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Agenda item 24:

Strengthening of the role of the United Nations with regard to the maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security, the development of co-operation among all nations and the promotion of the rules of international law in relations between States (*concluded*)

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*President:* Mr. Stanisław TREPCZYŃSKI (Poland).

**AGENDA ITEM 24**

**Strengthening of the role of the United Nations with regard to the maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security, the development of co-operation among all nations and the promotion of the rules of international law in relations between States (*concluded*)**

1. Mr. ÅLGÅRD (Norway): The Norwegian delegation welcomes the initiative taken by Romania to put the strengthening of the role of the United Nations as a separate item on the agenda of this session of the General Assembly [A/8792]. This item is a challenge to every one of us to ask himself: What kind of a world Organization do we want? And if we want a strong and effective world Organization, how much are we willing to contribute, both politically and materially, to achieve this aim?

2. A primary objective of Norway as a Member State has always been to assist in strengthening the potentialities and the performance of the United Nations. This remains our primary objective. The United Nations should not be viewed first and foremost as a forum for national politics; the strengthening of the Organization should be an aim in itself.

3. The draft resolution before us [A/L.684 and Add.1-4], when adopted, will give Governments the possibility of setting out in more detail their views on how to strengthen the role of the United Nations in world affairs. The remarks of my delegation today will therefore be limited to only a few highlights.

4. The main role of the United Nations remains, in our view, to act as an instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security. We therefore regard it as essential to strengthen the peace-keeping role of the Organization and to increase both its capabilities and the authority of the Secretary-General in this respect. This view has been manifested in concrete acts by my Government. Norway has contributed to peace-keeping operations, both in the form of forces and in the form of substantial voluntary contributions. We realize the difficulties in achieving an agreement on how and in what form peace-

keeping operations are to be conducted in the future. The international community will, however, need observers or forces also in the future to contain conflicts and situations which endanger the peace.

5. It is our hope that progress can be made in this field in the coming years. Norway, for its part, is willing to do its share in the peace-keeping field. As pointed out by the representative of Sweden a few days ago [2088th meeting], the Nordic countries maintain a constant preparedness in the form of permanent stand-by forces, and in the near future we will provide the Secretary-General with further and more detailed material on this subject.

6. Another main role for our Organization is to serve as the instrument for the solution of economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems. This work is literally peace-building, as it serves to eliminate conflicts stemming from social and economic injustice and under-development. In this regard we should also like to stress the importance we attach to the protection of human rights, and we should like to see the international instruments of the United Nations for the protection of human rights still further advanced and developed.

7. The decolonization process and our Organization's role in it is another field to which Norway attaches the greatest importance. The history of our Organization in this field is encouraging. The decolonization process in the post-war era has taken place in an orderly form; bloodshed has been the exception and not the rule. This could hardly have been achieved without the Organization's active participation and influence in the process. Unfortunately, there still remain some areas—above all, in southern Africa—where the decolonization process has not reached and where the United Nations still has a great role to play. In this connexion I should like to stress that the Norwegian Government will continue to offer humanitarian and economic assistance to freedom movements in Africa.

8. No discussion on the possibilities of strengthening the United Nations would be complete without mentioning the financial situation of our Organization. As we all know, the increasingly difficult financial situation of the United Nations has for more than a decade been allowed to grow to such proportions that it is now seriously impairing the work and the effectiveness of the Organization. It should be stressed that this is a collective responsibility that rests with all Members and that they should all be prepared to accept certain sacrifices in order to secure the future of our Organization. The willingness of Member States to contribute to a solution of this problem may, in our view, be taken as a test of the genuine willingness of Member States to seek an effective and viable United Nations.

9. Like many other smaller countries, Norway regards the United Nations as the corner-stone of its foreign policy. The smaller States have perhaps a greater understanding of the importance of international co-operation within the framework of an Organization like ours. Isolated and alone, those nations individually have relatively insignificant possibilities of asserting their influence in the international arena. In order to influence the course of international development and to protect their own life-style and their own interests they must co-operate with others and be willing to pool their national sovereignty for this aim.

10. We are at the moment entering a period where the rigid attitudes of the past are about to be broken down and new possibilities for international co-operation are about to be opened up. In this situation we will have to strive carefully and conscientiously to create a better and more effective United Nations. In this context, may I quote the words of our Secretary-General in the introduction to his report on the work of the Organization:

“The United Nations provides, or should provide, the means by which all nations, great and small, participate on a basis of sovereign equality in the political process of establishing and maintaining international peace and security, in facing common problems through co-operation, and in planning and organizing for a better future. The improvement of great Power relations through bilateral diplomacy is certainly of fundamental importance to this process, but past experience indicates that it needs to be complemented and balanced by the multilateral diplomacy of the global Organization as a safeguard against misunderstandings, as a safety valve in critical times and as an instrument for the peaceful settlement of international disputes.” [A/8701/Add.1, p. 2.]

Those words of the Secretary-General sum up the situation as we see it, too.

11. Mr. MOLINA (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): When the delegation of Romania invited us to assist in the preparation of draft resolution A/L.684 and Add.1-4, Costa Rica was happy to accept that magnificent idea of a country which sincerely loves peace and desires the progress of all peoples. We considered it to be an excellent opportunity to insist in the General Assembly on aspects we consider to be fundamental.

12. It is necessary to repeat here that the United Nations must abandon its present line of conduct of producing a vast number of resolutions and proposals which never get beyond paper on which they are written. The use of sophisticated and rhetorical language, which skilfully seeks to avoid defining problems, and the old diplomatic solution that neither defines nor calls things by their names have deserved to be repudiated by the majority of the people of the world, who want effective solutions for today's problems, not the reiterated expression of high-sounding words typical neither of our times nor of our realities. There are already too many words in our Organization. We now need deeds which reaffirm all that has been said—but deeds carried out with the maturity which, for us in this Organization, representing the States of the world today, is one of our major responsibilities.

13. This is the time not to indulge in emotional outbursts denoting immaturity but to think seriously of real solutions of the problems afflicting mankind at this time. We must say quite frankly that none of the many problems—economic, social and political—which exist today will really be solved unless we all decide to act with a firm and unshakable will. Unless we realize that there are short-term and long-term solutions, and unless we unite our intelligence and our determination to face the challenges of our world with courage, we shall once again in our history commit the sin of myopia. Unless we act as civilized people we shall continue to follow roads of destruction and barbarism which are a disgrace to mankind.

14. Our proposal—that contained in the draft resolution now under consideration, on the initiative, as I have said, of Romania—is a genuine effort realistically to achieve the consolidation of victories indispensable for the progress of our peoples and the civilized coexistence of all States. The proposal contains the following fundamental concepts: first, the prohibition of recourse to the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State; secondly, the peaceful settlement of international disputes; thirdly, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and the sovereign equality of all; fourthly, self-determination of peoples; and, fifthly, co-operation among all States.

15. It is obvious that recourse to the threat or use of force in order to affect the territorial integrity or political independence of any State constitutes a violation of the very clear principles in Article 2, paragraphs 4 and 7, of our Charter.

16. The progress achieved in international understanding among all States irrespective of their political systems or régimes has undoubtedly opened up a wider perspective which will make possible co-operation among all and a quest for common objectives which will lead us to progress and a better future for mankind. In this way we shall be able to combine our wills and our efforts to struggle firmly against the poverty, ignorance and malnutrition which threaten vast areas of our world. To fight under-development in this way means that we are making a reality of the practice of tolerance, living in peace as good neighbours and promoting the economic and social progress of all peoples, as indicated in the Preamble to the United Nations Charter. With tolerance, respect for human rights and determination to resolve differences we shall be able to attain the peace we need in order successfully to solve our problems and thus create our own future.

17. To our shame, there have always been wars, the violent and irrational means whereby States decided to settle their international disputes. Were we to analyse the causes of any war we should find that it is the political and economic interests of great Powers that are at stake. Hence the enormous responsibility of the great Powers of the world of today for the maintenance of peace.

18. The inter-American system, which is the oldest regional organization, is perhaps the one that has most successfully used in practice the instruments it created for the peaceful settlement of disputes. It has had to pass through several trials, and has been able to prove that when

there is real determination and will international conflicts can be settled by the civilized means of direct conversation or impartial arbitration. This example of our system and others successfully applied in other regions should be the standard for the peaceful settlement of international conflicts by the use of legal mechanisms.

19. Under international law States accept an obligation to refrain from intervention in the internal affairs of other States, since application of the principle of self-determination enables peoples to provide themselves with the political organization they deem most convenient and adequate for their own interests. It is therefore inadmissible for a State to interfere with the unrestricted application of that principle, which is precisely the one that guarantees the peaceful coexistence of nations.

20. It is also inadmissible in the twentieth century for many peoples to be denied their right to self-determination. In this regard we must once again state that colonialism is a disgrace to mankind and that the exploitation by colonial Powers of the economic resources of countries subjected to colonialism is a shameful act which provokes general condemnation. Freedom, social justice, peace and self-determination are inalienable rights of all peoples; people cannot be deprived of these rights by the application of standards of conduct which are anachronistic in our world of today. All men are equal; we all have the same rights. And, as our Charter indicates, the interests of the inhabitants of the Territories subjected to colonialism are paramount over all. Our efforts must therefore continue until application of the principle of self-determination in all its aspects becomes a reality, and we cannot accept the existence, either today or ever, of peoples that are subjected to colonialism and denied the right to full self-government and respect for the values of their culture, as well as their right to political, economic, social and educational advancement.

21. If we manage to make the United Nations an effective instrument in the attainment of the objectives stated in the draft resolution under discussion, reason will have prevailed over barbarism, intelligence will have defeated violence and the civilized standards of international law will have achieved the maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security through co-operation among all nations. Let us hope that we are opening the doors to a better world for everyone.

22. Mr. DE GUIRINGAUD (France) (*interpretation from French*): In recent years there has been severe criticism of the United Nations. At the very time when it is becoming more universal, it appears to many of us to be losing its effectiveness and to be dashing the tremendous hopes placed in it when it was born. At least in part, these criticisms are justified. Of course, too much was expected of our Organization. It would have been wonderful, but unfortunately impossible, if by its mere existence the United Nations could have extinguished conflicts, solved the problems of an international community in the throes of rapid evolution, and accomplished perfectly on the universal scale a task which many national Governments had not succeeded in accomplishing within their own frontiers: the maintenance of harmony and peace.

23. The United Nations is nothing but the sum of our goodwill and or ill-will; and all we can find in our Organization is what we put there and there is no point in hoping that a modification of its structures will confer upon it any kind of magic power. Those structures were built at a time when the terrible trials of the world had inspired in those men responsible for peace a sense of reality, an experience which enabled them not to lose themselves in abstractions and not to content themselves with mirages.

24. If the ideal of peace and fraternity mentioned in the Preamble to our Charter has not been put into effect as fully as we might have hoped, let us not hold the Charter to blame for this, but let us reproach ourselves for our short-comings. Nevertheless, while in the various crises we have gone through since 1945 the results achieved by the Organization have not always been in keeping with our hopes, it has on many occasions called a halt to developments which otherwise might have deteriorated dangerously and led to more extensive conflicts. Also, it has created and extended throughout the world a new spirit, prompting peoples everywhere to conciliation, gradually building an international morality, which is still weak but has an influence, even in affairs in which the Organization cannot take a direct hand.

25. Many of us have regretted the fact that certain developments, including some of the most important, have occurred outside the framework of the United Nations. They have pointed out that the progress toward détente in Europe, in particular, which is one of the major successes of the policy of the post-war period, has not been accomplished within the framework of the United Nations. But this framework was not created to paralyse initiatives. The Charter contains no provision which confers upon the United Nations exclusive competence in international political affairs. Chapter VII provides, on the contrary, quite categorically, for the possibility of regional action and encourages such action, provided that such action is, as Article 52 states, "consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations". Can it not be affirmed quite rightly, therefore, that Europeans, many of whom were among the founding Members of the Organization, have largely drawn inspiration from the principles of the Charter in the developments which have brought them from confrontation to conciliation and understanding? One of the earliest results of détente in Europe will surely be the welcoming in this Assembly of the two States whose division has long been the symbol of the cold war.

26. However, much remains to be done if we wish fully to attain the objectives of the Charter, and the Romanian initiative is most timely in prompting us to examine the possibilities of strengthening the action of the United Nations in order to take new steps towards the consolidation of security and the development of co-operation among all States.

27. The principles mentioned in the preamble to the draft resolution are among the most important of those which should be at the basis of the action of our Organization. The non-use of force or the threat of the use of force against the territorial integrity or independence of a State, the peaceful settlement of conflicts, non-interference in the

domestic affairs of States, the equality of States, their duty to co-operate, and the right of peoples to self-determination are the very foundation of the Charter and constitute, in comparison with a past which is not yet all that distant, the essential element of the new spirit inspiring the United Nations.

28. The appeal in operative paragraph 4 to all Member States to contribute to better utilization of the structures and means provided by the Charter is eloquent and timely. It reminds us that we possess an instrument which we have not fully put to use. It calls upon us, realistically, not to seek in hazardous ventures what we already possess, the possibilities of which we must develop further.

29. It is this study that we are called upon to undertake under paragraph 5, which requires us, most wisely, to ponder this vital problem of the development of the role of the United Nations.

30. My delegation will take an active part in this study. We congratulate the Romanian delegation for its contribution. We are happy to see, among the sponsors of draft resolution A/L.684 and Add.1-4, two other States of ancient Europe, our neighbours Belgium and Italy, which to some extent, as it were, have been the representatives of the European Community of nine member countries in this enterprise, and we would like to congratulate them too.

31. My delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of Romania, supported by Belgium, Italy and other delegations. We hope that it will be adopted unanimously by the Members of the Assembly.

32. Mr. BANERJEE (India): In the succinct introduction to his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General, after briefly reviewing the encouraging changes that have taken place in great Power relationships, notes:

“Even if the Security Council were to acquire a new effectiveness through great Power détente, the idea of maintaining peace and security in the world through a concert of great Powers, although these Powers obviously have special responsibilities in matters of peace and security, would seem to belong to the nineteenth rather than to the twentieth century, where the process of technological advance and democratization is producing a new form of world society.” [A/8701/Add.1, p. 2.]

The Secretary-General further said:

“The world order that we are striving to build in the United Nations must meet the requirements of such a society, and any other system, however effective in the past, obviously cannot be acceptable, in the long run, to the peoples of the world. The interests, the wisdom and the importance of the vast majority of medium and smaller Powers cannot, at this point in history, be ignored in any durable system of world order.” [Ibid.]

33. These statements bring home the fact that the United Nations provides, and can provide further, the means by which all nations, great and small, participate on a basis of

sovereign equality in the political process of establishing and maintaining international peace and security, in facing common problems through co-operation, and in planning and organizing for a better future.

34. The above objectives conform with the initiative taken by the Romanian delegation in proposing the inclusion in the agenda of item 24, and my delegation would like to join the many speakers before us who have congratulated it on its initiative. The draft resolution, which my delegation would be privileged to support, would like the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the basis of views and suggestions from Member States and on the basis of the debate on the present item.

35. As the title of the item suggests, there are three elements involved on which the view of all Member States are invited. They are the question of the maintenance and consolidation of peace and security, co-operation among States, and the observance and promotion of the rule of law in relations between States.

36. The general debate, in which many distinguished Foreign Ministers took part, saw the expression of a wide range of opinions on these issues. However, the present item would require Member States to concretize their views on these aspects. In this manner, specific expression can be given to the Charter requirement in accordance with which the United Nations was meant to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of the common ends of the United Nations.

37. Non-aligned countries have in their latest declaration, adopted at Georgetown,<sup>1</sup> stressed the necessity of strengthening the United Nations. While accepting the presumption that the United Nations can only reflect developments in the contemporary world, they have felt that it can exert a positive influence on these developments and contribute to the furtherance of world peace and progress. Thus, while reaffirming the role of the United Nations, they have expressed the desire to take joint action to improve the efficacy of the United Nations as an instrument for ensuring world peace and security.

38. We cannot forget the results that our Organization has achieved in the matter of safeguarding peace in the world, in promoting détente and in solving outstanding problems by peaceful means, or the great contribution the United Nations has made to international co-operation and its involvement in its expansion. Moreover, new concerns, brought about under the pressure of technological advances in nuclear energy, outer space, the human environment and the sea-bed and ocean floor, have also been brought within the ambit of the United Nations. Rapid scientific and technological progress call for increasing multilateral co-operation and multilateral organizations. In spite of the fact that improvements have been achieved in these vital areas of international relations, the international atmosphere is still far from experiencing a feeling of security and calm.

39. The failure to apply effectively the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force has increased tension most seriously in the Middle East.

<sup>1</sup> Declaration adopted by the Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries at Georgetown, Guyana, on 12 August 1972.

40. Large territories of Africa continue to be under colonial or illegal domination in one form or another and the borders of the independent States of Africa are frequently violated by the colonial and racist régimes.

41. Discrimination of various kinds is being practised in many parts of the world, and nowhere in so pronounced and inhuman a form as in South Africa under its doctrine of *apartheid*.

42. Southern Rhodesia continues to be ruled by a white minority and the administering Power has so far failed to enforce its will to put an end to the unilateral declaration of independence and to introduce arrangements for majority rule on the basis of universal adult franchise.

43. Fluctuations in the international monetary system and in the international trade system continue to have harmful consequences for the economic development of the developing countries. These tend to increase rather than narrow the economic and social gap between the developed and developing countries.

44. The objectives which the sponsors of the draft resolution have in mind can be achieved by the strict observance by the United Nations of the seven fundamental principles mentioned in the second preambular paragraph of the draft resolution before us.

45. The two historic declarations adopted during the twenty-fifth session, namely, the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations [*resolution 2625 (XXV)*] and the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security [*resolution 2734 (XXV)*], have crystallized those principles so that they can serve as guidelines for the conduct of international relations.

46. The necessity for international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural and humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedom for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion has been accepted as a fundamental purpose of the United Nations.

47. While international attention has focused on this question, there has been a recognition of the fact that there is a vast and growing gap between the developed and the developing countries. This provides the rationale for multi-lateral programmes for economic and social co-operation carried out by the United Nations specialized agencies and organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank. The essential question, however, has been how adequate these measures are to assist the developing countries to bridge this gap within an acceptable period of time. The goals of development have been identified for long enough. What we lack is not knowledge, but the necessary political will. It is in this context that my delegation would agree that the efficacy of multilateral economic co-operation within the United Nations system can be increased by a more appropriate representation of all Member States in United Nations bodies so that the new realities of the present-day world are

better reflected in the actual structure of the Organization and so that those bodies can perform the tasks under the right conditions.

48. To conclude, my delegation will support draft resolution A/L.684 and Add.1-4 and will look forward to further constructive discussion in the future on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General which has been asked for in operative paragraph 6.

49. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on the representative of Japan who wishes to explain his vote before the vote on the draft resolution before us.

50. Mr. NAKAGAWA (Japan): The Japanese delegation will vote in favour of draft resolution A/L.684. The Government of Japan has a positive interest in strengthening the role of the United Nations, and my delegation welcomes the initiative taken by the Government of Romania to include the present item in the agenda.

51. We appreciate the fact that the Romanian delegation, after wide consultations with many countries belonging to various regional groups, has carefully worked out this draft resolution, which has 32 sponsors and which deserves wide support in the Assembly.

52. We are firmly convinced that, in order to strengthen the role of the United Nations, we must study carefully the various aspects of the Organization including, among others, such specific matters as the financial problem and the organization of the Security Council.

53. The Government of Japan will in due time submit its views and suggestions on ways and means of strengthening the role of the United Nations in accordance with operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution.

54. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/L.684 and Add.1-4. May I take it that the General Assembly adopts this draft resolution?

*The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 2925 (XXVII)).*

55. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Portugal who wishes to explain the vote of his delegation.

56. Mr. DE MEIRA-FERREIRA (Portugal): My delegation was happy to vote in favour of draft resolution A/L.684, a draft that was submitted at the initiative of the Romanian delegation and concerns the strengthening of the role of the United Nations with regard to the maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security, the development of co-operation among all nations and the promotion of the rules of international law in relations between States.

57. My Government also shares the point of view of those who hold that the recognition of and the full respect for the principles of independence and national sovereignty and their implementation, the full equality of rights and mutual

advantage, non-interference in domestic affairs, territorial integrity and forbearance from the threat or use of force have become *sine qua non* conditions for progress, peace and security throughout the world.

58. Nevertheless, with respect to paragraph 3 of the resolution, which urges all Member States to fulfil their obligations under the Charter and, in accordance with its provisions, to implement the resolutions of United Nations organs, my delegation would like to stress the importance of bearing in mind the fact that General Assembly resolutions are not mandatory, but are mere recommendations, Members being obliged to implement only those resolutions which are in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

59. It is in this context that the vote of the Portuguese delegation must be interpreted.

60. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): The representative of Romania has asked to speak before we conclude consideration of this item.

61. Mr. DATCU (Romania) (*interpretation from French*): The General Assembly has just adopted unanimously the draft resolution submitted by 32 delegations on the subject of strengthening the role of the United Nations.

62. The Romanian delegation, which took the initiative in bringing this question before the General Assembly, is certainly most pleased. The debate which has taken place on the subject and the unanimous adoption of the draft resolution bear witness, in our opinion, to the awareness of the objective need to strengthen our Organization and to increase its capability and role in international life. This has also meant a commitment on the part of all of us to continue this task with determination. We see therein a potential from which the Organization should benefit.

63. As we have already said, we are perfectly conscious of the complexity of the tasks which we shall have to face. But what seems to us to matter is to persevere in exploring the ways and means offered by the Charter so as to attain our common objectives and to work together with patience and, above all, with the political will to arrive at practical results.

64. The first step in this direction was taken at this session. Member States will have to make their observations and suggestions regarding the ways in which they can contribute to the strengthening of the role of the United Nations. This is but the natural way to go about it, because a process of such great scope requires, from the outset, the active participation and co-operation of all Member States.

65. This is, to be sure, only a beginning, but it is encouraging. It is certainly modest, but in our opinion, it is essential. On the foundations we have laid today we shall necessarily have to continue to build, and we are convinced that the constructive spirit of work and co-operation that prevailed during the consideration of the item on the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in international life will also characterize, in the future, all efforts to achieve that goal. That, in our opinion, is an essential condition if we wish to give greater vigour to the United Nations.

66. Before concluding, I wish to express once again, on behalf of the Romanian delegation, our whole-hearted gratitude to the many delegations that supported our initiative and lent their assistance to this first success in our undertaking.

*The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.*