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*President:* Mr. Corneliu MANESCU (Romania).

**AGENDA ITEM 34**

Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

**REPORT OF THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE  
(A/7004)**

*Mr. Kamil (Indonesia), Rapporteur of the Special Political Committee, presented the report of that Committee and then spoke as follows:*

1. Mr. KAMIL (Indonesia), Rapporteur of the Special Political Committee: As you know, the United Nations has been seized of this item for the past eighteen years or so. The Special Political Committee was greatly assisted during its consideration of this item by the statements and advice of the Commissioner-General, Mr. Laurence Michelmore, to whom all speakers in the Committee paid tribute for his able leadership of UNRWA. The Committee considered the item at eleven meetings, held between 11 and 16 December 1967, and heard some fifty speakers in the general debate on this long-standing and difficult problem. At the conclusion of its debate the Committee adopted all three of the resolutions which had been presented. Draft resolution A, originally submitted by the United States, was adopted by a roll-call vote of 99 to none, with 2 abstentions; draft resolution B, sponsored by nineteen delegations, was adopted by 102 votes to none, with 1 abstention; and draft resolution C, sponsored by five delegations, was adopted by a roll-call vote of 42 to 38, with 24 abstentions. Accordingly, the Special Political Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of these three draft resolutions [A/7004, para. 15].

*Pursuant to rule 68 of the rules of procedure, it was decided not to discuss the report of the Special Political Committee.*

2. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I call on the representative of Nigeria on a point of order.

3. Mr. ADEBO (Nigeria): Permit me, Mr. President, to associate the Nigerian delegation with the expressions of condolence which have been extended by previous speakers to the Australian delegation and, through it, to Mrs. Holt and to the Government and people of Australia for the loss which they have suffered by the tragic death of Prime Minister Harold Holt.

4. I apologize for intervening at this stage on a point of order, but I do wish to make a proposal with regard to resolution C contained in the report that has just been introduced [A/7006, para. 15]; that is to say, the draft resolution calling for the appointment of a custodian to protect and administer Arab property, assets and property rights in Israel. This draft resolution was taken up and considered in the closing stages of the Committee's deliberations, and the time left for its consideration was short. This was due to no fault of the sponsors, who were anxious to see positive action taken in a matter to which they attach a great deal of importance. On the other hand, the shortness of time made it impossible for the matter to be given the thorough examination that a number of other members felt necessary for a proposition of this kind.

5. From consultations which have ensued since the adoption by the Committee of the draft resolution, I have gained the impression that the sponsors would be prepared to consider favourably an appeal that they should not press for this draft resolution to be voted upon by this Assembly. Accordingly, I move that no vote should be taken by the Assembly on draft resolution C contained in the Special Political Committee's report.

6. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The General Assembly has just heard the Nigerian representative make the formal proposal that draft resolution C should not be put to the vote. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees.

*It was so decided.*

7. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I now invite the Assembly to vote on draft resolutions A and B which have been recommended for adoption by the Special Political Committee in its report [A/7004, para. 15].

*Draft resolution A was adopted by 98 votes to none, with 3 abstentions [resolution 2341 A (XXII)].*

*Draft resolution B was adopted by 105 votes to none [resolution 2341 B (XXII)].*

8. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I now call on the representative of the United States who wishes to explain his vote.

9. Mr. FOUNTAIN (United States of America): Resolution A on the report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, on which we have just voted, was sponsored originally by the United States. It supports the continued work of UNRWA and is modeled closely on the resolution [2154 (XXI)] which was adopted by a vote of 68 to none, with 39 abstentions, in the General Assembly last year. We are gratified that this year the resolution has just received a vote of 98 in favour, none opposed, and only 3 abstentions, and that the affirmative votes included those of the Arab States and of the socialist countries.

10. It is the hope of my delegation that this virtually unanimous approval of the resolution, including as it does an appeal to all Governments to contribute generously to UNRWA, will lead to increased and more broadly-based financial support for UNRWA's programmes and thus to the alleviation of the Agency's continuing financial difficulties.

11. The second resolution on which we have just voted, and which was approved unanimously, is humanitarian in nature and concerns the new refugees. It quite rightly reaffirms the resolution [2252 (ES-V)] adopted in July by the fifth emergency special session of the General Assembly. That resolution called upon the Government of Israel to facilitate the return of those inhabitants who had fled the areas since the outbreak of hostilities. We continue to believe that it must be implemented to the fullest extent possible. The Swedish resolution endorses the efforts of the Commissioner-General to provide emergency humanitarian assistance for the new refugees, and appeals to all Governments, organizations and individuals to make special contributions for that purpose.

12. A third resolution, calling for the appointment by the Secretary-General of a custodian for Arab property in Israel, was adopted in the Special Political Committee by a bare simple majority. It has—and quite wisely, we believe—not been pressed to a vote in the General Assembly. For a variety of compelling legal and political reasons which we stated on 16 December [594th meeting], my delegation opposed that resolution in the Committee, and would have opposed it again had it been brought to a vote here today.

13. As I stated to the Special Political Committee on 14 December [588th meeting], the tragic plight of the refugees cries out for a permanent solution. The desperate plight of those made homeless by both the recent and previous conflicts—and there are today several hundred thousand more refugees than there were a year ago—must be the concern of us all. Certainly, justice for the refugees is one of the essential elements of a lasting peace in the Middle East; indeed, a just settlement of the refugee problem is among the principles affirmed in the Security Council resolution of 22 November [242 (1967)], on the basis of which the Special United Nations Representative, Ambassador Jarring of Sweden, has undertaken his current mission to the Middle East. The nations of the area, with the help of the world community, must now, more than ever before, address themselves with renewed determination to this most agonizing human problem. And so, let us hope and pray that with the assistance of Ambassador Jarring a just solution of the problem of the refugees will at last, within the framework of an over-all settlement, be developed and implemented.

14. In the meantime, urgent measures must be taken if UNRWA is to continue, under both its regular and emergency programmes, to provide desperately needed services for the refugees. UNRWA's record of service over nearly twenty years and its outstanding response to the emergency needs it has faced since June deserve special commendation and wider support. Again, my delegation urges all Governments to make the most generous contributions possible to support the programmes of UNRWA in the coming year.

15. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The Assembly has now concluded its consideration of agenda item 34.

#### AGENDA ITEM 28

Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons:

- (a) Report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament;
- (b) Report of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States

REPORT OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE [A/7016]

#### AGENDA ITEMS 29, 30 AND 31

Question of general and complete disarmament

- (a) Report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament;
- (b) Report of the Secretary-General on the effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons and on the security and economic implications for States of the acquisition and further development of these weapons

## REPORT OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE [A/7017]

*Urgent need for suspension of nuclear and thermonuclear tests: report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament*

## REPORT OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE [A/7021]

*Elimination of foreign military bases in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America: report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament*

## REPORT OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE [A/7022]

*Mr. Orn (Sweden), Rapporteur of the First Committee, presented the reports of that Committee and then spoke as follows:*

16. Mr. ORN (Sweden), Rapporteur of the First Committee (translated from French): The first of the four reports of the First Committee deals with agenda item 28. Under that item, the First Committee recommends two draft resolutions [A/7016, para. 9] for adoption by the General Assembly. Draft resolution A, which concerns the report of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament,<sup>1/</sup> was adopted by the Committee by 94 votes to 1, with 4 abstentions. Draft resolution B, concerning the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States [A/6817], was adopted by the Committee by 90 votes to none, with 8 abstentions.

17. I now come to the First Committee's report on agenda item 29. Under this item, the First Committee also adopted two draft resolutions [A/7017, para. 10]. Draft resolution A, which relates to the Secretary-General's report on the effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons [A/6858], was adopted by 100 votes to none, with 1 abstention. Draft resolution B, based on the interim report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament,<sup>2/</sup> was adopted by 97 votes to none, with 2 abstentions.

18. I now turn to the First Committee's report on agenda item 30. The First Committee adopted, by 92 votes to 1, with 6 abstentions, a draft resolution [A/7021, para. 6] concerning the interim report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

19. I come finally to the report of the First Committee on agenda item 31. By 86 votes to none, with 11 abstentions, the First Committee adopted a draft resolution [A/7022, para. 6] which was also based on the interim report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

20. With those few remarks, I have the honour to submit the recommendations of the First Committee to the General Assembly for its consideration.

*In accordance with rule 68 of the rules of procedure, it was decided not to discuss the reports of the First Committee.*

21. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The Secretariat has just informed me that the documents

relating to agenda item 28 have not yet been circulated in all the languages. I therefore suggest that we pass on to agenda item 29.

*It was so decided.*

22. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): We shall now hear those representatives who wish to explain their vote.

23. Mr. BURNS (Canada): The Canadian delegation would like to make a few brief observations on draft resolution A, concerning the Secretary-General's report [A/6858 and Corr.1] on the effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons and on the security and economic implications for States of the acquisition and further development of these weapons [A/7017, para. 10].

24. The Canadian delegation became a co-sponsor of that draft resolution because of the importance which my Government attaches to the Secretary-General's report on this vital subject. The impact of the knowledge of the horrific effects which will be produced if nuclear or thermonuclear weapons are ever used has been softened by much repetition. The report contains facts and conclusions which the world would like to ignore and forget about. The Secretary-General's report—and particularly its first chapters—brings to us the realization of the sort of questions about which we are concerned in this Assembly when we deal with disarmament. They are questions of the life or death of hundreds of millions of men and women, of the destruction or crippling of civilization as we know it. For that reason, if for no other, we strongly support the provisions of operative paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of the draft resolution, which call for the report to be disseminated as widely as is possible at this time.

25. We must also thank the Secretary-General, the Secretariat and the group of experts for providing us with a document which will, we are sure, be of great assistance to those of us who are engaged in disarmament discussions at the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament. The recommendations to that end contained in operative paragraph 4 of our resolution will, we believe, be fully implemented.

26. Finally, I should like to express the appreciation of my delegation, as one of the original six co-sponsors of the draft resolution, for the wide support which the draft has received. We are very pleased to note that there are now thirty-one co-sponsors, and we interpret that as a welcome sign of the deep importance which the great majority of delegations attach to this subject.

27. Mr. TOMOROWICZ (Poland): I should like to express deep satisfaction that draft resolution A [A/7017, para. 10] was passed by the First Committee by such an overwhelming majority. We understand that the almost unanimous vote not only was a way of expressing appreciation to the Secretary-General and the team of expert-consultants for giving us the report on the effect of possible use development and acquisition of nuclear weapons [A/6858 and Corr.1] but also expressed—and this is probably even more important—the need, the very necessity and the will to make full use of the extremely valuable material

<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for 1967 and 1968, document DC/230 and Add.1.

<sup>2/</sup> *Ibid.*, document DC/229.

contained in that document to pave the way for further steps along the road leading to the ultimate goal of complete nuclear and conventional disarmament.

28. When, on 11 November 1966 [1461st meeting], we introduced the draft of resolution 2162 A (XXI) which constituted the basis for the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General, the Polish delegation was prompted by the deep conviction that the gathering, selecting, arranging and then propagating of that material was not only extremely timely, not only of great value, but dictated to all of us by sheer necessity. It was precisely the same approach and understanding of the problem which was voiced by the Secretary-General in May 1966 in his Strasbourg speech to the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe and later in the introduction to his annual report last year.<sup>3/</sup> However, we believe that it is important to go even further back, for it was in 1960 [874th meeting] that the Chairman of the Polish delegation to the fifteenth session of the General Assembly, Wladyslaw Gomulka, introduced to the United Nations for the first time the idea of preparing such a report and spreading and utilizing the truth about the real effects of nuclear arms and of weapons of mass destruction.

29. It has been generally accepted by now that the preparation of the report constitutes an important and valuable step, but at the same time we all realize that it is, at least at the present moment, a modest step in the right direction. And yet it took us seven whole years from the introduction of this initiative to this Organization by Wladyslaw Gomulka to its practical launching.

30. Does not this example, positive as it is, point to the necessity of further strengthening and multiplying our efforts so that we shall lose no ground in the competition with the continuing arms race? Does it not point to the necessity of adopting a prompt and active attitude towards the initiatives which could bring us nearer to general and complete disarmament, however partial and small the proposed steps may seem to be? It was this idea and this approach that united us in action on this issue with the Canadian delegation. I trust that it was the same idea that united all the co-sponsors and indeed all the delegations which voted for the draft resolution.

31. The situation demands that we should stay united for further similar actions and steps in the future. The very essence of the contents of the report in all its aspects obliges us to intensify all our efforts in actually making and not only considering steps towards general and complete disarmament. The very experience of this present initiative, which was delayed so long because of lack of confidence that the existing difficulties in its realization could be overcome, should fill us with new optimism. It should initiate and develop a new active approach to the existing plans for a partial solution, such as the Gomulka proposal for the creation of a nuclear-free zone, the Rapacki plan [697th meeting], or the idea of convoking a conference on European security.

32. As I have already mentioned, the report of the Secretary-General on the effects of the possible use

of nuclear weapons and on the security and economic implications of the acquisition and further development of those weapons has been generally appraised during the debate in the First Committee as a most competent and valuable document of its kind. But it is not merely a document, superior in its qualities as it may be; it is an instrument of action which we must use skilfully to the fullest extent.

33. Thanks to the efforts of the team of consultant experts coming from Poland, Mexico, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Sweden, France, Canada, Japan, Nigeria, the United States, Norway, India and the United Kingdom, who have conducted their work under the excellent chairmanship of Mr. Mullath A. Vellodi, in the spirit of true international co-operation, and thanks to the help extended by the Secretariat, we have been given a tool of supreme quality which, when properly utilized, will—to quote from the draft resolution: "encourage speedy progress in the prevention of [the spread of nuclear weapons,] as well as in other measures of nuclear disarmament".

34. We are in duty bound to make full use of the present draft resolution to that end. Having this aim at heart we have worked together with the Canadian delegation and other co-sponsors in producing and submitting this draft resolution. The Polish delegation is convinced that when strictly implemented not only by all Members of the United Nations but by all Governments, the draft resolution will in fact greatly contribute towards rallying all the forces to approach successfully the final goal of general and complete disarmament—preferably by giant strides, but realistically step by step, and consistently in the same direction.

35. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I now invite the Assembly to vote on the two draft resolutions submitted by the First Committee under agenda item 29 [A/7017, para. 10].

36. I shall put draft resolution A to the vote first. The Fifth Committee has submitted a report [A/7027] on the financial implications of the adoption of this draft.

*Draft resolution A was adopted by 113 votes to none, with 1 abstention [resolution 2342 A (XXII)].*

37. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I shall now put to the vote draft resolution B.

*Draft Resolution B was adopted by 113 votes to none, with 3 abstentions [resolution 2342 B (XXII)].*

38. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): We have thus concluded consideration of agenda item 29.

39. We shall now pass on to agenda item 30. I now put to the vote the draft resolution recommended to us by the First Committee [A/7021, para. 6].

*The draft resolution was adopted by 103 votes to 1, with 7 abstentions [resolution 2343 (XXII)].*

40. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): We have concluded our consideration of agenda item 30.

41. The Assembly will now consider agenda item 31.

42. I call on the representative of Liberia, who wishes to explain her vote on the draft resolution submitted by the First Committee [A/7022, para. 6].

<sup>3/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-first Session, Supplement No. 1A (A/6301/Add.1), page 7.

43. Miss BROOKS (Liberia): I should like, on behalf of the Liberian delegation, to reiterate the reservations of my delegation in connexion with this item. As we stated in the First Committee [1554th meeting], we feel that the title of the draft resolution, "Elimination of foreign military bases in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America" [A/7022, para. 6], is somewhat discriminatory in that it restricts it to those continents and excludes the continent of Europe.

44. Our second reservation is that the Government of Liberia respects the rights of sovereign States. We believe that if a sovereign State desires to have foreign military bases in its territory, it is its sovereign right to do so. However, we do approve of the removal of foreign military bases from dependent territories, because we feel that the peoples under administration do not have equal rights to negotiate regarding military bases in their territory.

45. With these reservations, the delegation of Liberia will vote in favour of the draft resolution, realizing that the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament is to prepare a progress report to be submitted to the twenty-third session of the General Assembly. We look forward with anticipation to that report from the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

46. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution of the First Committee.

*The draft resolution was adopted by 105 votes to none, with 13 abstentions [resolution 2344 (XXII)].*

47. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 31.

#### AGENDA ITEM 32

International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space: report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (concluded) <sup>4/</sup>

48. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): At its 1594th plenary meeting, which was held on 3 November 1967, the General Assembly adopted resolution 2260 (XXII) on agenda item 32.

49. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space has now submitted to the General Assembly a draft agreement on the rescue of astronauts, the return of astronauts and the return of objects launched into outer space, which is to be found in the addendum to the Committee's report [A/6804/Add.1, para. 8].

50. A draft resolution [A/L.544 and Add.1] on the subject has been submitted by a number of countries.

51. May I take it that the Assembly agrees to consider directly in plenary meeting the question raised in the addendum to the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space?

*It was so decided.*

52. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I call on Mr. Waldheim of Austria, the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

53. Mr. WALDHEIM (Austria): In resolution 2260 (XXII) of 3 November 1967, the General Assembly requested the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in the further progressive development of the Law of Outer Space, to continue with a sense of urgency its work on the elaboration of an agreement on liability for damage caused by the launching of objects into outer space, and an agreement on assistance to and return of astronauts and space vehicles.

54. Negotiations in the Outer Space Committee and its Legal Sub-Committee have now made it possible to agree on the text of one of these two conventions, a draft Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts, and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space [A/6804/Add.1, para. 8].

55. After the adoption by the General Assembly last year of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies [resolution 222 (XXI), annex], which in the meantime has been signed by the great majority of Member States and which entered into force a few weeks ago, the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space will represent another major step forward in the elaboration of the Law of Outer Space.

56. It is, in effect, implementing article V of the outer space Treaty, which had already stipulated that all contracting parties should render to astronauts all possible assistance in the event of accident, distress or emergency landing, and should safely and promptly return them to the state of registry of their space vehicle. The present Agreement provides in more detail for the measures to be taken in this respect.

57. On behalf of the Austrian delegation, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the work accomplished by the Legal Sub-Committee under its able Chairman, Mr. Wyzner. I do not deem it necessary to dwell on the contents of the draft agreement since the Chairman of the Legal Sub-Committee will be good enough to explain more in detail the main provisions of the agreement.

58. While we are thus pleased about the conclusion of the draft Agreement on rescue and return, we note at this time with regret that similar progress has not yet been possible on a draft convention on liability for damage caused by the launching of objects into outer space.

59. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Legal Sub-Committee recognized the importance of the relationship between these two agreements and expressed their view that, as work on the draft agreement on assistance and return has now been concluded, the Committee should expedite its work on the equally important and urgent matter of the preparation of a draft agreement on liability, and that these preparations should be concluded in time to allow the submission of this agreement to the twenty-third session of the General Assembly.

60. The Austrian delegation shares this opinion and expresses its hope that it will be possible, at the next

<sup>4/</sup> Resumption of the debate held at the 1594th meeting.

session of the General Assembly, to have before us a draft convention on liability for damage caused by objects launched into outer space.

61. We believe, however, that the continuing work on this convention should not delay adoption of the Agreement on rescue and return, which has been completed. In the light of these considerations, we have joined in co-sponsoring the draft resolution which is before the Assembly [A/L.544 and Add.1]. In the terms of this draft resolution, the General Assembly, recalling its earlier resolution 2260 (XXII), would commend the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space and would request the depository Governments to open the agreement for signature and ratification at the earliest possible date.

62. In this connexion, may I draw the attention of the Assembly to a minor addition to the draft resolution. In operative paragraph 1 the words "which is annexed to this resolution" should be added. The full paragraph would therefore read:

"Commends the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space which is annexed to this resolution;"

Since this is just a minor drafting change, I hope that the Assembly will be able to accept this minor addition.

63. In this draft resolution the Assembly would further express the hope that the Agreement would find the widest possible adherence, and it would call on the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to complete the preparation of the draft convention on liability for damage caused by the launching of objects into outer space urgently and, in any event, in time to submit it to the Assembly at its twenty-third regular session.

64. I should like to express our hope that the draft resolution will receive the unanimous approval of the General Assembly and thus open the way for an early entry into force of the Agreement on rescue and return of astronauts. We are convinced that this would not only represent an important step forward in the elaboration of the law of outer space, but also evidence of the co-operation and unity of all nations in the great venture of man in the exploration of outer space.

65. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I call on Mr. Wyzner of Poland, the Chairman of the Legal Sub-Committee.

66. Mr. WYZNER (Poland): It is indeed a privilege for me to take the floor after the introduction of the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space [A/6804 and Add.1] by its distinguished Chairman, Mr. Waldheim. This report, as the Assembly is aware, contains the text of the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space. The Agreement has been drafted by the Legal Sub-Committee, the labour of whose members over the past five years has enabled us to achieve this significant step in the development of international law relating to outer space.

67. From the very outset of the work of the Legal Sub-Committee, the necessity of preparing and concluding a treaty on assistance to and return of astronauts and space vehicles was recognized. Work on such agreement was carried forward during the first four sessions of the Sub-Committee which were held in 1962, 1963, 1964 and 1965 under the chairmanship of my distinguished predecessor, Professor Lachs. Moreover, provisions on the subject of assistance and return were included in the Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space adopted by the Assembly on 13 December 1963 [resolution 1962 (XVIII)] and in the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, commended by the Assembly in its resolution 2222 (XXI), adopted exactly one year ago on 19 December 1966.

68. The Legal Sub-Committee, at its sixth session, held in Geneva during the past summer, returned to the task of working out an agreement on assistance and return, and some progress was made in formulating articles and reconciling, or at least understanding, divergent positions. A number of substantive differences, however, remained and we were not able to reach an agreed text before the opening of the present session of the General Assembly. During the discussion of the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in the First Committee earlier in this session, disappointment was expressed by a number of representatives. Reflecting the desire for greater progress, the General Assembly, by resolution 2260 (XXII), unanimously approved on 3 November 1967, requested the Outer Space Committee, in the further progressive development of the law of outer space:

"to continue with a sense of urgency its work on the elaboration of an agreement on liability for damage caused by the launching of objects into outer space and an agreement on assistance to and return of astronauts and space vehicles;"

69. In the course of a series of informal consultations, which have already been referred to by the Chairman of the Committee, held in response to this resolution, a significant rapprochement emerged with respect to a number of the provisions of the Agreement on assistance and return. Following those consultations, a special session of the Legal Sub-Committee was convened during which a consensus on a text of the Agreement was reached which the Sub-Committee unanimously recommended for urgent consideration to its parent body. The Agreement is now before you, Mr. President.

70. As I stated previously in the Outer Space Committee, the text reflects a carefully designed balance between the legitimate interests of the party on whose territory the search and rescue operations are conducted and those of the launching authority. It is, I believe, a notable achievement.

71. It may be helpful to the members of this Assembly if I very briefly outline the contents of this agreement. Article 1 provides that the contracting party should notify both the launching authority and the Secretary-General of the United Nations if it has information

that the personnel of a spacecraft have suffered an accident or are experiencing conditions of distress or have made an emergency or unintended landing. Article 2 envisages assistance to astronauts in the territory of a party, while Article 3 deals with assistance outside that territory on the high seas or in any other place not under the jurisdiction of any State. Article 4 sets forth the duty to return astronauts safely and promptly, and Article 5 deals with the return of a space object and its component parts, on the understanding that expenses incurred shall be borne by the launching authority. A definition of the term "launching authority" is contained in Article 6. Finally, Articles 7 to 10 contain the final clauses which are similar to those in the outer space Treaty.

72. My colleagues will, no doubt, appreciate the significance, in humanitarian terms, of the Agreement for those brave and gallant men who are, in the words of Article V of the outer space Treaty, "the envoys of mankind in outer space", who are risking their lives, as recent tragic accidents have demonstrated, in endeavours which serve the interests of all. The Agreement is also important as a further step in the gradual development of the law of outer space. Its successful conclusion will give, I am sure, encouragement and impetus to the earliest conclusion of the equally important work on an agreement on liability for damage caused by the launching of objects into outer space, and in the study of questions relative to the definition of outer space, and the utilization of outer space and celestial bodies, including the various implications of space communications. As pointed out in the report which is now before you, the importance of the relationship between an agreement on assistance and return and an agreement on liability for damage is fully recognized. Having completed its work on the former, the Legal Sub-Committee agreed that the work on the latter should be expedited in time for submission to the twenty-third session of the Assembly.

73. Mr. President, in concluding these remarks, may I express my appreciation to Ambassador Waldheim for the guidance and valuable role which he has played in bringing this work to fruition. May I also express again my deep gratitude to all the members of the Legal Sub-Committee whose untiring efforts over the period of the last five years made possible the presentation of this Agreement, and to the devoted and highly competent members of the Secretariat who have worked with us.

74. Finally, speaking as a representative of Poland, I should like to express my delegation's gratification at the conclusion of this significant document, which, we believe, will move forward the cause of international co-operation in outer space. With its frightening potentialities for war, outer space cannot be allowed to become the field of competition other than peaceful competition. The agreement on the rescue and return is also a further collective step in the quest for peace since, among others, it eliminates possible sources of disputes and friction between States. These are some of the reasons which have prompted the Polish delegation to be among the co-sponsors of draft resolution A/L.544 and Add.1.

75. Miss BROOKS (Liberia): As a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/L.544 and Add.1, I do not wish to explain my vote. I should, however, like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the operative part of the draft resolution. In the fourth line of operative paragraph 4, the word "at" should be eliminated, and the paragraph should read:

"Calls upon the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to complete the preparation of the draft agreement on liability for damage caused by the launching of objects into outer space urgently and, in any event, not later than the beginning of the twenty-third session of the General Assembly, and to submit it to the Assembly at that session."

76. I should like to commend this draft resolution to the General Assembly for a unanimous vote. I recall very vividly that many delegations, including my own, expressed their regret at the beginning of the session that a treaty for the rescue of astronauts and the return of objects launched into outer space had not been concluded. Now that we have a treaty before us since, led by a deep concern for humanity, the super-Powers have been able to agree on this treaty, I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to extend to them our sincere appreciation and to call upon them to consider the possibility of concluding before the next session of the General Assembly a treaty on the question of liability for damages incurred in the operation of activities in outer space.

77. Mr. BERARD (France) (translated from French): In speaking in the General Assembly's debate on the agreement on the rescue of astronauts, the return of astronauts and the return of objects launched into outer space, the French delegation would like to recapitulate what it said in the Legal Sub-Committee and in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

78. While we regret the haste with which this draft convention [A/6804/Add.1] was considered by the Committee on Outer Space, we are not unaware of its importance as regards both the law governing space, the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space, and humanitarian assistance.

79. In my delegation's opinion, this draft convention contains some very wise provisions, but it also contains certain clauses which are something less than satisfactory.

80. First of all, we should like to point out that this draft convention applies to search and rescue undertaken not only on the earth and in its atmosphere, but also in outer space and on celestial bodies.

81. The provision in article 2 concerning co-operation between the launching authority and the territorial State is an effort to reconcile the requirements of the most thorough search and rescue operations possible with respect for the sovereignty of the State concerned. Accordingly, the article provides for co-ordinated efforts by both sides. In the event of disagreement on the advisability of such co-operation, the view of the sovereign State would prevail, since the rescue operations would be carried out in its territory. The article also provides that such operations shall be subject to the direction and control of that State, and that the State shall act in close and

continuing consultation with the launching authority, which shall co-operate with it.

82. With respect to the return of astronauts, we wish to state once more that article 4 should not contravene the national legislation of the contracting Party.

83. With regard to article 6, which deals with international organizations, my delegation would like to express its satisfaction at the clear statement to the effect that the launching authority whose rights and obligations are defined in the draft convention may be either a State or an international organization.

84. Some of the protocol provisions call for reservations of principle on our part, but in view of the very special purpose of the draft convention we are prepared to accept them in this particular case.

85. Before concluding, I should like to emphasize that in my Government's view the text of the draft convention applies in full only to experimental and scientific flights. The rights of the signatory States must be fully reserved with regard to the day when such flights may be utilitarian or commercial. When that happens it will doubtless be necessary to negotiate a new convention.

86. Lastly, the French delegation strongly hopes that the drafting of a convention on liability for damage caused by objects launched into outer space and the studies on the definition and peaceful uses of outer space will be completed with equal success in the course of the further work of the Legal Sub-Committee.

87. It is in this spirit that my delegation will vote for the draft resolution [A/L.544 and Add.1].

88. Mr. VINCI (Italy): The views of the Italian delegation of the draft Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space [A/6804/Add.1, para. 8], with regard to its contents, its necessary link with a parallel convention on liability for damages caused by objects launched into outer space, and the procedure which has been followed in arriving at such an agreement, have already been set forth in the Legal Sub-Committee and in the Committee on Outer Space, the parent body. I shall therefore be very brief.

89. First of all, I should like to say that the Italian delegation recognizes and stresses the importance of further and speedy progress in the elaboration of space law. From this point of view, we welcome the fact that, by means of unusual speed and unconventional procedure, it has been possible to come to an agreement on a draft convention on assistance to, and return of, astronauts. The Italian delegation would have wished that the same sense of urgency might have been applied in the preparation of a convention governing liability for damage caused by objects launched into outer space. We wish to underline once again that, in our view, it is not possible to establish any hierarchy between the two agreements. The least that can be said is that they have equal importance. Furthermore, they are connected also from a practical point of view. In fact, damages might occur as a result of those accidents or emergency landings referred to in the various clauses of the present agreement. It would therefore have been advisable,

in our view, to lay down rules concerning liability in the same agreement.

90. At the same time, however, we take note that there is now a consensus, as indicated in the report of the Legal Sub-Committee to the Committee on Outer Space [A/6804, annex III, para. 17], on the necessity and urgency of working out an agreement on liability. This is a new and encouraging development.

91. A second point is that we welcome the efforts made by members of the Committee, in a spirit of conciliation and compromise, to work out formulations that cover most of the points made by the European delegations and Australia in order to safeguard the rights and the status of the multilateral inter-governmental organizations of which Italy is a member.

92. These brief remarks indicate clearly, I hope, that we consider the agreement before us important both intrinsically and as forming part of a wider design, namely the legal discipline of space activities, the space activities which every day increase their impact on our life on earth and which are bound to do so increasingly in the near future.

93. The task of the United Nations in this field is very clear: to safeguard and promote not only the interests of a specific group of countries, but rather the general interest of all nations, whether they are engaged or not in space activities either individually or as members of a multilateral organization. The formulation of a law for space will create a framework that will facilitate the carrying-out of space activities for peaceful purposes and make such activities not a cause of disputes and tensions, but rather the source of benefits for everyone and for international co-operation.

94. In view of the highly humanitarian aims of this agreement, the Italian delegation has decided to become a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/L.544 and Add.1. We do so in the understanding that, pending the conclusion of a separate convention on liability, the general principles concerning responsibility for damages caused by launchings of astronauts and objects into outer space, as well as the provisions already contained in the space treaty signed last year [resolution 2222 (XXI) 2, annex], will cover the right of each party to receive due and full compensation for damages suffered.

95. To facilitate the approval by the competent Italian national administrations which so far have had no time to study the final wording of the draft agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space, and to render possible the ratification of this important instrument, it may be necessary at a given moment to ask the main space Powers to give us their concurrence in the interpretation which I have just given of this agreement. Therefore, I am obliged to reserve the right of my Government to make a formal request to this effect if and when it may deem it necessary.

96. Finally, we wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Mr. Waldheim, to the Chairman of the Legal Sub-Committee, Mr. Wyzner,

as well as to all the members of the parent body and the Legal Sub-Committee and to all our colleagues who made it possible to achieve the interesting results embodied in the agreement and, in particular, the intelligent show of unanimity which has significantly characterized the work of this highly authoritative body of the United Nations family.

97. Mr. DE SOUZA E SILVA (Brazil): I have asked for the floor in order to restate as briefly as possible the position of my delegation in regard to the draft agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space [A/6804/A20.1, para. 8], now under consideration by the Assembly.

98. My delegation fully sympathizes with the humanitarian purposes of the document and Brazil, as a member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, has participated in the discussions of the interrelated agreements on liability and on the rescue of astronauts.

99. During the meeting of the Legal Sub-Committee on 14 December, the Brazilian representative explained his delegation's objections, of both substance and procedure, to the said draft. Although recognizing the significance of the improvements made then in the text, and while voting in favour of the draft resolution, the position of my delegation remains basically the one that was stated on 14 December, particularly concerning the article 2 of the draft agreement.

100. Mr. BENITES (Ecuador) (translated from Spanish): At an informal meeting of most members of the Latin-American group I was asked to convey their serious doubts about the present procedure: the consideration of a draft resolution (A/L.544 and Add.1) on an item which has not been taken up or reported on by a Main Committee or placed on the agenda for our plenary meetings in accordance with the rules.

101. I should state that, despite these doubts, the States on whose behalf I am speaking did not wish, nor do they now wish, to oppose the decision, and they will vote in favour of it; however, they did ask me to declare that this unusual procedure ought not to constitute a precedent for the future.

102. My comments on behalf of those States thus refer solely to the procedure. With respect to the substance we should like to congratulate the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and its Legal Sub-Committee in particular. Its work has been excellent, and we hope that this will soon be followed by the drafting of an instrument concerning damage caused by space vehicles—an indispensable document for this work—and one on the rescue of astronauts, the return of astronauts, and the return of objects launched into outer space.

103. The space age now dawning requires full international co-operation for the benefit of mankind, towards which we consider this an important step.

104. Mr. CHAMMAS (Lebanon): As a member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its two Sub-Committees, my Government has held the continued policy of supporting efforts directed

towards effective and closer international co-operation in the field of the peaceful uses of outer space, in particular among space Powers. We believe that no effort should be spared in order to enhance and further strengthen such co-operation.

105. We note with satisfaction that the Legal Sub-Committee was able to reach a draft Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space. The draft agreement as submitted to the General Assembly incorporates ideas and changes which were proposed by delegations whose views we share and support, especially the changes which were incorporated in paragraph 2 of that Agreement during the deliberations of the Legal Sub-Committee last week.

106. We note, however, with deep regret the delay in the conclusion of a draft agreement on liability for damage caused by the launching of objects into outer space. We submit that such an agreement is important for those Powers which are not space Powers; but we were gratified to hear the representatives of the space Powers commit themselves to full co-operation in our work next year. We should have been more gratified had we been seized today with the two agreements together rather than with only one. However, my delegation agreed to become a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/L.544 and Add.1, despite the exceptional procedure with which it has to be treated, and we find ourselves in agreement concerning that exceptional procedure, as suggested by the representative of Ecuador who has just preceded me. Nevertheless we were able to co-sponsor the draft resolution for two important reasons.

107. The first of these reasons was that the agreement was the result of hard and tough negotiations, and those negotiations were brought to a fruitful conclusion. The contents of that agreement have a humanitarian character and express an urgent need.

108. The second reason why we co-sponsored the draft resolution was the inclusion of paragraph 4, which calls upon the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to complete urgently the preparation of the draft agreement on liability for damage caused by the launching of objects into outer space and, in any event, not later than at the beginning of the twenty-third session of the General Assembly. We would express the hope that at the twenty-third session the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space will present us with such a draft agreement.

109. Mr. KLUSAK (Czechoslovakia) (translated from Russian): The General Assembly has before it a draft international Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space, contained in the report of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space [A/6804, Add.1].

110. The conclusion of the work on that document, and its presentation at this session—and this is something I would particularly mention—is a response to the demands of a number of Member States that due attention be given to this important problem in the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and that a solution be found as speedily as possible. The urgency of working out such an

agreement was underlined once again in resolution 2260 (XXII), adopted unanimously by the General Assembly on 3 November 1967.

111. I should like to express our satisfaction over the real progress achieved in this matter. With the rapid development of science and technology in the use of outer space for peaceful purposes has brought to the fore the gradual development of legal means of regulating problems connected with man's penetration into outer space has become a priority matter. Exactly one year ago the General Assembly adopted the first important instrument in space law, the "Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies" [resolution 222 (XXI), annex].

112. That Treaty laid the foundations for a juridical form for the regulation of other important problems as well. The present draft international Agreement undoubtedly falls into this category. Its humanitarian nature only emphasizes its timeliness and appropriateness. We should therefore like to see that Agreement come into force as soon as possible and be applied as effectively as possible. The prerequisites for this exist, since accession to the Agreement is open to all States.

113. The completion of work on the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space, in our opinion, also makes it possible—and this opportunity must be taken—very soon to complete the work on an international agreement concerning liability for damage caused by the launching of objects into outer space, so that a draft may be presented at the twenty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly.

114. The present draft Agreement unquestionably constitutes a further contribution to fuller international co-operation among States in the peaceful use of outer space. As co-sponsor of this draft resolution [A/L.544 and Add.1] we should like to express our conviction that the Agreement will receive the Assembly's support.

115. Mr. VAKIL (Iran): Our consideration of the draft Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space [A/6804/Add.1, para. 8] on this last day of our work, should indeed be regarded as a happy ending to the twenty-second session of the General Assembly. I say this despite the fact that in the course of the discussion of this question in the special session of the Legal Sub-Committee and in the subsequent debates held in its parent body, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, my delegation was among those which were not entirely happy with the draft. Thus, while praising the draft as a significant step towards the evolution of space law, I should like to qualify it by saying that the draft could have been further improved if more time had been allowed for its consideration. I deem it proper, further, to state that the draft, as it now stands, does not cover all the elements which we consider to be essential.

116. My delegation has had some misgivings regarding the formulation of article 2 on territorial assistance. We introduced a new wording for the latter part of that article, which, in our view, would have clarified the meaning of that article with regard to the sovereignty and security of the territorial States. The humanitarian aspect of this treaty, as well as some other considerations, prompted us, nevertheless, to accept the compromise formula put forward by the delegation of France. This improvement, together with the statements made by the super space Powers in the Legal Sub-Committee and in the Committee on Outer Space, stating that the implications of article 2 could by no means affect the sovereignty and the security of the territorial States renders the draft resolution generally acceptable to us.

117. Before concluding, I wish to express the satisfaction of my delegation at the fact that a time limit has finally been set for the preparation of a convention on the liability for damage caused by the launching of objects into outer space. I am referring to operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution before us [A/L.544 and Add.1].

118. We sincerely hope that the same spirit of co-operation which characterized the negotiations leading to the successful drafting of that rescue treaty shall also permeate our efforts when we set out to negotiate the second projected convention.

119. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I shall now put to the vote draft resolution A/L.544 and Add.1.

*The draft resolution was adopted by 115 votes to none [resolution 2345 (XXII)].*

120. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their vote.

121. U SOE TIN (Burma): In view of the importance which Burma attaches to the Treaty on the Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies [resolution 222 (XXI), annex], and considering the need for international co-operation in the advancement of space exploration and research for the benefit of mankind, the delegation of Burma cast its affirmative vote on the resolution which has just been adopted. That affirmative vote of the delegation of Burma should not, however, be construed as an endorsement or acceptance by my Government of the provisions of the draft agreement, which my Government has not had the opportunity as yet to study and examine. The delegation of Burma wishes to reserve the right of its Government to state its position on the draft agreement at a later stage, after due study and consideration.

122. Mr. GOLDBERG (United States of America): Less than two months ago the General Assembly adopted a resolution [2260 (XXII)] asking the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to continue to work with a sense of urgency on an agreement on assistance to and return of astronauts and objects launched into outer space. Today the General Assembly has unanimously approved a consensus text of the Agreement forwarded also unanimously for its con-

sideration by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

123. The Committee has thus complied with the Assembly's mandate to proceed urgently, but it would be a mistake to assume that the draft had not been carefully prepared. It is a good and sound Treaty and one which will stand the test of time and experience. The United States regards the action of the Assembly in endorsing this Treaty as a historic action. The Treaty text represents agreement on implementing that famous phrase from the Outer Space Treaty that astronauts are "envoys of mankind" [resolution 2222 (XXI), annex].

124. My delegation believes that endorsement of the Treaty by the General Assembly constitutes one of the major achievements of this Assembly. The United States considers that the "Assistance and Return" Agreement which we have adopted represents a just balancing of the interests of all Members of the United Nations, the space Powers, the near-space Powers, the co-operating space Powers and all who are interested in outer space—which, indeed, means the entire membership of our Organization. This agreement bears witness to the fact that the United Nations can make a real contribution to extending the rule of law to new areas and to ensuring the positive and peaceful ordering of man's efforts in science and the building of a better world.

125. It is, not least, a tribute to those who venture forward into the new world of outer space. We shall work to make that venture one of benefit to all, as we hope it will be.

126. It is clear that although all nations, as I have just said, have a great interest in space activities, this particular agreement is of special interest and concern to the two major space Powers, whose astronauts are engaging in the hazardous enterprise of exploring the universe for the benefit of all mankind. What is significant to us is that countries which may not be launching their own astronauts for years to come, or which indeed may never be launching any astronauts, have made it clear that they consider the safety of astronauts, from whatever country they may come, to be a shared responsibility of the world community. That is in the great humanitarian tradition of the United Nations and its Member States, and my Government deeply appreciates the co-operation of the non-space Powers. Indeed, we have noted that attitude in nearly all of our negotiations on outer space matters. It may be that only by venturing beyond the earth's limits shall we learn that the bonds of humanity are stronger than the bonds of nationality.

127. In our statements before the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Legal Sub-Committee, my delegation recognized that, as several speakers have pointed out, other problems remain to be solved, particularly problems of acute interest to non-space Powers. I should therefore like to reiterate the point which my Government made in the Committee, that we attach a high degree of importance to the prompt conclusion of a satisfactory convention on liability for damage caused by the launching of objects into outer space. We intend to participate actively and constructively in the drafting of that agreement.

128. The resolution which the Assembly has just adopted calls on the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to complete an agreement on liability by the next session of the General Assembly, and I pledge the full and unstinting efforts of the United States to that end.

129. My delegation would like also to draw the attention of Members to article 7, which names the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union as Depository Governments and specifies that the Agreement will be open to all States for signature and ratification. The United States supports the accession clause now included in the draft Agreement because of the special and exceptional character of that Agreement. An Agreement for the rescue of astronauts is an exceptional instrument, of a special character. The fact that the "all States" clause has been employed in this instance does not indicate that it will be suitable in other circumstances. Adoption of the accession clause—urged because of exceptional circumstances favouring a very broad geographical coverage for the assistance and return Agreement—does not, of course, affect the recognition or status of an unrecognized régime or entity which might elect to file an instrument of accession to the assistance and return Agreement. Under international law and practice, recognition of a government or acknowledgement of the existence of a State is brought about as the result of a deliberate decision and course of conduct on the part of a government intending to accord recognition.

130. Recognition of a régime or acknowledgement of an entity cannot be inferred from signature, ratification or accession to a multilateral agreement. That, of course, is something which we all recognize.

131. The United States delegation wishes to thank Mr. Waldheim, the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the members of that Committee, Mr. Wyzner, Chairman of the Legal Sub-Committee, and the members of the Legal Sub-Committee, our colleague the other major space Power and the many representatives and officials of the Secretariat of the United Nations who have made possible the drafting of this Agreement. Compromise between the space Powers, and between the space Powers and the non-space Powers, was essential for such an Agreement as this to be presented to the Assembly.

132. We also thank you, Mr. President, for your help in obtaining a consensus that this item should be placed on the agenda for consideration on the last day of our proceedings. We believe that this Agreement will help to ensure that every possible assistance is rendered to astronauts in distress or emergency, and we believe that all the people of the world who follow the exploits of astronauts with such great interest will applaud and welcome this Agreement as we do.

133. Let us hope that these Agreements on outer space may inspire us to make similar agreements on our political problems on earth. After all, the Charter enjoins us to harmonize our actions, and surely that applies not only in space but also, very much, here on earth.

134. Mr. C. O. E. COLE (Sierra Leone): The Sierra Leone delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution we have just adopted. The very laudable humanitarian and juridical principles involved, as well as the fact that my Government is a signatory to the outer space Treaty, impelled my delegation to take this stand. It is the least tribute we can pay to all those who bravely venture into outer space for peaceful uses and all those who work so diligently to that end.

135. The Sierra Leone Government, however, has not had the opportunity of studying or pronouncing upon the scope and legal implications of the text of the Agreement in question, namely, the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts, and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space. My delegation would, therefore, like to make it quite clear that by voting in favour of the draft resolution, the Sierra Leone Government has in no way committed itself to signing and ratifying that Agreement.

136. My delegation would also like to express the hope that in the best interests of the non-space Powers and for the same humanitarian and juridical principles, the completion of the equally important agreement on liability for damage caused by the launching of objects into outer space will be attended with an even greater speed and urgency.

137. Finally, my delegation should like to take this opportunity to express its grateful appreciation to the Chairman of the outer space Committee, the Chairman of the Legal Sub-Committee, and all those who have worked so hard to make this Agreement in question such a huge success.

138. Mr. FEDORENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): The General Assembly has just taken a decision on the report of the United Nations Committee on Outer Space. In adopting the draft Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts, and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space, the Soviet delegation is convinced that the conclusion of that Agreement will be of great importance in connexion with the rapid progress of space technology, the development of space research and the ever wider use of space objects for such practical purposes as communications, weather forecasting, navigation and so forth.

139. The Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts will certainly be of great practical importance, ensuring the speedy rescue of astronauts in case of breakdowns, accidents or forced landings, for, as scientific and technological advance continues, manned space flights will become longer and more complex every year.

140. The Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts is the result of many years of hard work by the Legal Sub-Committee of the Committee on Outer Space, starting in 1962, when it first examined the proposal submitted by the Soviet Union on this matter. The draft agreement has taken into account or reflected the proposals, comments and amendments of a large number of countries which are members of the United Nations Committee on Outer Space and its Legal Sub-Committee.

141. Throughout work on the draft Agreement delegations showed a genuine desire to co-operate and reach agreement. We should like to make special reference to the service rendered by the Chairman of the United Nations Committee on Outer Space, Dr. Kurt Waldheim (Austria), and the Chairman of the Legal Sub-Committee, Mr. Eugeniusz Wyzner (Poland) in drafting the text. It goes without saying that we give due credit to the entire Committee on Outer Space for its spirit of co-operation and understanding in connexion with the work on the draft Agreement.

142. The document before us specifies and expatiates on the rights and obligations of States in regard to the exploration and utilization of space embodied in the Treaty on Outer Space adopted by the General Assembly exactly one year ago.

143. The overwhelming majority of States throughout the world have now acceded to that Treaty and the principles it lays down for the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space have become recognized standards of international law.

144. The legal basis of the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts is fully provided by the provisions of the Space Treaty. All its articles, including the ones concerning search operations and rescue of astronauts on foreign soil, are based on the principles of sovereign equality of States and their full, exclusive sovereignty within their own territorial boundaries.

145. In conclusion, the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts will be an important and useful further step in regulating States' activities in the exploration of space for peaceful purposes. We believe the approval of this draft Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts will create favourable conditions for the next step—the speedy completion of work on an agreement concerning liability for damage caused by launching objects into outer space.

146. The Soviet Union will make every effort to help in that direction.

147. In supporting the draft Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts the Soviet delegation reasons that its approval by the General Assembly and its speedy conclusion will contribute to the development of co-operation among States in solving important problems connected with the study of outer space and the use of scientific and technological achievements in this field for the benefit of mankind.

148. The Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts can truly be called an humanitarian act of international law on the part of the Member States of the United Nations towards the courageous explorers of those vast cosmic expanses, the men who are, in the words of the Treaty on Space, mankind's envoys in space.

149. In view of the humanitarian and urgent nature of the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, my delegation voted in favour of the sixteen-nation draft resolution commending this Agreement and proposing that it be signed and ratified as soon as possible.

150. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I wish to associate myself with those representatives who have expressed their satisfaction at the resolution which has been adopted unanimously by the General

Assembly and which is of great significance for peaceful co-operation among States in outer space.

151. The Assembly has now concluded its consideration of agenda item 32.

152. I now invite the Assembly to return to agenda item 28. The First Committee has submitted two draft resolutions on this item [A/7016, para. 9].

153. I call on the representative of Pakistan for an explanation of vote.

154. Mr. SHAHI (Pakistan): Among the draft resolutions recommended for adoption by the First Committee in its report, on agenda item 28 is draft resolution B [A/7016, para. 9], which decides that the Conference of Non-Nuclear Weapon States be convened from 29 August to 28 September 1968. The passage of this draft resolution with unanimity is in many ways a significant event in the progress of the disarmament question in the United Nations. It is a symbol of the goodwill and the spirit of mutual accommodation which alone can ensure progress towards security for all nations. But more than that, it is the first occasion when an initiative of the non-nuclear-weapon Powers has led to agreement not on a formula, not on an abstract text, but on a specific course of action to be followed towards an objective of fundamental importance for achieving a stable and peaceful world order.

155. It is not necessary for me to repeat now what I said in the First Committee yesterday about the negotiations which led to the unanimous adoption of draft resolutions A and B. But it would be a serious omission on my part if I did not take this occasion to record my delegation's profound gratitude to the Member States that gave us their steadfast support from the moment in the general debate of the last session of the General Assembly when Pakistan raised its voice on behalf of the principle that questions affecting the security of non-nuclear-weapon Powers call for consideration by those Powers at a conference of their own. In my statement in the First Committee yesterday [1555th meeting], I set forth the views of my delegation on operative paragraphs 3 and 4 of draft resolution B. Our vote on that draft resolution as a whole should therefore be construed as subject to the reservations that we expressed on the paragraphs in question.

156. I shall conclude by reiterating that the draft resolution reflects the categorical assurance given by the co-Chairmen of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee that the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States will be convened on the dates given in the text regardless of the outcome of the negotiations in the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee or the course of discussions on the report of that Committee at the resumed session of the General Assembly. In this context, we welcome the statements made yesterday in the First Committee by the representatives of the Soviet Union and the United States

[1554th and 1555th meetings]. We should like to express to them our thanks and appreciation for the spirit of goodwill, understanding and co-operation in which they negotiated with the non-nuclear weapon Powers the consensus embodied in draft resolutions A and B [A/7016, para. 9].

157. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I shall now put to the vote draft resolution A. The Fifth Committee has submitted a report [A/7028] on the financial implications of this draft.

*Draft resolution A was adopted by 112 votes to 1, with 4 abstentions [resolution 2346 A (XXII)].*

158. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I shall now put to the vote draft resolution B. The Fifth Committee has submitted a report [A/7029] on the financial implications of this draft. A roll-call vote has been requested.

*The vote was taken by roll-call.*

*The United Republic of Tanzania, having been chosen by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.*

*In favour:* United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Ceylon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (Democratic Republic of), Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Dahomey, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Southern Yemen, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

*Against:* None.

*Abstaining:* Afghanistan, Burma, Cuba, Cyprus, France, Gabon, Guinea, India.

*Draft resolution B was adopted by 110 votes to none, with 8 abstentions [resolution 2346 B (XXII)].*

159. The PRESIDENT (translated from French): We have finished our consideration of agenda item 28.

*The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.*