegations that, in accordance with paragraph 12 of decision 34/401, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Fifth Committee require sufficient time to review the programme budget implications of any draft resolution or decision before it can be acted upon by the General Assembly. The General Committee also drew the attention of the General Assembly to the views expressed by ACABQ regarding the use of the phrase "within available resources", as set out in document A/54/7. Accordingly, the use of that phrase in draft resolutions and decisions should be avoided.

On a final note, delegations are reminded to consult the document entitled "Programme Budget Implications: Regulatory Framework, Process and Practice for the Main Committees", which was prepared by the United Nations Budget Division and is posted on e-deleGATE. It contains information on the programme

budget implication process that members may find very useful in making preparations.

All submitted draft proposals will continue to be listed in a conference room paper and grouped under the traditional seven thematic clusters. Delegations are reminded that the sponsoring of draft proposals will continue through the e-Sponsorship tool on the e-deleGATE portal.

During the action phase, the Committee will continue to be guided by the informal papers issued by the Secretariat and containing the draft resolutions and decisions on which action will be taken each day. Those 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 that regard, I propose that the Committee retain the procedure followed in previous years, whereby draft resolutions and decisions are grouped under the seven thematic clusters.

During the action phase, a draft provisional programme of work and timetable for the next year, to be issued as a conference room paper, will be circulated for the Committee's consideration and action. Closer to the final phase of our work, further information will be provided on how we will proceed, including the traditional ground rules for taking action on draft resolutions and decisions, which are prepared by the Secretariat and made available on the e-deleGATE portal.

The documents before the Committee at this session, including those already issued or forthcoming, are listed in information document A/C.1/76/INF/1. One of the forthcoming documents is a list of participants, which will be issued as A/C.1/76/INF/2. Focal points for Permanent Missions are reminded to submit their participants' names in an online form with the option of uploading a scanned copy of the relevant note verbale. Each Mission will have to make only a single submission for all the Main Committees. The deadline for submission is 31 October.

The Department of Global Communications 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.

The Committee will now consider document A/C.1/76/CRP.1. Before taking action on it, does any delegation 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. Leite Novaes (Brazil): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to perform the crucial task of guiding us down the winding road of the First Committee at this session. I would like to wish you the best of luck and to convey Brazil's full support for your work. The same goes to our colleagues in the Bureau and in the Secretariat.

As we are all aware, the General Assembly decided in resolution 75/243, which was adopted by consensus, that programmes on which no conclusions or recommendations are provided by the Committee for Programme and Coordination should be reviewed by the plenary or the relevant Main Committee. That must be done in a timely manner so that the Fifth Committee can discuss and approve the related budget.

It has come to our attention that the Committee for Programme and Coordination, at its session held last June, did not recommend the approval of programme 3, "Disarmament", of the proposed programme budget for 2022, which contains mandates under the purview of the First Committee and therefore should be discussed under agenda item 139, "Programme planning".

My delegation believes that it is the responsibility of the membership to discuss the substance of the programmes that did not receive a conclusion or recommendation from the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in accordance with resolution 75/243. We look forward to having a constructive discussion on that open programme during the current session of the First Committee.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): I would like to assure the representative of Brazil that I have taken note of his remarks. He is entirely correct to raise such a relevant matter. I will consult with the Bureau before coming back to the plenary on whether this is a matter referred to us by the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

Mr. Alhakam (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. We look forward to working with you.

We support the statement made by the representative of Brazil on behalf of the Group of 77 and China concerning those programmes on which

no conclusions and recommendations were provided by the Committee for Programme and Coordination, which has considered the programmes referred to it by the General Assembly. Therefore, programme 3, "Disarmament", of the proposed programme budget for 2022 should be reviewed in the First Committee before submission to the Fifth Committee.

Mr. Rice-Howell (United Kingdom): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election to this important position. Please be assured of my delegation's full support for you and your colleagues on the Bureau during your time in office over the weeks ahead.

There is no formal procedure that requires the plenary or a Main Committee to review proposed programme plans for which the Committee for Programme and Coordination was unable to provide conclusions or recommendations. This year, the Committee for Programme and Coordination again decided to refer programmes without conclusions or recommendations to the General Assembly rather than specifying a specific committee.

The plenary or a Main Committee can decide to consider those proposed programme plans if its membership so chooses. For the past two years, the plenary and Main Committees have chosen not to take up those programmes. That is within their rights. The General Assembly resolution from last year (resolution 75/243) did not change that situation: it remains up to the membership and the Bureau to decide whether or not to take up a certain matter in the light of wider considerations about their programme of work.

If the First Committee were to consider this matter, it bears repeating that the mandates of that programme have already been agreed and are not up for discussion. The Committee for Programme and Coordination simply recommended that the General Assembly review the proposed programme plan to check that all activities are in line with those mandates.

The proposal to have the Main Committees review those programme plans presents issues of a procedural, practical and substantive nature. Ultimately, it is questionable whether we have sufficient time, in what are likely to be heavy programmes of work, to discuss those issues. The Committee for Programme and Coordination discussions suggest potentially lengthy and difficult negotiations. In some cases, the mandates are relevant to multiple Committees — that is to say, the

Office of Legal Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations — which could complicate things further.

The Fifth Committee will consider the programmes nonetheless as part of its review of the annual budget. Time is of the essence. We should avoid any delay to the Fifth Committee's consideration of the United Nations regular budget in order to ensure that United Nations entities know what their budget is in good time. We owe it to the United Nations and the people it serves.

Mr. Elhomosany (Egypt): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections.

I take the floor to support my colleague from the Permanent Mission of Brazil on the issue of open programmes of the Committee for Programme and Coordination. Indeed, paragraph 9 of resolution 75/243 is clear on this matter. Therefore, we request that our programme of work include, under agenda item 139, "Programme planning", the relevant open programmes of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

Mrs. Nadeau (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Since this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, as well as your colleagues on the Bureau on your elections. I assure you of our full collaboration throughout our work ahead.

Regarding the matter of programme planning, I would like to thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his remarks, which we fully support. Moreover, we believe that the proper context for discussing this matter is the Fifth Committee.

Mr. Zambrana Torrelío (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Since this is the first time that I take the floor, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to lead our work, as well as the other members of Bureau.

I take the floor in support of the remarks made by the representative of Brazil in the light of resolution 75/243, paragraph 9, which clearly establishes that it is up to us, as the relevant Main Committee, to discuss the programme budget. While we understand our work is complicated and our agenda heavy, we believe it is more important that we discuss the matter at hand.

Mr. Li Sui (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, China congratulates you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the First Committee. We also thank the Bureau for its efforts to ensure that the session will be successful. China will work closely with the Bureau.

China supports the statements just made by the representatives of Brazil, Syria and other countries with regard to paragraph 9 of resolution 75/243. That paragraph provides that, in the rare event that the Committee for Programme and Coordination cannot provide conclusions and recommendations on a given subprogramme or programme of the proposed programme budget, the plenary of the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly responsible for those mandates will have the subprogramme or programme before it in order to provide any conclusions and recommendations on the said subprogramme and programme to the Fifth Committee, at the earliest opportunity, for timely consideration by the Committee.

In order to reach agreement as soon as possible on those issues, China supports the proposal by other representatives that the First Committee undertake consideration of the open programme in question.

Mrs. Romero López (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I convey my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections. We wish you every success in your work and assure you of Cuba's full support.

My delegation wishes to express its support for the proposal made to plan discussion as soon as possible, as part of the programme of work of the First Committee, of the agenda item entitled "Programme planning". In our view, it is up to the Main Committees to undertake substantive discussion of the subprogrammes and programmes of the proposed programme budget on which no specific conclusions and recommendations have been provided by the Committee for Programme and Coordination, especially when related to the implementation of a mandate established or promoted by the First Committee.

That is in line with paragraph 9 of resolution 75/243, whose implementation would be facilitated by the Organization's programme administrators being provided with an appropriate and adequate road map to carry out their work as expeditiously as possible. We trust that the Bureau, under your leadership, Mr. Chair, will find a way for us to discuss this important matter as part of the Committee's programme of work.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the chairmanship of the First Committee

and assure you of Russia's unstinting support for your efforts and those of the Bureau: you can rely on us.

I will not take up too much of the First Committee's time. I would simply like to say that we support our colleagues from Brazil, Cuba, Egypt, Syria, Bolivia and China concerning the need to discuss, during the work of our Committee, programmes on which consensus was not achieved at the sixty-first session of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in June 2021. That is fully in line with paragraph 9 of resolution 75/243.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the other Bureau members on your elections to preside over the First Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. Please rest assured of my delegation's full cooperation.

My delegation adds its support to the statement delivered by the representative of Brazil and supported by other delegations.

While I have the floor, please allow me to reflect on another important point. Following the observations that my delegation has expressed on previous occasions and during informal consultations, we take note of your explanations and all documents distributed on the organizational issues relative to the work of the First Committee. Nonetheless, I would like to put on record our position that, so far, we have heard several concerns expressed by many delegations regarding the possible implications of the modalities suggested in the relevant papers.

The virtual conduct of the informal consultations in particular has raised many questions and concerns regarding inclusivity and maintaining an equal footing among Member States. To minimize those implications, proper solutions should be foreseen. In that regard, it is incredible to note that, due to the unilateral course of measures taken by the host country, access to many of the platforms of virtual meetings is blocked for specific countries. Therefore, that obstacle must be removed in order to ensure equal access for all delegations. It is not only appreciated but also expected that you, Mr. Chair, and other United Nations authorities will work in unison in order to resolve this issue.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his kind words and observations. I would like to assure him that his concerns will be taken into consideration and

included in the record of the meeting. I also assure him of the concern of the Chair to ensure that all delegations can participate on an equal footing and that all States Members of the United Nations can fully participate in the work of both the General Assembly and its Main Committees.

Ms. McIntyre (Australia): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to this important position. I look forward to your stewardship of our discussions over the coming weeks.

I would just briefly add that I would support the referral of our budget back to the Fifth Committee, rather than its consideration by this Committee. Noting the already very heavy agenda of the First Committee and the constraints on our negotiating time owing to the pandemic, I think it would be unwise to further burden our time with consideration of the budget, which was already a very lengthy and complex issue for the Committee for Programme and Coordination to consider. Given that the Committee for Programme and Coordination itself was unable to reach consensus, I would also expect any First Committee consideration of the budget to be lengthy and complex.

Time is of the essence. We cannot delay the General Assembly's review of the budget, and it really needs to be treated as a matter of urgency to be referred to the Fifth Committee for proper consideration without further delay.

Mr. Knight (United States of America): Let me please add my delegation's voice in welcoming you, Mr. Chair, and the Bureau and congratulating you on your elections. You can rest assured that we will provide our full support as we undertake the exercise of the coming weeks.

Just to add our voice very briefly to those of our colleagues from the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, the United States is also of the view that the First Committee should neither postpone nor unduly delay the appropriate consideration of the budget items under consideration by the Fifth Committee and that those discussions belong with the Fifth Committee. We add our voice to those remarks.

Mrs. Romero López (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would just like to add briefly that we support what the representative of Iran said regarding the need to ensure that all Member States can participate on an equal footing in the work of the First Committee.

Mr. Dvořák (European Union): I will add only briefly to the discussion on this issue. I would like to refer to the statement made by my colleagues in the Third Committee this morning: our position presented there remains the same also for the First Committee.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank all those delegations that took the floor to express their views on whether to discuss this subject or refer it to the Fifth Committee. This is a highly unusual situation that requires consultation with the Secretariat, the Office of the President of the General Assembly and the other Committee Chairs.

As members will have grasped, this matter involves several bodies, including the Main Committees, the General Assembly, the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Fifth Committee, all of which need to find common language and an approach to this question of whether to proceed to discussion with or without a recommendation. Therefore, I should like to propose that we leave this matter pending while we await discussion of the agenda item and that we bring the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Secretariat and the President of the General Assembly into the discussion.

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.1/76/CRP.1, taking into account the observations that have been made this afternoon and, above all, concerning the need to continue consultations and to revert to the matter at a later date?

It was so decided.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): We shall now proceed to consider the draft indicative timetable for a structured discussion of specific subjects on the adopted thematic approach on disarmament and international security agenda items, as contained in document A/C.1/76/CRP.2.

There being no comments or questions on the document, may I therefore consider that the Committee wishes to proceed in accordance with the draft indicative timetable contained in document A/C.1/76/CRP.2 as presented?

It was so decided.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): I see no further requests for the floor and therefore propose to adjourn the meeting at this time, in accordance with our programme of work and timetable.

The Committee will meet again in the General Assembly Hall on Monday, 4 October, at 10 a.m. sharp to begin its substantive work with the general debate. I look forward to working closely with all members in the coming weeks and express my sincere thanks in advance for members' understanding and punctuality and for their respecting the rules agreed upon when it comes to limitations to speaking time, the financial statements and regional groups.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.