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Chairman: Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire)

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AGENDA ITEM 70

QUESTION OF ANTARCTICA: GENERAL DEBATE AND CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): The First Committee will now begin its general debate on agenda item 70, "Question of Antarctica", and will then proceed to consider draft resolutions submitted under this item and to take decisions on them.

The question of Antarctica was placed on the agenda of the General Assembly for the first time during its thirty-eighth session. Since then, the First Committee has considered this issue. As members of the Committee are well aware, this is an extremely complex and sensitive problem. However, discussions within the Committee have made a contribution to a better understanding and knowledge of the unique character of the Antarctic region. Moreover the Committee's debates have strengthened the conviction of all participants that Antarctica should for ever be reserved solely for peaceful activities and should not become a theatre of or stake in international disputes.

Antarctica is indeed one of the most extraordinary regions of the world, covering a tenth of its surface. Although there are no permanent human settlements in Antarctica, its location and ecosystem are of considerable interest for the entire international community. For all countries the importance of this region consists in the fact of its unique environment and its value for research and scientific co-operation regarding, for example, the role of Antarctica in the world's atmospheric and oceanic currents and the planet's climate.

(The Chairman)

Our debate on the question of Antarctica has first of all made the international community more aware of the need to preserve the Antarctic region as a nuclear-free zone and to make it a region free from all military activity, and in particular from nuclear tests and radioactive waste. First and foremost Antarctica must preserve its nature as a peaaeful zone.

Now that we are about to take up consideration of the question of Antarctica, I ehould like to express the hope that once again our debates will take place in an atmosphere of good will and co-operation so that consensus can again be reached on this important question.

Before celling on the first speaker I should like to remind delegations that in accordance with a decision taken by the Committee draft resolutions under this agenda item must be submitted at the latest by 17 November, that is, today, at 12 noon.

Mr. JACOBS (Antigua and Barbuda): May I first, Sir, say how happy I am that you are presiding over the Committee's affairs. Matters brought here, such as the auestion of Antarctica, which is now before us, are of importance to the international community as a whole. Your skill, patience and understanding are vital assets in conducting these deliberations.

I have beforo me a draft resolution with which I hove some difficulty. I will comment on aspects of that later.

The purpose of my intervention is not to seek to isolate the countries which are Antarctic Trerty Consultative Parties. I wish instead to engage them in a constructive dialogue on this issue, for isolation of any group in the context of this debate would lead only to polarization of positions and a widening of the chasm which has separated us so far on this matter.

Therefore, my delegation urges the Committee to refrain from any actions that would sweep the wintry winds of Antarctica into our discussions and cast a cold chill over the dialogue we must have in order to narrow the gulf which still stretches between the Consultative Parties and the rest of us.

The record should show that my country, Antigua and Barbuda, fully recognizes, and is deeply appreciative of, the fact that the original Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty demonstrated considerable concern for global stability by devising a means to set aside territorial claims in Antarctica and to convert their national ambitions into a common concern to use the area for peaceful purposes.

We are aware that the caution of the Consultative Parties in responding to attempts within the United Nations system to deal with the future management of the continent derives from their fears that such attempts could upset the fine balance of the arrangements now in place and reopen Antarctica to instability. But the answer to such fears is not to opt to ignore the views of others, for such an option would deny the opportunity for discussion and negotiation and set the

(Mr. Jacobs, Antigua and Barbuda)

Consultative Parties on a collision course with those already deeply resentful of what they consider to be the Consultative Parties' self-appointment as the sole arbiters of Antarctica's future.

Like the World Commission on Environment and Development, my Government subscribes to the view that

> "the challenge is to ensure that Antarctica is managed in the interests of all humankind, in a manner that conserves its unique environment, preserves its value for scientific research, and retains its character as a demilitarized, non-nuclear zone of peace". (A/42/427, chap. 10, para. 83)

It is about how to meet that challenge that I wish to put forward some ideas.

There are many who regard the Antarctic Treaty itself as an issue. Some developing countries believe that the Treaty system is the preserve of the rich and technologically advanced countries, and that the Parties have arrogated to themselves the exclusive riyht to determine the continent's future.

An important part of the process of reaching international consensus on Antarctica is to make the Treaty and the Treaty arrangements acceptable, as a basis for the future administration of the region and for participation in events in Antarctica by poor, small nations, such as mine, The opportunity now exists for a much broader representation and to provide involvement for all without upsetting the delicato balanae and the genius of the Treaty.

We would propose, first, that the Antarctic Treaty be retained as the basis for administering the continent, particularly to preserve the Treaty's achievements in the areas of peace, science, conservation and environment1 and, secondly, that one representative from the United Nations regional groups be appointed to sit with the Consultative Parties, irrespective of the present geographical distribution and representation. We would encourage the Consultative Parties to examine this idea closely.

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The biggest stumbling block to the broadening of the Treaty's decision-making mechanism is the demand that to qualify for admission to the ranks of the Consultative Parties a State must oonduat substantial scientific research in Antarctica. Many developing oountries could not possibly meet that requirement, since their human and financial resources are fully committed to fundamental progress and problems of survival, including dealing with hunger, malnutrition, inadeauate housing and poor medical facilities.

But it should not be felt that developing countries alone are excluded from becoming Consultative Parties by virtue of the existing qualification demands. Some developed oountries are also not in a position to divert resources to ecientif ic research in Antaratiaa. Never theless, they would welcome an opportunity to share the international responsibility for the continent. Therefore, the idea I have just mentioned needs to be examined closely, and a mechanism should be worked out for such countries to participate.

Thirdly, we propose that an authority be established to manage the Antarctic. The authority should be staffed with experts who are capable of the day-to-day management of the continent within prescribed guidelines. The authority should receive its mandate from the Consultative Parties group. It should also be prepared to work with the non-governmental organizations and conservationists to preserve and manage the continent's resources.

My fourth proposal is a fund for the future. The 1980 Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources was an important step to regulate fishing in the area. It is also important that the Consultative Parties are now conducting negotiations to complete an agreed legal framework for determining the environmental acceptability of possible mineral exploration and development in Antarctica and to govern and manage such activities.

(Mr. Jacobs, Antique and Barbuda)

But the Consultative Partiee run the risk of destroying all their good intentions in Anterotioa as long as they continue to reach and implement decision6 without the participation of a more representative group of the international aommunity or a management eystem. We reaognise that, in attempting to settle the termo for mineral exploration now, the Consultative Parties are aware that it is easier to do so before any finds are made, Similarly, we suggest that the Consultative Parties need to hrinq on board a wider representation of the international aommunity in advanae of any exploitatior , of any sort, of the Antarctic's resources - or, again, before a proper management syster is established, for if the participation of the wider aommunity comes only after aotual exploitation of resources has begun, oonfrontation over Antarctica will be the log ical consequence .

We accept that certain countries will continue to exploit the marine life of the Antarat ic. We feel they should do so in a controlled manner and within a framework in which the world - and no less Antarct ica itself - benefits f tom the revenue derived from taxation. We propose, further, that the revenue raised from taxes on fishing and, in time, mining should be placed in a special development fund for maintaining the Antarctic environment and advancing global human Aovelopment. We propose that the fund could be subdivided in three ways; expenses for the maintenance of the Antarctic environment, hard loans to developed countties and soft loans to less developed countr ies, and grants to the world's poorest States.

I come to the question of there being no consensus. The United Nations has been unable to produce a consensus resolution on the question of Antarctica, except in the first year in which the item was placed on the agenda. Many of the Consultative Parties appear to believe that the United Nations may not be the best forum for resolving the issues surrounding Antarctica. They may be correct. But

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until the Consultative Parties themselves agree to broaden the representation in their decision-making process by inviting the participation of representatives of each region of the world, or by establishing an authority, the United Nations will be the only forum where non-Consultative Parties will be heard on Antarctica.

(Mr. Jacobs, Antigua and Barbuda)

My delegation believes that our proposals would go a long way towards democratizing Antarctica and should be acceptable to all. Antigua and Barbuda recognizes that the Treaty Parties have the available resources to manage the region in the interests of mankind and to share the revenue derived from their commercial activities in the region with the poor and destitute of the earth.

We call upon the Treaty Parties to accept their obligations a8 sovereign States and to manage the Antarctic region in the interest of the international community and mankind as a whole. Any attempt on our part to product draft resolutions that are confrontational will damage the delicate discussions now under way.

Mr. HITAM (Malaysia) : I am happy to see you, Mr. Chairman, presiding over our debate on the question of Antarctica. Your personal qualities and experience will guide us in our discussions of this very delicate and crucial aueation. I am convinced that the Committee can only benefit from your wisdom. I am also very appreciative of the comments you have just made.

In the debate on this agenda item in 1984 my delegation stated:

"The fundamental approach of my Government is to proceed with care and caution, to build upon agreement and to move forward by consensus if at all possible. Our intention is to build, not to destroy, and our attitude is to explore all questions with an open mind and with full respect for the views and interests of others and for the realities of the situation in Antarctica." (A/C.1/39/PV.50, p. 8-10)

Our belief has been that, if standards of objectivity, fairness and merit are brought to bear on any problem, it is the more likely that a wise and fair result can be achieved.

Despite that approach, the search for consensus on the issue has again proved elusive. In the four debates we have had on Antarctica, only the two initial

(Mr. Hitam, Malaysia)

debates, in 1985 and 1984, led to consensus draft resolutions. In the past two years the Antarctic Treaty Parties did not participate in the debates. Nevertheless, despite that boycott, the debates were extremely useful in clarifying the concerns and interests of a significant majority of nations regarding Antarctica. The importance of Antarctica to Member States was again underscored. The adoption of General Assembly resolutions, in particular resolutions 40/156 A and 40/156 B of 16 December 1985 and resolutions 41/88 A and 41/88 B of 4 December 1986 were milestones in the continuing search by non-Treaty parties to make the Antarctic Treaty System acceptable to them as well. The proposals made thus far deserve the serious consideration of the Consultative Parties to the Treaty.

It has become an indisputable fact that the question of Antarctica is indeed a matter of major international concern and that it merits a place of priority on the international agenda. This is especially so, not just by reason of the debates, but more so by reason of the Secretary-General's reports, including report A/42/586, dated 30 September 1987, as well as the correspondence between Member States and the Secretary-General. The international community's growing concern and interest in this subject are also demonstrated by the prominence given it in the Political Declaration adopted by the Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Harare from 1 to 6 September 1986, in the resolution adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its forty-second ordinary session, held at Addis Ababa from 10 to 17 July 1985, and in the decision of the council of Ministers of the League of Arab States held at Tunis on 17 and 18 September 1986. To those was added resolution 25/5-P (IS) of the fifth bumrnit Meeting or' the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held at Kuwait from 16 to 29 January 1987. Those important conclusions underlined the need for a closer examination of the issues of Antarctica by all States.

(Mr. Hitam, Malaysia)

This deepening of concern and interest in Antarctica has been sustained by the conviction of the majority of Member States that it in vital to international peace, to the international economy, to the global environment and to communications. In short, Antarctica is vital to life on earth; it is vital to the interests of mankind. That is our inevitable conclusion - the conclusion of this Organizat ion - since 1983, when the subject was placed before it. How, then, can anyone eugqeet that the United Nations not he involved in the management of Antarctica or, for that matter, how can the international community be denied access to the Treaty on the basis of eauality or propriety?

The fundamental issues at stake hear repeating. Fi rot, Antarct ica is mankind's last frontier. It is vast and holds a substantial amount of natural resourcea, includ inq fresh water, a resource that is rapidly diminishing. Its ecoeyetem is fragile and has tromondous impact upon global ecology and environment. A minor disaster in Antarctica could assume major significance in its effect on the rest of the world. Its strategic location has enormous implications for international peace and security.

Secondly, Antarctica is no man' s land. No sovereignty has been accepted. The seven claimant States, some of which have overlapping claims, havo never succeeded in obtaining recognition of those claims, even amongst themselves, elthouqh they obvious? / share a common interest in protecting their claims. Furthermore, claims to the other par ts of Antarctica have been abjured for the time being. There in also the additional complication that the two super-Powers, the Soviet Union and the United States, insist that they have a basis of claim. An important feature is that there has not been permanent human habitation on the continent. we therefore have the uneasy situation with regard to Antarctica that the issue of sovereignty remains unresolved, with a few claimanta confronted by the reality that the rest Of'

(Mr. Hitam, Malaysia)

the Treaty Parties and the world do not recognize their claims and do not ever want them asserted.

Thirdly, Antarctica has been managed by the Consultative Parties since 1959. Under the Treaty's two-tier system, there are today 20 Consultative Parties and 17 non-Consultative Parties. Only six developing aountries from Latin America and Asia are numbered among the Consultative Parties. The other Treaty memhere are all industrialized States, from both East and West, That distinction is a disturbing element of the Treaty. Regrettably, the raaiet apartheid régime in South Africa is also included in this very exclusive Consultative Party group.

(Mr. Ritam, Malaysia)

On the basis of the Treaty provision on decision-making, a substantial majority of Member States could never be involved in Antarctica's management even if they chose to subscribe to the Treaty, nor would they be privy to decisions taken by the Consultative Parties. Obviously those inequalities need to be resolved in accordance with contemporary norms.

Those basic issues have assumed a greater urgency because of negotiations among the Treaty Parties to conclude a minerals rigime, notwithstanding their assertion that there is no minerals bonanza in Antarctica and that, even if there were, it will not be exploitable in the foreseeable future. At the same time as negotiations are proceeding, exploration for minerals is being carried out under cover of research. The negotiations themselves - which we understand are necessarily contentious because of the differing claims to standing by the Parties, between the claimants and the non-claimants, the Consultative and the non-Consultative, and the developed and the developing States - are nevertheless being accelerated by the Consultative Parties. They wish to complete them by the middle of 1988, to pre-empt the initiatives taken at the United Nations and other intersational organizations. Their aim is open to speculation, the most serious supposition being that it is to deny the larger community of nations - the United Nations - from participating in the exercise on the pretext that their participation would be too fractious for the good of Antarctic peace and stability.

My delegation is seriously perturbed by this contrived haste over an issue which has such far-reaching ramifications for international peace and security, for the environment and the global economy, not to mention the inherent rights of those nations which are denied a say in the proposed régime.

A major raison d'être of the Treaty was the concern to prevent conflicts arising from the sovereignty claims and from super-Power rivalry which could have led to the militarization and subsequent destabilization of the region. It was

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an imperative which we accept and endorse since, indeed, we fully understand the special concerns of States to which Antarctica is a strategic backyard. We also appreciate that the Treaty has served its purpose in that respect.

However, we now live in an era in which security can be assured only through the participation of the entire international community. It is universally recognized that issues such as disarmament and denuclearization require the support of all nations, large and small. For true and durable security to be achieved in Antarctica, the endorsement of the international community is a sine qua non.

The other justification for the birth of the Treaty was the need for scientific research to be promoted on that continent with the concomitant requirement for its regulation. Again, we can accept the requirement that decisions had to be made, if not the argument that only those with the requisite expertise could make them.

We have no difficulty, therefore, in appreciating the significance of the Treaty in assuring peace and security and in facilitating scientific research, with the caveat that the present and future concerns and interests of the international community must now be accommodated if the régime which applies in Antarctica is to continue to serve humanity effectively.

What we cannot accept is that the narrow criteria on which the original Treaty was constructed are now redefined in the broadest terms by the presumption that the few parties to the Treaty have the right to decide on a minerals régime that has an impact on the interests of the many non-parties.

What are those interests? There is the inequitable agreement negotiated without transparency to all nations regarding the exploitation of what are the last major natural resources on this globe. This disregard for the call of the Members of the United Nations is itself a threat to international security. Where there is

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no equity and justice, there is great potential for conflict. The assurances of the Consultative Parties that they are acting as trustees of mankind and that the régime provides for universal participation will not calm the disqui[illegible] non-participants in the negotiations - or even of some of thoee in negotiation.

There also the question of the tremendous ramifications that the exploital of such resources would have for the world ecology and environment. The international community must be assured that there are adequate safeguards+ That can be achieved only with its participation in the negotiations. Apart from that fact, our information on the current negotiations suggests that while the effect on the environment has been considered, no viable proposals for environmental protection have been submitted.

The voracious appetite of industrialised States for natural resources has already had a serious impact on the global ecology and environment. Undeterred by this, those nations now appear to be prepared to make decisions on, and proceed with, exploration and exploitation in Antarctica, seemingly oblivious of the potential for disaster and, worse, a disaster which could affect other nations not party to their negotiations.

The issues are of such dimensions that we are constrained to question the motives of the Treaty Parties in their effort to hasten the establishment of the minerals régime. We are forced to the conclusion that, in their desire not only to retain but to enlarge their exclusive and privileged status, and to forestall further evolution in the international debate on Antarctica, the Treaty Parties are prepared to take risks on the repercussions of this régime on world peace and security, the global economy, the environment and related issues.

(Mr. Hitam, Malaysia)

At this stage let me quote the decision of the European Parliament on the issue of minerals negotiation8 by Treaty Parties. Paragraph 22 of its resolution on the economic significanco of Antarctica and the Antarctic Ocean dated 18 September 1987,

> "calls, therefore, on Member States WI.) are involved in the minerals régime negotiations not to proceed further towards the signature or ratification of such a régime until the environmental risks have been ascertained and adequate safeguards developed".

That eloquent resolution requires no further clarification.

My delegation earnestly calls on the Treaty Parties to consider seriously the implications of their action and to impose a moratorium on the negotiations for a minerals régime until such time as members of the international community can participate fully if they so choose, within their capacity, in such negotiations in accordanco with General Assembly .esolution 41/88 B of 4 December 1986. To ignore the appeal of the large majority of States members of the General Assembly will seriously compromise the validity of whatever régime is concluded and will have dangerous consequences for the peace, security, environment and economy of the wor Id. In this context, the Treaty Parties should, as a first step, make all information on the negotiations on a minerals régime available to the United Nations. Finally, the involvement of the Secretary-General in the negotiations will do much to assuage international concern.

The continued participation of the racist Pratoria régime in the meetings of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties is intolerable to all nations that abhor racism and deliberately instigated violence baaed on racism. The structure and provisions of the Treaty, compounded by the attitude of some of the Parties, allow this travesty to remain. That is a serious reflection on the Treaty.

(Mr. Hitam, Malaysia)

My delegation has benefited from the work of the Secretary-General in furnishing us with the information we need on Antarctica since we first began to debate this issue in 1983. We appreciate the immense effort that has gone into the compilation of the reports, including this year's report, given in document A/42/586, dated 30 September 1987. My delegation has studied this year's report with great interest and we note that there has been an improvement in some of the areas on which we have commented in the past, in particular on the question of the flow of information between the Consultative Parties and the United Nations and its related agencies. Regrettably, despite the assurance8 of the Consultative Parties that they will continue to provide the international community witn information on Antarctica and on the operation of the Antarctic Treaty system, it is evident that what information has been forthcoming has been on an extremely selective basis.

My delegation believes that Member States not parties to the Treaty require comprehensive information, not only on the Consultative Parties' biennial meetings, but also and especially on the current negotiations on the minerals régime and on the activities of the Treaty Parties in Antarctica, reports on compliance with the provisions and regulations of the Treaty system, and more information on the operations of the Treaty system itself. Nothing less than the provision of the full picture of developments in Antarctica to Member States through the United Nations will satisfy the international community's desire to know with confidence what the Treaty parties, especially the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, are doing to promote the interests of mankind in Antarctica.

My delegation has raised the question of the involvement of the relevant specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations, in the Antarctic Treaty system. We feel there is still considerable room for improvement in such co--operation. Direct interaction between the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties and the specialized agencies and international orqanizations should include

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provision for the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to take into account the recommendations of the specialized agencies and international organizations, which would reflect the concerns and interests of the international community.

We are also at111 awaiting clarification of the legal implications for Antarctica of the 1982 United Nation& Convention on the Law of the Sea in the southern ocean and of the proposed international sea-bed authority. On this the report is silent. We note that no effort hao been made by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to engaye in any kind of dialogue with the representatives of the Preparatory Commission for the International Sea-Bed Authority or tha United Nations Law of the Sea off ice.

My delegation would like to see a comprehensive study made of the many proposals submitted by Member States to the Secretary-General. It would be helpful if advice or recommendations were forthcoming on broadening the involvement of the non-Consultative Parties in Antarctica, for example in the area of scientific research, through the establishment of international stations.

In general, therefore, substantially more information is needed so that the international community may feel satisfied that it is fully informed on all aepocts of Antarctica and that it may be in a position to protect its interests. The Current information available is less than reassuring to concerned Member States outside the Antarctic Treaty system.

My delegation and many others with similar perceptions of Antarctica believe we have been reasonable in the various requests we have made. We would not be doing justice to the interests of our peoples or to the broader interests of humanity if we did not persevere in our efforts on this issue. We have been reasonable in the face of the prevarication and the obvious unwillingness of the Consultative Parties to co-operate fully and in good faith with the United Nations in meetiny the many concerns that have been expressed.

(Mr. Hitam, Malaysia)

We have not, however, sought confrontation. We have, in fact, sincerely hoped that the discussions that have taken place here and elsewhere, whether multilateral, regional or bilateral, would lead to mutual understanding and to a convergence of views. The search for coneensua is of the highest priority for us. We have worked hard for consensus because of the major importance of Antarctica in global affairs, If consensus is achieved, we could move forward together in a decisive way to ensure that Antarctica will be managed fully in accord with the purposes and principles set forth in the United Nations Charter. Only in this way can the interests of mankind in peace and security, the environment, economic and scientific research' meteorology and communication be fully assured,

We therefore deeply regret that, despite the close consultations that have taken place, it has not as yet been possible to achieve consensus in regard to this year's debate. In the negotiations we came close to achieving a workable compromise, but unfortunately we were unable to reach agreement on some key points.

In its search for consensus my delegation's fundamental objective was to prepare the foundation for a régime in Antarctica that had international legitimacy and transparency. We are convinced that only such a régime can fully serve and meet the concerns and interests of mankind. In our view, the Secretary-General could play a role in evaluating the current régime of the Antarctic Treaty system following his observance of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties' meetings, including tho negotiations on the minerals régime. The notion was that the Secretary-General would be able to act as a bridge *between* the Treaty Parties *and* Member States outside the Antarctic Treaty system. In this way the international community could be involved, even if indirectly, in Antarctica and would also be able to judge whether its interests and concerns were being accommodated.

The failure of consensus could be attributed to the disinclination of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to participate in any kind of review of the

(Mr. Hitam, Malaysia)

Treaty despite its obvious inadequacies. Their reticence on this issue implies a lack of confidence in the Antarctic Treaty system as it stands. I put it that the Treaty cannot stand up to closer scrutiny when measured against its own criteria of promoting the interests of mankind.

We have done our best to bridge the gap in our positions, but we cannot be expected to surrender the basic principles that are at stake. We do not despair, however, as we believe that the negotiations so far provide a basis for continued consultations, both bilaterally with the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties and through their representative, the representative of Australia.

We are also grateful to like-minded colleagues from other delegations. We are encouraged also by the positive outlook of some members of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, especially the developing countries in the group. We welcome especially the indications from a major Power, a member of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, that it is ready to consider a consolidation of and improvement in the Treaty's international mechanism. Most of all we hope most sincerely that draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.87 before us, which we believe represents fair, objective and reasonable positions given the import of the subject and the interests of all Member States, will pave the way for consensus at the forty-third session of the General Assembly next year. Although the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties may claim credit for the evolution of the Treaty in recent years, we believe that the real credit belongs to the international focus on the issue through our debatee and resolutions.

(Mr. Aitam, Malaysia)

As a result, the non-Consultative Parties and some international organizations were invited to participate as observers in the consultative meetings in 1983 and in the minerals régime meetings in 1886, and information flows to the international community on the activities *of* the Treaty Parties have improved, even if they are less than satisfactory.

The world today is no longer the world of yesteryear, when the Treaty was horn. Interdependence and multilateralism *are* the order of the day, and they can be ignored only at our peril. The realities of the international situation will continue to impose themselves upon Antarctica; they cannot he shut out. We shall continue to knock at the door to search for a reconciliation of views and consensus in a constructive manner for what must be a universally acceptable régime for the governance of Antarctica.

Mr. WIJEWARDANE (Sri Lanka): A developing country sees Antarctica enveloped and shrouded in the mists of technology and advanced science. It is difficult for us, without the advantage of scientific know-how, to have a picture of that ice-bound continent and to see what goes on in a part of the planet that we inhabit.

The right of mankind to enjoy an ecosystem that sustains life and livelihood cannot be denied. That is why my delegation is taking part in this debate, which we hope will eventually lead to a régime under which both developed and developing nations may take an abiding interest in maintaining an ecosystem which, as the Brundtland Commission report has pointed out, should be relevant to the sustainable development of all humankind.

From that point of view, we offer our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the subject, document *A/42/586* of 30 September 1987. The Secretary-General has been able to make the report on the basis of the three resolutions we adopted last year - resolutions 41/88 A, B and C. The

(Mr. Wijewardane, Sri Lanka)

Secretary-General's report has offered an opportunity to the developing countries in particular to discern from the documentation that he has put together the variety of activities that even now international bodies are responsible for in Antarctica.

It is not surprising to find the World Meteorological Organization taking a role in sustaining international interest in the meteorology of the southern hemisphere. It has presented several papers in this regard. Joining the World Meteorological Organization is the International Civil Aviation Organization, monitoring the situation in the area of Antarctica to assure the safety of flights around the continent, The future may see commercial flights supplementing flights which set out now in search of data for ecientif ic purposes.

In the realm of providing food for the world's population, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has taken steps to ensure close co-operation with the system of the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources. One would expect that scientific consultation and co-operation would result in increasing studies of fisheries stocks and resources in the southern ocean. There are also related benefits in measures and regulationa leading to the protection and preservation of the marine environment of that ocean. In this connection, there should he strong and firm measures aqainet marine pollution caused by the dumping of waste and other toxic material. These scientific probes and investigations in the southern ocean, be they on climate changes, marine environment, living resources or development of ocean studies, including additional oceanographic data, will ensure that future knowledge of the southern ocean and the continent of Antarctica become more broad-based, and that future qenerations will be able to enhance their scientific knowledge of the oceans and climates which are related naturally to the vast land mass of Antarctica.

(Mr. Wijewardane, Sri Lanka)

The world's population, which is threatening to double and treble within the next century, must have an assurance that there will be known stocks of proteins on which life can be sustained. Mankind has a right to know its environment so that in seeking information relating to the Antarctic ecosystem, scientific information about the Antarctic may be collected, exchanged and studied in both developed and developing countries.

There is no difficulty in recognising that the Antarctic and its continental shelf, referred to as the Antarctic environment and the Antarctic Ocean, are Vital in maintaining the stability of the global marine environment, weather and climate patterns; hence, they have an immediate impact on all mankind.

To argue that the Antarctic should remain the exclusive preserve of only a few States which, because of historic accident, were able to come together as Parties to an Antarctic Treaty in 1959, has no relevance to our interdependent world. We have the assurance as of now that the Antarctic will he used for peaceful purposes only. The Treaty also has great merit in that it has been able to hold in abeyance claims to sovereignty in Antarctica. It has preserved a nuclear-free-zone, free Of both nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It forbids disposal of nuclear waste and assures us that the living resources of Antarctica will not be over-exploited. But still these reasons do not still lend themselves to conclusions that the Antarctic Treaty system should remain confined exclusively to a few countries.

I have tried to argue in this statement that all mankind has a vital stake in Antarctica. Recent scientific investigations in that area now reveal a threatening gap in the protective ozone layer above the continent, with a tendency to expand. The danger to all living matter, including mankind, as a result of the hole in the Protective ozone layer has been affirmed in recent scientific literature. we fear that unless regulatory steps are taken to assure the restriction of certain toxic

(Mr. Wijewardane, Sri Lanka)

chemical matter by 011 States, whether they belong to the Antarctic Treaty group or not, there is a danger t o all mankind inherent in such a situationThis is just another example to illustrate the responsibility of us 011 to protect the ecosystems of tho globe, irrespective of our location on this planet. We welcome in this connection the initiatives taken in tho recently concluded Montreal Protocol on Chlorofluorocarbons. We hope that tho international community will accede t o the Protocol.

Antarctica is, as I have said, so intimately connected with our lives that thoro is no reason to yo on assuming that the Antarctic Treaty system must exclude from its deliberations and discussions the rest of the world community.

It is in this aontoxt that tho sponsors of the draft resolution have for the last few years considered it prudent and desirable and in the best interests of tho world community to make Antarctica tho subject of an expanded study, with information flowing continuously t o the United Nations, g iving the Secretary-General an opportunity t o follow all aspects of the question of Antarctica by being represented at all meetings and discussions pertaining to it.

I t must be clearly stated here that the intention in the draft resolutions we sponsor is not to overturn or do away with the Antarctic Treaty system but rather to make it viable on the basis of the fact that the global environment is one, and cannot be separated.

We havo therefore tried during our consultations to achieve a draft resolution which could bo adopted by consensus and thereby signal our main intention that Antarctica is an international concern relevant to the life and well-being of mankind and i ts environment. We are aware that the Antarctic Treaty system will be up for review in 1991. We are also aware that the States Parties to the Treaty are

(Mr. Wijewardane, Sri Lanka)

engaged in negotiations about the establishment of a minerals régime. We are concerned that the Antarctic environment, when it is commercially exploited for its mineral wealth, should not be destroyed by uncontrolled exploitation and exploration.

(Mr. Wijewardane, Sri Lanka)

We would urge that the States Parties, which are now an exclusive club that includes tha racist régime of Pretoria, should not overlook the fact that any agreomenr they reach should have a legal framework, accepts:- .le to the internat ional community, to look after our common concerns. We would therefore caution against the adoption of a minerals agreement before United Nations representation is included in the Antarctica Treaty ayotem and no action ahould be permitted until all environmental risks have been ascertained and adequate safeguards have been developed to the satisfaction of the international community,

The international community could be assured that its interests are adeauatoly safeguarded only if a mechanism is adopted that will enable the Secretary-General to sit in on all deliberationa and nogotiationo and only if he has an opportunity to reflect the concerns of the majority of those who, because of past deprivation and present poverty, are unable to put together the resources and are bereft of the relevant technology to enable them to enter the portals of the Antarctic Treaty.

I warmly welcome thc initiatives that are now being taken by the sponsors of these draft reeolutlone to emphasize the concerns of that group.

Mr. CHOHAN (Pakistan) : We live in an increasingly interdependent world. All of us recognize the need the harmonize our views and actions in order to facilitate the growing process of interdependence for mutual and common benefit. The United Net ions, with its universal membership, provides the ind ispensable Forum for focusing attention and taking action on all matters which are a matter of common interest and a cause of common concern for mankind.

Consideration of the question of Antarctica by the General Assembly is a recognition of the fact that that hitherto distant and desolate continent, hidden under tho haze of myths and polar cape, is of vital importance to the wellbeing and future of mankind. It is therefore natural that the international community should have a direct interest in sharing and participating, in an equitable manner, in the

(Mr. Chohan, Pakistan)

scientific exploration and economic exploitation of that huge land mass that covers nearly one tenth of the Earth's surface. In deliberation upon this question once again we are motivated by the earnest desire to build bridges of understanding in order to remove the barriers of exclusivism that have so far characterized the approach of some to that uniaue continent.

Although uninhabited, Antarctica is of vital strategic importance to all States. It is increasingly being recognized that any disturbance of its fragile environmental balance could have far-reaching consequences for the world's ecosystems. The continent presents extensive opportunities for scientific research in various fields of relevance and interest to all Statee. It possesses rich marine and mineral resources, which are increasingly becoming accessible and which all peoples are entitled to share equitably.

We are aware that the Antarctic Treaty itself has acknowledged the common interests of mankind in Antarctica. We do not deny the positive aspects of the Antarctic Treaty system, which holds in abeyance the territorial claims of certain States over partn of Antarctica, which ensures the denuclearized status of the continent and the exclusion of military rivalry and which makes possible the pursuit of peaceful co-operation in scientific research. But the Treaty came into existence at a time when a vast majority of States were still struggling to break the shackles of colonialism. In 1959 the Antarctic Treaty may have appeared to be the most viable approach. However, the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties must acknowledge that the world has significantly changed since then. The dif ferencee that have emerged with regard to the Treaty relate to the manner in which the common interest of mankind reauires realization in practice in Antarctica.

The scientific and technological disadvantages presently faced by a majority Of the developing countries cannot constitute a sufficient basis for denying them their right to participate, as eaual partners, in the decision-making process

(Mr. Chohon, Pakistan)

governing the affairs of Antarctica. Onerous conditions have debarred those States from acquiring full consultative status, and accession to the Treaty only secures tho second-class status of non-Consultative Party.

There has been a major evolution in the technological and political areas, which necessitates a review of the built-in deficiencies of the Treaty. Technology relevant to the exploration and exploitation of the resources of Antarctica has during the past 30 years developed in such a manner as to present the possibility of substantial economic returns, which in turn raises the spectre of conflict and competition over those resources. we have a comprehensive international Convention establishing a new régime relating to the Law of the Sea. Its adoption has made it necessary to examine the compatibility of the Antarctic Treaty system, as well as the activities promoted under the umbrella of that Treaty, with the provisions of the Convention. New precepts and principles have been accepted in relation to areas considered as the common heritage of mankind. The acknowledged interest of all mankind in Antarctica implies that the international community should be more fully involved in its administration and should partake equitably of the benefits derived from the scientific, commercial or other activities in Antarctica.

In response to all those developments we had communicated our views to the United Nations Secretary-General in 1983. Pakistan called for the replacement of the Antarctic Treaty system by a new instrument of universal character negotiated by a conference to be held under the auspices of the United Nations. The fundamental principles that should inspirit such a new instrument are the following: first, Antarctica is the common heritage of mankind) secondly, it is not subject to appropriation by any State or persons; and thirdly, it should be reserved exclusively for peaceful purposes.

However, guided by the need to avoid frictions and the vitiation of the atmosphere, we accepted a circumspect approach to the promotion of progress on this

(Mr. Chohan, Pakistan)

issue. It was our earnest hope that the initiation of a dialogue between the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties and the rest of thr international community, within the framework of the United Nations, could lead to agreed measures to introduce democratic principles with regard to the Antarctic régime while preserving the benefits and achievements of the 1959 Treaty. However, constructive circumspection has been mistaken for a lack of determination. Over the past two years we have witnessed a renewed rigidity of positions. The non-participation Of the Treaty's Consultative Parties in the voting in the past two years is indeed regrettable.

My delegation also shares the legitimate concern over the participation of the apartheid régime of South Africa as a full Consultative Party to the Antarctic Treaty. The international community has clearly pronounced its total opposition to the abhorrent practices of apartheid based on racial discrimination between human beings, which are totally unacceptable.

The Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned countries, at their summit meeting at Harare last year, affirmed their conviction that any exploitation of the resources of Antarctica should ensure the maintenance of international peace and security in Antarctica and the protection of its envirorment and should be for the benefit of all mankind. In that context they also affirmed that all States Members of the United Nation6 had a valid interest in such exploitation. It is a matter of concern to the developing countries that while the Treaty has no legal order for resource development the Consultative Parties have decided to ignore that fact and are pushing ahead with the project of creating a new régime for mineral exploitation. It cannot be considered fair or proper that a subscription to the Antarctic Treaty should be a precondition for participation in the negotiation on the minerals régime. The t wou ld, in fact., be compounding one inequity by imposing another.

(Mr. Chohan, Pak ietan)

It is imperative that all uountriea stand on an eaual footing in respect of establishing a mineral régime without regard to their statue as Consultative or non-Consultative Party.

The Pakistan delegation hopes that the Antarctic Treaty Parties will participate constructively in the debate and decisions of the Committee on Antarctica this year. We believe that our deliberations should lead to the following main conclusions: first, that certain ineauitable features of the 1999 Treaty, especially the onerous conditions for acauiring full consultative status, reauire review and adjustment1 secondly, that negotiations for a minerals régime Should he halted until Such adjustments are made, in order to provide wider access to the treaty; thirdly, that steps should be initiated by the Treaty Parties to exclude the racist régime of South Africa from the 1959 Treaty; and fourthly, that a dialogue between Treaty Parties and non-Parties is indispensable to avoid any serious friction and international dispute in the future.

Mr. GBEHO (Ghana): The Ghana dolegation welcomes this debate as yet another opportunity to outline Ghana's position on an important issue which rightly concerns the international community. AS in previous years, we are addressing the Committee in a spirit of co-operation, as the search for a common position continues on this important question.

It will be recalled that last year, the Antarctic Treaty Parties decided not to participate in the decisions taken in the General Assembly on the texts which became resolutions 41/88 A and B. Those resolutions, adopted by more than one half of the Members of the United Nations, merely contained requests to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to keep the Secretary-General fully informed on all aspects of the question of Antarctica and to suspend the negotiations on the arrangements for exploiting Antarctica until such time as the international community would have the opportunity to examine the matter. In effect, the two-part

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

resolution of 4 December 1986 was aimed at promoting greater international co-operation and advancing global peace. And yet the Consultative Parties boycotted the decision-taking on the resolution.

We are aware of the calculated attempts to deny to the undisputed majority of the States Members of the United Nations the opportunity for the continued exchange of views on the question of Antarctica. This Organization, founded to promote open, frank and fair dialogue among Member States, is being denied that same opportunity because some fear that their own views might not be accepted by the vast majority.

For some unexplained reasons, the Consultative Parties have suddenly decided to speak through a single spokesman instead of expressing the views of their delegations individually as was done in the past. There is nothing particularly unusual about this mode of conveying group sentiments or positions on an issue on which the members of a group may have a common position. Indeed, this approach conforms to the current rationalization of work in the First Committee. our concern, however, is that the strategy might well have been designed to muffle open and broad discussion of the issues and also perhaps to accord the question of Antarctica a low-key status, which would eventually give this important m tter a hasty but certain burial. This deduction is based on reports that certain political pressure groups, out of na row national interests, have been working quietly but strenuously for the removal of the question of Antarctica from the General Assembly's agenda. It seems that the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties have also adopted a policy of non-participation in all United Nations votes and inquiries on the subject. In fact, a number of the Consultative Party delegations,

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

including those among them which are otherwise regarded as friends of the developing countries, are on record as being the most ardent supporters of this move.

This attitude, exhibited at the last two sessions of the General Assembly, is as strange as it is unwelcome. My delegation respects the right of any Member State or group of Member States to advance their views with transparency and conviction, even if many or most delegations find fault with such views.

It is therefore difficult for us to see the point of refusing to discuss fully or to participate in the decision-making process because of the fear of opposition. It is intellectually lees than candid and politically unacceptable. Ideas and views that cannot bear scrutiny here in the United Nations will continue to be the product of conceited and supercilious, if not misguided, authors.

Let me hasten to state my delegation's unequivocal position that any attempt either to block the consideration of the item or to seek, under the cover of any rules of procedure, to frustrate meaningful examination of the question, would be firmly opposed by us. We invite other fair-minded delegations to do likewise. Such a principled Stand would further betray the intentions of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties who, after all, claim that the Antarctic Treaty represents the best arrangement for the greater part of mankind.

In his report on the work of the United Nations submitted at the last session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General touched upon an inescapable truth which is relevant to the present debate between the Treaty Parties and the non-Treaty Parties on Antarctica. He said:

> "In a world where the destinies of all countries are almost certain to become ever more closely linked, there can be no substitute for an effective multilateral system in the maintenance of international peace and security and in the co-operative management of global problems." (A/41/1, p. 1)

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

We would therefore hope that all delegation5 would approach this debate in a spirit of constructive dialogue and avoid taking refuge in unwelcome procedures that would side-step the issue.

Let me at this juncture convey to the Secretary-General the appreciation of tl.e Ghana delegation for his reports contained in documents A/42/586 and Corr. 1 and A/42/587, which are now before this Committee. My delegation has studied the reports and finds them a good presentation which has shed some light on the flow of information about the Antarctic system to the specialized agencies. The report in document A/42/587 dealing with the exclusion of the racist apartheid régime from membership of the Antarctic Treaty, a subject to which I will turn later, again shows that the issue of continued extension of the privilege5 of Antarctic Treaty Consultative Party membership to the racist régime of South Africa is yet to be taken seriously. A5 of now, it seems that most States that are Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties would, at best, settle for only verbal condemnations and nothing more.

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

While therefore appreciating the Secretary-General's reports, we do not think the reported flow of information to, or the working conditions with, the United Nations institutions should necessarily lead to the muffling of the call for a reassessment of the 1959 Antarctic Treaty. In any case, the information available does not cover the full range of activities of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, in particular the current flurry of negotiations with respect to the mineral resources development in Antarctica. In fact a significant part of the activities of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties with respect to the minerals régime continue to be shrouded in secrecy, thus denying accountability to a large majority of the international community.

As we had occasion to state in this Committee, the Ghana delegation does not deny the achievements of the Antarctic Treaty system in preserving peace, international scientific co-operation and protection of the environment in Antarctica. Nor are we advocating the destruction of the system. What we have tried to do is draw attention to the inherently restricted membership of the Antarctic Treaty deriving from its two-tier membership principle and the "sacred cow" attitude which the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties attach to the system.

The protagonists of the status quo have denied this. They say membership is open and that we should follow the example of the developing countries that are non-Consultative Parties and become parties to the Antarctic Treaty. But how can small countries, such as my own, expect to play an active part in a system which, as a price for membership, must demonstrate a "substantial scientific research activity" on a sustained basis? The truth is that, given the two-tier principle, small countries like my own would at best only join the crowd since they cannot immediately undertake a scientific research activity or mount exploration in Antarctica in order to qualify for Antarctic Treaty Consultative Party status. They also inform us that since 1983 the status of the non-Consultative Party

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

members has improved; they are now admitted into Consultative Party meetings although they have no role in the decision-making. But how can this second-rate status be truly appealing when, as is obvious from complaints, the non-Consultative Parties are, as of now, denied by the two-tier principle full and effective participation in the entire range vf international co-operation and management concerning Antarctica?

The developing countries - whose often quoted good "example" we are asked to emulate - are, it must be stressed, no more satisfied with the system than the non-Treaty Parties. In fact, one of them is on record as having been until recently in the forefront of the most bitter criticism of the 1959 Antarctic Treaty. Its decision to accede to the Treaty could very well be out of frustration rather than from any particular satisfaction with the operation of the Treaty system. Today we all know that all is not well with Antarctica and that the current scientific and other activities are contributing enormously to the threat to the region's ecosystem. So present arrangements and practices are not exactly promoting a Garden of Eden. Why not open them up to international participation and, I dare say, wisdom?

It is our belief that for a fair and wiser international involvement, the Antarctic should be brought within the purview of the United Nations and placed directly under its supervision, without necessarily destroying the legitimate right of its present Treaty Parties. This would be consistent with the universality Of the present era. The United Nations management would, in our view, provide the safest guarantee of the rational and peaceful settlement of potentially conflicting claims, which as of now have only been temporarily and artificially suppressed. The precedents provided by the United Nations regulatory institutions, namely, the 1967 Treaty on the exploration and uses of outer space, the 1970 law concerning the

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

Moon and other celestial bodies, and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, can also be applied to Antarctica.

The fact of the matter is that: Antarctica forms one tenth of the globe. It also holds enormous resources of particular significance for international peace and security, the economy, the environment, scientific research, meteorology and telecommunications. It is logical, therefore, that mankind as a whole should have a legitimate interest in that part of the world. A handful of countries should not arrogate to themselves a portion of the universe to which the rules and regulations of the most universal of institutions would not apply. This is undemocratic and quite contrary to our present-day concept of universality. What is more, it is an arrangement that sows the seeds of discord and conflict as the current discussion already reveals.

In the Ghana delegation's contribution to the debate last year we recalled the experience of the infamous Berlin Conference of 1884, when a few countries, wielding superior military and technological power, decided to carve out and share among themselves the continent of Africa. Now, 100 years later, the international community has not outlived the dire consequences of that selfish act. We emphasized that it was the era of the rich and the powerful. The Berlin mentality and the nineteenth century paternalism, which awarded the heritage of mankind only to the rich and the militarily powerful, have, after all, been replaced by a United Nations committed to the promotion of the common good of humanity on the basis of collective effort and collective responsibility. To what new bright idea do we owe a reversal of this forward march of mankind?

We therefore urge the Consultative Parties to be more forthcoming. The non-Treaty Parties have demonstrated considerable flexibility and have made a number of proposals aimed at breaking the present deadlock. We invite the

(Mr. Ghohc, Ghana)

Consultative Parties to reciprocate in a positive way and to avoid taking refuge behind the consensus procedure in order to block progress. We on our part stand ready to co-operate openly, truthfully and sympathetically with them in the search for a meet ing of minds. We invite them to do the same,

We would In this connection restate our concern over reports that the Consultative Parties are almost on the verge of finalizing a régime for the commencement of commercial exploitation of the Antarctic resources. woll informed sources have it that the final decision may he taken at the spring 1988 meeting to he held at Wellington, New Zealand. As we stated last year, my Government is very likely to consider null and void any such conclusions reached at that mooting and, in the aircumstanoes would not recognize any legal régime negotiated outside the framework of the United Nations.

As an African delegation we are naturally and, I hope, understandably sensitive to the continued association of south Africa with the Antarctic Treaty. One wonders why a régime which has been expelled from various international bodies for its odious and unacceptable system of apartheid ehould continue to he given the protective shield of Antarctic Treaty Consultative Party membership. In its resolution 41/88 C, of 4 December 1986, the General Assembly specifically called for the expulsion of the racist Pretoria régime from rembership of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties.

(Mr. Gheho, Ghana)

It is true that a significant number of the Antarctic Troaty Consultative Parties voted for the reoolution. But how can we take them seriously when they continue to extend membership privilegea to a régime whose racial policies have been denounced by the Uni ted Nations as a crime against humanity? Our rationale for thia position is simply that the raoist regime does not represent, nor extend the benefits of .ts activities in Antarctica to, the overwhelming majority of its citizens, because of the unaaceptahle system of apartheid. Why, then, should the Treaty direotly or indirectly underwrite apartheid?

It is even more baffling that the so-called friends of Africa hob-nob with the racist Pretoria regime at their Consultative Party meetings and then turn round to proclaim an anti-apartheid stance. We think that is a practice of double standarde. We invite the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties - in particular, the friends of Air ice - to muster the necessary political courage and call for the expulsion of the racist régime from their midst. When apartheid is eradicated from that unfortunate country, South Africa may return to international organizations. That, in our view, would he a practical demonstration of political support for General Assembly resolution 41/88 C.

In conclusion, we re-emphasize that we do not seek to destroy the 1959 Antarctic Treaty. We acknowledge i ta achievementa. The fact remains, however, that aiter two decades of operation on the basis of its present principles the Treaty system cannot validly be defended as one committed to the promotion of the common good. Its fundamental premise is profit, power and the qlory of only a few. To the Consultative Parties we repeat that the future of our world lies in interdependence, collective responsibility and shared heritage. To ignore this truism, presumably hecauae of profit, is to perpetuate the present yawning gap

(Mr. Gbeho, Ghana)

between the world's rich and poor and unwittingly to provide the basis for discontent, which could seriously disrupt the peace of the world in the future.

It is the view of the Ghana delegation that the Committee has a clear responsibility, which should be exercised in two ways. First, it should resist any attempt to scuttle consideration of the question of Antarctica, and, secondly, it must examine and place the item in its proper perspective so that more people will not only be made fully aware of the serious flaws in the present Antarctic Treaty system, but also be encouraged and directed to work for a broader-based regulatory system within the framework of the United Nations. This, in our view, would make the Antarctic Treaty system more acceptable to the whole of tha international community.

Mr. KABANDA (Rwanda) (interpretation from French): I hope that the debate we are starting on the question of Antarctica will enable the Committee to go further than it hao in the past three sessions. When, at its thirty-ninth session, the Committee was first called upon to consider the question of Antarctica the position of some seemed to be totally irreconcilable with the position of others. Most Members of the United Nations called for an open régime, involving the participation of all in applying the results of research and experiments in Antarctica and the exploitation of the continent's resources for the benefit of mankind, but the States Parties to the Treaty seemed to reject any form of; dialogue, going so far as to say that they would not participate in any decision-taking on questions pertaining to Antarctica.

Despite the negative attitude so far, I continue to believe that there arc possibilities for understanding, if the Parties to the Treaty ayree to listen to the demands of those countries that are not Parties - the majority of Members of the United Nations.

(Mr. Kabanda, Rwanda)

Among the problems, I should mention those aonoerning the environment, to which the Secretary-General has drawii the internat ional community' s attent ion in his annual report. There is also the problem of open participation in defining the legal minerals rég ime . Finally, and not the leaet important, there is the problem of way8 and means to br ing about more open participation in the Treaty system, it being underetood that our participation - at any rate, that of Africa - aannot involve agreeing to the participation of the régime that hae made racial discrimination its national policy. I am, of course, referring to South Africa.

Previous speakers have developed those points, and I do not wish to dwell on them. I shall be content to focus on three provisions of the Treaty, In i t s first preambular paragraph the States Parties recognize

> "that it is in the interest of all mankind that Antarctica shall continue forever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and shall not become the scene or object of international discord".

That is a clear assurance, which we welcome. We understand it to mean that there will he neither military bases nor testing of nuclear or conventional weapons in Antarctica. We regard that as a guarantee, even though it does not appear clearly in the Treaty itself. We believe the assurances we have been given in the etatemente made in the Committee over the past three sessions are enough, because my delegation has learned to trust our partners.

In the fourth paragraph of the preamble the Governments concerned say that they are

> "Convinced also that a treaty ensuring the use of Antarctica for peaceful purposes only end the continuance of international harmony in Antarctica will further the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations*.

(Mr. Kabanda, Rwanda)

Whatever furthers the purpose6 and principles of the United Nations is of interest to its Members and should therefore be enaouraged. Among the purposes of the United Nations, apart from international peace and security, a prominent plaoe is held *by* co-operation among Members for economic, social, scientific, technological and cultural development, including the exohange of information.

That, in our view, is the vision that, at least in part, inspired the authoro of the Antarctic Treaty, which also states (Article III (2)):

> "In implementing this Ar ticle, every encouragement shall ne given to the establishment of co-operative working relationo with those Specialised Agencies of the United Nations and other international organisations having a scientific or technical interest in Antarctica."

It would therefore seem a matter of course that Members of the United Nations, which constitute the majority of that mankind whiah is mentioned in the Antarctic Treaty, should strive to express their views and, what is more, to participate in the activities being carried on in Antarctica and to benefit from progress in science and expor ience. It would seem to be normal that those of our countries that are sufficiently equipped to do so should have access to them. Admittedly, we are not as yet in a position to state our claims - which, I repeat, are justified - for we should not rush ahead too fast, even if sorely tempted to do so.

Although we are assured that the research and experiments being done in Antarctica are for peaceful purposes, we must also be assured that the results of such research and experiments will also benefit mankind. That is not stated in the Treaty.

It has been said at the past three sessions - and in private discussions - that the countries not parties to the Antarctic Treaty have no legal or moral justification for claiming a share of the benefits derived from research in that.

(Mr. Kabanda, Rwanda)

area and that everything belongs, instead, to those who are devoting their resources and energies to it. Such a reaction is, I suppose, understandable, but it does not necessarily seem justified, since we could just as well ask what is the basis for the right to appropriate that region and its resources, especially mineral resources* Such a right certainly cannot be justified by scientific and technological progress, nor by the fact of having got there first, for in that case those countries that are lagging behind scientifically and technoloyioally would have *no* rights - other than the right to acquiesce *in* a fait accompli. If I may be allowed a simple analogy, it could equally well be said that the country which first landed men on the moon could say that that celestial body was its property by right - and we certainly do not accept that idea.

I do not want to dwell upon considerations of that kind. Nevertheless, I would like to pay tributo to the men who have been risking their lives to discover tho secrets of Antarctica, and if there were a plan to erect a monument to them, my delegation would have no objection, we are all the more grateful to them because they have revealed to us the existence of vast resources hitherto unknown - fauna, flora and mineral resources that, we are told, could, if exploited, help to improve the economic end social lot of the human community.

During the past three sessions our debate concluded with a request to the Secretary-General to submit a report on Antarctica based on information gathered. He has done so to our complete satisfaction, and we congratulate him.

Today, however, in view of the increasing interest in the question of Antarctica expressed by Member States, it would be useful to States Parties to the Antarctic Treaty that are Members of tne United Nations or that have Observer status, as well as to countries that are not parties to the Treaty and that do not yet *enjoy* consultative status, if the Secretary-General could participate in the

(Mr. Kabanda, Rwanda)

deliberations of the bodies established under the Treaty, in order to provide the Assembly with first-hand information. We are not asking that he should be considered a party to the Treaty - at least not for the time being - but we would like him to be considered an interested observer. He is, in fact, the spokesman, the watchful eyes and ears, of mankind as represented in the united Nations.

In any event, we do believe that Antarctica is a vast area where, as elsewhere, international co-operation could flourish for the benefit of all countries without regard to their scientific and technological levels, without regard to their geographical situation or to their economic importance. We are convinced that frank and open dialogue, such as the one we have been having here for four sessions now, would enable us to achieve that, on condition that all parties view it in its proper context. Whatever happens, this debate must continue,. especially as the life of the Treaty - 30 years - *is* nearly over; that fact must always be borne in mind. In 1959 we were not there - at least the majority of our States were not. In 1989 - or later, for the exact date is immaterial - we must be present at the establishment of a new Antarctic régime that will take account of the requirements of the international community. It is in this same sense that we will express our views again next year, and in future years too, if necessary,

For the benefit of those who wish to have the text of my statement, I wish to state that it will be available tomorrow.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I shall now call upon those delegations that have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. The Committee has an estahliahed procedure to be followed in exercising the right of reply, and I would ask delegations who wish to speak to abide by it.

Mr. WOOLCOTT (Australia): As this is the first time I have spoken in this Committee under your chairmanship, Sir, I wish to say how glad my delegation, and I am sure other delegations representing Antarctic Treaty countries, are to see you presiding over this debate, which we are confident you will do with your widely acknowledged skill, objectivity and wisdom.

Tomorrow I shall be addressing some of the wider issues involved in this item, but I wish now to make a response in exercise of right of reply, on behalf of States parties to the Antarctic Treaty.

The Permanent Representative of Malaysia said in his statement this morning that "In the past two years, the Antarctic Treaty Parties did not participate in the debates" (supra, p. 12), and he went on to say, "despite that boycott". I wish to put on record that there was no boycott. Treaty Parties did participate in the debate through my statement in this Committee, delivered as Chairman of the New York group of the Antarctic Treaty on behalf of States Parties to the Treaty. The fact that a eingle statement was made simply serves to underline the unity of approach on the part of Treaty Parties.

I should like also to mention that the representative of Rwanda said a few minutes ago that the life of the Treaty was close to expiring. I should pint out, I think, in the interests of accuracy, that the Treaty is not limited in time. The Treaty provides for a review in 1991, ehould a Treaty Party eeek such a review.

Finally, my friend and colleague, the Permanent Representative of Ghana, used the phrase "sacred cow" with reference to the Antarctic Treaty. The Antarctic Treaty does not eeek to be a sacred cow. Rather, it could he more appropriately likened to a healthy, hard-working and friendly ox, not working in a Garden of Eden, to take another phrase from my Ghanaian colleague's speech, but in a frozen, harsh and hostile environment. In fact, the Treaty welcomes constructive advice.

Mr. GBEHO (Ghana): I always welcome having a parliamentary exchange with my colleague and friend, the Ambassador of Australia, who I might add used to he his country's High Commissioner in Ghana. I am exercising my right of reply first in reference to the mention of the sacred cow. I take all the points the representative of Australia made about the ox, and I share his dream not only that the Antarctic Treaty will be a healthy ox, but that it will stop being a stubborn ass.

It may he true that the Treaty Parties participated in the debate last year. What we said - and I am sure this is what my colleague from Malaysia also said - was that for reasons beat known to the Treaty Parties members of the Committee they decided to speak with only one voice and to boycott the decieion-making process. That is what we are quarreling about: I can take anybody dieagreeing with me, and I can take the conviction with which that dieagreement is expressed, but when my opponent turns away and says he will not debate or vote because he does not share my views, then the raison d'être of the United Nations is undermined, even destroyed.

I hope the Treaty Parties will understand the point we are making, I made a reference to the Garden of Eden because they wish to tell everybody that everything is all right with the 1959 Antarctic Treaty and that we are political iconoclasts trying to destroy it. I wish to reemphaeize that the Antarctic Treaty is no Garden of Eden. It is a Treaty that needs to be updated; it is a Treaty that muot open its doors to international participation. If it must do so, it should be in the framework of the body that represents mankind in all its universality: the United Nations.

Mr. HITAM (Malaysia) : I thank my colleague, the Permnnont Representat ive of Ghana, for speaking on the subject raised by our colleague from Australia. I entirely agree with the perspective in which he placed the words I quoted by the representative of Australia, I do not want to prsiony this debate except to say that I was very happy with the statement made hy the Permanent Representative of Australia, that the Parties did indeed take part in the debates on this item during the past two sessions of the General Assembly, although they did not take part in the decision-making process, as my colleague from Ghana has noted.

I ehould like to direct the attention of members of the Committee to the draft resolution to he considered tomorrow, which refers to the question of the involvament of the Treaty Parties in discussions in the United Nations.

Mr. KABANDA (Rwanda) (interpretation From French) : I must respond to the statement of our colleague from Australia. I am very grateful to him For informing us that it is in 1991 that there may be a review of the Treaty. The text of the 1959 Treaty speaks of 30 years, and arithmetical calculation led me to the date of 1989 for a Treaty review.

I hope that in 1991 there will he full agreement both among Treaty Parties and between Treaty Parties and other members of the international community, which are calling for a more open régime.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): On Thursday, 19 November 1987, in conformity with our programme of work and with the Committee's timetable, we shall begin the general debate and consideration of draft resolutions under agenda items 71, 72 and 73, relating to international security.

To make full use of the time allocated for consideration of those items, I request members to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible. I propose that the list of speakers on agenda items 71, 72 and 73 be closed on Thursday, 19 November 1987, at 6 p.m. As there is no objection, I take it that the Committee agrees with that proposal.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): The following delegations are scheduled to speak at the Committee's next meeting: Zaire, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Indonesia, Nepal, Yugoslavia and Kenya.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.