Chairman: Mr. WEGENER (Federal Republic of Germany)
(Vice-Chairman)

CONTENTS

GENERAL DEBATE, CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION UPON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS ON AGENDA ITEM 66 (QUESTION OF ANTARCTICA) (continued)
The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 66 (continued)


Mr. VERMA (India): For the second year in succession the General Assembly is considering the item on the question of Antarctica. Resolution 38/77, adopted by the General Assembly by consensus last year, requested the Secretary-General to prepare a comprehensive, factual and objective study on all aspects of Antarctica, taking fully into account the Antarctic Treaty system and other relevant factors. The Secretary-General's study, prepared in pursuance of this resolution, is now before the Committee in document A/39/583. The debate on this item last year, which my delegation followed with close attention, gave us a clearer understanding of the viewpoints of various Member States. We hope that our deliberations during the current General Assembly session will contribute to enlarging the area of understanding and to promoting wider international co-operation on the continent.

India's interest in scientific activity, combining deep-sea exploration and the study of living and non-living resources in the Indian Ocean as well as in the Antarctic region, is not new. The Antarctic region is separated from the Indian sub-continent by a continuous stretch of the waters of the Indian Ocean. Unlike the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans, which, as "open oceans", communicate with both the Arctic in the north and the Antarctic in the south, the Indian Ocean has its northern boundaries enclosed by land mass. Thus, it communicates with the Antarctic Ocean only in the south. It is from this ocean that it derives most of its fertility and energy.

From a scientific point of view, the exploration of Antarctica would add to our knowledge of factors relating to the Indian Ocean, especially the monsoon phenomena on which the economy of India is vitally dependent. There are several aspects of life in the ice-bound region which are akin to that in areas of India's northern frontier. An evaluation of these aspects would be of much interest and utility. It would also contribute to our understanding of concrete steps to be taken for environmental protection in the ocean areas as well as other linked surroundings of the Indian sub-continent.
In the past, many Indian scientists participated in exploration activity covering the Antarctic landmass and its surrounding areas as part of the teams of other countries. Indian science has now developed enough expertise and experience in various branches of geology, geophysics, oceanography, meteorology, astrophysics, space science and communication science to undertake detailed scientific study on the landmass of Antarctica and oceanographic studies in the surrounding seas. Keeping that in view, India organized three scientific expeditions to the South Indian Ocean and Antarctica during 1981-1982, 1982-1983 and 1983-1984. The fourth Indian expedition to Antarctica is on its way. The Government of India has now established a permanently manned scientific station in the course of the 1983-1984 Antarctic season. The station is named "Dakshin Gangotri". Our modest research in these varied fields is naturally open and available to our friends in the developing world who wish to share in it.

India became a Consultative Party to the Antarctic Treaty in September 1983. In joining the Antarctic Treaty, we were aware that it represented the common desire of the parties to preserve and protect the fragile environment of Antarctica and to establish a régime which would encourage international co-operation in scientific research in conditions of peace and tranquillity. This Treaty recognizes that it is in the interests of mankind that Antarctica shall continue for ever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. It provides for the peaceful exploration of the continent by all nations. It also prohibits any measures of a military nature, such as the establishment of military bases, the carrying out of military manoeuvres or the testing of any types of weapons, including nuclear weapons. It freezes all territorial claims on Antarctica. The continued demilitarization of Antarctica remains one of the most important justifications for the continuation of the Antarctic Treaty system. A notable feature of the Treaty is that it is open to all countries of the world. The Treaty ensures that Antarctica shall not become the scene or object of international discord; in doing so, it promotes the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.
We are indeed grateful to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive study on Antarctica circulated in document A/39/583 (Part I), covering the physical, legal, political, economic and scientific aspects of the frozen continent. In this context, we have noted with interest the replies from many Member States communicating their views to the Secretary-General to assist him in carrying out the study. We also wish to thank the officials and experts of the United Nations Secretariat, who have worked diligently and accomplished the difficult task of compiling the study. The study has been made available to us only recently. The Government of India will give very careful attention to the study as well as to the annexed responses of Member States. We are certain that the study will add to our knowledge of Antarctica in all its aspects, including the positive contribution of the Antarctic Treaty system in the peaceful management of the continent. We hope that the study will contribute towards a deeper understanding and appreciation of the continent itself, the scientific activities being carried out there and the international co-operation that has emerged over the years.

It is the view of the Government of India that the Antarctic Treaty has established Antarctica as a region of unparalleled international co-operation in the interest of all mankind. It would be unrealistic and counterproductive to think of a new régime in the present situation. Any attempt to undermine the Antarctic Treaty system, or to alter it drastically, could lead to international discord and instability, as well as the revival of conflicting territorial and other claims. The Antarctic Treaty system is not an exclusive body. It is an evolving institution whose structural and organizational framework is conceived in a flexible manner. We do not believe that this framework is intended to exclude any country from its purview, nor is the regulation of activities covered thereunder imposed arbitrarily. The Antarctic Treaty system is an open system which is gradually evolving further, taking into account the legitimate concerns of all.

The Government of India also believes that the conduct of scientific research and other activities in Antarctica should be for the benefit of mankind. In this context, it is desirable to bring the scientific research on the continent increasingly to the attention of the developing countries and to ensure that it is directed to their benefit. The Antarctic Treaty system should be broadened by the accession of more States. The evolving Treaty system should be made more open and
responsive to the viewpoints of all States. The process has already begun, and we welcome, in this context, the recent decision of the Consultative Parties to invite the acceding States not possessing consultative status to attend consultative meetings as observers.

The recent Meeting of Ministers and Heads of Delegation of Non-Aligned Countries, held in New York in October 1984, expressed the hope that the study and the discussion at the thirty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly would contribute towards widening international co-operation on the continent. We look forward to a fruitful exchange of views and a constructive conclusion to our deliberations in the Committee.

It is our firm conviction that any resolution relating to Antarctica should be adopted by consensus. We are aware of the intensive efforts that are being made with a view to achieving a consensus resolution this year. We hope that all Member States will co-operate fully in achieving this desired goal.

Mr. BEAUC (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): At the outset my delegation wishes to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for the report he has submitted. We believe that it constitutes an important contribution towards effective understanding of the Antarctic and the system established by the Antarctic Treaty. Accordingly document A/39/583 is an appropriate reply to the request in resolution 38/77 for a "comprehensive, factual and objective study".

We also note with interest that a large number of States have come forward with comments and that the Secretariat has been able to circulate these views in time for our debate. We believe that these are all elements of great value in our consideration of this item. In view of their length and their recent distribution, my delegation will not go into detail on them at this stage.

As is well known, the subject of the Antarctic is of great interest to the Republic of Argentina. As we had the opportunity of pointing out when the item came up for the first time last year, my country is closely linked to the Antarctic continent by reasons of sovereignty, history and geography. A description of the ongoing presence and activities of Argentina in the Antarctic, which gained momentum at the beginning of the century, may be found in the comments submitted by my Government, which are contained in part two of the report.

In this statement we shall concentrate upon an analysis of the principal features of the Antarctic Treaty system, especially in relation to the discussion
that has taken place on this item since its inclusion on the agenda. Our comments will be made also in the light of the opinions expressed in the report.

The views of the Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty, including Argentina, have been clearly and eloquently expressed by the representative of Australia.

We have discussed what should be the features of the system of management of the Antarctic and how we may give effect in that continent to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. My delegation believes that facts and experience have clearly demonstrated that the system established by the Treaty meets those conditions of effectiveness. Its flexibility has made it possible to find appropriate solutions and to facilitate international co-operation for a quarter of a century.

It has been stated that we should prevent Antarctica from becoming a focus of international tension. It is precisely the Treaty that has made it possible for the Antarctic to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and has kept it entirely free from militarization and outside the arms race. In that regard, we would draw attention to paragraphs 161 to 170 of the report of the Secretary-General, which refer to the Antarctic Treaty system in practice and which conclude with the following statement:

"The successful implementation of the Antarctic Treaty in keeping Antarctica free from nuclear weapons is one of the significant post-war contributions toward averting nuclear weapon proliferation and halting the nuclear arms race." (A/39/583 (Part I), para. 170)
Similarly, it has been indicated that a possible cause of tension could arise out of conflicting territorial claims. Argentina is one of the countries which maintains a firm claim for sovereignty in the Antarctic. The report of the Secretary-General extensively describes the differences of view on the question of sovereignty and states that at the time the Treaty was drawn up, some kind of solution was necessary to guarantee peace and stability in the region. It is precisely article IV of the Treaty that has made it possible to reach a delicate balance of the rights and interests of the parties. In the present circumstances we do not believe it would be possible to create a better system, a system which we must say has become one of the most outstanding examples of international co-operation.

This co-operation has borne fruit especially in the scientific sphere, where relations have been established with the specialized agencies of the United Nations and with other organizations that have a scientific and technical interest in Antarctica. These working links began immediately after the Treaty was signed and since 1961 they have been carried out in an effective manner. On this point, my delegation would like to refer to the information supplied directly by those organizations, which may be found in paragraph 356 in the report. The exchange of information on various programmes is a fundamental element in this co-operation. Argentina is making an essential contribution through its 8 permanently manned scientific stations, its 7 temporary stations and the 42 shelters which are used by exploration and research missions. The first of those was established in 1904, that is to say, 80 years ago. It is worth pointing out that for Argentina, which is a developing country, the establishment and maintenance of these facilities has meant a considerable effort in terms of human and material resources.

The observation and inspection system established by the Treaty, in conformity with which observers enjoy complete freedom of access at any time to each and every one of the regions of Antarctica, has convincingly shown that the Treaty works in practice in conformity with the principles that led to its formulation. I should like to point out here the conclusions of one of the most recent inspection missions noted in paragraph 84 of the report of the Secretary-General. In that visit which included the Argentine stations General Belgrano II and Vicecomodoro Marambio, it was noted that "all stations visited exemplified adherence to the peaceful purposes of the Antarctic Treaty". (A/39/583 (Part I), para. 84)
One point reflected in the summary of the deliberations of the last session refers to the composition of the Treaty and its ostensibly exclusive character. My delegation wishes to reiterate here one of the principal features of the Treaty, namely, its open character. All States wishing to accede to it may do so. As a matter of fact, since last year's discussion, Cuba, Finland, Hungary and Sweden have acceded to the Treaty. Similarly, as was indicated by the Permanent Representative of Australia in his statement, several non-Consultative Parties have indicated their intention to accede to consultative status. The Argentine Government has consistently encouraged new States to join the Antarctic Treaty, and we wish to avail ourselves of this opportunity to reiterate our complete willingness to co-operate with any country wishing to carry out scientific activities in Antarctica. This collaboration, which is carried on both from Argentina proper and from our Antarctic stations, is, we feel, particularly useful for the developing countries. A recent example of the activities of Argentina in this respect has been its co-operation with the Governments of Brazil, China and Peru.

Another area where the Treaty system has achieved exemplary results is protection of the environment. Preserving the Antarctic ecosystem is of vital importance to all mankind. As was stated by our Government in its reply to the Secretary-General, in the case of Argentina, our concern for maintaining this preservation of the environment:

"is increased by the proximity of the South American part of its territory to the Antarctic continent, by which it is influenced, making it into a dependent or related ecosystem". (A/39/583 (Part II, vol. I), p. 23, para. 101)

In this regard, the Antarctic countries have adopted provisions which taken together constitute one of the most effective bodies of regulations to protect the environment. These are measures for the conservation of Antarctic fauna and flora adopted in 1964, which proclaimed the Antarctic Treaty areas to be zones of special conservation, the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals adopted in 1972, and the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, which came into force in 1982. With regard to mineral resources, the Consultative Parties decided in 1977 not to explore or exploit these resources until a régime has been established. The principles that guide negotiations on this point were laid down in the recommendation adopted at the consultative meeting
in Buenos Aires in 1981, and they clearly specify that the régime governing possible mining activities will be open to all States committing themselves to comply with and respect the principles and objectives of the Treaty and will not be established to the detriment of the interests of the rest of the international community.

As was reiterated by our Government in its reply to the Secretary-General:

"The Argentine Republic has supported the continuation of an effective moratorium on the exploration and exploitation of Antarctic mineral resources while progress is being made towards the adoption of the above-mentioned régime, because it is of the opinion that, before that time, further studies have to be undertaken, particularly on implications for the environment and on measures for its protection. Moreover, in common with the other Consultative Parties, Argentina is seeking to design a just, equitable and open régime ...". (A/39/583 (Part II, vol. I), p. 22, para. 95)

My delegation wishes to place on record its complete disagreement with those opinions that have attempted to equate the Antarctic with the question of the sea-bed or outer space. As we stated in the debates last year, this parallel is completely erroneous. In Antarctica there is an effective legal régime that is open to all States. There is no legal vacuum that needs to be filled with provisions that are more suitable to other régimes and which were applied in different situations. Nor is Antarctica a res nullius. On the contrary, there are territorial claims to it and there is and have been for many decades a presence and uninterrupted activities in Antarctica.
Consequently, references to a common heritage of mankind are equally inappropriate. The Permanent Representative of Australia has pointed to the conciliatory attitude of the Consultative Parties and to the fact that, in a spirit of compromise, they did not oppose the inclusion of this item in our agenda and joined in the consensus adoption of General Assembly resolution 38/77. We hope that, based on the submission of the study and on the views expressed in the course of the present debate, there will emerge a more thorough knowledge of the Antarctic and of its system that will make it possible to enhance the existing co-operation and to ensure broad future co-operation by States.

Antarctica is open to all who wish to co-operate in the effort and sacrifice demanded by that Continent. Activities undertaken in Antarctica since the adoption of the Treaty 25 years ago have developed in line with the agreements and provisions of the Charter and through a system of consensus. We cannot participate in or support any kind of parallel mechanism that might impair the Treaty system or that would not enjoy the support of the parties to the Treaty.

We hope that these exchanges of views will lead to a greater participation by States Members of the United Nations in the Antarctic Treaty system. As we have stated previously, the Government of Argentina is totally prepared to offer its fullest assistance in making such participation effective.

Mr. MBOKWERE (Nigeria): My delegation has read with considerable interest the Secretary-General's report, which includes his comprehensive, factual and objective study on all aspects of Antarctica, taking fully into account the Antarctic Treaty system and other relevant factors.

At the heart of this debate is the Antarctic Treaty, which entered into force in 1961, and it is hoped that States Members will fully utilize the opportunity to search for areas of co-operation in Antarctica with a view to determining appropriate actions which will serve the common interest of mankind. My delegation therefore believes that, given the political will, the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, non-Consultative Parties and non-parties to the Treaty can and should collaborate in working out an acceptable arrangement that could transform the existing Treaty into a genuine and effective instrument for the preservation of lasting peace and security and the strengthening of international co-operation in the continent.
That this potential exists is borne out in the Treaty by the acceptance by the parties to it of the principle that it is in the interest of all mankind that Antarctica should not become the scene of international discord. My Government therefore welcomes the statement in the Treaty that Antarctica should be used for peaceful purposes only and that a non-militarized régime should prevail in the area. Again, as pointed out in the report, the prohibition of any nuclear explosion and of the disposal of radioactive waste material there makes the Treaty the first nuclear-test-ban agreement. In this regard, it is our hope that the spirit which spurred the agreement on the non-militarization of Antarctica could be extended to other disarmament measures, including the establishment of the nuclear-free zones now under consideration in various regions of the world.

Furthermore, my delegation has also noted with considerable interest the efforts of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties in protecting the Antarctic environment with the assistance of its Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR). Agreed measures are now in force for the conservation of Antarctic flora and fauna, and guidelines have been issued on expeditions, development of research bases, waste disposal, protection of species and tourism, in the interest of environmental protection. We are also aware of the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals and the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources.

The study also contains valuable information dealing with the resources of Antarctica, including minerals, icebergs, with particular reference to the fact that the continent contains 70 per cent of the world’s store of fresh water, living marine resources and the ongoing negotiations by the Consultative Parties to establish a mineral régime.

Against that background, my delegation has given deep thought to the Antarctic Treaty system in the light of the study before us. What is readily striking in the Treaty is the division of its adherents into Consultative and non-Consultative Parties. In the first category are the original 12 adherents, now joined by 4 others, who make up the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties. Only the Consultative Parties are entitled to vote on questions of policy concerning Antarctica. The 16 non-Consultative Parties are not allowed to vote or to participate in Antarctic policy making. To acquire consultative status, an
acceding party must establish permanent scientific stations or conduct substantial research in the area. The condition for gaining consultative status was established by the 12 original adhering States, which claim a history of active involvement in the continent. The result today is that the only members of the Antarctic Treaty system that are developing countries are Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, India, Papua New Guinea, Peru and Uruguay. Latin America has six, Asia has three and Africa none. Of these, Argentina, Brazil, Chile and India are Consultative Parties. For acceding parties who have the capacity to carry out scientific research it is a matter of their own decision as to the timing of their acquisition of consultative status. In the present circumstances, therefore, those acceding States that cannot afford the qualifying scientific programme to be conducted in Antarctica are permanently excluded from any meaningful participation in decision making. Consequently, interested States that cannot fill the bill for consultative status are, ab initio, discouraged from joining the Treaty system. One glaring weakness of the system is its exclusiveness. This debate therefore offers the international community a chance to examine the prospects of making concerted efforts in a non-confrontational manner to attempt to remove the unnecessary restrictions which continue to hinder the full participation of any interested parties, taking into account the ecological and climatic importance of Antarctica to mankind as a whole.

As pointed out in the report, the ecosystems of Antarctica are extremely vulnerable to disturbance which could cause climatic changes. What is needed effectively to protect the environment is a comprehensive measure to replace the current, self-imposed constraints of the Consultative Parties, which are no more than voluntary codes of conduct. It is my delegation's view that the present system of environmental controls would be greatly strengthened with the participation of the international community.
It is common knowledge that Consultative Parties have been conducting a series of special meetings to negotiate an agreement on a mineral régime. My delegation is concerned about this disturbing development. Account must therefore be taken of any hazardous environmental changes that may arise from exploration for, and exploitation of, minerals in Antarctica. Any attempt to conduct mineral activities there in the prevailing uncertain circumstances is not only premature, but may also be regarded as an ill-advised manoeuvre to foreclose the option of conserving Antarctica as a heritage of mankind.

Indeed, for a few countries to set out to decide the fate of Antarctica without any consent from, and not even consultation with, the international community may be somewhat reminiscent of the rush by the then imperial Powers to carve out colonies in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America. I strongly believe that it is not the intention that such history should be repeated in the second half of this twentieth century in Antarctica.

Instead of pushing to keep the United Nations from involvement in the affairs of Antarctica, the Consultative Parties should strive to reach a broad-based understanding with the international community. Unilateral conclusion of the mineral régime by the Consultative Parties outside the United Nations system cannot be in the long-term interest of all concerned. There is still the obvious need to determine the long-term uses of Antarctica, recognizing the interest of all parties.

Our view is that Antarctica should ultimately be treated as a common heritage of mankind. In this connection, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, in its resolution on Antarctica, recognized:

"the importance of Antarctica and its continental shelf and Southern ocean for the world as a whole, particularly in maintaining the stability of the global marine environment and atmosphere, and the paramount importance to mankind of its great wilderness qualities for science, education and inspiration."

Again, the necessity of accommodation between the international community and the parties to the Antarctic Treaty in acting in harmony is highlighted by the implications of the law of the sea for the mining régime under negotiation by the Consultative Parties. In this connection, the Secretary-General's report points out that article VI of the Treaty raises the problem of whether Antarctic ice forms, such as shelf ice and pack ice, should be included in the régime associated
with land or with water. The report goes on to say that the juridical nature of shelf ice, pack ice and underlying waters is unclear and appears to be a very difficult issue to resolve. (A/39/583 (Part I), para. 104) We wonder whether the Consultative Parties have unilaterally resolved this complex legal issue, which arose on several occasions during the law of the sea negotiations.

The issue of the territorial claims of 7 of the 12 original Consultative Parties remains unresolved and alive, no matter how we look at it. According to the study, one of them claims about two fifths of the continent, and only 15 per cent remains unclaimed. One argument, as indicated in the study, adduced by some Consultative Parties for the rejection of the principle of common heritage of mankind as irrelevant to Antarctica was the fact that seven countries maintained national territorial claims in Antarctica and therefore, among other reasons, Antarctica was neither res communis nor res nullius. Moreover, some Consultative Parties, while remaining opposed to any territorial claims, treat themselves as States with a basis of claim. One way, therefore, to find a permanent solution to the question of territorial claims is the application to Antarctica of the principle of common heritage of mankind.

The question we still ask is this: why the determined and lengthy efforts by the Consultative Parties to keep the world body out of the Antarctic Treaty system? Why should it be necessary to continue to maintain the requirement of Consultative Party status? Can Consultative Parties claim to be representative enough to cater for all the interests of mankind in Antarctica? The irony is that while no Organization of African Unity member has acceded to the Treaty, South Africa holds Consultative Party status. Its membership raises serious political and moral questions for us.

However, we recognize that the Antarctic Treaty has played a significant role in introducing order in Antarctica, particularly at a time when non-recognition and overlapping of territorial claims were causing tension. We recognize as a positive step the maintenance of Antarctica as demilitarized and free from nuclear weapons and strategic competition.

My delegation hopes that the Consultative Parties will give thorough consideration to the views expressed by States that are not parties to the Treaty. What is needed now is for the international community to examine the possibility of setting up an ad hoc committee further to examine the Secretary-General's study,
taking into account the views of Member States. It must be emphasized, however, that many Governments, including mine, have yet to examine the study and convey their views, which will facilitate the work of an ad hoc committee.

In conclusion, it is clear that a further advance is now needed to enable all countries to participate fully in the peaceful use of the area.

Mr. Wattley (Trinidad and Tobago): Antarctica is a remarkable and unique continent. It is very different from the places which all of us know as home, and this very remoteness adds to our problems in our consideration of this agenda item. What happens on Antarctica is of immense and immediate importance to us all.

Antarctica is no longer the last, dark, hidden, virgin land that it was up to the eighteenth century. It has been discovered, explored and carved up, and is now threatened with exploitation. These changes of circumstance demand that there be changes of outlook. The régime that prevailed and sufficed in the past needs to be looked at very closely to determine whether it satisfies the requirements of the present and the immediate future. The year 1991 is not so far away.

My delegation is pleased with the report of the Secretary-General on the question of Antarctica and has been impressed by the efforts of some delegations and the many organizations which have sought to awaken the interest of all nations in the very vital question of Antarctica.

The Secretary-General's report and the comments of many delegations and organizations all point to one salient fact - that there is still much that we do not know about Antarctica. Antarctica is indeed like a huge iceberg; what can be seen is much less than what cannot be seen.
What we know about Antarctica is much less than we need to know. Past activities in Antarctica have already had detrimental effects. The lure of profit has taken its toll on the population of seals and whales. What effects will the desire for petroleum, uranium, natural gas and even potable water have on the admittedly fragile ecosystem of Antarctica?

It is said that only in Antarctica have the two super-Powers co-operated in achieving a common goal - the goal of scientific knowledge. Can we expect this spirit of co-operation to persist when economic and strategic interests come to the fore?

The concerns which are being increasingly felt over Antarctica were focused during the thirty-eighth session on the demand for a comprehensive and factual report. This has now been presented. We must now concentrate on what should be the next step. Not even the Consultative Parties to the Antarctica Treaty system can now insist that the status quo must be maintained intact. As admirably as it has functioned in the past, the system must move with the times. The closed circles of Consultative Parties and non-Consultative Parties must yield access to all interested parties, for the benefit of all mankind.

My delegation acknowledges the achievements of the Antarctic Treaty system - it has left Antarctica free of nuclear activity, free of military activity, free of open territorial disputes; it has protected the environment; it has achieved much in the scientific exploration of Antarctica - it has set an example in peaceful co-operation between otherwise antagonistic nations. Scientists from the East and the West, from the North and the South, conduct their experiments, share their discoveries and help one another when in distress.

However, a serpent is already in the Garden of Eden and Trinidad and Tobago hopes that the racist régime of South Africa will play no part in future international considerations relating to Antarctica. A régime which has totally rejected all the norms of civilized international behaviour has no place in an undertaking of such importance to all mankind.

There is clearly a conflict between exploiting Antarctica for the benefit of a privileged few and exploiting it for mankind in general. There is also a conflict between exploiting Antarctica and preserving it for scientific study and for its value in the complex chain of interrelated systems which give life to the planet Earth.
It has been suggested that Antarctica should be declared the common heritage of mankind, exploited for the good of all mankind and used for peaceful purposes only. It has also been suggested that all territorial claims should be denied, destructive economic exploitation by a few with the means to do so should be prohibited and Antarctica should be declared a protected nature reserve, a world park.

At this stage, the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago does not feel that enough is known for us to decide firmly what direction should be followed in developing or preserving Antarctica. What is clear is that the search for a solution can no longer be left to a self-elected few. The task for this Committee is to recommend a mechanism which can involve and benefit from the experience of the existing Treaty system, as well as involve and seek the experience of all other nation States and international organizations, in a joint search for the best possible régime for Antarctica.

Mr. VEJVODA (Czechoslovakia): The basic position of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic on the question of Antarctica is contained in the Secretary-General's report, document A/39/583, Part II, which is now before the Committee, together with the views of other Member States and the study requested under General Assembly resolution 38/77.

In our view, the Antarctic Treaty, to which the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic acceded on 14 June 1962, is a treaty whose aims and purposes are fully in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations and whose importance rests on three principal premises: first, the Treaty prohibits military activities in Antarctica; secondly, it freezes the territorial claims made in respect of that region; and, thirdly, it provides for the freedom of scientific research in the region of Antarctica.

We consider the Antarctic Treaty an important international instrument that significantly helps to limit the arms race, strengthens international peace and security and creates conditions for the peaceful co-operation of States participating in the peaceful exploration of Antarctica. By strictly prohibiting any activities of a military nature, such as the establishment of military bases and fortifications, the holding of military exercises, as well as the testing of any types of weapons, the Treaty creates material prerequisites for the
demilitarization of Antarctica as well as conditions for the use of Antarctica exclusively for peaceful purposes. Of immense significance for the future of the whole of mankind and all life on earth are those very provisions of the Treaty that have saved the unique nature of Antarctica and the entire region south of 60° S latitude from any nuclear explosions or other tests involving nuclear weapons and from the dumping of radioactive waste material.

The Treaty embodies the principle of free scientific activity in Antarctica and within its framework States develop co-operation in the scientific exploration of Antarctica, particularly in the form of the exchange of information on planned scientific work in Antarctica, the exchange of scientific personnel and the exchange of data and the results of scientific observations.

As a Party to the Antarctic Treaty and at the same time, in accordance with article IX, as a party not having consultative status, Czechoslovakia highly values the work accomplished at the consultative meetings, including the adoption of some 100 recommendations concerning transport, meteorology, communications and other fields. We support the view that meetings of the Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty should be attended in an observer status, by the States not having consultative status. This would not only enrich the discussion on issues relating to Antarctica but would facilitate broader dissemination of information on and better understanding of questions related to Antarctica among those States that are currently not parties to the Treaty.

Regarding the Antarctic Treaty as an important international legal and arms limitation instrument, we strongly believe that any involvement on the part of the United Nations should be directed towards further strengthening the régime established by the Treaty and fully utilizing the opportunities for broad international co-operation in the peaceful exploration and uses of Antarctic resources as provided for by the Treaty. Furthermore, we are convinced that any revision of the Treaty would not only be unjustified in the light of its present functioning, but would also entail the serious risk of undermining a peaceful legal régime of activities of States in Antarctica which has proved its usefulness during the past 25 years.

With these considerations in mind, we considered carefully the study prepared by the Secretary-General and contained in Part I of document A/39/583, as well as the views of Member States contained in Part II.
While the Secretary-General's study undoubtedly provides useful and comprehensive information on physical, legal, political, economic and scientific aspects of the Antarctic Treaty system and its functioning that could be of great benefit to Member States interested in the issue, there has been very little time to analyse and draw clear-cut conclusions from the replies of States, some of which are admittedly incomplete and which cover only one third of the total membership of the United Nations. In any event, both the study itself and the replies available so far will in our view have to be given more detailed analysis by Member States before a substantive decision on the matter can be taken by the General Assembly.

Any such decision would, we believe, have to be adopted on the basis of consensus that would emerge as a result of further study of the matter and consultations among States, which will necessarily require additional time and effort in order to bridge the existing differences in the positions of States as to the methods, procedure and desired objectives of the deliberations on Antarctic matters in the United Nations.

The Czechoslovak delegation therefore strongly believes that any decision that the General Assembly might take at this session with respect to the question of Antarctica must not go beyond setting up a suitable procedure that would allow a thorough study of the issue by Member States with a view to facilitating constructive international co-operation in the exploration and exclusively peaceful use of Antarctica.

Mr. THEUTENBERG (Sweden): I should like first to commend the Secretariat, especially the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs and the Office of Legal Affairs, on the excellent work done in presenting to us, in a comprehensive, factual and understandable way, the complex issues of Antarctica. This study has provided us with broad information for our debate. It has brought together different aspects of the Antarctic issue - political, legal, economic, environmental, as well as scientific. To be able fully to understand the complex issue of Antarctica, it is essential that all facts be presented in a balanced and objective way. It is important to have a realistic perspective on the future of the Antarctic continent and what it is economically, scientifically and legally possible to achieve in the foreseeable future. To base assessments about the future of Antarctica on wishful calculations and expectations rather than on real facts, as far as they are known to us today, would, I believe, lead in the wrong direction.
In its reply of 14 June 1984 to the Secretary-General's request for views and information relevant to the study on Antarctica, the Swedish Government emphasized that it would be of particular value if the study were to put the existing possibilities of exploiting the resources of the continent and the surrounding continental shelf in a realistic perspective. It was furthermore stated that all available information indicated that economic development of the Antarctic continent is something that belongs to the distant future. The study presented by the Secretariat in document A/39/583 is in itself a very useful effort to contribute to our knowledge about the complexities of Antarctica. It also extends this knowledge beyond the traditional circle of nations that have so far been active in respect of Antarctica. Thus the study has served a useful purpose.

Even if a realistic attitude is taken, it is easy to understand that in recent years Antarctica has attracted increasing attention from the international community and also from States that have previously not paid so much attention to it. The continent has considerable scientific, environmental, climatic and geophysical significance far beyond the limits of the Antarctic region. Questions pertaining to the exploitation of the resources of the earth have, as is obvious to all, become a leading feature in the political and legal debate of this decade. Together with these fundamental issues, the environmental aspects have also come into focus, and more and more countries are paying serious attention to the question of the preservation of nature.

The Swedish Government will endeavour to promote the principles of international environmental law based on, inter alia, the principles laid down in the Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment of 1972 as one of the key factors for the future management of Antarctica and the preservation of Antarctic nature. It is important therefore to listen to scientific experts and other parties seriously engaged in the task of protecting the environment. The Antarctic Treaty system, consisting of binding treaty obligations as well as recommendations, is forming good ground for the efficient protection of Antarctic nature.

The Antarctic Treaty of 1959 is an interesting feature in the sphere of international relations. Objectively speaking, I believe it is fair to state that it belongs to the limited number of treaties that have actually worked well in practice for a considerable time, apart from the fact that it is of the rare kind that has efficiently kept potential conflicts under control. When the
international community actually has a Treaty such as this, which functions well in preserving important principles of international law and promotes true international co-operation, it is something that I believe we should be careful not to upset. We know what we have; we do not know what will happen if actions are taken to undermine the effectiveness of the Treaty system. After all, it is, I believe, the orderly and efficient management of the continent and its resources that is vital to us all, regardless of our political points of departure.

Antarctica shall be used for peaceful purposes only. The Antarctic Treaty has established Antarctica as a nuclear-free area. From the point of view of the arms race, this condition has a real as well as a symbolic meaning. It is, further, the only continent on earth where all military activities and installations are forbidden. These provisions are of great significance for peace and stability in the region, as well as in a more global context.

The leading principle is that of freedom of scientific investigation in Antarctica and co-operation towards that end. All these principles are remarkable in international co-operation and should be safeguarded. It is a well-known fact that the coming into being of the Treaty in 1959 put off possible conflicts as to territorial claims. The Treaty system could, as long as it is allowed to stay in force, be viewed as a kind of guarantee — considering the wording of article IV of the Treaty — that such issues will not be brought up again. In this regard the Treaty has an important role to play; nobody really knows what could be substituted for the delicate balance being upheld by the Treaty system.

Sweden is speaking for the first time in this forum as a party to the Antarctic Treaty. Sweden deposited its instrument of accession to the Antarctic Treaty on 24 April of this year, thus availing itself of the provision of the Treaty that it is open to accession by all Member States of the United Nations. This action was motivated by our wish to support the basic principles of the Antarctic Treaty and the results which have been achieved so far for international co-operation within the framework of the Treaty. Furthermore we hold the view that it is of particular importance that the fundamental legal order with regard to Antarctic represented by the Treaty system be upheld by a wider circle of nations, especially since new difficult issues concerning natural resources are coming into focus.
Sweden has also acceded - on 6 June 1984 - to the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources of 1980, also a most important factor in the preservation of the resources of the area and the establishment of orderly management of the exploitation of its living resources. Sweden welcomes the coming into being of that Convention. We hope that in the future Swedish scientists will contribute to the work done within the framework of this Convention.
All this is not a sudden interest on the part of my country. The scientific community in Sweden has manifested a long-standing interest in the polar regions. Swedish research efforts have traditionally been directed mainly towards the Arctic region, the Scandinavian peninsula being adjacent to the Arctic region. Swedish scientists have long been able to acquire knowledge and experience in various fields of polar science, such as the importance of the polar regions to maritime and atmospheric conditions, the effects of pollution on arctic systems, the effects of the exploitation of sea resources and the control of such exploitation, palaeo-oceanography and the development of techniques for the utilization of economic resources of the polar regions. Since comparative Arctic-Antarctic research is of great significance there has been a considerable Swedish interest also in Antarctic research. The joint Norwegian-British-Swedish scientific expedition to Antarctica of 1949-1952 should be mentioned in this context.

The Polar Research Committee of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has recently carried out a survey of what constitutes the present tasks and competence of Swedish polar research. A special body, the Polar Research Secretariat, has recently been set up with the task of initiating and co-ordinating Swedish polar research in all fields, including Antarctic research. However, sufficient resources for an independent Swedish research effort in Antarctica have not been at hand. International co-operation in Antarctica, based on the principles of the Treaty, is therefore of the utmost importance in the view of the Swedish authorities and efforts to stimulate such co-operation have always had the full support of the Swedish authorities and of the scientific community. It was actually, it should be recalled, at a meeting in Stockholm in 1957 that the decision was taken to set up a permanent scientific agency for the co-ordination of Antarctic research, the so-called Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR). Sweden has started to participate also in this context.

My Government is very much aware of the fact that aspects relating to the exploitation of the continent and its surrounding continental shelf are not covered by the Treaty itself. New mechanisms must be worked out in this regard. I have already mentioned the 1980 Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources. The deliberations now going on pertaining to the mineral resources régime are extremely important for the orderly management of the resources of the area, although one must repeat again the importance of realism
when it comes to an evaluation of the possibilities of exploitation. A basic order must be worked out for this kind of exploitation, taking due account of the environmental implications. It is only natural that many nations have an interest in how these deliberations are carried out and the real outcome thereof. Our view is, however, that the ongoing negotiations between the Consultative Parties to the Treaty concerning the mineral resources régime provide a base for an efficient solution.

When deciding to accede to the Antarctic Treaty, my Government took the view that acceding States should also be able to follow the process of negotiation between the Consultative Parties. By reason of the decision of the Consultative Parties to admit all acceding States as observers with a right to present their views, it is now possible for them to gain an insight into the ongoing negotiations. My Government welcomes the flexibility shown by the Consultative Parties and hopes to be able to participate actively in the joint effort to work out a just and efficient régime for the exploitation of the mineral resources in Antarctica, if ever such exploitation is possible. Thus, to our mind, acceding States will also have a role to play in this respect in the future.

It should be remembered that the achievements of the Antarctic Treaty system so far would have been inconceivable if a climate of rivalry had been allowed to prevail. If we are going to deal successfully with the many important issues of Antarctica in the future also, we must retain the principle of consensus and see to it that the area does not become the scene of international discord again. It is also clear that international co-operation for the management of Antarctica will not be meaningful without the necessary support and participation of those States whose expertise is most needed for dealing successfully with the many difficult questions pertaining to Antarctica.

The Antarctic Treaty States have shown the willingness and foresight to tackle new issues of importance for the management of Antarctica as they evolve and the Treaty is open for accession to any State Member of the United Nations. Thus, there seems to be a good future potential for wider international co-operation encompassing all States genuinely interested in Antarctica, based on the present Treaty system.

Mr. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): This year marks a quarter of a century since the Antarctic Treaty
was concluded. The Soviet Union has always attached, and continues to attach, great importance to this Treaty as an international legal document aimed at curbing the arms race and strengthening peace and security throughout the world. For the first time in the history of international relations and international law, an entire continent has been declared in a Treaty as a zone for peaceful research and scientific co-operation among States. The Antarctica Treaty is open for accession by any interested State. At the present time, more than 30 States, both large and small, are parties to it. They are to be found on all continents of the earth and represent different socio-economic systems.

The entire 25-year history of the Treaty has demonstrated its effectiveness and growing international recognition. Indeed, it provides a unique example of co-operation between differing groups of States in tackling complex international problems connected with the present and future of this sixth continent, as it is called.

The Antarctic Treaty is based on the principles of the United Nations Charter and contains extremely important provisions aimed at maintaining international peace and security and the development of co-operation among all States. It is a clear demonstration of the best way to tackle global problems, taking into account the interests of all countries and peoples.

Article I of the Treaty, which was drawn up with the active participation of my country, proclaims that Antarctica shall be used for peaceful purposes only. The Treaty prohibits any measures of a military nature, such as the establishment of military bases and fortifications, the carrying out of military manoeuvres and the testing of any type of weapons. Of particular importance in present conditions are the provisions of article V of the Treaty, which prohibits any nuclear explosions in Antarctica, for either military or peaceful purposes, and the disposal of radioactive waste materials. Taken as whole, the provisions of articles I and V give Antarctica the status not only of a demilitarized zone, but also of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and I should particularly like to emphasize that this is the first time in history that such a zone has been created.
The Secretary-General's study very correctly points out that the successful implementation of the provisions of the Antarctic Treaty is one of the most significant post-war contributions to averting nuclear-weapon proliferation and halting the nuclear-arms race. The conclusion of that Treaty served as a precedent for numerous initiatives and proposals relating to regional disarmament measures, and continues to serve as an incentive for further initiatives in this field. In the current international situation, the reduction of military presence and the establishment in various parts of the world of zones free from any kinds of nuclear weapons, as well as zones of peace, take on particular meaning.

Of extreme importance is the principle of freedom of scientific investigation, embodied in article II of the Treaty. On the basis of that principle, fruitful international co-operation has been successfully developed for more than 25 years in that almost inaccessible and inhospitable part of the world. The scientific data and information resulting from the work of Antarctic expeditions and from the ongoing activities of the scientific stations are available to any interested State party to the Treaty. These data are now already of practical value in the development of a wide variety of disciplines and for increasing the understanding of phenomena and processes on earth which are unquestionably of interest to all mankind.

Turning back the pages of history, we find that there was indeed a time when Antarctica was the scene of bitter international conflicts, disputes and claims; armed clashes frequently occurred. It was virtually a question of occupation or the carrying out of a sui generis partition of the Antarctic wastes and territories among various individual States. The conclusion of the Antarctic Treaty was an important and effective means of preventing disputes, friction and conflicts among States, since the Treaty shelved the whole question of territorial claims.

The Treaty is also of considerable importance because it prevents the spread to Antarctica of crises from regions in close proximity to this sixth continent.

In order to promote the objectives and ensure the observance of the provisions of the Treaty, article VII provides for the carrying out of inspections. Each State party to the Treaty has the right to designate observers, who have complete freedom of access at any time to any or all areas of Antarctica, including all stations, installations and equipment within those areas. Ships and aircraft at points of discharging or embarking cargoes in Antarctica are also open to inspection.
I would note that the Secretary-General's study quite correctly points out that during the entire time in which the Treaty has been in existence not a single instance of violation of its provisions has been recorded; not a single inspection carried out in Antarctica has found evidence of activities contrary to the Treaty's provisions.

Under established international practice, the implementation of the provisions of a particular international agreement, as well as the verification of the observance of the agreement and the co-ordination of States' efforts to enforce the agreement, is normally the responsibility of a specific organ or mechanism, whose establishment is provided for in the agreement. The mechanism for the Antarctic Treaty is the Consultative Meetings of the States parties to the Treaty. Under article IX, original parties to the Treaty as well as contracting parties that carry out substantial scientific research activity in Antarctica, such as the establishment of scientific stations or the despatch of scientific expeditions, are entitled to participate in the work of the Consultative Meetings. The latter parties are entitled to participate in the Meetings during such time as they demonstrate their interest in studying Antarctica.

Since the opening in 1977 of the permanent scientific station called "Henriyk Arctowski", the Polish People's Republic has been a participant in the Consultative Meetings. In September 1981, when the "Georg von Neumayer" station started to operate, the Federal Republic of Germany acquired the same right. In September 1983, India and Brazil acquired consultative status, after having established their own scientific stations in Antarctica. Thus, at present, more than half of the parties to the Treaty – that is, 16 States – are Consultative Parties. Experience has shown that the existing procedure provides a real opportunity for any State that has acceded to the Antarctic Treaty to acquire consultative status.

The Consultative Meetings consider matters pertaining to the regulation of activities by States in Antarctica, including its use for exclusively peaceful purposes, the obligation to facilitate scientific research and international scientific co-operation in the study of the continent, the exercise of the right of inspection there, the protection and conservation of living resources, and so forth.
One of the fundamental provisions of the rules of procedure of the Consultative Meetings is the rule that the unanimous approval of all States participating in the work of the Meetings is necessary for the adoption of recommendations. This not only creates a businesslike atmosphere in the discussion of various matters, but also guarantees the formulation of balanced recommendations and decisions that reflect the views of all States taking part in the work of the Consultative Meetings and that are consistent with their interests.

The additions to the rules of procedure adopted at the Twelfth Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, held in Canberra in 1983, are of great importance. A procedure is thereby laid down for participation in the Consultative Meetings as observers of States parties to the Treaty which do not enjoy consultative status. The admission of observers to meetings called within the framework of the Treaty illustrates the open nature of such meetings and the desire of the Consultative Parties to demonstrate to the international community the positive role of the recommendations drawn up for the benefit of all mankind.

The development of broad international co-operation in Antarctica was made possible only by the 1959 Antarctic Treaty, which could be called the sole international legal document of its kind. Its effectiveness and practicality has been verified and proved by its history of almost a quarter of a century. In recent times, the need for the all-round strengthening of the Antarctic Treaty has become particularly acute and urgent. That is essentially because some States have shown the intention to revise this important international Treaty.
The Soviet Union is vigorously opposed to any attempts to undermine the Treaty, regardless of the pretexts under which they are made. Such attempts are fraught with serious negative consequences, not only incidentally for the countries of the Antarctic region but for mankind as a whole. They may be detrimental to the principle contained in the Treaty concerning the use of Antarctica exclusively for peaceful purposes, which would undoubtedly have a negative effect on the general international situation. Such attempts might mean that, rather than being a zone of peace and fruitful co-operation among States having differing economic and social systems, Antarctica would instead be converted into an area of friction and international conflict, and there would be a new and more intensive struggle among States to assert their claims to Antarctic regions, a matter which has at present been frozen by the Treaty. It is not tampering with the Antarctic Treaty system or creating any kind of parallel system but rather an all-round strengthening of the Treaty and ensuring that the interested States accede to it that will guarantee that this important region will continue in the future to be used for the benefit of mankind.

In conclusion, I should like to read out the text of a message of welcome from the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, which I have just received, addressed to the participants in the Antarctic expeditions of the Consultative Parties in connection with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Antarctic Treaty:

"The conclusion of the Antarctic Treaty is an event of major international significance. This is the first time that countries with different social systems have united their efforts to make Antarctica a continent of peace and firmly protect it from being the scene of military preparations. These efforts are particularly significant at the present time, when the international situation has deteriorated.

"The example of international co-operation in Antarctica is a unique one. Joint activities to discover the secrets of the sixth continent have enriched human knowledge with invaluable data about the phenomena and natural processes there and serve to further the interests of all States and peoples, enabling us to make better use of the forces of nature for the benefit of mankind."

Mr. GBEDO (Ghana): It is an honour for my delegation to participate in the debate on the subject of Antarctica, knowing how important it is to many
members of the Committee and the delicate nature of the consultations that have taken place and the negotiations concerned with it. Our contribution today, therefore, is intended to offer the Committee yet another perspective on the matter as well as underscore our own principled approach to such questions.

The Secretary-General's study on the question of Antarctica, which we now have before us under agenda item 66, represents a year of remarkable effort and achievement on a subject that until recently was almost remote, obscure and forbidding. For some of us, it was the seventh summit meeting of the non-aligned countries, held in New Delhi last year, that aroused the dormant interest in and focused attention on Antarctica, which otherwise might still be of little concern to the vast majority of members of the international community, especially among the developing countries.

The overwhelming interest that has been generated in Antarctica since then has been due also to the further impetus created in this Committee when we reached a consensus agreement at the thirty-eighth session to request the Secretary-General in resolution 38/77, adopted by the General Assembly on 15 December 1984, to prepare a comprehensive, factual and objective study on all aspects of Antarctica, taking into account the Antarctic Treaty system and other relevant factors, as well as the views of Member States on the subject.

My delegation welcomes the study with appreciation and commends the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for the exceedingly hard work that has gone into producing the report under obviously severe time constraints. We are all the more pleased that, in spite of these constraints, the study, from our preliminary and cursory reading, gives the impression of having generally fulfilled the requirements that it be comprehensive, factual and objective. Its presentation also seems to us to be conveniently clear and concise, given the vast compendium of scientific and technical literature and documentation that we understand are available on Antarctica.

However, in view of the very short period of time in which the study has been available to us before the start of this debate, my delegation, like many others, is not in a position to give its considered views on its contents.

I should nevertheless like to take this opportunity to respond to some of the arguments that have been advanced here by some of the Consultative Parties in defence of maintaining the status quo with regard to the Antarctic Treaty. But,
before proceeding any further, it would be pertinent to place my remarks in the correct context by reminding the Committee that the objective of the non-aligned countries in asking for a United Nations study on Antarctica was and still is to widen international co-operation on the continent, as stated in paragraph 135 of Part I of the Secretary-General's report (A/39/583). There is nothing secret or sinister about that. What surprises us is the fear and extreme sensitivity which some of the Consultative Parties have displayed over such a well-meaning, legitimate and openly stated intention. The kind of reaction we saw in this Committee last year and are witnessing again this year, in some instances in a heightened and more dramatic form, makes us wonder what there is to hide in or over Antarctica.

We have heard such strange and categorical statements as that it is not possible even to modify the Antarctic Treaty and that there is no viable alternative to it. Surely that is not meant to be taken seriously by anyone, least of all by seasoned diplomats gathered in this Committee. We will concede the point that the Treaty is very important to the parties to it but we beg to differ on its immutability. The very fact that it was designed by a select group points to the fact that it is patently defective and discriminatory in many respects and should not be left to continue intact after more than 20 years. To open it for signature in its present form is to be completely oblivious of the evolution and progress that have occurred in the thinking of the international community as a whole on principles that should govern and characterize arrangements such as the Antarctic Treaty, which purports to serve the interest of mankind as a whole and not merely a select and exclusive section of it.
We have heard with even more surprising repetitiveness the less than convincing arguments that the Antarctic Treaty should be left alone because it represents a unique working example of a demilitarized, nuclear-free zone of peace and international co-operation in scientific research and environmental protection. We are not told why by opening Antarctica to much wider and more democratic international co-operation under United Nations auspices any of these sacred elements would be threatened by developing countries such as mine. Yes, indeed, we are told that the Antarctic Treaty is open to all and that all are welcome to join whenever they wish. The catch, of course, is that small developing countries such as mine have neither the means nor the scientific resources needed to meet the exacting qualifications required to become a party to the Treaty. Are we for that reason to be locked out permanently from sharing in the benefits of the patrimony of all mankind which Antarctica should be? In this regard we wish to state clearly that Ghana cannot and will not continue to accept the present situation in which a group of 16 States have arrogated to themselves under the Antarctic Treaty the right to manage and exploit the continent for their exclusive and selfish benefit. This may be an affront to their Treaty which they no doubt regard as the law, but they must remember that if we had accepted the actions of the Congress of Berlin in 1884 as law, decolonization would have been impossible. In particular, we reserve the right to question and oppose any Antarctica minerals régime established by the Consultative Parties outside the framework of the United Nations without the involvement of the international community as a whole. We shall do so because we see no compelling reason for the rejection of the United Nations framework save to preserve economic profit only to those who are geographically and/or technologically advantaged.

We feel particularly insulted by those developing countries, parties to the Treaty in one capacity or another, which have suggested that they will protect the interests of other developing countries not parties to the Treaty or associated with it. Ghana has certainly given no such mandate to any party to the Treaty and will not do so now or in the future. The interests of all mankind, including those of the developing countries, in Antarctica can best be protected through the United Nations, to which we all belong and which provides the most appropriate machinery for the international community as a whole to participate in decision making and to co-operate in all matters relating to the continent.
It is thoroughly unacceptable for a small group of countries to seek to exercise monopoly and sovereignty over Antarctica. It is reminiscent of the golden age of colonialism when vast territories were carved out and shared by the colonial Powers among themselves. Are the mineral and other resources of Antarctica to be left for the exploitation and enjoyment of the Treaty parties alone?

It is perhaps easier to understand that some States still have not entirely recovered from the philosophies and practices of the nineteenth century. But it is far more difficult for my delegation to comprehend why the Antarctic Treaty has such sway over some of the foremost defenders of the interests of the third world and key opponents of racism and apartheid, to the point that they are willing to put aside their scruples and principles and join South Africa in the exemplary enterprise which that Treaty is held out to be to the rest of us. As we stated in this Committee last year, we wish to repeat that we cannot countenance racist South Africa's participation or association of any kind in the Antarctic Treaty and that parties to the Treaty should take expeditious steps to expel it. Apartheid South Africa's accession to the Treaty makes it all the more obnoxious and objectionable to us, given the fact that it has been excluded from all respectable international organizations. Racist South Africa has none of the peaceful, non-militarized and co-operative attributes that are associated with the Antarctic Treaty and it is a scandalous disgrace that it should still be allowed to belong to it a whole year after many Member States have raised their voices against its involvement in Antarctica. It is a sorry spectacle indeed to see what odd bedfellows the Antarctic Treaty has made of some Member States and racist South Africa.

In the consultations that have been held since the debate last year, most of the Treaty parties have indicated to us that they wish to separate this issue from apartheid. They have even accused us of naïveté since South Africa's geographic position and scientific potential make it a natural party to the Treaty. I shall try to answer those two accusations without rancour. As long as the Treaty is between Governments - and government remains the procedure for the orderly arrangement of the affairs of a people or country - you cannot divorce the racism of the South African régime from the activities of the Treaty. For in its participation in these activities, the racist régime does so while discriminating against a sizeable number of South Africans. Furthermore, it is our contention that the present racist régime of South Africa does not enjoy the mandate,
implicitly or tacitly, of the majority of South Africans and therefore cannot act in good faith on behalf of all South Africans. We are thus unable to sanction the activities of the Treaty which will result in unlawful behaviour which is of benefit to only a minority of South Africans. Until we correct this anomaly, we think that South Africa should be excluded, if only to emphasize to it that the Treaty can only survive based on civilized standards.

I wish to conclude by reiterating the conviction of Ghana that it is in the present and long-term interests of the international community that parties to the Antarctica Treaty - particularly the core Consultative Parties - recognize and bow to the winds of change sweeping over that continent. It is in no one's interest for them to persist in resisting change because that is the one sure way to involve Antarctica in confrontation and conflict. If indeed it is their purpose, as they claim, to steer the continent clear of such pitfalls, then the Consultative Parties should move quickly to bring Antarctica into the régime of the common heritage of mankind under the auspices of the United Nations. Ghana is committed to the attainment of this goal as early as possible in the interest of and for all mankind.

It is for this reason that my delegation fully supports the proposal for the establishment of a United Nations ad hoc committee to take a closer look at the Secretary-General's study on the question of Antarctica with a view to widening international co-operation in all fields in the continent.
Since it would appear that the parties to the Treaty are now willing to share information on Antarctica, we suggest that one of the functions of the proposed ad hoc committee, when it comes into being, should be to act as a clearing-house for information on Antarctica. This should ensure the ready accessibility of such information to all Member States and international organizations.

It is simply inconceivable that, at this point of time in the history of international relations, anything other than a régime for Antarctica based on the principles enshrined in the Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Outer Space Treaty should be acceptable to the international community as a whole. Those who think otherwise have simply decided to bury their heads in the sand like the proverbial ostrich. To them, nothing has happened or changed since the United Nations came into existence nearly 40 years ago, and in all blissfulness they still can see nothing. Most of us believe otherwise, and we must therefore work to improve on what can become a fine model of international co-operation.

**Mr. Somba (Cameroon):** The Cameroon delegation, notwithstanding the requested deadline for Member States to submit their views on Antarctica, wishes to express the policy of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon.

The Government of the Republic of Cameroon wishes to make the following comments at this stage, in response to paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 38/77 of 15 December 1983, which requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States in the preparation of a comprehensive study on all aspects of Antarctica.

The Government of the Republic of Cameroon views Antarctica as an area which should be managed and utilized rationally to secure the optimum benefits for mankind as a whole, in accordance with appropriate global international arrangements and within the framework of the United Nations, with a view to the eventual embodiment of the question of Antarctica in a more open and accessible international convention that would make that continent part of the common heritage of mankind and not, as it is at present, the exclusive preserve of a restricted number of countries.

The selective application of the exclusive attitude and secretive style of consultation of the Antarctic Treaty Powers must give way to a consideration of the impact of setting aside their so-called private hunting grounds in Antarctica, and, in the view of the Government of Cameroon, the Antarctic Treaty should be
understood only as an eminently provisional arrangement which cannot presume to prejudge the definitive status of Antarctica. The silence of the international community with regard to the Treaty cannot be understood as a form of acquiescence, either in law or de facto.

The principle of the freedom of the high seas, as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, should govern Antarctica for the common good of mankind, and the search for new international arrangements in scientific research, demilitarization, peaceful coexistence and environmental protection is a valuable and complementary goal.

The continent of Antarctica must be used and managed for the benefit of and in the interests of everyone, and all nations should participate in the decision-making processes affecting it. Its living and non-living resources should therefore be considered the common heritage of mankind.

The preservation of Antarctica as a zone of peace for wildlife and environmental research is an essential element in the maintenance of international peace and security.

There is an urgent need for a careful and more objective evaluation of the risks and benefits involved in exposing Antarctica to mineral exploration and development.

A moratorium on all commercial mineral exploration and development, achieved through international agreement under the auspices of the United Nations, is essential as an interim measure pending a comprehensive study of the whole question of mineral development in Antarctica by the United Nations system. The Antarctic resources régime currently being negotiated by a small number of countries is exclusionary and restrictive, whereas it should serve the interest of all Member States and of mankind as a whole.

Even considering the narrow context of the Antarctic Treaty, it represents a major departure from the practice of co-operation, with its special stress on the principle of equitable sharing of resources, of scientific-research information and of data on Antarctica among the parties to the Treaty.

It is the view of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon that the time has come for appropriate measures to be initiated through multilateral negotiations, under United Nations auspices, with a view to bringing about broader international co-operation in Antarctica in order to give reality to the concept and principle of a régime of common heritage.
Finally, one of the fatal flaws of the study prepared by the Secretariat and contained in documents A/39/560 and A/39/583 is that no attempt has been made to relate the Antarctic Treaty to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, a Convention which, as all would agree, has been one of the most important achievements of the United Nations. While taking note of other aspects of the study referred to in documents A/39/560 and A/39/583, it is our view that the failure to make the Antarctic Treaty and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea complementary goes against the accepted principle of universality.

At this juncture these are the views of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon on this subject, and my delegation reserves its right to speak further on it at a later time.

Mr. SORZANO (United States of America): My Government is pleased to have received the report of the Secretary-General on Antarctica contained in document A/39/583. A preliminary reading indicates that it contains a valuable summary of available information relating to Antarctica, the Antarctic Treaty and the Antarctic Treaty system. The Secretariat is to be commended for its comprehensive, factual and objective work. We look forward to examining the study in detail.

Discussion of Antarctica at this session of the General Assembly coincides with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Antarctic Treaty, which was signed in Washington, DC, on 1 December 1959. Today's discussion therefore offers an appropriate occasion to review how the Treaty has effectively functioned over the first quarter century of its existence.

The Antarctic Treaty is open to all nations and is based upon the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. The Treaty reserves Antarctica exclusively for peaceful purposes. All activities of a military character, including the testing of weapons, are prohibited. Nuclear explosions and the disposal of radioactive wastes in Antarctica are likewise prohibited. These obligations, which are subject to verification through on-site inspection provisions contained in the Treaty, make the Antarctic Treaty an important arms-control agreement. As a result, Antarctica presents a situation all too rare in today's world, since it is an area free from the threat of military competition or conflict.
The Treaty guarantees freedom of scientific research in Antarctica and establishes obligations to share and make freely available resulting observations and data. As a result Antarctica has been an area of important advances in the fields of atmospheric, earth and ocean sciences, advances which have made essential contributions to a fuller understanding of our planet.

The Treaty creates innovative juridical provisions to permit States parties to it to develop and apply necessary obligations to Antarctic activities in spite of differences over the legal and political status of Antarctica. As a result, a system operates for Antarctica which provides peaceful resolution of difficult issues. This effective system is unique in contemporary international relations.

The Treaty provides for regular meetings to formulate, consider and recommend measures in furtherance of the principles and purposes of the Treaty. As a result of this system a broad range of steps has been taken to ensure that human activities in Antarctica take place in a peaceful and co-operative manner, as well as to ensure protection of the environment and resources of Antarctica.
In view of the importance attached to this latter point, I simply cite as illustrations several of the steps relating to the environment developed through this consultative mechanism. These include the agreed measures for the conservation of Antarctic fauna and flora, which afford special protection to native Antarctic species and to sites of ecological importance or sensitivity: the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals and the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources. The latter, the most recent Convention - signed in 1980 - provides an effective mechanism for regulating fishing activities in Antarctic waters. It applies an ecosystem-wide management approach to ensure conservation of living resource populations and maintenance of ecological relationships. Also, as a result of the operation of the consultative mechanism, there are ongoing discussions to develop a co-operative system for dealing with possible mineral resource activities in Antarctica. The aim of these negotiations is the establishment of a system to determine whether possible mineral resource activities in Antarctica would be acceptable and to ensure necessary regulation of any such activities determined to be acceptable.

A look at the 25 years of the Antarctic Treaty reveals its basic operational characteristic: it works. The letter and spirit of its provisions are being observed, and an important area of the world is reserved exclusively for peaceful international co-operation. Equally important, it works as a mechanism for anticipating, identifying and resolving new issues as and when they arise. The Antarctic Treaty system demonstrates the capability to evolve - the capability to evolve to meet new circumstances and the capability to accommodate new interests and new participants. The diversity in the political, economic and social systems represented among the parties to the Treaty, parties which now number 32, testifies to the dynamic quality of the Antarctic Treaty system. Also significant is the fact that the system - including all the measures developed related to it - has been achieved by the process of consensus.

In the view of my Government, the Antarctic Treaty system represents in practical form one of the best realizations of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. It has also delicately balanced many diverse interests. The Antarctic Treaty and the Antarctic Treaty system offer the vehicle for all those who are interested in Antarctica - or who seek to develop an interest in it - to pursue their interests in concrete and co-operative fashion. It is on the basis of these facts that the United States approaches General Assembly consideration of
the Antarctic item. Important working relationships exist between the United Nations and the Antarctic Treaty system. Growing awareness of, and interest in, Antarctica have already strengthened the Treaty system and offer the opportunity to build upon and extend those relationships.

Last year we achieved consensus in this Committee on an Antarctic resolution. We approach this year's debate prepared again to reach a result by consensus. However, there can be no consensus on proposals which aim at, or have the effect of, altering the basic provisions of, or replacing, the Antarctic Treaty. We believe there is no justification for any presumption of a dichotomy between the Antarctic Treaty system and the United Nations system. Establishment of any parallel machinery by the General Assembly as a forum in competition with the Antarctic Treaty is neither necessary nor acceptable. Such action would serve neither the interests of the United Nations as an institution nor the interests of its Member States. Here, as on other points, our views are identical to those of the other Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties.

I have called attention in these remarks to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Antarctic Treaty. As depositary Government for the Treaty, we feel a particular obligation and sense of pride in marking this occasion. To do so, President Reagan has conveyed a special message to all the scientists and support personnel working in Antarctica. I should like to conclude my statement, therefore, by simply quoting the text of the President's message, which was signed on 26 November and released yesterday.

"I am delighted to send greetings to all the scientists and station personnel of every nation in Antarctica as we mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Antarctic Treaty, sometimes called the Washington Treaty.

"On December 1, 1959, in Washington, D.C., the twelve nations then active in Antarctica pledged themselves to an imaginative experiment in international cooperation and understanding. The Antarctic Treaty, signed that day, reserves a major region of our planet exclusively for scientific research and other peaceful endeavors. The treaty bans all military activities, including the testing of weapons in Antarctica, and prohibits nuclear explosions and the disposal of radioactive wastes there. It guarantees the freedom of scientific research and establishes a consultative mechanism to allow the treaty system to meet new challenges and adapt to new circumstances. To achieve these
objectives, it embodies unique conflict-avoidance provisions permitting countries which disagree over the legal status of Antarctica to work together harmoniously.

"Now, a quarter century later, we can all take pride in the accomplishments and vitality of this important treaty system. It has fully realized its objectives of maintaining Antarctica as an area free of conflict and devoted to peaceful international cooperation. Membership in the treaty system has continued to expand and, within this system, effective steps are being taken to ensure that new activities in Antarctica are managed in a responsible fashion and do not threaten Antarctica's environment. The Antarctic Treaty represents an outstanding example of how countries with diverse political perspectives and interests - East and West, North and South - can work together for the benefit of all.

"The Antarctic Treaty incorporates and extends to the realm of international relations the spirit of practical cooperation which scientists working in Antarctica have displayed from the earliest explorations onward. It is fitting, therefore, to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the treaty by saluting the scientists and station personnel whose exciting and important work in Antarctica continues to reflect the universal ideals reflected in the treaty. I commend your commitment to the search for knowledge and send my best wishes to all of you for a productive season."

We hope others may join us in participation in the Antarctic Treaty system, so that next year, on the twenty-sixth anniversary of the Treaty, more members may confirm the viability, flexibility and effectiveness of the existing régime.

Mr. SUAREZ (Philippines): Last year the Philippines co-sponsored resolution 38/77 on the question of Antarctica. That resolution, which was adopted by the General Assembly without a vote, requested the Secretary-General to prepare a comprehensive, factual and objective study on all aspects of Antarctica, taking fully into account the Antarctic Treaty system and other relevant factors.

The Secretary-General was also requested to seek the views of all Member States in the preparation of the study. The Philippines complied with the request of the Secretary-General, being one of over 50 countries which submitted their views in response to the request of the Secretary-General.
It is significant that many countries - not to mention non-governmental organizations - responded to the request to submit their views in aid of the study by the Secretary-General. We think it demonstrates the interest and concern of the larger part of the international community with regard to Antarctica. While this ice-bound continent may be remote and isolated from the rest of the world, the question of its future certainly is now in the forefront of international attention. Indeed, the Philippines shares the view that the present and future development of Antarctica must be the responsibility of the international community. As my delegation stated in this Committee last year:

"... both reason and justice would be well served if the 'common heritage' and 'common benefit' principles enunciated in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea were to find application in the case of Antarctica." (A/C.1/38/PV.44, p. 7)
In discussing the question of Antarctica we believe that it is necessary to keep in mind the word "balance".

There is evidence to show that the Antarctic is of critical importance in maintaining the world ecological balance. It is imperative, therefore, that the ecological balance of the Antarctic continent be preserved. It is reassuring that the framers of the Antarctic Treaty bore this need in mind by prohibiting nuclear explosions and the dumping of nuclear waste in Antarctica and by providing a framework for preserving and protecting the sensitive Antarctic environment.

There is, however, another aspect to this concept of balance, and here we refer to the desirable balance that must be achieved between the interests of the parties to the Antarctic Treaty and the wider interest of the international community, bearing in mind that the Antarctic is our common heritage and therefore should be for the benefit of all mankind.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's study as requested by the General Assembly last year. That study will be an invaluable aid to a clearer and deeper understanding of the complex issues raised by the subject of Antarctica. My delegation regrets, however, that we are left with no time to give the study the careful consideration it deserves. We hope therefore that we can all agree, at an appropriate time, to take the necessary steps for the study to be analysed fully and in depth, in order to aid the consideration of the subject of Antarctica by the General Assembly.

Miss Dever (Belgium) (interpretation from French): Yesterday the representative of Australia outlined the position of the Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty.

This statement confirms and illustrates the constructive attitude adopted in the debate by the Consultative Parties ever since the question of Antarctica has been on the agenda of the General Assembly. Despite certain doubts as to the advisability of doing so, my delegation, like those of the other Consultative Parties, has not opposed the organization of an instructive and educational debate on the Antarctic Treaty and system. However, we remain opposed to the idea that the debate should lead to one or more initiatives that could revise or even replace the 1959 Treaty or set up a parallel mechanism. In other words, we unreservedly support the objective of a greater awareness and greater understanding of the Treaty, but we cannot go along with action that could undermine the foundations of effective and potential international co-operation in Antarctica.
My delegation is of the view that the study prepared by the Secretary-General, which we have just received, is in keeping with the mandate he was given under resolution 38/77 of 15 December 1983. Indeed, although we have not yet had time, in view of its recent circulation, to consider it in depth, it appears to respond in large measure to the criteria indicated in that resolution; it is quite comprehensive and is certainly factual and objective. I wish to thank and congratulate the Secretary-General and all his assistants on this substantial document that will arouse great interest among all Member States and will greatly contribute to the objective that we set for ourselves last year, that is, to increase awareness of the enterprise that began more than 100 years ago, the legal foundations of which were laid down in 1959 by all countries that could and wished to assume certain responsibilities. This legal system established by the Antarctic Treaty, whose twenty-fifth anniversary will be commemorated on 1 December - that is, the day after tomorrow - continues to develop and to adapt itself to the circumstances of modern international life, demonstrating remarkable flexibility.

The dynamism and vitality of the Treaty can be seen in many ways. I should particularly like to emphasize the fact that the Antarctic Treaty is not hermetically sealed. It is open to accession by all States Members of the United Nations. Ambassador Woolcott enumerated the Consultative and non-Consultative Parties which constitute an impressive and constantly growing list. Since last year's debate, we have noted four new accessions: Cuba, Finland, Hungary and Sweden. Other countries are preparing to join the group of Consultative Parties and the group of non-Consultative Parties. The continuing increase in the number of parties to the Treaty constitutes, in my opinion, the most eloquent and convincing proof of the confidence the international community places in this unique instrument of international co-operation. The current list of States parties indicates that States from both North and South and from both East and West, developed countries and developing countries, feel that they can accede to the system established under the Treaty. It is my Government's firm hope that the Treaty's many merits will continue to encourage the greatest possible number of States to become parties to it.

We should also note, as examples of the dynamic, open character of the system, the international conventions concluded at the initiative of the Consultative Parties, which are open to signature and accession by all other States: I would

Negotiations relating to a mineral resources régime are continuing, with the non-Consultative Parties participating from now on with observer status. The Consultative Parties have meanwhile pledged to refrain from any commercial exploration or exploitation.

Allow me now briefly to touch upon other features of the Treaty that seem particularly significant: the Treaty excludes the Antarctic from the arms race by prohibiting any measure of a military character, such as the establishment of military bases, the holding of military manoeuvres and the testing of any type of weapons, including nuclear weapons. Thanks to the Treaty, Antarctica has been internationalized and demilitarized. It has become a real nuclear-weapon-free zone.

All this is extremely important for world peace and security.

Moreover, the Treaty encourages and facilitates scientific co-operation and the exchange of scientific information of use to all States. The Treaty effectively protects the natural environment for all mankind.

It has successfully prevented any dispute or international conflict over Antarctica.

Finally, the Treaty, which is based on the Charter of the United Nations, promotes its purposes and principles and enshrines the Antarctic as a zone of peace.

This achievement should be protected. All attempts to establish a parallel system or to replace this one with a new régime would undoubtedly, especially in present world conditions, impair a precious equilibrium that has proved its worth and that continues to bear fruit for the benefit of the entire international community.

Such attempts would inevitable lead to legal insecurity, which would in turn give rise to disagreements and rivalries and even temptations to call into question the provisions relating to demilitarization and territorial claims.

It is not by impairing the Treaty system but by consolidating it, especially through the accession of interested States, that we will contribute to the preservation of the Antarctic for the benefit of future generations.

Belgium will have the honour of hosting the thirteenth Consultative Meeting in 1985. This will certainly provide a new opportunity to illustrate the concern of the Treaty parties for the broad dissemination of information about their activities.
The CHAIRMAN: We have heard the last speaker for this afternoon.

The Chairman set a deadline of 6 o'clock this evening for the submission of draft resolutions. I have been informed that work on an important draft resolution is still under way, and I have been assured that the parties that are particularly interested in the subject-matter are working diligently to arrive at a compromise text. They have therefore requested an extension of the deadline. Throughout the afternoon I have tried to contact the Chairman to obtain his advice and decision. I have, however, not been able to reach him. Therefore, bearing in mind the assurance that earnest work is continuing, I would suggest that the Committee decide to extend the deadline to 10 a.m. sharp tomorrow morning. The Secretariat has assured me that that deadline will enable it to print the text in the morning, so it will be in the hands of members while basic statements are still being made.

The Chairman will be presiding over the Committee tomorrow morning, and in view of the situation I would expect him to avail himself of his prerogative under rule 120 to waive the 24-hour deadline for the submission of draft resolutions so that action can be taken on the agenda item tomorrow. I understand that the Chairman will be prompted to take that decision under rule 120 since the work now under way is being pursued in view of a consensus. If I hear no objection I shall take it that the Committee agrees to that procedure.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.