



# General Assembly

Seventy-third session

## First Committee

1<sup>st</sup> meeting

Thursday, 4 October 2018, 3 p.m.  
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Jinga. . . . . (Romania)

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

for all of their hard work in ensuring the success of that 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:** At the outset, I should like to extend a warm and sincere welcome to all delegations participating in the First Committee's deliberations at the seventy-third 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. I am indeed honoured and deeply indebted to all Committee 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 that ensures that our work is carried out efficiently and that our endeavours meet with success. I hope that 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 Mohammed Hussein Bahr Aluloom of Iraq for the skilful and effective manner in which he conducted the proceedings of the First Committee at the seventy-second session. I should also like to pay tribute to the other members of the previous Bureau

Before proceeding further, I would like to remind delegations that the Committee has to fill two more positions of Vice-Chair. As members will recall, when the election of Bureau members for the seventy-third session took place on 5 June (see A/C.1/72/PV.29), nominations were pending for Vice-Chairs from the Group of African States and the Group of Western European and other States. It is my pleasure to inform the Committee that the Group of African States has nominated Mr. Noël Diarra of Mali, and the Group of Western European and Other States has nominated Mr. José Ataíde Amaral of Portugal, for those two remaining positions. Since no other candidate has been nominated, may I take it that the Committee wishes to elect by acclamation Mr. Noël Diarra of Mali and Mr. José Ataíde Amaral of Portugal as Vice-Chairs of the First Committee for the seventy-third session of the General Assembly?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** I warmly congratulate Mr. Noël Diarra and Mr. José Ataíde Amaral on their election. I look forward to working closely with both of them, as well as with Vice-Chair Ms. Marissa Edwards of Guyana and Rapporteur Ms. Muna Zawani Md Idris of Brunei Darussalam. I am pleased to report that, over the past weeks, we have developed a strong collegial and professional approach to our work, which certainly augurs well for this session of the Committee. At this time, I would also like to recognize the very professional and friendly support of the Secretariat, in particular the

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Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.

### Organization of work

**The Chair:** The Committee has before it document A/C.1/73/1, which contains the 19 agenda items allocated to the First Committee by the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September. The Committee also has before it documents A/C.1/73/CRP.1, A/C.1/73/CRP.2 and A/C.1/73/CRP.3, which contain, respectively, the Committee's proposed programme of work and timetable for 2018, the draft indicative timetable for structured discussion of specific subjects on the adopted thematic approach on disarmament and international security agenda items, and the text of a draft decision proposed by the delegation of Brazil, entitled "Participation in panel in the exchange with the High Representative and other high-level officials".

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/73/250.

In order to make full use of the time and conference services made available to the Committee, with its cooperation and support, 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 in order to enable the Committee to maintain, or even improve, the record of its utilization of conference facilities.

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

On the question of explanations of vote, rights of reply and points of order, the Committee will conduct its work strictly in accordance with decision 34/401, which states that explanations of vote should be limited to 10 minutes. The first intervention in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation, on any item at a given meeting, should be limited to 10 minutes, and the second intervention should be limited to five minutes. In line with the decision taken by the Assembly on 21 September, upon the recommendation of the General Committee, points of order should be limited to five minutes.

Returning to the organization of work of the Committee and the agenda items allocated to it, as set out in document A/C.1/73/1, I would like to draw the attention of the members of the Committee to the following.

First, three new sub-items have been added to the Committee's agenda, namely sub-item (c) of agenda item 99, entitled "Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space"; sub-item (mm) of agenda item 101, entitled "Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World"; and sub-item (oo) of agenda item 101, entitled "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons". Those sub-items result from the decisions taken by the Assembly at its seventieth and seventy-second sessions.

Secondly, 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 item 101, entitled "General and complete disarmament". I have been informed that the Assembly will consider the report of IAEA tentatively on Friday, 9 November.

Thirdly, 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 2019. In that connection, the Committee is asked to review a note by the Secretariat contained in document A/C.1/73/INF/4, which highlights the provisions of General Assembly resolution 72/313, entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly".

Finally, agenda item 137, entitled "Programme planning", is allocated to all the Main Committees and the plenary of the General Assembly in order to

enhance discussion of evaluation, planning, budgeting and monitoring reports. So far, I have not received any information concerning that item.

I will now highlight a few details related to the Committee's proposed programme of work and timetable, as outlined in document A/C.1/73/CRP.1, which is based on General Assembly decision 72/516, of 4 December 2017. As indicated in document A/C.1/73/CRP.1, the First Committee will commence its substantive work on Monday, 8 October. It will hold a total of 27 substantive meetings and should conclude its work by 9 November, as approved by the General Assembly.

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

The general debate on all items will run from 8 to 17 October, for a total of eight meetings. During that segment, on 16 October, the Committee will have its usual exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs on the follow-up to the draft resolutions and draft decisions adopted by the Committee at its previous sessions and on the presentation of reports. In addition, during the general debate segment, the President of the General Assembly will address the First Committee on Monday, 8 October. At the end of the general debate, the Committee will devote at least half a meeting — 90 minutes — to hear statements by representatives of civil society in an informal setting, following which delegations will be given the floor to make comments or pose questions to the speakers.

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 web portal. 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 their names 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, 9 October, at 6 p.m. I would also like to remind all delegations to keep in mind that a rolling list implies that they should be prepared to intervene 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 respect the time limits for statements of eight minutes when speaking in a national capacity and 13 minutes when speaking on behalf of groups of delegations. I would encourage participants to keep to those time limits to address genuine time-management concerns expressed by delegations over the years. In that regard, delegations with relatively long statements should deliver a concise summary of their texts and submit the full statement in written form for posting on PaperSmart.

The second stage of the Committee's work will focus on thematic discussions 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 afternoon of Wednesday, 17 October, to Wednesday, 31 October, for a total of 13 meetings. In that regard, I would like to highlight that the Committee will meet all day on Wednesday, 17 October, with the general debate ending in the morning and the thematic discussions beginning in the afternoon. 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.1/73/CRP.2.

During the second phase the Committee will take up the respective subject areas listed in the timetable, comprising the seven clusters on which it has traditionally focused during that phase of its work: "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". For each of the seven clusters, our proceedings will comprise two parts. The first part will begin in a formal mode, with a panel or guest speakers, as applicable, and will be followed by an informal question-and-answer segment, during which delegations taking the floor will need to ask concise questions rather than read out statements. The second part will be in a formal mode and will

consist of interventions by delegations, including the introduction of draft resolutions and draft decisions.

I would now like to touch on the exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials in the field of arms control and disarmament on the theme “Current state of affairs in the field of disarmament and arms control”, which is scheduled to take place on 17 October. As delegations will recall, at the briefing that I convened on 10 September, the rationale behind the proposed composition of the panel of high-level officials was discussed and it was proposed that the panel comprise the following six officials: the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Executive Director of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. There are nine seats at the table.

Since that briefing, I have received feedback from several delegations on the matter. In view of the diverse opinions and views received, I requested that document A/C.1/73/CRP.2 be issued without any reference to the composition of the panel. The delegation of Brazil has since submitted a draft decision on participation in the panel, as contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3, which is before the Committee today for its consideration. I have also received proposals from other delegations, including a substantive proposal from Mexico.

Given the diverse views that continue to be expressed by delegations on this critical issue, and in order to find a lasting solution regarding the composition of the panel, I intend to continue holding consultations with interested delegations and to incorporate their views in a non-paper that will be issued during the current session of the Committee. If necessary, informal consultations will be convened on the non-paper, during the intersessional period, with a view to arriving at a longer-term decision by June 2019.

Document A/C.1/73/CRP.2 indicates the panels and briefings to be held during the thematic segment. The Committee will hold panel discussions under cluster 6, “Regional disarmament and security”, and cluster 7, “Disarmament machinery”, and introductory statements under the clusters 1 and 4. Due to the schedule of the Chair of the Group of Governmental Experts on Further

Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, that briefing will be held on 18 October.

Delegations are reminded that the Committee will meet all day on 17, 22 and 29 October, according to its programme of work. On 25 October, the Committee will hold the traditional certificate award ceremony for graduating Disarmament Fellows.

The list of speakers for the thematic segment will open on Thursday, 11 October, via the e-speaker tool for the First Committee on the e-deleGATE web portal. As indicated in the programme of work, the deadline for inscription on the list of speakers for the thematic discussions is Monday, 22 October, at 6 p.m. Thereafter, the list will close. All delegations wishing to take the floor during that segment of our work are therefore kindly asked to make every effort to inscribe their names on the list of speakers before the stipulated deadline. In addition, 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 to seven minutes. With the Committee’s understanding, I intend to apply those time limits faithfully to enable it 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 time limits indicated.

The third, and last, segment of the work of the Committee, namely, action on all draft resolutions and draft decisions, will run from Thursday, 1 November, to Thursday, 8 November, for a total of five meetings, since the United Nations will observe Diwali on Wednesday, 7 November. As discussed at the briefing on 10 September, no formal meeting of the Committee will be scheduled on Diwali. Members are asked to kindly note that, while the Committee will aim to conclude its work Thursday, 8 November, there is an option to hold a sixth meeting, if necessary, on 9 November.

As indicated in the programme of work, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and draft decisions is Thursday, 18 October, at noon. Compliance with that deadline will provide sufficient time to delegations for consultations and also ensure the timely issuance of all drafts in all official languages. Sponsors and co-sponsors of draft resolutions and draft decisions wishing to schedule informal consultations on their drafts are encouraged to begin as soon as possible, in order to ensure that they have sufficient time for

those consultations. Delegations that need assistance in booking conference rooms in that regard should contact the Secretariat.

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 draft 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. A briefing will be held immediately after the adjournment of this meeting, conducted by senior United Nations officials, on the programme budget implications process. I encourage delegations to actively participate in that briefing.

At the same time, I would like to remind all delegations that, in accordance with paragraph 12 of General Assembly 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 draft 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 the 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 draft 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 the First Committee's website. It contains very useful information on the programme budget implications process for delegations as they make their preparations.

All submitted draft proposals will continue to be listed in a conference room paper and grouped under the seven clusters I mentioned. Those drafts will be issued subsequently as L. documents, which will indicate on the title page the delegations that have signed on as sponsors of the draft prior to its submission to the Secretariat. Delegations are reminded that the sponsoring of draft proposals will continue through the e-sponsorship tool on the e-deleGATE portal, which will also be covered in today's technical briefing.

During the action phase, the Committee will continue to be guided by the informal papers issued by the Secretariat 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 it has followed in previous years, by which draft resolutions and draft decisions are grouped under the clusters I mentioned.

During the action phase, a draft provisional programme of work and timetable for the seventy-fourth session will be issued as a conference room paper and 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 on the traditional ground rules for taking action on draft resolutions and draft 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 document A/C.1/73/INF/1. One of the forthcoming documents is a list of participants, which will be issued as A/C.1/73/INF/2. The e-list of participants module has been deployed for the lists of membership of the Main Committees and for the list of delegations to the seventy-third session. Permanent Missions' focal points should submit their participants' names in an online form and upload a scanned copy of the relevant note verbale. Each Mission will have to make only a single submission for all the Main Committees, as well as for the list of delegates to the seventy-third session.

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.

The Committee will now consider document A/C.1/73/CRP.1. Before taking action on document A/C.1/73/CRP.1, I shall give the floor to delegations for comments or questions on the information I have provided so far regarding the organization of the Committee's work for this session.

**Ms. Jáquez Huacuja** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would just like to ask a question before we proceed. I am more or less clear about the Committee's proposed

programme of work. We have a document before us that outlines the First Committee's programme of work for this session. We thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for your comments and for taking into account the proposals made by my delegation. However, my question is — will we hold consultations to determine the composition of the panel, as it is not defined in the document? According to the programme of work, the panel is scheduled to take place on 17 October. Who will the members of the panel be? Have consultations been planned before 17 October to determine the composition of this year's panel? I am asking about this because we are a little concerned, Mr. Chair, because you stress the need for ongoing discussions on this matter, perhaps until March 2019. As you have said, such discussion is needed and we agree. But the question of the composition of the panel to be held on 17 October remains unresolved.

**The Chair:** I hope that we will be able to reach a decision today, preferably by consensus, on the composition of the panel to be held on 17 October. If not, it will be up to Committee members to decide if we will need to hold consultations. When I mentioned consultations on the composition of the panel, I was thinking about the composition of panels at future sessions and whether we might be able to establish a clear rule for that going forward. For the composition of the panel at the current session, I will be guided by the suggestions of Member States. I hope that together we will be able to find a solution.

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.1/73/CRP.1?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair:** Before turning to the indicative timetable contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.2, the Committee shall first consider the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3, in accordance with rules 130 and 131 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Before taking action on the draft decision, I shall give the floor to delegations for comments or questions.

**Mr. Bravaco** (United States of America): First of all, let me congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your assumption of this important responsibility. You can count on the American delegation's full support.

To clarify, Mr. Chair, are you asking the Committee to adopt draft decision A/C.1/73/CRP.3 by consensus?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Bravaco** (United States of America): Unfortunately, my delegation is not in a position to support the consensus adoption of the draft decision at this time. We understand, Mr. Chair, that you wish to continue to hold consultations on the composition of the panel, so that the adoption of draft decision A/C.1/73/CRP.3 now by consensus seems to put the cart before the horse because the decision establishes, at least in part, who will be on the panel.

Perhaps, as you suggest, Mr. Chair, we should continue informal consultations to try and arrive at a compromise solution and reach consensus, which has been the long-standing tradition on procedural matters before the Committee. I believe that we should try to adhere to consensus-building and consensus-making on procedural matters before the Committee. It is a tradition that has served us well in the past. At this point, I am afraid that my delegation cannot support the consensus adoption of the draft decision. We would like to continue informal consultations to arrive at consensus on the composition of the panel, not only for this year and but also for the years to come.

**Mr. Hansen** (Australia): I would like to assure you, Mr. Chair, of the full support of the Australian delegation as well.

I have listened carefully to what we have just heard from the delegations of the United States and Mexico. We appreciate that this is a complex issue. During the preparatory meeting held earlier, Australia spoke about the need for equitable arrangements to be reached on this particular issue. We continue to hold that view. We think that the proposal that you have made, Mr. Chair, is a very good one, namely, for consultations to be held on this particular matter with a view to reaching a decision by March or June next year and issuing a non-paper on the topic during this session.

Our view is that the procedure should be formalized in the draft decision, as proposed by Brazil in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3, so that, in addition to indicating that the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean would participate this year, it also plans or formalizes the course of action ahead, including the issuance of a non-paper, following consultations during this session, with a view to

reaching a decision on the future by March or June next year. I think that would be consistent with the letter from the Permanent Representative of Brazil dated 24 September 2018, which stated that:

“We remain at your disposal to engage in discussions on possible arrangements that may lead to a permanent solution to this issue in the future and pave the way for a consensus decision on the matter”.

If we are to take that approach, we should ensure that it is reflected in the decision itself so that we all know what is ahead. That might address some of the issues that have been raised by the delegation that took the floor before me.

**Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer** (Brazil): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election.

As the Committee is aware, over the past four years the States of Latin America and the Caribbean have strongly supported the participation of the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) as a panellist in the exchange of views among the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials on the current state of affairs in the field of disarmament and arms control, also called the high-level panel, which is traditionally organized at the beginning of the thematic debate of each session of the First Committee. That eventually came to pass during the seventy-second session, in 2017, when the First Committee approved by consensus draft decision A/C.1/72/CRP.4 to invite the Secretary-General of OPANAL to participate in the high-level panel (see A/C.1/72/PV.5).

It was therefore with great surprise that, during the informal consultations held on 10 September we were informed that, following discussions with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, it was not the intention of the Committee to invite the Secretary-General of OPANAL to be part of the high-level panel this year. Since those informal consultations, the member States of OPANAL, in written communications to the Chair, have consistently reiterated their support for the request to invite the Secretary-General of OPANAL, as well as their expectation that he will again be invited to participate in the opening panel, following the practice initiated last year.

We regret that a limited number of States continue to object to the participation of the Secretary-General of OPANAL, which, in our view, should be a straightforward and simple issue. Although those objections have been framed over the past few years as a position of principle against the participation of regional organizations in the high-level debate, there are reasons to believe that they are derived primarily from a substantive disagreement with the message that OPANAL delivers.

As a matter of principle, we cannot accept that that message is silenced or relegated to the background. We recall that other regional organizations have their special role recognized in the United Nations system and are routinely allowed to speak from positions of prominence on issues of relevance to their respective mandates. We see no reason why OPANAL should be treated as a second-rate organization in this debate. We also recall that OPANAL is an important part of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime, whose role goes well beyond the scope of regional security. The experience of OPANAL inspired the creation of other nuclear-weapon-free zones, which today include 116 States, and its importance has been recognized by the Secretary-General in his agenda for disarmament.

We further recall that the Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States recognize OPANAL as a specialized body of the region in the areas of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, which is regularly mandated to speak on behalf of the region on issues under its purview. We have taken note of the scenarios proposed by the Bureau, as we have indicated to the Chair in writing. We believe that every alternative proposed by the Bureau would lead to either suppressing or downgrading the voice of OPANAL — an organization that, in the area of global disarmament and non-proliferation, has an important role and represents the views of 33 member States.

We are ready to consider alternative formats for the organization of the high-level panel for future sessions of the First Committee. In that regard, we recall the proposal put forward by the delegation of Mexico, which would contribute to making the high-level panel more open and inclusive. However, we believe that under no circumstances should this year's debate halt the practice initiated last year. In that context and following the practice of the previous session, our delegation

submitted a draft decision of the First Committee on the matter. As indicated in our communication, my delegation calls for immediate action on our proposed draft decision, as contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3.

**The Chair:** Before giving the floor to the remaining speakers, I kindly request that members of the Committee not put words in my mouth. As I said from the very beginning, my position as Chair is 100 per cent that of an honest broker. The final decision belongs to the Committee. If I were the only decision maker here, I would take a decision and everyone would be happy, but the Committee belongs to all its members and it is their discussion. All its decisions will hopefully be based on consensus. It is of no help to anyone to start this session with tensions running high. If we fight from day one, I am afraid that by the end of the session, we will have to clean up the bloodshed. We are colleagues working on the same side — here or in Geneva. There is life after this session of the First Committee. I ask that members bear that in mind.

**Ms. Jáquez Huacuja** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I take the floor again to support the request made by the delegation of Brazil to take immediate action on this issue. Mexico firmly supports the participation of the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) in the high-level panel on the current state of affairs in the field of disarmament and arms control, which will be held during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, notwithstanding any discussions we might have in future to arrive at the most sustainable and consensus-based solution possible.

OPANAL is the only organization of its kind, and previous sessions of the First Committee have already benefited from its participation and its continued contributions in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, *inter alia*. We regret that, for reasons we do not understand, such contributions to the substantive work of the First Committee have become a source of controversy and procedural challenges. That is why my country has circulated a proposal on the high-level panel for future sessions.

We agree with you, Mr. Chair, that it is very important to avoid such controversy, but the high-level panel must serve as a pluralistic platform that stimulates a dynamic exchange of different views. The panel

should be multisectoral and include voices from inside and outside of the United Nations so that our debates are enriched. Invitations to panel members can be issued in the most inclusive way possible so as to include a wide range of speakers. Panel discussions should also reflect twenty-first century changes and challenges and inform the work of the First Committee. We therefore hope that the other members of the First Committee will support that vision in order to energize and revitalize the high-level panel. However, I reiterate that, in spite of the fact that such reflection is needed, we must determine the composition of this session's panel. I reiterate Mexico's support for immediate action to be taken on the issue of the participation of OPANAL.

**Mr. Bourgel** (Israel): In brief, we fully support the views expressed by the delegations of Australia and the United States.

**Ms. Mac Loughlin** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Without wishing to take up too much time, Argentina would like to make it very clear that it supports Brazil's proposal to invite the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) to participate in the high-level panel. We would also like to support and actively participate in the consultations that you, Mr. Chair, will hold on the issue of the composition of future panels. We support Mexico's proposal, which we believe is relevant and allows for the possible participation of other regional organizations in future panels. We would like to make it very clear that we support the proposal for the participation of the Secretary-General of OPANAL in the panel and ask that we reach a consensus-based solution in the spirit that guides us here in the First Committee.

**Ms. Benítez Lima** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election and that of the other members of the Bureau.

I would simply like to express our full support for the views expressed by the representative of Brazil and by Mexico and Argentina, and we support Brazil's request for immediate action to be taken. We are surprised that an issue that appears to be such a simple one — inviting the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean to be part of the panel — is causing such controversy. In that regard, we support the position

of Mexico that consultations should not impede the prompt resolution of this issue by 17 October.

**Mr. Hansen** (Australia): Like Mexico, Australia supports having different viewpoints expressed by a wide range of speakers. It is not clear to me why the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) speaking on the panel every year makes that happen. Australia had proposed that regional groups be given an opportunity, on a rotational basis, to put forward a regional organization each year. For example, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States could have it this year, through the participation of OPANAL, and then next year another regional group would be given the opportunity to put forward a regional organization, and so on, in order to rotate through the regional groups. That would be fair and equitable for all regional groups. We may not like the speakers in a given year, but everyone would be given a chance and the process would be fair and equitable. As the representative of Mexico said, we would thereby contribute to having a wide range of speakers on the panel, which is to everyone's benefit.

Notwithstanding the proposal that the representative of Australia made, we support the Chair's proposal. We suggested to you, Mr. Chair, in our earlier intervention, that our proposal be formalized and added, perhaps as an oral amendment, to the draft decision proposed by Brazil. The proposal would be to add a second paragraph to request the Chair to conduct consultations this year on possible future arrangements so that a non-paper could be issued during this session with a view to the adoption of a decision in March or June 2019. To be very clear, we are not opposed to OPANAL speaking this year. We have simply said that the course of action for future sessions should be reflected and formalized so that it has some status and is recognized. That seems to be consistent with the letter circulated by the Permanent Representative of Brazil, which indicated his availability to engage in discussions on possible arrangements for a permanent solution to the issue in future. Nothing put forward by Australia has been in contradiction to the views expressed by the delegation of Brazil or others.

**Mrs. Jarrot** (France) (*spoke in French*): First, of all, allow me to congratulate you on your election, Mr. Chair, and wish you every success in our future discussions. You have our full support. I would also

like to thank you for your creativity and the various ideas you have proposed to us today and in the past.

The issue of the composition of the panel is clearly an important one. It is important in and of itself and goes above and beyond the specific question raised by delegations that spoke before me. It is an issue that is raised every year, but not only with regard to this particular organization.

If we look at the composition of last year's panel, there were organizations included that will not be on this year's panel. The very fact that we are discussing this issue again proves that members are willing to take time out to engage in discussion and consultations. In that regard, I would like to echo all of the points made by our Australian colleague with regard to the proposal he made earlier and concerning support for the holding of consultations on future arrangements. I believe that it is important to hold consultations and find an alternative that brings together all viewpoints, as described thus far. We fully support that approach.

**Mr. Campbell** (United Kingdom): I would again like to offer our support and congratulations on your election, Mr. Chair.

Clearly this is an issue that arises every year, or, at least, has arisen for the past couple of years. It causes some controversy. In order for it to be avoided next year — clearly, we have not managed to do so this year — we would like to support the proposal that you made, Mr. Chair, and which has been so eloquently described by my Australian colleague, namely, to have the issuance of a non-paper included as an oral amendment to the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3, in an effort to avoid this controversy next year.

**Mr. Garrido** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I take this opportunity Mr. Chair, to congratulate you on your election. You have my delegation's full support in conducting your duties.

I would simply like to support the proposal put forward by Brazil (A/C.1/73/CRP.3). My delegation finds it very difficult to understand the reason for the opposition to a simple decision to include the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) on the panel, based on its historic role, experience, past and present functions and thematic relevance to the panel. Would not its participation be

relevant, without prejudice to our discussions of future arrangements for the panel? Should its composition not be as inclusive as possible? Should civil society representatives not be invited to participate in it?

We should have discussions on the future composition of panels, which will be very important and interesting and will take time, because it is necessary and will determine how the Committee will function in future. Meanwhile, the issue on the table — the inclusion of OPANAL in this year's panel — must be resolved. It is for that reason that we support Brazil's proposal to take immediate action on the issue and allow sufficient time for in-depth discussions of future arrangements.

**Mr. Díaz Reina** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): As I take the floor for the first time, Mr. Chair, allow me to congratulate you on your election. I wish you every success in today's meeting. You have the support of the delegation of Colombia as you conduct your duties.

I would simply like to voice support for the proposal put forward by Brazil (A/C.1/73/CRP.3) and for the comments made by my colleagues from the region. We have had several meetings on this issue and we do not understand the difficulty of having the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean participate in the panel.

**Mr. Méndez Graterol** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We, too, Mr. Chair, would like to congratulate you on your election. We trust that your efforts will garner positive results. You have our delegation's full support.

With regard to the issue being discussed, we would like to underscore that the delegation of Venezuela also supports the proposal put forward by Brazil to take action on the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3. The statement made by the representative of Brazil was eloquent and referred to the participation of the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) in the panel to be held on 17 October. We believe that OPANAL's commitment to the issues of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament is clear, as demonstrated by the fact that it has been in existence for more than 50 years. Therefore, we believe that the Secretary-General of OPANAL should participate in the high-level panel, as he did last year. We again underscore our support for the proposal put forward by the representative of Brazil.

**Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer** (Brazil): I apologize for taking the floor again. I think that the words of my Permanent Representative were misunderstood, so I will quote what he said in a letter sent to the Chair, namely:

“We remain at your disposal to engage in discussions on possible arrangements that may lead to a permanent solution to this issue in the future, as well as pave the way for a consensus decision on this matter at the current session”.

The discussions refer to the future, not to the present.

**Mr. Zambrana Torrelío** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election. You have Bolivia's full support.

I would like to voice my delegation's support for the statement made by the delegation of Brazil, which was also endorsed by other delegations from my region. We believe that it is important that the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean participate in the high-level panel to be held on 17 October. We do not understand why there are attempts to prevent the participation in the panel of the representative of a regional organization with experience that could inform our discussions in the First Committee. Therefore, we reiterate our support for the request made by the delegation of Brazil to take immediate action on the issue.

**The Chair**: I very much appreciate all the congratulations and support. May I take it that the support of members can also be construed as their support for my suggestion that we do our best to find a consensus-based solution? Otherwise, members will kill me, and I will die happy because I received the Committee's full support.

I ask that members kindly bear in mind that 20 minutes ago Committee members should have been in a briefing with the Secretariat. I can stay for as long as the Committee requires, but let us try to streamline the meeting.

**Ms. Sánchez Rodríguez** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Like other delegations, Mr. Chair, we congratulate you on your election. My delegation would also like to express its full support as you guide the work of the Committee.

We would also like to join the call by the delegations of our region for immediate action by consensus on the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3 proposed by Brazil, which calls for the participation of the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean in the panel discussion to be held as part of the exchange of views with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, scheduled for 17 October. At the same time, we would like to call upon those delegations that do not support the draft decision to join the consensus on its adoption and continue consultations and discussions on future arrangements for the panel on the basis of the proposal made by Mexico and any other proposals that may be made.

**Mr. Hansen** (Australia): I take the floor again only because it is not clear to me that the suggestion I made has been understood correctly.

I am happy for action to be taken immediately, provided that the good proposal of the Chair be included — namely, that we formalize the future discussions referred to in Brazil's letter as part of the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3. I am not sure if there is any opposition to that approach. Some representatives have said they are not sure why countries are opposed to the participation of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean on the panel. We are not opposed to that. We have simply suggested that the Chair's proposal for future discussions and the issuance of a non-paper be included in the draft decision so that we are aware not only of what action will be taken on the composition of the high-level panel for this year but also of the procedure proposed to ensure that future situations are handled in a manner that does not take up the time of the Committee. I hope that is understood.

**The Chair:** Let us establish a rule for today's debate and any other similar situation. A delegation can intervene twice. Otherwise, we will have a talk show. If the Committee prefers to do otherwise, let me know and I will comply with suggestions. There are representatives of 193 countries represented here. If 10 or 20 representatives are exchanging views, it is perfect for young diplomats to take notes and report back home, but it is not good for the work of our Committee.

To clarify, is the delegation of Australia proposing an oral amendment?

**Mr. Hansen** (Australia): I suggested that your proposal, Mr. Chair, be included in the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3 so that it is formalized to ensure that we do not have to repeat this discussion year after year. The words are your own. I am not putting forward a proposal other than the one yourself have put forward.

**The Chair:** I am afraid we need to have something in writing. I have something from the Secretariat. I can read out the proposal, but I must have confirmation. A written proposal is always clearer than a verbal proposal. The paragraph to be added would read:

“The Chair will conduct informal consultations this year regarding future arrangements related to the composition of the panel, including a non-paper to be issued this year.”

Is that more or less correct? In any case, we will need to have that in writing. Meanwhile, pending further clarification, I will continue with the list of speakers.

**Mr. Soemirat** (Indonesia): Let me start, Mr. Chair, by congratulating you on your election. I assure you that our delegation will fully support you and the Bureau during this session.

We have carefully listened to the dynamics among members on this particular issue. At this stage, we would like to highlight one particular principle. We always welcome contributions from all stakeholders in their efforts to advance nuclear disarmament in general, including, but not limited to, the representatives of regional or subregional organizations. Nonetheless, we believe that the Committee should try to move forward on the basis of a number of principles.

First, the Committee should not attempt to hold hostage any current arrangement, which may be referred to as low-hanging fruit, that is already before the Committee, such as the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3, proposed by the delegation of Brazil, on the participation of the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) in the high-level panel to be held on 17 October. It is clear from the draft decision that the delegation of Brazil is not requesting a permanent invitation for the Secretary-General to participate in future similar events.

Therefore, if it is acceptable for this particular session, the Committee can simply adopt the draft decision, while at the same time remaining open to

establishing more clarity in future with regard to, for example, a possible rotation among the regions. I believe that members from other regions would also like to invite regional organizations to participate in future high-level events. Therefore, my delegation believes that the issue may be viewed on two separate tracks. The Committee can agree on the proposal for the current session, while at the same time, based on consultations, it can work on the proposal to establish a more permanent arrangement for the future. My delegation is flexible but we also need your guidance, Mr. Chair.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, I would like to pose a question to the Secretariat. Is a vote required when perhaps only one delegation disagrees with a draft decision before the Committee?

**Mr. Tituaña Matango** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Like other colleagues, Mr. Chair, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election. You have our country's support.

We support the proposal put forward by Brazil. We hope that the immediate action requested can be agreed upon by consensus. We would like to express our support for discussing this issue in future, as suggested by the delegation of Mexico. We hope that a decision will be taken on the action proposed, and if so we stand ready to join the consensus.

**Ms. García Gutiérrez** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I join colleagues in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, and wish you every success in your work at the helm of the Committee. You have my delegation's full support in this process.

I would simply like to express our support for the proposal made by Brazil and for the adoption of the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3. We hope for a consensus-based adoption in the spirit that prevails in the Committee. That is without prejudice to any consultations or discussions we might hold in future on the procedure for determining the composition of the high-level panel, so as to prevent us from having this discussion again next year. I would like to place on record my delegation's support for the proposal put forward by Brazil.

**Mr. Bravaco** (United States of America): I will do my very best not to take the floor again this afternoon, in deference to you, Mr. Chair.

Much has been said, and I have tried to listen as closely as I could. I would like to start by saying that our delegation holds the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) in the highest regard. We understand its historic contribution to Latin America and the Caribbean, which is why, after some consideration last year, my delegation decided to acquiesce on a matter of principle and afford OPANAL an opportunity to speak on the panel, given that, if I remember correctly, last year was the fiftieth anniversary of the finalization of the Treaty of Tlatelolco — the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. We did so on substance, as we support OPANAL, but also because last year, like this year, a vote is being threatened on procedural matters in the Committee.

There is a pattern here now. We acquiesced last year because we did not want to see a vote called, because I can tell the Committee and you, Mr. Chair, that my prediction is that, if the issue is forced to a vote, the precedent that that establishes for the Committee on its procedural working methods will have disastrous consequences moving forward, in terms of the unity of the Committee when trying to reach consensus-based positions, not only on procedure but on substance. It will be the beginning of the end, and it is completely unnecessary.

I personally understand the importance that the Latin American and Caribbean region accords OPANAL but, quite frankly, if one region can force by majority rule its opinion of what the composition of the high-level panel should be in 2018, then in 2019 another random regional group in the Committee can do exactly the same by making exactly the same arguments that a particular organization is vital, historic and important to a region; we want it on the panel so we will force a vote to make it so, if it comes to that. There is no end in sight once we go down that road.

I would appeal for consensus and compromise. This is the second year in a row that OPANAL would be on the panel and, in previous years, I believe, that the Secretary-General of OPANAL has served on the panel and spoken from the floor. We have heard a great deal from the Secretary-General of OPANAL. If this year we decide on the composition of the panel and then put into some sort of non-paper or compromise proposal, to be determined, the possible composition of the panel in the future, those of us who are being asked to compromise do not know what we will be getting

at the end of process. We know what we are getting at the front end, which is what our colleagues from Brazil want. On the back end, however, our delegation does not know what it will be getting. As a matter of a fairness and principle, I am not sure that that is an appropriate way to proceed. I think we should try to put it all together into one fair equation that is solved at the same time.

Also, at least in the Group of Western European and other States, our Vice-Chair, our colleague from Portugal, sent out a list of options for this year and in future. Both were somewhat linked and there was a framework being proposed. The members of the Group were asked to get back to our colleague from Portugal with our views as to what we thought would work from the various national perspectives. The United States sent its views to Portugal, and yet I believe on the very same day the Secretariat circulated the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3. Therefore, with all due respect, the process of compromise and consultation seems to have been short-circuited, overruled, bypassed. We were under the impression that under your auspices, Mr. Chair, the regional groups were being consulted in an effort to find a way forward and views were being sought. Then document A/C.1/73/CRP.3 was issued, and we are where we are.

In conclusion, we are ready to do our part to try to develop a framework agreement on the issue, but to solve one part of the equation now and leave the other part of the equation unsolved and unknown is not a good basis for compromise. I suggest we continue the consultations under your auspices, Mr. Chair. I think that OPANAL had its time on the panel in 2017 and we should try and maintain the status quo of the panel for this year and then move forward in 2019 and beyond.

**The Chair:** The list containing various proposals and alternative solutions, which the Committee received from me, was circulated to all members in an attempt to provide food for thought and move closer to a compromise solution. The amendment proposed by Australia is on the screen.

I have a question for the representative of the United States. Is he willing to consider the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3 today with the proposed amendment? There are different options on the table now.

**Mr. Bravaco** (United States of America): I promised that I would not take the floor again but this is at your invitation, Mr. Chair.

I see that the amendment refers to the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly and beyond. What happens this year? Do we add what appears on the screen to the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3?

**The Chair:** The understanding is that the amendment is to be added at the end of the draft decision proposed by Brazil. Would the delegation of Australia please correct me if I am wrong?

Have I understood correctly that the amendment suggested is to be added to the draft decision proposed by Brazil?

**Mr. Hansen** (Australia): I was just speaking to one of your colleagues, Mr. Chair, on that very matter. Another way this might be handled, in the interest of time and to allow delegations to get instructions from their capitals, would be for the issue to be put forward, perhaps on Monday, as a separate draft decision. We could separate the two and take action on the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3 in its current format. Either way, if it raises the comfort level of Member States, the key point is that formalized action and decisions about the draft decision should be taken.

I will leave it in your hands, Mr. Chair, as to the best way to do that, whether it be to facilitate the taking of decisions today or, if instructions are needed from delegations over the weekend, to facilitate that and take a decision first thing on Monday; that is fine with me as well. But the proceedings are in your hands, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** I call on the representative of Brazil on a point of order.

**Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer** (Brazil): I am not the first speaker to take the floor three times today, so I think I should have the right to speak. I believe that my delegation did not ask for a vote; I think that other delegations made such a request. We just asked for the text contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3 to be adopted by consensus.

Nevertheless, we are ready to accept the Australian proposal. With the understanding that our proposal is accepted by consensus, we can accept the Australian proposal, with just one personal note: I do not think

that we can include wording that states that the decision must be taken by consensus. The Committee decides whether or not a vote must be consensus-based. That is my personal view, and a small detail. If the Committee is ready for a solution, my delegation can accept our proposal as amended by Australia. I thank Australia for its suggestion. I have my doubts about the inclusion of the words “by consensus”, but the Secretariat can explain if the words can be put in writing.

**Ms. Jáquez Huacuja** (Mexico): I will speak in English, in the interest of time. I, too, wanted to say that other delegations were given the time to speak about the proposals put forward. This is an informal discussion and we must preserve the interactive nature of discussions. That is why I am taking the floor again.

We can go along with the proposal put forward by Australia, with the understanding that it is an amendment to the Brazilian proposal (A/C.1/73/CRP.3), which we are going to accept. As the representative of Brazil said, we do not see the need to include the words “by consensus” in the text, but we realize that if we use those words we could include the word “format”, beside the “composition” of the panel. However, that is also up to the delegations. We also believe that we are ready to take a decision today because information on the issue has been circulated, and we came to today’s consultations in that spirit. We see no need to postpone it until Monday. That is all I wanted to say. I apologize to the delegation of Guatemala.

**Ms. Estrada Girón** (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time I take the floor, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to chair this session of the First Committee. We assure you, Sir, that Guatemala will participate constructively in the discussions and work of the Committee.

With regard to the issue on the table, my delegation would also like to support the participation of the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) in the high-level panel. We support the proposal put forward by Brazil (A/C.1/73/CRP.3), which other States of Latin America and the Caribbean endorse. We believe that it is important that the Secretary-General of OPANAL participate in the panel.

In that regard, we request that immediate action be taken on the issue. We also thank Australia for its proposal, which we can support. As the representatives of Brazil and Mexico mentioned, we are most interested

in taking action on the OPANAL issue and taking a decision on how we will determine the composition of future panels.

**Mr. Trejo Blanco** (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): This is the first time I take the floor, Mr. Chair. I think you skipped me earlier.

As it is the first time I am taking the floor, I join other colleagues in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election. You have the support of my delegation as you lead the work of the First Committee.

The delegation of El Salvador supports the proposal put forward by Brazil (A/C.1/73/CRP.3) and echoes the sentiments of other delegations of my region. We note that, at times, the discussion can be a bit uncomfortable. Nonetheless, it simply highlights that a decision must be taken on the procedure for extending invitations and determining future panels and debates. We are therefore in favour of taking a decision in future on how to organize panels and select speakers. That is why I believe we can support Australia’s suggestion to resolve the issue now. Once again, Mr. Chair, you have the full support of our delegation in ensuring that the work of the Committee is set on a successful course.

**The Chair**: I apologize to the representative of El Salvador. I was led astray by the electronic device, as it is not being very nice to me today.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the members of the Bureau, on your election to steer the work of the First Committee.

With regard to the proposal put forward by our colleague from Australia, it is our view that it is perfectly aligned with the proposal made by Indonesia. We believe that the proposal should be independent. We should like to discuss the issues we have with the proposal with the representative of Australia. We can then take a decision on Monday.

We call for document A/C.1/73/CRP.3, as is, to be scrutinized because Australia’s proposed amendment includes issues that raise questions for us about the consultations to be held. We would ask, for example, which delegations would participate in such consultations. A closer examination would ensure that questions are clearly posed and answered.

**Mr. Hassan** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to join colleagues in congratulating you, Mr. Chair,

and informing you that we have full confidence in your skills and abilities. We assure you, Sir, of our full support.

I would like to underscore that the Group of Arab States would have preferred if the work of the First Committee had not begun with a procedural vote on an issue that should not be contentious, especially given the international consensus expressed in several General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the contributions of such conventions to the achievement of international peace and security and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It would therefore be appropriate to enable the Directors and Secretaries-General of international bodies to participate in the panel at the United Nations.

In that regard, we are faced with two options, which are not contradictory. Brazil's draft decision, contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3, provides a specific date for the participation of the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. It does not preclude the need for negotiations or consultations about future meetings. We therefore call for Brazil's proposal to be adopted by consensus, as we wait for the outstanding issue to be addressed in future.

*(spoke in English)*

With regard to the proposed amendment, there is no need to include "with interested delegations" because I think it is an issue of interest to all delegations. Nonetheless, that is not to say it is a dealbreaker for us.

**The Chair:** The proposal is certainly open for the consideration of and revision by Committee members, if they decide to revise it.

**Mr. Prieto (Peru)** *(spoke in Spanish)*: First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election to chair the First Committee. You have the support of my delegation, Sir, in your efforts and for the decisions to be taken in the First Committee.

Like our colleagues from other countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, we support the proposal put forward by Brazil (A/C.1/73/CRP.3). However, at the same time, we believe that Brazil's proposal does not exclude the holding of future consultations on the work and composition of the panel.

We also heard statements from other delegations here today, and none of them spoke of a vote. There is no risk that we might put the draft decision in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3 to the vote. The initial request was for the draft decision to be adopted by consensus. Similarly, no other delegation threatened to put it to the vote. However, a vote was mentioned by a delegation that opposes the participation of the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean in the high-level panel.

While we support Brazil's proposal, we also support the one made by the delegation of Australia. Perhaps the suggestion made by Australia could be included in another draft decision. Brazil's proposal could remain as is and immediate action can be taken on it.

**The Chair:** No one has requested a vote today. That is what I have understood from all the statements we have heard. At the same time, we have heard requests for additional consultations to be held on document A/C.1/73/CRP.3 and on the composition of the panel in general. On the other hand, there are also requests for immediate action to be taken on document A/C.1/73/CRP.3.

There is support for the Brazilian proposal as is, as well as support for it as amended by the Australian proposal. Even the Brazilian Ambassador, who is present, has agreed that the Australian proposal could be acceptable to his country. Some countries have requested that a decision be taken now, but Brazil has asked for a consensus-based decision. Other countries have explicitly said that they are not prepared for a show of consensus today.

It seems to me that we are making good progress and that there is still an important margin of goodwill. I was told that last year the decision on the full composition of the panel was adopted at the fifth plenary meeting of the Committee. This is our first meeting. I was also informed that the decision taken last year to invite the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) was just for last year, not for the future. That means that, if we are not able to reach consensus — I am just the humble Chair for this session, and it is up to the Committee members to take the decision — or agree on a formula for the next couple of years, we risk reaching the centennial of the United Nations discussing the issue of whether or

not to invite the Secretary-General of OPANAL every year at the start of the First Committee. By then, 30 years from now, OPANAL would perhaps have its fifth Secretary-General.

It is in all our interest to find common ground. I hope that we can reach consensus. I remain at the Committee's disposal.

It is up to the Committee, but my suggestion is to postpone this discussion until Monday. Those who said that they need instructions from their capitals, and therefore cannot take a decision now, will have the weekend to decide. Their capitals will be happy to see that their missions in New York are active over the weekend. Monday will perhaps bring us more wisdom.

This is a good starting point for reaching consensus. The goal is to achieve a win-win solution, not to play a win-lose game, because that helps no one. If one delegation — or even 10 — out of 193 has its back against the wall, it will not work, and we will not reach consensus.

It is in our interest to start off on the right foot. It is up to the Committee to let me know if it agrees with my suggestion to postpone the issue until Monday.

**Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer** (Brazil): I would just like to say that draft decision (A/C.1/73/CRP.3) has been on the table for a week, so that all members have had the time to consult their capitals. We accept the Australian amendment. I would like to suggest that the Committee be asked whether or not it agrees with both the Brazilian draft decision and the Australian amendment. I think that all delegations are in agreement with the Australian amendment. If in fact there is no agreement on the amendment, Brazil requests that action be taken immediately on it, and then the Committee can revert to the draft decision. Why not ask if there is any delegation that disagrees with the draft decision put forward by Brazil and the amendment put forward by Australia?

**The Chair:** Some delegations have said that they needed instructions from their capitals about whether or not the Australian amendment is acceptable. If, during the last half hour, the respective capitals have communicated that they accept the Australian amendment, that would be even better. Do all delegations agree to a single text based on the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3, put forward by Brazil, as revised by the amendment

proposed by Australia? Perhaps the amendment could be made available on the screen for consideration.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I believe that I was very clear when I stated that we have not even read the text of the amendment that has been proposed. It is now displayed on the screen but we have not read it before. How, then, Sir, do you expect us to consider adopting it? At the start we said that we are willing to consider draft decision A/C.1/73/CRP.3, which we support. We are in favour of the participation of the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean in the panel. However, we said that we prefer to consider drafting a separate text with the representative of Australia with the aim of preparing an additional draft decision that could be considered on Monday or Tuesday. That draft decision would then be circulated in all six languages to all delegations. I think that you are well aware, Mr. Chair, that it is now quite late in most capitals.

**The Chair:** I asked the Committee to consider whether or not we could discuss the amendment today because the rules of procedure allow the Chair that possibility, on the condition that a decision is taken by the Committee. I would like to remind delegations that, according to rule 120 of the rules of procedure, proposals and amendments shall normally be submitted in writing to the Secretary-General, who shall circulate copies to the delegations.

As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of Committee, unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations no later than the day preceding the meeting. The Chair may, however, permit the discussion and consideration of amendments, or of motions as to procedure, even though such amendments and motions have not been circulated or have been circulated the same day. I am consulting the Committee on its willingness to consider the last-minute amendment proposed by the delegation of Australia. With the exception of the Syrian Arab Republic, all other delegations, either explicitly or silently, have accepted the idea of discussing the amendment today. We are speaking about consensus.

**The Chair:** I call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic on a point of order.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize to the representative of Italy. Syria was not the sole delegation that referred to this issue.

We must be clear. Today's meeting is being recorded. That recording and the minutes of the meetings can be consulted. Syria is not the only country that said that the text of the amendment proposed by the representative of Australia to draft decision A/C.1/73/CRP.3 is not welcomed.

**Mr. Romussi** (Italy): At the outset, let me express my appreciation at seeing you, Sir, chairing the First Committee. You can count on Italy's full support in discharging your duties.

I believe that the package in front of us is sound and responds to the arguments put forward by all the delegations that spoke before me. I think there are exigencies to be taken into account. It would be very unfortunate for a procedural issue to be put to the vote. Consensus is of paramount importance. We therefore call on all Member States to reach a consensus-based solution, as you envisaged, including the two paragraphs. We understand that the Australian amendment has now been put forward. It is simple, and therefore I do not think I need advice from my capital on it. It is something that we can take on for next month. We are very happy to accept it.

**Mr. Prieto** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): This is the second time I take the floor. I would simply like to say that my delegation welcomes Australia's amendment. Perhaps one way to make progress on the issue might be to take immediate action on the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3, put forward by Brazil, as it currently stands. Australia's amendment could then become a separate draft decision, on which delegations would have enough time to consult with their capitals. Today, however, we could take action on the initial draft decision put forward by Brazil.

**The Chair**: The only difficulty with that suggestion is that we spoke about reaching consensus and not about putting the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3 to the vote. But there is no consensus on either the draft decision or the amendment on the table. Since the Brazilian draft decision and the Australian amendment, which was presented to the Committee for the first time today, require further consideration by delegations, my suggestion is to postpone action to a later date on both the draft decision and the amendment. I had said we would postpone action until Monday but someone mentioned Tuesday. I therefore propose that we postpone action to Tuesday to avoid further discussions. I promise to get back to the Committee

as soon as possible. Is my suggestion acceptable to the Committee?

**Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer** (Brazil): I call on all delegations to accept the proposed draft decision (A/C.1/73/CRP.3) and amendment on the table because it is one way to solve the issue. If delegations cannot accept that package, we would like to take action now.

**The Chair**: We have a set of entry data. A long time ago, I used to be a physicist-engineer. I worked in nuclear physics. Mathematics is always the best reference. What we have as entry data is the Brazilian proposal, the Australian amendment, a request to postpone, a request to take action today and, overall, everyone wants to reach consensus.

It is in our hands. Should we switch off all the lights and hope that in half an hour we will have a solution? I have asked if it is within my competencies as Chair to take a decision. I was told that that was not possible and that the Chair is here just to give the floor to representatives. Therefore, the ball is in the Committee's court. What should we do?

The Committee wants consensus but there is disagreement about the simple issue of taking a decision today or on Monday and about whether or not to accept an amendment. This is all legal and normal and is part of the democratic process and General Assembly rules of procedure here at the United Nations.

**Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer** (Brazil): I think that at the very start we requested that immediate action be taken. Therefore, taking a decision on Monday is not on the floor. If the issue is whether or not to accept the amendment proposed by Australia, my delegation can decide that. We accept the amendment.

If other delegations need more time, let us take immediate action on our draft decision, as contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3, and on Monday we can talk about the amendment proposed by Australia. However, the Brazilian delegation again asks and calls on delegations to accept the compromise and adopt both the draft decision and amendment as a package. Let us end the discussion and go home.

**The Chair**: It is too early. It is only 5.15 p.m.

Once again, we are speaking about consensus. Is any delegation opposed to the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3, put forward by Brazil? Alternatively, is any delegation opposed to having a

single text that is a combination of the draft decision proposed by Brazil and Australia's amendment?

**Mr. Bravaco** (United States of America): I do not think that it is possible to read the draft decision put forward by Brazil in isolation (A/C.1/73/CRP.3), now that there is an Australian amendment. I, for one, do not have plenipotentiary powers and cannot make that decision alone. I have to consult my capital. I doubt that we want to start throwing rules out now, on top of everything else. There is a 24-hour rule, and I would like to hold onto that. I think we are entitled to it.

There is a new proposal, an amendment that I have not seen before. I have some concerns about how it relates to the Brazilian draft decision. I mentioned earlier that there is front-end flexibility being requested, on the one hand, but with no further information on the other. We do not know where consultations will lead. I feel that it is my responsibility to explain the pluses and minuses of the package that has been proposed to my capital and offer my best recommendation. I need time to do that. I think that Monday or Tuesday would be appropriate, depending on the scheduling of high-level speakers on Monday.

**Mr. Seifi Pargou** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election. You have our full support.

Very briefly, with regard to the proposal of Brazil (A/C.1/73/CRP.3), which we received a week ago, we have no problem with its adoption, either by consensus or by a vote. If it is adopted by a vote, my delegation will vote in favour of it. If it is adopted by consensus, we will join the consensus. Concerning the Australian amendment, I believe that with or without it, you, as Chair of the First Committee and elected by it, have the authority to conduct informal consultations on the subject. Therefore, we do not see the need or added value in having any written or formal decision by the Committee on that specific proposal.

However, if there is a strong wish to have it in writing, we reserve our right, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and the Committee, to have it in writing. As stipulated in the rules of procedure, it should be in writing and circulated to Member States. It has not been circulated. The rule does not say that it should be posted on the screen. It should be in writing and circulated. That has not been done. Therefore, we are not in a position to discuss the issue. While we are ready to take action on the Brazilian

draft decision, we suggest that the consideration of the amendment proposed by Australia be postponed to a later date in order to give us sufficient opportunity to consider it and, at the same time, receive instructions from our capitals.

**The Chair:** It is not an amendment circulated on paper, but let me refer to the rules of procedure. The Chair may, however, permit the discussion and consideration of amendments or of motions as to procedure, even though such amendments and motions have not be circulated. Therefore, the fact that it is on the screen makes it a bit more than an oral amendment. It is an unofficial amendment. It may be considered an oral amendment. It is my right to put it to the Committee's consideration and it is the Committee's right to take a decision on it.

**Mr. Giacomelli da Silva** (Brazil): I take the floor because I have not yet done so and therefore I can take it twice. I would like to clarify Brazil's position.

We made a request for immediate action on our proposal (A/C.1/73/CRP.3). It was made according to the rules of procedure. We ask that the Committee take action on our original proposal. We tried as much as we could to find a solution with regard to the Australian amendment but that was not possible. Therefore, we reserve the right to have our original draft decision, which was circulated earlier, to be considered at today's meeting. We will not relinquish that right. We would like the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3 to be considered immediately, according to the rules of procedure.

**The Chair:** To my knowledge, there are two options for taking action — by consensus or by a vote. Is the delegation of Brazil prepared to request a vote?

**Mr. Giacomelli da Silva** (Brazil): To clarify, we are not asking for the draft decision to be put to the vote. We would like for action to be taken on it. If other delegations do not want the proposal to be adopted, then those delegations would have to request the vote.

**The Chair:** I am learning something new every day.

**Ms. Benítez Lima** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I think that we must consider the fact that postponing action on the draft decision put forward by Brazil (A/C.1/73/CRP.3) until Monday will not change the decision we could take today. Why? It is because there are no new elements to put to our capitals. The new element is reflected on the screen. I think we can all

agree on it. We can argue about the modalities and times, and so on, but at the very core we all agree. Brazil's draft decision is the source of the controversy, and it is not a new element. We are already familiar with it. That is why it makes no sense to postpone taking a decision until Monday.

**The Chair:** Other delegations have requested more time to consult with and receive instructions from their capitals with regard to the proposed amendment, which has been accepted in principle by Brazil. We also have to respect their request. While some delegations have no problem discussing both proposals, other delegations have an issue with it and must consult their capitals. We have to be respectful to all members of the Committee.

**Ms. Jáquez Huacuja** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would simply like to again recall that, as other delegations have said, Brazil's draft decision (A/C.1/73/CRP.3) has been circulated. Mr. Chair, Australia proposed its amendment to the draft decision at your suggestion to hold additional discussions about the future of the decision. Mexico had also intended to circulate a substantive document. We understand that some delegations are not ready to take a decision on the issue. How, then, will we resolve it in future? What will the composition of the panel be? What will its function be? Some delegations have said that they do not know what future panels will look like. We ourselves have no idea, and that is why we need consultations.

However, we can decide to invite the Secretary-General of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) to participate in this year's panel. It will not do any harm. It will be a positive contribution, as it has been in the past. As far as my delegation understands, it will not prevent any other organization that wishes to speak from participating. We therefore do not view it as being unfair, as some delegations have suggested.

I, too, would like to again call on delegations to resolve the issue today with regard to the participation of OPANAL today. We believe we are ready to do so both in form and in procedure, as well as politically. That is why we are present at today's meeting.

We can continue talking about how future panel discussions will be conducted, the format they will take, who will be invited and then set specific terms of reference in order to avoid having this discussion every year, as you yourself have said, Mr. Chair. That is why Australia proposed the amendment, which has

been included, in good faith, in the consideration of the draft decision. My delegation will accept the package if it will help us to take action on the issue today. If everyone does not agree to take a decision on the package, then the package will not exist.

However, the draft decision put forward by Brazil still exists. My delegation will continue to support it and we can easily take action on it today.

**The Chair:** I have good news. Given the time, the briefing with the Secretariat has been cancelled. There will be no briefing on technical aspects today.

I will suspend the meeting for a few minutes. I ask the delegation of Brazil and other interested delegations to approach the rostrum for consultations.

*The meeting was suspended 5.30 p.m. and resumed at 5.40 p.m.*

**The Chair:** The latest developments are that Australia is ready to withdraw its amendment provided that the text proposed by the Syrian Arab Republic is accepted.

I call on the representative of Brazil on a point of order.

**Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer** (Brazil): I would like to request that the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3, as distributed a week ago, be put to the vote. All delegations have instructions from their capitals.

**The Chair:** The representative of Brazil has requested that the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3, be put to the vote.

Pursuant to rule 128 of the rules of procedure, after the Chair has announced the beginning of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting, except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting. In the case of a voting error, delegations wishing to register their original voting intention should not disrupt the voting process to request a correction by taking the floor. They should instead approach the Secretariat to clarify the original voting intention, which will be reflected in the official records.

We shall now take action on the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.3. A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen

*Against:*

Israel, United States of America

*Abstaining:*

Andorra, Australia, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Equatorial Guinea, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

*Draft decision A/C.1/73/CRP.3 was adopted by 86 votes to 2, with 27 abstentions.*

**The Chair:** I now call on the representative of Bulgaria.

**Ms. Stoeva** (Bulgaria): My country did not participate in the voting because we firmly believe that issues of a procedural nature should not be addressed in that way and that they should be strongly discouraged.

**The Chair:** We shall now consider the draft indicative timetable contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.2, taking into account the decision just taken on the participation of the Secretary-General of the Agency for

the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) in the exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials on Wednesday, 17 October. That panel will now include, in addition to the Secretary-General of OPANAL, the following officials: the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Executive Director of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

May I take it that the Committee wishes to proceed in accordance with the draft indicative timetable contained in document A/C.1/73/CRP.2, as amended?

*It was so decided.*

**Programme of work**

**The Chair:** I should like to draw the Committee's attention once again 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 resolution 72/313, of 17 September, decided to establish the pattern for the rotation of the Chairs of the Main Committees for the forthcoming 10 sessions of the General Assembly, namely, from the seventy-fourth to the eighty-third session. In accordance with the annex to that resolution, the Chair of the First Committee will be nominated by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for the seventy-fourth session in 2019. In the light of that provision, I would like to propose that the First Committee consider that item some time in May or June 2019, approximately three months before the opening of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the Committee wishes to proceed accordingly?

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.*