



# General Assembly

Seventy-seventh session

## First Committee

**10<sup>th</sup>** meeting

Thursday, 13 October 2022, 3 p.m.  
New York

Official Records

*Chair:* Mr. Pieris .....(Sri Lanka)

*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

75/325, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, and 76/236, on programme planning.

### Agenda items 90 to 108 (continued)

#### General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

**The Chair:** In accordance with the decision to devote at least one and a half hours of the general debate to statements by members of civil society, the Committee will now listen to statements by the representatives of non-governmental organizations. I extend a warm welcome to all present today and I would request all speakers to kindly make their statements short, and no longer than five minutes.

In keeping with the Committee's established practice, I will now suspend the meeting to enable us to continue in an informal setting.

*The meeting was suspended at 3.05 p.m. and resumed at 4.15 p.m.*

**The Chair:** This brings to an end the general debate of the Committee on all disarmament and international security agenda items allocated to it.

### Agenda items 124 and 139

#### Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

##### Programme planning

**The Chair:** In connection with these two agenda items, I invite the attention of the Committee to a note by the Secretariat contained in document A/C.1/77/INF/4, which highlights relevant provisions of resolutions

In accordance with operative paragraph 16 of resolution 76/236, whenever the Committee for Programme and Coordination cannot provide conclusions and recommendations on given subprogrammes or programmes of the proposed programme budget, the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Committees of the General Assembly responsible for those mandates will consider the said subprogramme or programme at the very start of its session in order to provide any conclusions and recommendations to the Fifth Committee at the earliest opportunity, and no later than four weeks after the start of the session, for timely consideration by the Fifth Committee.

In line with resolution 76/236, the Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended that the Assembly at its seventy-seventh session review the programme plan for programme 3, on disarmament, under the agenda item entitled "Programme planning". Today's meeting is in response to that mandate. I intend to submit a Chair's summary of the discussion under "Disarmament programme" to the Chair of the Fifth Committee following the debate. Similarly, based on the feedback from delegations, as Chair, I will summarize the key points raised by Committee members on the working methods of the Committee for onward transmission to the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly.

We will now hear from our first speaker.

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**Ms. Hill** (Australia): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Canada, New Zealand and my own country, Australia (CANZ).

I would like to thank you and the Bureau, Mr. Chair, for your work in managing the request to consider the 2023 programme plan on disarmament. We support you, as the Chair of this Committee, in communicating the outcomes of today's discussion to the Chair of the Fifth Committee at the earliest opportunity for the Fifth Committee's timely consideration.

CANZ is not represented on the Committee on Programme and Coordination (CPC), but we recognize the important role it plays, as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, in providing conclusions and recommendations on the programme plan portion of the United Nations budget to the General Assembly, through the Fifth Committee.

Here we would like to recall paragraph 7 of resolution 76/236, on programme planning, which recommended that the CPC provide recommendations on all programmes in the programme budget. We welcome that the CPC was able to agree recommendations for more programmes this year than last year, after its session was extended to five weeks. However, we share the disappointment of colleagues that the CPC was unable to reach consensus on recommendations for five programmes, including disarmament. We also want to recall paragraph 16, which states that whenever the CPC cannot provide conclusions and recommendations on a given programme, the plenary or relevant Main Committee will consider that programme at the very start of its session, in order to provide any conclusions and recommendations to the Fifth Committee at the earliest opportunity for timely consideration by the Fifth Committee.

We note that the mandates included in all programme plans have been agreed by Member States. We believe that the programme plan on disarmament faithfully translates the relevant mandates from Member States and we do not support altering it. The CPC is a consensus-based body. The Fifth Committee is a consensus-based body by tradition, and any conclusions and recommendations provided by other Committees must also be decided by consensus. Any attempts to move forward on these matters without consensus would undermine not only the CPC but also the Fifth Committee and the budget planning process.

Mr. Chair, we ask that you, on behalf of the First Committee, recommend to the Fifth Committee that the General Assembly approve the programme narratives on programme 3 of the 2023 proposed programme budget, as proposed by the Secretary-General.

**The Chair:** I now give the floor to the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer.

**Ms. Homolkova** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. I would like to emphasize that we welcome this discussion and that we very much appreciate all your efforts, Mr. Chair, and preparations in relation to this discussion and to resolution 76/236.

I would like to emphasize that this informal discussion should not be duplicative of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), nor should it aim to replace it — otherwise, it would undermine the important role of the CPC in the future.

We would like to reiterate that the agenda item “Programme planning” is not meant to re-litigate the work of the Committee for Programme and Coordination let alone reopen the substantive mandates that underpin the programme plans. In that regard, we highlight that the CPC should strive to reach consensus on all submitted programme plans. We regret very much that consensus could not be found on five very important programmes related to disarmament. We would like to also recall that planning is a consensus-based exercise and that the Fifth Committee is responsible for overseeing the implementation of mandates and therefore has the final responsibility to adopt the programme plan and budget.

In conclusion, we are convinced that the programme plan for programme 3, “Disarmament”, faithfully transcribed the relevant mandates for Member States, and we oppose any alteration of the proposed plans. We would like to kindly ask you to reflect these views in your Chair's summary.

**Mr. Turner** (United States of America): Much along the lines of the previous speakers, the United States is disappointed that the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) was unable to provide conclusions and recommendations for five programme plans during its sixty-second session. That included programme 3, “Disarmament”, which is relevant to our Committee.

Our understanding, as per paragraph 16 of resolution 76/236, which you read out to all of us, is that the ultimate authority on these matters still lies

with the Fifth Committee, which is responsible for administrative and budgetary matters. Programme plans must be considered by the Fifth Committee as a final step. The CPC is a consensus-based body, and the Fifth Committee is a consensus-based body by tradition. Any conclusions and recommendations provided by the other Committees must be decided by consensus. Attempts to move forward on these matters without consensus would undermine the entire planning process. As evidenced by the CPC, deliberations on these plans are long and arduous, meaning that this would take a great deal of valuable time away from the already strenuous work of this Committee. We therefore ask for support in swiftly moving the programme plan for disarmament to the Fifth Committee.

As for the programme itself, I have a couple of comments. We take note of the lessons learned and adjustments that have been required because of the coronavirus disease pandemic. While the global community looks forward to conditions that will allow greater in-person participation, we concur that new technologies and ways of working developed during the pandemic can also be positives and facilitate greater transparency, more inclusive participation and a more environmentally conscious approach to the work of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and multilateral forums generally. We also concur with the aspirations expressed in the document for greater cooperation with other entities at the global, regional, national and local levels, as well as engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders.

Finally, we would note the references to increasing efforts on diversity, including gender equality, in disarmament forums and participation. The United States underlines the importance of diversity and inclusion, particularly gender equity, as a critical component in ensuring great global peace and security.

**Mr. Hashmi** (Pakistan): I do not have a prepared statement. I would just like to make some remarks and comments in line with the originally intended interactive nature of this discussion.

First, in principle we agree that the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and the Fifth Committee, which traditionally consider programme and budget aspects, are the forums that should continue to deliberate, review and approve those aspects. Having said that, we are also open to consideration of these subjects by the First Committee if and when these

matters remain unresolved in those bodies. In any case, the questions of budget and programme should not be immune to discussions in the substantive committee itself, which is the First Committee, especially pertaining to questions about disarmament. At the end of the day, this is about intergovernmental oversight of the programme budget and the substantive mandates.

I have five observations with respect to the budget, expenditures and posts. In specific terms, I am talking about document A/77/6. The first observation is that the overall envelope of the budget for the subprogramme on disarmament is divided almost equally between regular budget and extrabudgetary resources. We would like to see more visibility on the utilization of extrabudgetary resources. For example, we would like to know the breakdown of how much of those extrabudgetary resources are earmarked, tightly earmarked or unearmarked. That transparency, or greater visibility, is essential to ensure that the resources that are provided, especially from extrabudgetary sources, are in line with the intergovernmentally agreed mandates or, more specifically, implementation of those core intergovernmentally agreed mandates.

The second observation relates to our continuing concern over the imbalance in geographic representation in the Office for Disarmament Affairs. Now, if we look at the numbers in the document with respect to the current composition of staffing in the Office for Disarmament Affairs, we see that the cumulative number of people from four regions is less than the number of people from one specific region. There are around 18 people from four regions collectively, whereas one region has a geographic representation of 19. That discrepancy needs to be rectified. That is something that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) has also pointed out, and we echo the ACABQ call for more efforts and steps to rectify that imbalance going forward. That is something that the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has periodically highlighted, and we trust that the Office for Disarmament Affairs leadership will take steps in that direction.

My third point is on the composition of the various groups of governmental experts (GGEs). We recognize that, owing to budgetary constraints and because the mandates are agreed first at the First Committee level, once a resolution has been adopted, that turns into a mandate. However, over the years we have seen that the composition of GGEs has shrunk

from the traditional number of 25 to around 15. That part is fully understandable, but when it comes to the finalization of the actual composition of the GGEs, we need to see more representation and diversity from States and regions that is truly reflective of the balance of interests and perspectives. That is something to which the Non-Aligned Movement has also spoken, and I would like to emphasize that point once again. In the future, greater representation and diversity from various regions and countries needs to be ensured in the composition of the GGEs.

My fourth point is on the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Office for Disarmament Affairs for its professional conduct of this Fellowship over the years. This Fellowship has been in place for more than 40 years. We trust that the Office will continue to ensure that the original objective of enhancing the capacity, knowledge and understanding of professionals from developing countries will be enhanced through this Fellowship going forward. I would like to commend the Office for doing a very good job.

My final point is on the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). I would like to underscore that this is an important constituent of the disarmament machinery. We are concerned that the level of regular subvention that is approved by the General Assembly for the UNIDIR budget continues to be very modest. That paves the way for an oversized level of extrabudgetary resources, which in many cases are tightly earmarked. That is something that we would like to place on record.

**Mr. Hegazy (Egypt):** I would like to make some quick remarks on the proposed programme budget for 2023. We believe that it might be difficult for some disarmament experts to discuss budgetary issues within the First Committee. We also believe it might be more appropriate to discuss them in the right forums. While we do discuss rocket science, it might be difficult for us to understand budgetary issues. We would therefore be in support of sending the programme budget report to the Fifth Committee Chair through you, Mr. Chair, in a letter. We would also like to underscore the importance of the adoption by consensus of this report and the maintenance of its exclusively technical nature. These were our brief comments, and we hope that we can send the report through you, Mr. Chair, to the Chair of the Fifth Committee.

**Mr. Rice-Howell (United Kingdom):** I thank you, Mr. Chair, and the Bureau for arranging today's meeting on working methods and programme planning. I would like to be clear that this meeting does not set any precedent for how the First Committee approaches the matter of programme planning in the future.

In the light of the significant burden of work in the First Committee, the United Kingdom would like to reiterate that we consider the Committee on Programme and Coordination to be the best place to review and provide technical conclusions and recommendations on the proposed programme plan for 2023.

The Committee on Programme and Coordination plays an important technical advisory role in the General Assembly's review of the United Nations programme budget. We regret that it has again not provided any conclusions or recommendations to the General Assembly on this programme. We reiterate our call on the Committee on Programme and Coordination to redouble its efforts to reach consensus on all programmes next year.

The mandates covered in this programme have been agreed. This Committee is being asked to review the proposed programme plan and to check that activities proposed by the Secretary-General are in line with these agreed mandates. It is not to reinterpret or reopen those mandates through what should be a technical review process.

As has been set out in General Assembly resolutions, and in line with the regulations and rules, it remains the role of the Fifth Committee to endorse these programme plans. We thank our colleagues from the Office for Disarmament Affairs for preparing programme 3. The United Kingdom supports the crucial work of the Office for Disarmament Affairs. We acknowledge in particular its work in supporting the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

It is clear that multilateral efforts in this area have in the last year been disrupted by the coronavirus disease pandemic. We welcome the virtual engagement and flexibility of the Office for Disarmament Affairs over the last few years. We would welcome an update on how it has used lessons learned to enhance mandate delivery.

We welcome the continued effort of the programme to reinforce the norm against chemical weapons, including by supporting full implementation of



international instruments such as the Chemical Weapons Convention. Maintaining levels of technical expertise, preparedness and resourcing is key for the delivery of this programme.

The United Kingdom welcomes the strong language throughout the programme on gender equality and the participation of women in the work of this programme and would welcome an update on progress in this respect.

Lastly, on the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on this programme, we welcome the steps taken by the Office for Disarmament Affairs to implement the recommendations. In particular, we welcome the Office's first-ever strategic plan for the period 2021–2025, and we would welcome steps taken by the Office to improve monitoring and evaluation.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, the United Kingdom asks that you, on behalf of this Committee, recommend to the Fifth Committee that the General Assembly approve relevant programme plans without modification.

**Mr. Leite Novaes (Brazil):** Before I begin, I would like to express our surprise at the fact that only a little more than one hour was allocated for the discussion of dozens of pages of the proposed programme. Further, although we fully support the participation of civil society in the Committee's work, I would also like to express my surprise at the almost all-white and all-Northern composition of the civil society panel we just saw. We sincerely hope that next time we will have a more ethnically and geographically balanced group.

Turning to my statement, during last year's session of the General Assembly, resolution 76/236 reiterated that whenever the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) cannot provide conclusions and recommendations on a given subprogramme or programme of the proposed programme budget, the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly responsible for those mandates will consider the said subprogramme or programme at the very start of its session in order to provide any conclusions and recommendations to the Fifth Committee, at the earliest opportunity, and no later than four weeks after the start of the session, for timely consideration by the Fifth Committee.

Despite the tireless efforts of several delegations, including my own, once again this year, the CPC was unable to reach consensus on five programmes, including programme 3, "Disarmament".

Programme planning is an essential part of the work of the United Nations. It is how mandates are translated into activities to be fulfilled by the Organization. If we fail to have intergovernmental approval of the programmes, the Secretariat is left without guidance and is unable to appropriately deliver on its mandates.

It is extremely disappointing that the CPC once again failed to approve the disarmament programme. In that regard, allow me to refer to what some delegations have said about undermining the work of the CPC, in particular the Main Committees' analysis and recommendations as something that would undermine the work of the CPC. What undermines the work of the CPC is not the Main Committees discussing and giving recommendations on the programmes but rather the CPC's inability to fulfil its mandate. And if that continues to happen, the Main Committees have a duty to take on the responsibilities according to the rules of procedure that govern the work of the Main Committees. That has been done in the past and could very well be done in the future if the CPC continues to be unable to fulfil its purpose.

Turning back to my statement, it is extremely disappointing that the CPC failed to approve the disarmament programme — to a great extent owing to the politicization of discussions that should be of a merely technical nature. It is the fourth consecutive year that the Committee has not reached a conclusion regarding programme 3. This year, however, the Secretariat should not be left without intergovernmental guidance. Allow me to revert to the programme itself, which is not a budgetary issue. I invite colleagues to read the programme in order to see that this is not a Fifth Committee issue, but rather a substantive issue that relates entirely to the work of the Main Committees, including the First Committee.

First, I would like to express our full support for the work of the Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA) in assisting States' multilateral efforts to promote our common disarmament goals. Brazil is supportive of the programme as drafted and hopes the First Committee will be able to recommend the approval thereof by the Fifth Committee. We fully endorse references made to the Secretariat's work in support of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, especially to the organization of its first meeting of States Parties, which took place earlier this year. We hope to see such references maintained in future programmes, as mandated by the General Assembly. We equally

support the adoption of a gender-sensitive approach to the programme, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The women and peace and security agenda is a top priority for Brazil in its disarmament efforts. Another issue that I would like to praise is the emphasis given in the programme to the strengthened implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), the comprehensive review process of which is currently being carried out by the Council.

Mr. Chair, we appreciate your efforts and those of the Secretariat to hold this crucial meeting. We stress the time-sensitiveness of the agenda item on programme planning and trust that the First Committee will be able to complete the review of said programme and send its conclusions and recommendations to the Fifth Committee. This should not be a merely procedural meeting. It is not enough to produce a compilation of positions. I should emphasize that we are mandated to provide conclusions and recommendations to our colleagues in the Fifth Committee. Anything short of that will mean that we were once again incapable of fulfilling our duty.

**Ms. Romero Lopez** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We express our thanks for the convening of this meeting and would like to make a few comments on the matter.

As regards programme planning, we welcome the fact that the programme of work of our Committee allowed for a debate on this issue. We are of the view that it is up to the Main Committees to substantively address the programmes and subprogrammes of the proposed programme budget for which the Committee for Programme and Coordination did not provide specific conclusions and recommendations, especially when they create and give effect to mandates that the Committee has established or promoted. This allows us to support programme administrators within the Organization in having an accurate and adequate way of accomplishing their work as quickly as possible.

As regards the working methods, we wish to recall that the pandemic has affected the work of the Organization, and the General Assembly had to adapt its methods in order to continue operating. We recall that those methods were of an exceptional nature. The rules of the General Assembly should continue to guide our work and the mandates and functions of the Assembly should be respected. We advocate for the resumption

of in-person work for our Committee as well as for the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies, including for negotiations. The participation of all delegations must be ensured in equal conditions.

**Mr. Kusano** (Japan): We would like to express our sincere appreciation for all the efforts made by the Chair and the Secretariat for the First Committee.

Paragraph 16 of resolution 76/236 states that the plans that did not receive conclusions and recommendations from the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) will be considered by the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly responsible for those mandates at the very start of its session in order to provide any conclusions and recommendations to the Fifth Committee, at the earliest opportunity, and no later than four weeks after the start of the session, for timely consideration by the Fifth Committee.

While we believe that it is indeed within the purview of each Committee to decide whether or how to take up programme planning in our programme of work, and my delegation remains committed to engaging positively and constructively to achieve the best possible outcome for all of us as evidenced by the work of the CPC, deliberations on these plans are long and politically sensitive processes, meaning that this would take a good deal of valuable time away from the already crowded workload of the First Committee.

It is also important to point out that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters, including programme planning. We therefore believe that it is in our best interest to swiftly move these programme plans to the Fifth Committee so that it may continue with its work, with an understanding that the Chairs of the Main Committees dictate the path forward for their work.

**Mr. Vorontsov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the Office for Disarmament Affairs for their support in implementing the decisions taken by the Security Council and General Assembly. Such assistance should be unbiased, de-politicized and carried out strictly in line with the mandates issued by Member States. The same goes for the proposed programme plan. The Russian delegation did submit proposals on how to amend the document (A/77/6) but in order to save time, I am not going to repeat them

here in the First Committee. If there is a need for that, we stand ready to send our considerations to you, Mr. Chair.

The problem with the document and its consideration in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly does not consist in the lack of the necessary level of expertise in the Fifth Committee but rather in the fact that the contents of the document are not in line with the Fifth Committee mandate. And that is because a fairly large number of provisions directly related to the activities and the areas of interest of the First Committee were included in the document.

Those issues are substantive in nature and have to do with arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, and that is precisely why the Fifth Committee and the Committee for Programme and Coordination are hardly in a position to consider them or come to consensus decisions thereupon. Under the current conditions, therefore, the best solution in our view would be to reproduce the decision that we made last year, which would be as follows:

*(spoke in English)*

“To approve, on an exceptional basis and without creating a precedent, for programme 3 of the proposed budget for 2023, a programme narrative that is composed solely of the list of mandates at the programme level and the objectives approved by General Assembly in its resolution 71/6 and the deliverables for 2023 at the subprogramme level.”

*(spoke in Russian)*

We would also like to use this opportunity to describe how the Russian Federation approaches the work of the First Committee, including our view of the participation by observers from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which was already touched upon by Brazil. This is also something that we pay close attention to, considering the kinds of NGOs that we listened to today.

The meetings of the First Committee must be conducted exclusively in person, provided that there is a sufficient number of specialists from each delegation in the room. We do not consider a telecommuting arrangement or a hybrid format for our meetings to be acceptable. Experience shows that such alternative formats considerably diminish the effectiveness of our work and are not conducive to achieving successful results.

Another important issue concerning the organization of the work of the First Committee is the participation therein of non-governmental entities. It is our view that such participation should be fully in line with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and established First Committee practice. It must be conducted without detriment to the intergovernmental nature of this body. The States that are not members of the United Nations, as well as intergovernmental organizations and entities that have been given observer status have a standing invitation to participate in meetings as observers. Other interested parties should inform the Secretariat that they are interested in participating and should provide information about the goals, programmes and activities of their organizations in those areas that fall within the area of competence of the First Committee. Such organizations will then be invited, as appropriate, to participate as observers under silence procedure. NGOs that have been given observer status and other interested parties approved by Member States under the silence procedure could participate in official meetings of the General Assembly, make oral statements within a specialized informal segment for NGOs and submit written reports, which would then be published. All contributions they make should be in line with the agenda of the First Committee.

Member States should use their sovereign right to invoke an objection, but should do so reasonably, in a spirit of inclusivity and to promote the important contribution of other interested parties to the work of the First Committee. Other interested parties should approach the work in the First Committee responsibly and be politically neutral.

We must ensure to abide by the principle of equitable geographical distribution and the principle of diversity of NGO participation. If there is a Member State who objects to the participation of some other interested party, they do not have to state their objection publicly or disclose the reasons therefor. At the same time, such a Member State has a right to voluntarily state their objection and the rationale behind it. And with the agreement of the State, the Chair could then share that information with another Member State upon the request of the latter. Using and following these principles would help us to avoid problems within the First Committee in the future and would ensure that our work here is effective.

An additional obstacle to developing dialogue among Member States on issues having to do with

arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation is the issue of visa issuance to delegates who are attending United Nations events. Here we would like once again to underscore the lack of good faith on the American side when it comes to their obligations to issue visas to members of delegations who are attending United Nations events. This is an unacceptable practice, and it is a gross violation of the international legal obligations of the United States under the 1947 Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations. Under that Agreement, unimpeded travel to United Nations Headquarters areas is to be provided to the representatives or officials from Member States. Such representatives and officials should also be issued visas free of charge and as quickly as possible.

**Ms. Bentégeat** (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. Chair, for organizing this discussion. We believe it is important to ensure that it does not detract from disarmament issues, which are at the heart of the work of the First Committee, and that it does not duplicate the work of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), which would weaken that Committee's important role. Programme planning is not intended to call into question the work of the

CPC and even less to reconsider the substance of the mandates that underpin the plans. I recall that these mandates have already been agreed and the plans are just a faithful rendering of these mandates.

We regret that consensus was not achieved on such an important programme as the programme on disarmament. Planning is a consensus-based exercise. The Fifth Committee is responsible for overseeing implementation of the mandates, and, as such, it is this Committee that has final responsibility for adopting the plan and budget. Plans for programme 3 accurately reflect the mandate that was given by the Member States on this subject, and we support these plans. We would therefore ask you, Mr. Chair, to recommend on behalf of the First Committee to the Fifth Committee that it approve the plan as proposed without modification.

**The Chair:** We have heard the last speaker and have exhausted the time available for this meeting. I will share with delegations my summary of today's discussions. The next meeting of the Committee will be held tomorrow afternoon at 3 p.m. in this conference room, when the Committee will begin its thematic discussion.

*The meeting rose at 5 p.m.*