



CONTENTS

Agenda item 26:

Examination of the question of the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, underlying the high seas beyond the limits of present national jurisdiction, and the use of their resources in the interests of mankind: report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee to Study the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction (*continued*) 1

Chairman: Mr. Piero VINCI (Italy).

AGENDA ITEM 26

Examination of the question of the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, underlying the high seas beyond the limits of present national jurisdiction, and the use of their resources in the interests of mankind: report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee to Study the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction (*continued*) (A/7230, A/C.1/973, A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1, L.426/Rev.1, L.427 and Corr.1, L.429/Rev.2 and Add.1 and 2, L.430, L.431 and Add.1-3, L.432/Rev.1, L.433 and Corr.1, L.434/Rev.1, L.435, L.436, L.437 and Add.1)

1. Mr. AMERASINGHE (Ceylon): My delegation is intervening at this stage only to make certain observations on the main draft resolution [A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1] that is before this Committee and that was introduced by the representative of Belgium [1602nd meeting] in its revised form. The representative of Belgium explained with great clarity not merely the content of the draft resolution but also the reasons why it emerged in its final form. Draft resolutions have been falling on this Committee in abundant profusion. That is an indication of the infinite variety and complexity of this problem and of the many and diverse concerns that it arouses. The great merit of draft resolution A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 is that it has attracted a large number of co-sponsors—sixty-two now—representative not only of all interests in the General Assembly but of a full range of economic and social systems.

2. This is no mean achievement on a matter that is by no means free from controversy. This degree of support became possible because the primary aim of the co-sponsors was to attain unanimity or near unanimity. It may be contended that unanimity or near unanimity is attainable

on a complex and controversial issue only at the expense of substance or principle. But this I would respectfully submit is not the case. The original co-sponsors succeeded in achieving this degree of support without compromising any important principle. We may have muted the emphasis but we certainly have not sacrificed the substance. The test of this lies in the fact that there is nothing that could have been done under the original draft resolution which cannot be done equally effectively and thoroughly under the draft resolution now before this Committee. The original intention remains, that is, to make an exhaustive study of the problem and to present recommendations which will carry us closer to the attainment of our objective.

3. I must repeat here what our real objective is and how we believe it can be attained. The objective is to ensure that the resources of this area are not left open to competitive exploitation by nations with the capacity to do so but that the resources will be available for the benefit and in the interest of all mankind, particularly the developing countries which are so sorely in need of some additional resources.

4. There are three indispensable conditions that have to be satisfied if this objective is to be attained. The first is that we must identify the area, and identify it clearly, without permitting the present ambiguity and uncertainty to be prolonged indefinitely. The second is that we must agree on the legal status of this area and the title to its resources. That status and that title must take a form that would promote and not hamper the attainment of our objective. Finally, we must have some means of administering the area and its resources. That would include not merely the exploitation of the resources in the most efficient manner but the conversion of the resources to beneficial use and the equitable distribution of the proceeds of such conversion.

5. In regard to each of those three conditions we do realize that there are countries which have serious reservations. There should be no objection, however, whatever reservations are held, to the study of the problem and the presentation of recommendations. It is for the General Assembly to take the final decision, but what is to be avoided is an attitude of obscurantism which rejects even the examination of certain possibilities. We would expect those who have serious reservations to suggest alternative courses of action, alternative forms of treatment which would help us realize our objective. That would be the test of sincerity in regard to the objective that we have in mind or that we claim to have in mind. What good, for instance, is it to say that this area must be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and that military uses must be totally prohibited and banned and then not to agree on the type of peaceful use to which the area should be put? What good is

it to say that such an area exists and then to refuse to identify clearly the limits of the area? What good is it to say that any form of international administration or central administration is *ab initio* excluded, is out of the question, without suggesting an alternative which will enable the wealth of the area to be evenly distributed? We must be clear in our minds that any ambiguity would benefit not mankind as a whole but that section of mankind which has the financial and technological capacity and the power to exploit the existing ambiguity and to seize the resources that are available.

6. It has been said, for instance, that such ideas as international control or administration are Utopian. To our minds it is no less Utopian than the dream of disarmament. The standing committee whose establishment is proposed has an opportunity of examining the question without prejudice, predilection and presumption, and none should fear the result of that examination. Later the time will come for those who have reservations to express them. But let us not obstruct the examination of the question in its fullest and widest scope.

7. I am aware that the degree of support, the near unanimity which this draft resolution has succeeded in securing—and I am not prejudging the vote but am speaking with full knowledge of the fact that it has secured near unanimity—will be seriously prejudiced and imperilled if the draft is amended in any material particular. When I speak of any “material particular” I mean the amendment of the draft in a form that would give it an emphasis which it did not originally possess and which had to be avoided in order to secure the degree of unanimity that we have succeeded in securing.

8. I refer to the amendments contained in document A/C.1/L.426/Rev.1 presented by the delegations of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. May I at this stage say that I am in complete agreement with the amendment proposed in paragraph 2 of that document. That is precisely what I think we should ultimately work towards and that is precisely what I think we shall need. But unfortunately the adoption of this amendment could only be at the expense of some of the support that we have succeeded in gaining after long, painful and exacting effort. I would therefore appeal from the floor of this house to those three delegations—with the assurance that I am in the fullest sympathy with their idea—to have second thoughts about that draft resolution and to try to see their way to withdrawing the amendments.

9. I repeat this in all seriousness: not a single developing country would object to this proposal that we must examine the advisability of establishing in due time an appropriate international machinery. In fact, this is much less than what the developing countries want. The developing countries do envisage a time when there will be an international organization that will conduct the exploitation of these resources and their equitable distribution in the interests of all mankind, and primarily for the benefit, we hope, of the developing countries. The draft amendment suggested by Kuwait does not even go as far as that; it merely asks the Committee to examine the advisability of establishing in due time an appropriate international machinery. It in no way commits the standing committee or

the General Assembly to the adoption of a proposal for the establishment of international machinery.

10. Just as I feel it necessary to appeal to the three sponsors to withdraw this amendment, I must also express my perplexity at the inability of a certain section of our membership to accept it. That, I certainly regret very much.

11. At this stage I do not wish to comment on the other draft resolutions. We have given our sponsorship to the draft resolution regarding the international decade of ocean exploration [A/C.1/L.429/Rev.2 and Add.1 and 2] and to the draft resolution regarding measures against pollution of the marine environment [A/C.1/L.431 and Add.1-3].

12. As regards the draft resolutions relating to discussion of principles, we do not think it appropriate at this stage to comment on the content of these draft resolutions since there is a move to negotiate in order to reach agreement on a single set of draft resolutions.

13. May I in conclusion take this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks to all those representatives who have expressed appreciation of my work as Chairman of the *Ad Hoc* Committee. As I said earlier, it was a very simple task to preside over a Committee of representatives who were consistently constructive, well informed and knowledgeable on the subject.

14. The CHAIRMAN: Before giving the floor to the next speaker on my list I should like to inform members that Niger has become a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/L.426/Rev.1. The number of co-sponsors of that draft resolution is now four.

15. Madagascar is now a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/L.429/Rev.2 and Add.1 and 2 bringing the number of co-sponsors of that draft resolution to twenty-three.

16. Madagascar has also decided to co-sponsor draft resolution A/C.1/L.431 and Add.1-3. The number of co-sponsors of that draft resolution is now thirty-seven.

17. Finally, Guatemala has decided to co-sponsor draft resolution A/C.1/L.437 and Add.1. The number of co-sponsors of that draft resolution is now thirteen.

18. Mr. NTEZIRIZAZA (Rwanda) (*translated from French*): During the general debate, my delegation has had occasion to express its views on the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction [1595th meeting]. Within the context of that statement, the delegation of Rwanda would like to give its opinion on some of the draft resolutions which are now before the Committee.

19. My delegation will give its sincere support to the draft resolutions which best reflect the basic principles that should guide any future action taken by States or international bodies in the realm of exploration, exploitation or use of ocean and marine resources.

20. The delegation of Rwanda is happy to be among the many sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and

Add.1, and hopes that the members of our Committee will give it their unanimous approval. This draft calls for the establishment of a standing committee which would be entrusted, *inter alia*, with studying the elaboration of the legal principles and norms to be observed in the exploitation and utilization of the resources of the seas and oceans. The motives behind the establishment of such a committee are clearly set forth in the eighth preambular paragraph, which states that the General Assembly considers

“... that it is essential to provide, within the United Nations system, a focal point for the... elaboration of desirable measures of international co-operation in this regard,”

and in the seventh preambular paragraph, which states that the General Assembly is

“Convinced that such exploitation should be carried out for the benefit of mankind as a whole, irrespective of the geographical location of States, taking into account the special interests and needs of the developing countries.”

21. The goals set forth in the operative part of the draft should, once they have been achieved, reduce the time needed between the various stages which will make the resources of the sea-bed and ocean floor accessible to all. The projected studies should take into account foreseeable advances in technology and the effect they will have economically on the exploitation of the resources of the sea-bed and ocean floor.

22. With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/L.429/Rev.2 and Add.1 and 2, my delegation welcomes the idea of proclaiming an international decade for a programme of research and exploration under United Nations auspices, designed to foster a better understanding of the marine environment. As we said in our statement, we hope that a greater number of countries and scientists can take part in the surveys and researches in order to achieve a common goal. We should also ensure the widest possible dissemination of the results of the studies undertaken during the decade so that countries unable to participate in the various programmes could acquire specialized knowledge in the marine sciences which could encourage them to develop the resources of the area within their national jurisdiction. Provision should be made during the decade, for a programme for training personnel more particularly to enable developing countries to play an increasingly active part. In the light of these considerations, my delegation will vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/L.429/Rev.2 and Add.1 and 2. We are, moreover, convinced that it is in the interest of all countries that the exploration and exploitation of the resources of the sea-bed and ocean floor should be carried on in such a way as to avoid polluting the marine environment, especially the biological resources of the sea. Indeed, we must see to it that the race to acquire marine resources is not a factor in the decrease or destruction of other resources already existing in the sea, from which mankind derives so many benefits.

23. For this reason, we shall vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/L.431 and Add.1 to 3, which recommends the adoption of appropriate measures to prevent the risk of pollution and other disastrous or dangerous effects which

might result from the exploration and use of the resources of the sea-bed and the ocean floor.

24. Draft resolution A/C.1/433 and Corr.1, lays particular stress on the idea of defining the area which comprises the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof. We consider that such a definition can emerge from the work of the standing committee which is to be set up by the Assembly.

25. In our opinion, this draft has the same aims as draft resolution A/C.1/L.434/Rev.1 submitted by the delegation of Liberia. The question of the non-appropriation of this region dealt with in draft resolution A/C.1/L.434/Rev.1 is also dealt with in paragraphs 1 and 2 of draft resolution A/C.1/L.433 and Corr.1 which my delegation will vote for if the Committee seems disposed to adopt it, since it is more complete.

26. As for draft resolution A/C.1/L.430, my delegation feels that it might duplicate draft resolution A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 which the Committee is about to adopt.

27. The CHAIRMAN: Before calling on the next speaker on my list, I wish to inform the Committee that Cameroon has become a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1. The co-sponsors of that draft resolution now number sixty-three. Ecuador has decided to co-sponsor draft resolution A/C.1/L.431 and Add.1-3, bringing the number of co-sponsors to thirty-eight. Haiti has decided to co-sponsor draft resolution A/C.1/L.437 and Add.1, bringing the number of co-sponsors to fourteen.

28. Mr. PILAVACHI (Greece): I wish to make a brief statement in order to put forward certain views that refer to a question closely related to the item treated in the draft resolutions before us, and more particularly draft resolution A/C.1/L.429/Rev.2 and Add.1 and 2, of which my country is a co-sponsor.

29. The question was already raised by the representative of Libya in his intervention [*1597th meeting*] during the general debate. It was followed up by the representative of the United States of America [*1601st meeting*] when he introduced the aforementioned draft resolution. The representative of Libya also made an extensive reference to this matter in his intervention yesterday afternoon [*1602nd meeting*]. He reminded us of the great progress that has been made in recent years in the field of marine archaeology and of the prospect of discovering in the near future archaeological treasures at the bottom of the sea.

30. While supporting his opinion with regard to the need for intensified international co-operation in submarine archaeological research in regions lying close to the shores of countries with ancient civilizations, I should like to draw the attention of the Committee to another aspect of the problem which is of no small importance.

31. We know that the sea-bed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction is rich in mineral wealth and promises to become an important source of raw materials that can be exploited for the benefit, as we hope, of the whole of mankind. We may be sure, however, that, sooner or later,

the explorers of the sea-bed and its subsoil will come across wealth of a different kind—I mean sunken ships and perhaps cities and other treasures belonging to past civilizations. These, of course, would be of the greatest historic and artistic value. Objects of this kind, we believe, should not be subjected to the same régime as material wealth but rather to a special status that would take their special nature into consideration.

32. It is well known that it is mostly the Mediterranean countries, where civilizations arose in ancient times, which are interested in this particular problem. I am sure, however, that other countries also have a direct interest in it.

33. My delegation had considered submitting a draft resolution on the question. We think, however, that this may be premature at this stage. I should like, therefore, simply to draw the attention of the Committee to this question and to suggest that further study of all aspects of the problem be undertaken by the standing committee which we hope will be constituted as a result of our deliberations.

34. The main problems that will arise will, of course, be the preservation as well as the determination of ownership and custody and the choice of the site where the objects of art will be displayed. It should not be forgotten that these treasures, which are of interest to all mankind, are at the same time part of the cultural and artistic legacy of particular countries.

35. We feel that the international community would like to see archaeological findings placed in, or rather returned to, the cultural, artistic and natural background and setting where they originally belonged and where they could be displayed to the greatest aesthetic advantage.

36. The Greek delegation therefore suggests: first, that the international decade of ocean exploration should interest itself in the scientific and technical aspects of submarine archaeology, and secondly, that the committee whose establishment is provided for in draft resolution A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 shall take up the examination of the artistic, cultural and legal matters connected with findings of an archaeological character in the sea-bed beyond national jurisdiction. In this connexion UNESCO and other international bodies might provide most useful assistance.

37. Mr. MENDELEVICH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*translated from Russian*): The First Committee has completed its general debate on the question of the sea-bed and the ocean floor. It may be said without exaggeration that the debate as a whole was interesting and meaningful because the statements of many delegations were interesting, meaningful, and inspired by a desire for a constructive solution.

38. I have no doubt that the wealth of information accumulated in the Committee as a result of the general debate will be studied more than once by various Governments and will more than once prove useful.

39. Whereas, when this question was discussed in the First Committee a year ago, many of the statements made were virtually improvisations, since the subject was entirely new to the United Nations, this time delegations approached it with a deeper understanding, enriched by their experience in studying the problem of the sea-bed and by the work so successfully performed in the course of the year by the *Ad Hoc* Committee.

40. The fact that our work in this area has reached a new stage is also reflected in the draft resolutions before us. A number of them contain constructive suggestions and proposals which could even now be put into effect. In addition, several of them have been thoroughly discussed between groups of States in consultations held while the Committee carried on its work, so that it was possible to reconcile the views of these groups to a far greater extent than usual. We feel that the practice of conducting serious consultations in a workmanlike atmosphere has fully justified itself, and we can only hope that it will be continued.

41. Which of the draft resolutions before us deserve an immediate decision, in the view of my delegation? Which of them do we consider not quite ready for action by the General Assembly? Which would it be wiser to postpone? In other words, if I were to compare this Committee to a great dredge which brings up samples from the bottom of the ocean, I would say that the bucket of our machine is now full—full of draft resolutions. But we must look and see what in our bucket is edible sea-food and whether this sea-food is of the highest quality—for the decisions we take must always be of the highest quality.

42. I should now like to comment on some of the draft resolutions individually, and first of all on draft resolution A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 proposing the establishment of a United Nations committee on the sea-bed and the ocean floor.

43. It will be remembered that preliminary draft resolutions on the subject were submitted to the *Ad Hoc* Committee and were then made the subject of very serious and thoroughgoing consultations between groups of States, consultations which continued during the work of the First Committee. I must say that while these preliminary drafts pursued a worthwhile purpose, they contained a number of provisions my delegation did not deem entirely appropriate. Some paragraphs reflected what I would call a supranational approach. It was not clear what bearing the work of the committee on the sea-bed would have on the disarmament negotiations being carried on in other organs, and there was a considerable lack of clarity as to the manner in which the future committee would proceed with its work.

44. Owing to the consultations I have mentioned, results were achieved which we consider satisfactory in the main, and these various points were formulated more clearly in the draft resolution I mentioned. Nevertheless, since some of the provisions of the draft are so phrased that many delegations wish to record their position on the actual phrasing, the USSR delegation too wants to say a few words on how it interprets certain provisions.

45. My first comment relates to the fifth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, which reads:

“Recognizing that it is in the interests of mankind as a whole to favour the exploration and the use of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, for peaceful purposes”.

46. As everyone knows, my delegation supports and approves of the thesis that the entire sea-bed and ocean floor should be reserved exclusively for peaceful uses; and it has put forward a proposal to prohibit any military uses thereof.

47. I should like to stress once more my delegation's deep conviction that military use of the sea-bed and the ocean floor must be prohibited throughout their entire extent beyond the limits of the territorial waters of coastal States.

48. In our view—and, I am sure, in the view of any delegation which takes a practical attitude towards this question—there can be no justification for excluding the continental shelf from such a prohibition. Under the 1958 Convention¹ the coastal States exercise sovereign rights over the continental shelf only for the purpose of exploring it and exploiting its natural resources. In all other respects, State sovereignty does not extend to the continental shelf.

49. Why, then, should the continental shelf be excluded from the prohibition of military use of the sea-bed and the ocean floor? One need not be an expert in military strategy or technology to see at a glance that, if there are any parts of the sea-bed and the ocean floor that might be used in the immediate future for military installations and military purposes in general, these are the areas of the continental shelf, rather than the ocean deeps. In the next few years, military facilities are not going to be installed at a depth of 8,000 or 10,000 metres—our technology has not developed this far, nor is it likely to in the near future—but in the shallow waters of the continental shelf, at depths of 50, 100, or 200 metres. That is now technically feasible. It is a technically soluble problem. What conclusion are we to draw? Are those States which do not support the proposal to prohibit military uses of the sea-bed and the ocean floor beyond the limits of territorial waters prepared to allow more powerful States to place military installations on their continental shelf? This, as we know, is not prohibited by the Convention on the Continental Shelf, which gives States sovereign rights over the continental shelf only in respect of exploration and exploitation of its natural resources. Where does that leave us? Can any country, whether it be in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe, or some other part of the world, be content to allow more powerful States to install military facilities on its continental shelf? We simply refuse to believe it. We do not credit any such possibility. That is why we are strongly, firmly and consistently advocating prohibition of military uses of the sea-bed and the ocean floor beyond the limits of territorial waters. That would be in the interests of all, or virtually all, States, and especially of developing countries not possessed of great military might. Consequently, we interpret the relevant provision of the draft resolution as meaning that this is the

course to be followed by the United Nations, since it would be in the interests of all mankind.

50. Now, a few words about operative subparagraphs 2(a) and 2(b) of the draft resolution. In our view, they mean that the future United Nations committee on the sea-bed and the ocean floor must, *inter alia*, study the suggestions put forward by States with respect to the legal, technical and economic aspects of State activity in exploring and exploiting the resources of the sea-bed and the ocean floor.

51. With regard to subparagraph 2(c), I would draw attention to the indisputable fact that the question of reservation of the sea-bed and the ocean floor exclusively for peaceful purposes, i.e., prohibition of the use thereof for military purposes, is within the competence of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament and appears on its agenda. That is natural and reasonable, since this is primarily a question relating to disarmament. We interpret the subparagraph to mean that the task of the committee on the sea-bed and the ocean floor in this connexion will be, taking into account studies and negotiations being undertaken in the field of disarmament, to assist the Eighteen-Nation Committee in its study of the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor beyond the limits of territorial waters. That is my delegation's understanding of the powers delegated in this area to the future committee on the sea-bed and the ocean floor.

52. My delegation also takes note of the statement made by the Belgian representative on behalf of the co-sponsors of the revised draft resolution concerning the organization of work of the proposed committee. It takes the view that the United Nations committee on the sea-bed and the ocean floor, which is to study important questions vitally affecting the interests of States, must proceed on the basis of consensus in adopting its recommendations.

53. In mentioning these things, I cannot pass over the fact that amendments, contained in document A/C.1/L.426 and now also revised, have been submitted. Mr. Amerasinghe, the representative of Ceylon, has just commented on them. In its statement in the general debate, my delegation expressed its firm conviction that to establish at the present time some sort of international machinery to guide and supervise the activities of States on the sea-bed and the ocean floor were not only premature but fraught with undesirable consequences—undesirable primarily for the developing countries, but not for them alone.

54. As my delegation said at that time, plans for the creation, at the present stage of development of human society, of international machinery based on the common ownership of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, attractive as they may be (and we understand perfectly why the delegations of some of the developing countries should find such ideas appealing) would probably—as in any other sphere of human activity today—lead either to complete collapse of international co-operation in this field or to seizure by the great monopolies of virtual control over marine resources, even though the organization of such international machinery and the forms of such common ownership might, on the face of it, be very democratic.

¹ *United Nations Treaty Series*, vol. 499 (1964), No. 7302.

55. That is why we say that we regard this approach as Utopian from the theoretical and dangerous from the practical point of view.
56. Mr. Amerasinghe has just remarked that other Utopian plans have been submitted—for example, the plan for general and complete disarmament. With all due respect, I must say that this is a false analogy. It is false because, difficult as the road to general and complete disarmament may be—and, as we all know, it is very difficult indeed—the end goal, which we believe will some day be attained, is a truly noble goal. It is in the interests of all States and it carries no hidden danger with it; on the contrary, if we were to attain it the peoples of the world would be happy. We have no doubt that, when we do succeed in this task, the peoples will be happy.
57. Consequently, we do not think it right to term disarmament a Utopian dream. As to calling Utopian the idea of creating international machinery to control the activity of States on the ocean floor, which would be their common property, I would say that this goal is more readily attainable, but dangerous. If we act upon this idea, the likelihood is, as I said before, that the benefits to be derived from its realization will go not to the peoples, not to the developing and other States, but to the monopolies.
58. That is why we believe and reiterate that this is a dangerous idea. For our part, we are ready to go on explaining our position on it. We feel, however, that on one point a decision must be taken here and now: the non-inclusion in the committee's terms of reference, as set out in draft resolution A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1, of contradictory provisions which would only weaken the text and deprive it of the broad support it now enjoys.
59. This is why I associate myself with the appeal made by the representative of Ceylon. I too would urge the co-sponsors of amendment A/C.1/L.426/Rev.1 not to press for its adoption—indeed, not to press it to a vote, whose results might conceivably prevent the Committee from unanimously adopting the basic draft resolution.
60. I would only add that my delegation finds the third point of the amendments as unacceptable as the second.
61. Having explained my delegation's position on draft resolution A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1, I shall comment briefly on the other draft resolutions.
62. Draft resolution A/C.1/L.429/Rev.1 and Add.1-3 proposing an international decade of ocean exploration, to begin in 1970 and to include scientific research and exploration of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, has been improved as a result of consultations, so that it is now clear that the proposed decade would be a useful programme of exploring the oceans and the ocean floor as part of a co-ordinated long-term programme of oceanographic research carried out under the aegis of the United Nations. The draft resolution—quite rightly, in my view—entrusts the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, the most competent international organ in this sphere, with co-ordinating an expanded long-term programme of oceanographic research, one of the components of which would be the proposed decade of ocean exploration.
63. The work accomplished by the *Ad Hoc* Committee has demonstrated to us all present-day knowledge of the characteristics of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and of the extent and disposition of mineral resources beyond the limits of the continental shelf is extremely scanty and inadequate. Particular importance therefore attaches at this stage to the further exploration of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the uniting of State efforts—by organizing international co-operation—in this important undertaking.
64. Draft resolution A/C.1/L.429/Rev.2 and Add.1-3 meets these purposes, and the USSR delegation will vote for it.
65. Together with a large group of other delegations, the USSR delegation has co-sponsored draft resolution A/C.1/L.431 and Add.1-3 calling for a study of means of preventing pollution of the marine environment which might result from exploration and exploitation of the resources of the sea-bed and the ocean floor. This is an important question which merits general attention and careful study. A competent study can be made by the international organizations already concerned with preventing pollution of the marine environment—the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency and others. As a co-sponsor of the draft resolution, my delegation urges its unanimous adoption.
66. I now pass to a sheaf of draft resolutions dealing with the fundamental principles governing State activity on the sea-bed and the ocean floor. They are draft resolution A/C.1/L.430 submitted by Mexico, draft resolution A/C.1/L.433 and Corr.1 submitted by Malta, Mauritius and Tanzania, draft resolution A/C.1/L.437 and Add.1 submitted by Argentina, Brazil and a number of other countries; and, although they are somewhat narrower in scope, I might also include in this category draft resolution A/C.1/L.432/Rev.1 submitted by Cyprus and Uruguay and draft resolution A/C.1/L.434/Rev.1 submitted by Liberia. It is being said in the corridors that we may expect several more draft resolutions pursuing the same aim: the immediate adoption of a definite set of principles.
67. My delegation has explained in the general debate its position on the question of formulating legal principles applicable to the sea-bed and the ocean floor beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. It is convinced that the idea of drafting a declaration of such principles needs further careful study. We cannot disregard the fact that there are marked differences and conflicts in the views of States and groups of States with regard to the scope and content of the document which is to embody the fundamental principles governing the activities of States on the sea-bed and the ocean floor. At the same time it is obvious, if we are to take the matter seriously—and my delegation sees no other possible approach—that such principles must have the unanimous approval of the General Assembly. Such approval cannot be obtained, however, until the present divergences regarding the substance of the principles concerned have been reconciled and the entire complex of relevant questions has received further study.
68. What would happen if the Chairman were to put to the vote here and now the draft resolutions I have enumerated? Presumably, some delegations would vote in

favour of one draft resolution, others in favour of another, still others in favour of a third, etc. In the end no draft resolution would be adopted, or, if several parallel texts were adopted, the resulting chaos would be such that we would not know what we had approved and what we had rejected.

69. I think that the very presence of a large number of draft resolutions is evidence of the fact that the question is not ripe for decision and that any voting would be premature. To vote now would only complicate matters, particularly since any resolution we adopt now could only be adopted in haste and under pressure, as time is running out, since the Committee has other and even more time-consuming items on its agenda. I do not think it wise to insist on a decision being taken now on these draft resolutions. It would be best to postpone the voting, to allow delegations to study and analyse these draft resolutions more carefully and to hold consultations on them. The best place to do this, in my opinion, would be the future United Nations committee on the sea-bed and the ocean floor. Surely that would be the most reasonable course of action to follow.

70. I will therefore not comment on these draft resolutions separately or say exactly how my delegation would vote on them if they were put to the vote. I believe that the Committee as a whole is not ready to vote on them. I do not mean to imply, however, that these draft resolutions are for any reason totally unacceptable to my delegation. That is not so. I can say now, for example, that the draft resolution, submitted by Cyprus and Uruguay, on the need for defining with all possible speed the boundaries of the area which we term the sea-bed and the ocean floor beyond the limits of national jurisdiction is acceptable to us. The text does contain the phrase "international regime", which is somewhat ambiguous and can be interpreted in different ways, but I take it to mean an international regime in a purely legal sense, bearing no relation to any international machinery, such as I commented on earlier. On the whole, this resolution would be acceptable to my delegation, and the same holds true of the Liberian draft resolution, which would freeze all claims to the sea-bed and the ocean floor pending the adoption of a declaration or a treaty. My delegation has no objection to this text either and could support it.

71. Other draft resolutions also contain provisions acceptable to my delegation. Some have more of them, and others fewer. This is yet another reason, it seems to me, not to hurry with the adoption of these texts, for there would be countless amendments to each one and a situation would result in which a calm, purposeful and rational decision would be out of the question.

72. For these reasons, I feel that it would be best not to take a vote on the five draft resolutions I have mentioned or on any other texts of the same type that may yet be submitted.

73. These are the comments my delegation wished to make on the draft resolutions before the Committee.

74. Mr. DIGGS (Liberia): The delegation of Liberia has submitted a draft resolution [*A/C.1/L.434/Rev.1*] which is before this Committee for consideration. In the light of the debate on this item, and considering that the draft

resolution [*A/C.1/L.432/Rev.1*] submitted by Cyprus reflects the same objectives as the contents of our draft resolution, we shall not press for a vote on our resolution but will co-sponsor and support the one submitted by Cyprus.

75. The CHAIRMAN: Before giving the floor to the next speaker on my list I should like to inform the members of the Committee that Pakistan has become a co-sponsor of draft resolution *A/C.1/L.429/Rev.2* and *Add.1* and *2*. The number of co-sponsors is now twenty-four. Mauritius has become a co-sponsor of draft resolution *A/C.1/L.431* and *Add.1-3*, bringing the number of co-sponsors of that draft resolution to thirty-nine.

76. Mr. ABDEL-HAMID (United Arab Republic): I have the privilege on behalf of my own delegation and those of Libya and the Sudan to join in the appeal addressed this morning by the representative of Ceylon, Ambassador Amerasinghe, to the delegations of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela; namely, the appeal not to press to the vote their amendments contained in document *A/C.1/L.426/Rev.1*. In associating ourselves with this appeal we should like to express our appreciation and understanding of the reasons which motivated the three delegations in submitting these amendments. It is our understanding that this appeal will not prejudice any of the issues involved, and it is further our understanding that the committee when established will give full consideration to them.

77. I should like also to say a few words on behalf of the United Arab Republic delegation. I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation of and support for the draft resolution contained in document *A/C.1/L.429/Rev.2* and *Add.1* and *2*, concerning the decade of ocean exploration. My delegation attaches great importance to the adoption by the General Assembly of a set of principles concerning the area of the sea-bed and ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof. However, in view of the consultations which are taking place at this stage it is my delegation's intention not to intervene, but we should like to reserve our right to intervene later in the debate, if the necessity arises, to express our views on the various issues involved. We should like also to reserve our position—and we may wish in due course to make some suggestions—on the procedure to be adopted in the consideration of these highly important principles. That procedure—on which we may wish later to make some suggestions for consideration by the Committee—should, we believe, be based on two fundamental prerequisites: co-operation and harmony, in order that principles widely acceptable to the entire membership of this Organization may be adopted.

78. Mr. WALDRON-RAMSEY (United Republic of Tanzania): The difficulties facing the Committee as a result of the complexity of the draft resolutions before it tend to drive my delegation to suggest to the Chairman and to our other colleagues that we should postpone voting on all of these draft resolutions until as late as possible this afternoon. That would allow the necessary consultations on a number of very important elements contained in the texts to continue, and also—and primarily—would allow the Group of Seventy-Seven, the developing countries in the First Committee, which have not had a chance to meet on these issues, to do so with the usual facilities of interpreta-

tion, either at the end of this morning's meeting or at the beginning of this afternoon's. In that way we can harmonize and reconcile a number of divergencies which tend to arise within the preoccupations of the members of the developing countries. I do not think this should present any insuperable difficulties to our colleagues. Our group is rather large and this is understandable. The Western European countries have been able to meet from time to time on these matters as have the socialist countries. But the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America together—a grouping which is usual in these matters—have not been able to meet at one and the same time to discuss these important issues. Hence the plethora of draft resolutions that have come to the Committee from various elements of the Group of Seventy-Seven, the developing countries; they have not been given the opportunity to harmonize their position.

79. Speaking more concretely now as an original co-sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1, which sets out the position with regard to establishing a committee to deal with the question of the peaceful uses of the sea-bed and ocean floor, my delegation accepts the amendments suggested by the delegations of Kuwait, Niger, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela [A/C.1/L.426/Rev.1]. These amendments are apt amendments—especially 2 (c), which tends to express in the most acceptable language the same consideration which animated the developing countries during the meetings this year of the *Ad Hoc* Committee. We feel, therefore, that as a co-sponsor we must accept these amendments not only for the sake of consistency, but also because the particular amendment to which I have referred, dealing with studying the advisability of establishing in due time an appropriate international machinery, should be dealt with by the standing committee, or whatever type of committee we establish in due course. We think it would certainly not impinge upon the balance of the text; it would certainly lend some weight to the text from the point of view of the developing countries. We, like our colleague of the United Arab Republic, would want to express our deep satisfaction to the delegations of Kuwait, Niger, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela for this very timely amendment which is of profound significance and which we feel should not present any great difficulties to any delegation.

80. We feel that the degree of unanimity, to which our colleague of Ceylon referred this morning, is a rather doubtful concept. The Powers co-sponsoring draft resolution A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1 represent a variety of currents and opinion. The large number of co-sponsors—some sixty-two or sixty-three—should not be taken to mean that we are unified on every conceivable aspect of this draft resolution. That is not the case. It is not the case, for instance, that the developing countries co-sponsoring this draft resolution feel that the amendment of Kuwait, Niger, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela is inopportune and should not be pressed at this moment. There are a vast number of developing countries co-sponsoring this draft which feel that this is a very timely amendment, an amendment of which we should not lose sight. Indeed, if we read the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee carefully we find this self-same amendment, this self-same concept, featuring quite prominently therein. Therefore we would want again to express our thanks to these four delegations which seek

to incorporate this particular concept in the mandate of the committee which is to be established.

81. That is our position, and we should like to have an opportunity provided for the group of developing countries to meet to harmonize their position on a number of questions—for instance, the principles, the question of the size of the committee to be set up and the method of composition, the question of the decade, and a number of other things on which we think we need to meet as a group and to finalize a complete position that would in due course help the Committee to discharge its mandate on this particular item in an expeditious manner.

82. The CHAIRMAN: Before expressing any view on the suggestion just made by the representative of Tanzania, I think it would be useful to exhaust the list of speakers for this morning.

83. Before doing so I wish to inform the Committee that Lebanon has become a co-sponsor of the draft resolutions contained in documents A/C.1/L.429/Rev.2 and Add.1 and 2 and A/C.1/L.431 and Add.1-3. The co-sponsors of those draft resolutions number now respectively twenty-five and forty.

84. Lesotho has decided to become a co-sponsor of the draft resolutions contained in documents A/C.1/L.425/Rev.1 and Add.1, A/C.1/L.429/Rev.2 and Add.1 and 2, and A/C.1/L.431 and Add.1-3. The co-sponsors of those resolutions number now respectively sixty-four, twenty-six and forty-one.

85. Mr. HAMBRO (Norway): I asked for the floor some time ago and I am afraid that what I wanted to say may have to some extent been covered by the last speaker. I wanted to join my voice to the appeal made by the delegate of the United Arab Republic, and if the Chair should grant the postponement of this meeting so that the developing countries could get together I should like that appeal to be addressed to the whole group during that meeting.

86. The CHAIRMAN: At this stage perhaps it would be convenient for the Committee if we postponed the afternoon meeting until four o'clock in order to give the countries just mentioned by the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania time to consult among themselves. At the same time I would suggest that the co-sponsors of the different draft resolutions before us also consult among themselves and indicate to the Chair when they will be ready to ask for a vote on their draft resolutions in order to spare our time and expedite our work. I would also suggest that the Chairmen of different regional groups try to get in touch with the Chair in order to settle other questions which are still pending. I think if we follow this plan of work we may be able to proceed with the haste which is necessary at this stage. Before I adjourn the meeting I should also like to add for the information of the members of the Committee that a new provisional document has just been circulated [A/C.1/L.431/Rev.1].

87. If there is no objection we shall meet at 4 p.m.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.