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at 10.30 a.m.
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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 48th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ALATAS (Indonesia)

CONTENTS

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

Australia - notification 19

Australia - minerals 26

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AGENDA ITEM 70

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

The Chairman: As decided by the Committee, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions under this agenda item is 6 p.m., Tuesday, 26 November 1985.

I propose that the list of speakers in the debate on the item be closed at 6 p.m. today, 25 November. May I take it that the Committee agrees to that proposal?

It was so decided.

Mr. ABDUL KADIR (Malaysia): It is indeed a special pleasure for me to participate in this debate on the question of Antarctica, particularly when you, Mr. Chairman, a diplomat of exceptional ability and sophistication and the representative of a country with which Malaysia enjoys very warm relations, are presiding over our deliberations. Statements made in this Committee and elsewhere have indicated that there are many differing and strongly held views with regard to Antarctica. Malaysia hopes that the outcome of the present debate will be acceptable - or at least minimally unacceptable - to all participants. I know that we can depend on your diplomatic skill to guide us to such a conclusion. My delegation will certainly do all it can to be helpful.

This Committee has engaged in two quite lengthy debates on the question of Antarctica, in 1983 and 1984, and I believe that as a result we all have a clearer idea of where each of us stands. Most notably, we have also been assisted by the study in the report of the Secretary-General, and in that connection I should like to reiterate once more the appreciation and gratitude that my delegation expressed last year for a job well done.
There can be no doubt that over the last two or three years there has been a heightening of international interest in the question of Antarctica. Aside from various non-governmental seminars and conferences, I would refer in particular to two important international meetings which have discussed the question of Antarctica since this Committee's debate last year.

The first was the regular summit meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which adopted a resolution declaring Antarctica to be the common heritage of mankind.

The second was the Luanda meeting of Foreign Ministers of non-aligned countries, which adopted a resolution which, *inter alia*, expressed the conviction "that the interest of the international community in the continent can be enhanced by keeping the United Nations fully informed of developments in Antarctica", and noted "that the General Assembly should remain seized of the question of Antarctica". It further expressed the hope that the United Nations study would contribute to a more comprehensive debate at this session of the General Assembly "with a view to taking appropriate action, taking into account the concerns of members of the Movement".

I should perhaps pause here to explain some of the concerns expressed in that debate, which, despite time constraints, enjoyed the active participation of 31 delegations. I do not believe I am misinterpreting the general feeling of a very large majority of delegations which spoke on the substance of the issue by saying that, while they fully appreciated the achievements of the Antarctic Treaty system, which they did not wish to prejudice, they were concerned about such matters as ensuring continued United Nations involvement, developments relating to the
negotiations on minerals, to which many felt that some form of the concept of common heritage was applicable, and the participation of the racist apartheid régime of South Africa in the Antarctic Treaty system, as a Consultative Party, moreover.

In the light of all this— that is, the positions of Member States as articulated in this Committee and in their submissions to the Secretary-General in connection with the United Nations study, and in the light of the more recent developments at the OAU summit meeting and the non-aligned Foreign Ministers meeting, the question is, where do we go from here? My delegation does not believe that it is beyond our diplomatic ingenuity to devise ways and means to reconcile differing viewpoints and to move forward because, despite the differences, an important common thread has emerged: a desire to ensure the broadest possible support for a system to manage international co-operation in Antarctica which would ensure its continued peaceful use, including the utilization of its resources for the benefit of all mankind in a manner that would preserve international peace and security, promote scientific research and protect Antarctica's delicate environment.

But, in diplomacy, as we all know, timing is of the essence. This is the third occasion on which this Committee has discussed the question of Antarctica. It is therefore still a relatively new subject in the general international dialogue and there is a need for more information and greater clärification of issues, as well as for all of us to seek to understand better each other's interests, concerns and hopes. As my delegation stated in the debate last year, "the more time we spend in seriously thinking about and frankly discussing the subject of Antarctica, the better are our prospects of success. In that process it would also be helpful not to cast aspersions on each other's motives." (A/C.1/39/PV.50, p. 8)
We stated then and reaffirm now that we accept

"that the Treaty Parties are seriously concerned that what they have achieved should not be undermined and destroyed",

and we asked, and ask again now, that they accept that we for our part

"are seriously concerned about how Antarctica might best be ... managed in the interest of all mankind". (p. 11)

As part of the process of clearing the air, I seek the indulgence of members as I elucidate - at the risk of repeating what has been stated by my delegation before - the considerations which govern Malaysia's own thinking regarding Antarctica. Central to that thinking are the following realities.

First, it is a fact that there is no agreement on the issue of sovereignty. One could even go further and state that, except inter se among the seven claimant States - and leaving aside the matter of overlapping claims - no other States recognize those claims. There is also a large unclaimed sector. In addition, two States, the Soviet Union and the United States, assert that they have a "basis of claim". Thus, in relation to the sovereignty issue, there is the reality of the claims on which the seven claimant States insist with varying degrees of intensity; there is also the reality that an overwhelming majority of Member States - to be precise, the other 152 - do not recognize those claims.

Secondly, in talking about Antarctica we are not talking about a minute atoll of no significance in the middle of nowhere. We are talking about one tenth of the surface of the globe, strategically located, with a fragile ecosystem and possessing rich mineral resources. Antarctica, therefore, is of great significance to the world in terms of international peace and security, economy, environment, scientific research, meteorology, telecommunications and so on. It should be added that Antarctica has no permanent human habitation.
Thirdly, the Antarctic Treaty has existed since 1959 and today has 18 Consultative Parties and 12 non-consultative parties. Of the Consultative Parties, six are developing countries, four are from Latin America and two are from Asia, and of the non-consultative parties, two are from Latin or Central America and one is from Asia. No African or Arab State is a party to the Treaty. On the other hand, the racist apartheid régime enjoys the status of a Consultative Party. The rest — that is, the overwhelming bulk of the membership — are industrialized and socialist States.

Fourthly, States not parties to the Treaty are excluded from any involvement in the management of Antarctica. Malaysia continues to see deficiencies in a system for the management of a territory such as Antarctica, possessing as it does the characteristics I have just mentioned, in which a limited group of States, on the basis of criteria which they themselves determine, confer on themselves the exclusive right to make decisions affecting all activities in Antarctica without accountability to the international community. It is true that non-consultative parties now participate as observers in the biennial meetings and in the minerals negotiations of the Consultative Parties — a recent development which, possibly, was not unconnected with the debates on Antarctica in the United Nations and elsewhere — but there are limitations on that participation and it is not yet obvious that non-consultative parties actually exercise any influence on the deliberations of the Consultative Parties.

In the light of these considerations, surely more must be done than merely to proclaim the virtues of the Antarctic Treaty system and invite other States to accede to the Treaty. Let me put the matter in another way by referring to a statement made to the General Assembly by my Deputy Prime Minister. He said:
"Bearing in mind the characteristics of Antarctica, we wish to see that the system for the management of that continent is one which would be accountable to the international community, which would make it possible for the relevant international organizations and specialized agencies to be more directly involved and which would ensure that the fruits of the exploitation of its resources could be more equitably shared as the common heritage of mankind but taking into account the position of the claimant States. In other words, accountability, involvement and equity should be the elements of the system for managing Antarctica." (A/40/PV.22, pp. 67, 68)
At this point, I should perhaps take a little time to refer to the question of minerals. I shall begin by referring to the assertion, one that has often been made by the Consultative Parties, that any exploitation of such resources cannot realistically be envisaged until perhaps early in the next century. Considering that those same Parties are currently involved in negotiations for such a régime and, further, that entities from a number of those Parties are currently engaged in activities dealing with minerals in Antarctica under the general rubric of "research," the relevance of the assertion that it may be another 20 or 25 years before any exploitation may take place remains obscure to my delegation. Are we being told that some countries - but not others - should concern themselves about certain developments because those are not to occur until two or three decades hence? I need not comment on the presumptuousness behind such a thought. The fact is that negotiations for a minerals régime are currently taking place. It is also a fact that decisions regarding the terms and conditions of such a régime, including any question of benefit sharing, remain the exclusive prerogative of the Consultative Parties.

When we look at the Antarctic Treaty itself it is clear that, apart from the concern to prevent conflict arising from sovereignty claims and super-Power rivalry, the driving force behind the Treaty was Antarctic science, to which was linked the concern to protect its delicate ecosystem from being upset by such scientific activities. Hence the criteria for the right of decision-making was scientific activity. Accepting - without necessarily admitting - that some special expertise is required to make decisions affecting peace and security, the environment and scientific research in Antarctica, and, moreover, that such expertise lies only with the Consultative Parties, what is the justification for extending the exclusive right of decision-making into the area of minerals exploitation? Among other things, such a régime will need to examine the question
of the equitable sharing of the benefits of mineral exploitation, regarding which
the expertise - let alone the exclusive expertise - of the Consultative Parties is
not self-evident to my delegation.

There is in fact a certain paternalism in the insistence of a group of 18
countries that they know best on behalf of the world, that the complexities
involved in a minerals régime are beyond the capacity for involvement of others and
that therefore they, and they alone, should negotiate such a régime - in secret, on
certain sensitive points, away even from the observers that are
non-consultative-parties - while at the same time expecting us to take comfort from
the assurance that they indeed will "not prejudice the interest of mankind".

The justification that was advanced by the Consultative Parties for their
exclusive decision-making rights is that those rights are exercised to regulate
activities in Antarctica and, therefore, only States with such activities should
have the right to decide on regulating them. In relation to mineral resources, it
is being suggested, then, that only those States that have the capacity to exploit
mineral resources in Antarctica - on the assumption, that is, that all 18
Consultative Parties, and no others, have that capacity - should have the right to
make decisions regarding a minerals régime. Is that concept acceptable to the
international community today? If such a concept had been applied during the
negotiations which led up to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,
which has received near unanimous support from the international community,
including practically all of the Consultative Parties, surely one of the major
achievements of contemporary diplomacy would not have been possible.

I referred earlier to the resolution adopted at the Summit Meeting of the
Organization of African Unity (OAU), which, after all, represents a very
significant voice in the world, that Antarctica is the common heritage of mankind.

And we all also know the position that the Treaty Parties, particularly the
claimant States, take on this question. Nevertheless, whatever views may be held regarding the applicability of the concept of common heritage to Antarctica, at the very least it must be acknowledged that Antarctica is not the common heritage of the Consultative Parties, to be disposed of in any manner they think best. My delegation believes strongly, therefore, that all Member States should be involved in determining the régime that would govern resource exploitation in Antarctica.

Let me state here our own view, which is that the resources of Antarctica should be regarded as a common heritage of mankind, taking into account all relevant factors, that is, that any exploitation of its resources should, inter alia, ensure the maintenance of international peace and security in Antarctica, the protection of its environment, the non-appropriation and conservation of its resources, international management and the equitable sharing of the benefits of such exploitation.

I have tried in these remarks to avoid going over ground that has been covered in the two previous debates in this Committee - not, I must admit, with complete success. We can spend our time here extolling the virtues of the Antarctic Treaty system, on the one hand, or, on the other, dwelling on its deficiencies. While such an exercise may not be unhelpful, particularly in the early stages of our debate, I expect it will not carry us too far at present. How then, does Malaysia propose that this Committee proceed?

In this connection my delegation's starting-point this year is the Secretary-General's report. The study contains a wealth of information that has been set out with lucidity and commendable brevity, and it has helped us immeasurably to understand Antarctica better. My delegation therefore believes that the study has provided a very good basis on which to carry our work forward.

While we have learnt a great deal from the study, it seems to my delegation that there are certain areas that could profit from further examination. We can
(Mr. Abdul Kadir, Malaysia)

Think of three in particular, and, indeed, my delegation mentioned them briefly in its statement last year.

The first is the question of information flow. It seems to my delegation that it would be useful to examine further the information currently available to the United Nations, not only with regard to the regular biennial meetings of the Consultative Parties, but also with regard to the special consultative meetings, including the current negotiations on the minerals régime, as well as more introductory and background information on the operations of the Antarctic Treaty system, the activities of the respective Treaty Parties in Antarctica, reports on compliance with the provisions and regulations of the Antarctic Treaty system, and so on, in order to enable us all to be more familiar with what is going on in Antarctica.

Second is the question of the interaction between the relevant specialized agencies, as well as other intergovernmental organizations and the Antarctic Treaty system. Here again, we are all aware that there has been some interaction - and indeed, the Secretary-General's study contains references to it. But my delegation believes that those references could be elaborated with advantage to all concerned and, therefore, improve our knowledge about this very important area. The question of how such interaction and co-operation could be expanded and deepened is also one that could be profitably studied.

Third is the significance of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in the southern ocean, particularly as it relates to the possible exploration and exploitation of its mineral resources. This is a legal matter, and a careful elucidation of the issues involved would surely be very useful to us all.
Those are three areas which, in the view of my delegation, deserve further study. No doubt there are others, and the suggestions contained in the submissions of various Member States for the United Nations study, for example regarding ways and means of facilitating the involvement of developing countries in scientific activities in Antarctica, including the possibility of establishing international stations, deserve further consideration.

My delegation also believes that it would indeed be most useful to have more information on the role of the non-consultative parties. It is true that they have, at long last, been admitted as observers at the meetings of the Consultative Parties, but there are reports of their exclusion from certain restricted meetings, or of the withholding of certain documents from them. In general, it would also be useful to have a clear idea of their role and their influence and effectiveness in the meetings of the Consultative Parties.

Having identified some areas which we believe should be studied further, the next question is the machinery through which such study could best be undertaken. I believe it is well known that my delegation has expressed the view that an ad hoc committee would be an appropriate body for this purpose. We elaborated that proposal at some length in our statement in this Committee last year. I will not go over the ground again, beyond reiterating our conviction that discussions of the relevant issues in such a committee would not derogate the responsibility of the Treaty Parties or challenge the Antarctic Treaty system any more than do such discussions in this Committee, and our belief that those discussions are more effectively conducted in a small committee, which would provide for a freer exchange of ideas and views among the relevant experts than would be possible in the somewhat more formalized structure of debate in this Committee. Nevertheless it is also well known that our proposal has been strongly resisted by the Consultative Parties, even though this year we have further qualified the terms of
reference of the proposed committee to studying the relationship between the Antarctic Treaty system and the United Nations system and, in this way, taking into account the fears they had expressed last year.

Ever since these debates began my Government has made it clear that our fundamental approach is to proceed with care and caution, to build upon agreement and to move forward by consensus if at all possible. That remains our position, and we will not therefore press our proposal. Nevertheless, my delegation remains convinced that the issues I have mentioned earlier in my statement do deserve the serious study that would facilitate our further understanding of the question of Antarctica. I believe we all agreed that the Secretary-General's study has been of immense value in this task. It seems to my delegation, therefore, that an expansion of that study to examine the issues I have mentioned would also be of great value.

Looking back on the discussions in this Committee during the past two years, my delegation is convinced that they have contributed positively to the evolution of the thinking of each one of us with regard to Antarctica. As a result my delegation is not unhopeful that a convergence of views will be possible over time. But it will require much effort on the part of us all, including the effort to achieve greater understanding based on more knowledge of different aspects of the question, as well as much good will, including the overcoming of suspicions and doubts about each other's intentions. I believe we have made some progress. Let us persevere in our task so that together we can reach our common goal, which is to ensure the broadest possible support for the system of managing one of the most extraordinary parts of the globe in the interest of all of us, now and in the future.

Mr. WOOLCOTT (Australia): As this is the first time I have spoken in this Committee, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of
this important Committee and say how delighted I am, both personally and officially, to see you presiding over our deliberations. You are a friend of long standing and a Permanent Representative of the highest reputation in this Organization. The country you represent, Indonesia, is our largest and nearest neighbour to our north, and I am delighted to see you in the Chair. My delegation is sure that you will discharge your duties with your customary skill, tact, charm and efficiency.

The future of Antarctica is a matter of national interest to Australia, which administers the Australian Antarctic Territory. For us, this is not a distant theoretical issue. It is also a matter of concern to the Australian Government that this continent, which lies to the immediate south of Australia and which is one of the few areas of the world at present free of conflict, discord and tension, is for the third consecutive year taking the time and resources of the General Assembly.

It is also, in our view, ironic that in the year in which we commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the United Nations, an effective, flexible, open and highly successful legal instrument continues to be under challenge by a few Members of this Organization. Discussion on Antarctica, within the United Nations and elsewhere, over the past two years has already been extensive and exhaustive. The Secretary-General's comprehensive study circulated last year and the national contributions made to it have added greatly to the volume of information available on activities in Antarctica and on the Antarctic Treaty system.

For those reasons, and because I set out at some length the Australian Government's attitude to this matter in 1983 and again in 1984, I intend as far as possible to spare the Committee unnecessary repetition this morning. But there
remain a number of points that I wish to make on behalf of the Australian Government.

First, let me address briefly those proposals which Malaysia and several other countries continue to urge on the international community, namely, that some new United Nations committee be established to deal with Antarctica, that Antarctica should be declared the common heritage of mankind, that the Treaty Parties should be more accountable — as it is put — to non-members of the Treaty, that South Africa should be expelled from the Treaty and that the negotiations for any future minerals régime should be under the auspices of the United Nations.

To take those questions briefly in that order, Australia, like other Treaty members, remains firmly opposed to the proposal to established a United Nations special, or ad hoc, committee on Antarctica. While on the surface that proposal may look harmless enough, Australia considers there would be considerable disadvantages, and no real advantages, in creating yet more international machinery to consider Antarctic matters. This would prejudice the Treaty system in several ways.

First, it would lead to institutionalized United Nations involvement in the management of Antarctic affairs, where a proved, effective system perfectly in accord with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter already exists for this purpose.

Secondly, it would not provide those States that are active in Antarctica with the protection given by the Antarctic Treaty in relation to differing national positions regarding sovereignty. Moves to revise or replace the Treaty system by such a committee would also be potentially dangerous. They would run the risk of reopening competition between States active in Antarctica, of reviving contention over sovereignty and heightening international tension in the very way the Treaty has successfully avoided for more than 25 years.
Thirdly, a committee to deal simply with information on and interest in Antarctica would be both redundant and unnecessary. It would in our opinion also be an undesirable precedent for the United Nations to presume to set up a committee to monitor countries freely associated within an established legal treaty.

The Permanent Representative of Malaysia said in the recent plenary debate on Cambodia that dialogue for dialogue's sake is meaningless, adding that dialogue can only be constructive when it addresses the crux of the problem.

The Australian Government considers that to seek to establish yet another committee of this Organization to deal with Antarctica would not add to the existing capacity for dialogue. Moreover, there is no problem in Antarctica the crux of which we need to address. No people have been colonized in Antarctica; nobody has been denied self-determination in Antarctica; nobody has invaded Antarctica; nobody has been deprived of rights in Antarctica; no nuclear explosions have taken place there; no dumping of nuclear waste takes place there. Nobody is exploiting Antarctica economically. On the contrary, the Antarctic continent's only export at present is scientific knowledge.

An existing Treaty which includes countries from East and West, as well as from North and South, is, as the Deputy Minister of Malaysia pointed out a few minutes ago, operating effectively, although, for the record, the number of consultative parties is 18 while the number of non-consultative parties is in fact 14 and more are expected to join shortly.

Antarctica is not an East-West issue, nor is it a North-South issue. If such a committee were to be set up by a simple majority it could in our view serve no useful purpose, especially as members of the Antarctic Treaty would not join any such committee, which would inevitably join the ranks of some other unnecessary and ineffective bodies which have on occasion been set up without proper forethought or
support and which do not do credit to the image of this Organization, which we are trying to improve, especially in this commemorative year.

Some delegations have argued that Antarctica should be the common heritage of mankind in the same way as this concept has been applied to outer space and the deep sea-bed. Indeed the Deputy Foreign Minister of Malaysia did so this morning. This, however, ignores the political and legal realities of Antarctica.

Common heritage is an attractive concept, and Australia itself is a strong supporter of common heritage in outer space and for the deep sea-bed. But the prerequisites for applying the common-heritage concept are an international consensus that designated areas are beyond the limits of national jurisdiction and that they are not governed by an existing legal régime. While this is true of outer space and true of the deep sea-bed, it is not so in the case of Antarctica, where there are long-standing claims to sovereignty whether they are accepted or not and where a multilateral system of international regulation of activity in the form of the Antarctic Treaty system has now existed for a quarter of a century.

It is also relevant in the common-heritage context that the Antarctic Treaty system specifically incorporates a series of principles designed for the benefit of mankind as a whole. Indeed one of the objectives unanimously reiterated by the consultative parties for the negotiations on a minerals régime is that it should not prejudice the interests of all mankind in Antarctica.

The representative of Malaysia has argued that the Treaty system is an exclusive or closed club and that there is no what he calls accountability. These arguments have no real basis in fact. Any Member of the United Nations - I repeat, any Member of this Organization - may join the Antarctic Treaty system simply by acceding to the Antarctic Treaty. Accession to the Treaty automatically entitles a State to participate in the regular consultative meetings of the Treaty parties and in special consultative meetings on Antarctic mineral resources.
The final reports of the consultative party meetings, which contain details of the discussions on agenda items and all the recommendations adopted by those meetings, are publicly available. Moreover copies of these reports are forwarded to the Secretary-General. For those countries with a real and serious interest in Antarctica there is absolutely no shortage of available information. Moreover the Treaty parties are naturally responsive to international public opinion.

Critics of the Treaty have also spoken of the need for some interrelationship between the Antarctic Treaty system and the United Nations system. Interaction already exists between the Treaty system and the United Nations system through practical links with a number of United Nations specialized agencies. These links and the greater public availability of information on the activities of the Antarctic Treaty partners, to which I have referred, provide ample opportunity for those members of the world community that have a genuine interest in Antarctica to follow developments there.

As I have repeated many times, those States with a substantial interest in Antarctica, including Malaysia itself, have only to accede to the Treaty if they wish to participate more actively in Antarctic affairs. Accession costs nothing in monetary terms; it requires only the acceptance of obligations in relation to activities in Antarctica.

I should also like to address directly the matter of South Africa's membership of the Antarctic Treaty, a fact which has led a number of African countries, in their rightful indignation about the repugnant policy of apartheid, to call for the expulsion of South Africa from the Treaty.

As I am sure all representatives in this Committee are aware, Australia is totally opposed to apartheid. Our position has been vigorously demonstrated in the Security Council, in the General Assembly and in the Commonwealth.
Notwithstanding this, we consider that there are circumstances in which even such fundamental differences of view as those existing between the Government of Australia and South Africa on apartheid should not inhibit the pursuit of objectives which we believe can advance the interests of mankind.

South Africa is an original signatory of the Antarctic Treaty. It is also a signatory of many other treaties and conventions, including the Law of the Sea Convention, to which a number of countries which have called for South Africa's expulsion from the Antarctic Treaty are also signatories.

But the important thing is that the Antarctic Treaty confers obligations as well as rights on countries which are parties to it. It is a Treaty rather than an established international organization, and thus the question of barring any country from membership does not really arise. But even if by some means South Africa were to be excluded from consultative meetings, it could not be excluded from the Antarctic. It is not in the interests of those countries active in the Antarctic, nor of the international community as a whole, that activities conducted by any country in the Antarctic should be free of the constraints and obligations imposed by the Treaty on the many important recommendations adopted under it.

As accession to the Treaty is open to all Members of the United Nations, the willingness of other parties to participate in meetings implies nothing with regard to attitudes towards the internal political systems of other participants.
Given its geographical proximity and involvement in the Antarctic, there are advantages in South Africa's continuing to be bound by the Antarctic Treaty's provisions relating especially to demilitarization, denuclearization, inspection, scientific investigation and environmental protection. The disarmament aspects of the Treaty are of particular significance inasmuch as they commit all States not to develop or test nuclear weapons in the Antarctic region. Moreover the Treaty provides for on-site inspection to ensure compliance with these obligations. South Africa has abided by these Treaty obligations.

I should like to turn now to the criticisms of the negotiations on a régime to govern future mineral activity in the Antarctic. Great exaggeration has surrounded the resources situation in Antarctica, while the motives of the Antarctic Treaty parties in conducting the negotiations have in my view been seriously misrepresented.

Antarctica is not a cornucopia of untapped mineral wealth, as some persons seem to believe. As the Secretary-General's report states, no mineral deposits economically worth extracting have been found in Antarctica. Also there is little likelihood that minerals in commercial quantities will ever be found. There would be immense technological and also political and ecological obstacles to extracting minerals in the Antarctic. I wonder whether some of the critics of the minerals negotiations have in fact read the Secretary-General's report on this aspect of the subject.

The reason why the negotiations are taking place now rather than in 50 or 100 years' time reflects the ability of the Antarctic Treaty system to anticipate and to deal with issues before they might become serious difficulties. Against the possibility that development might one day be found to be feasible and economic, Antarctic Treaty consultative parties believe it is important to reach some agreement in advance on a régime which would ensure that such activities were
environmentally acceptable and would proceed in a regulated and disciplined manner. Such a régime would avoid the risk that mineral-resource activities might lead to a revival of the international rivalries which the Antarctic Treaty was designed to overcome and which it has so successfully avoided for over 25 years. It is true that the negotiations are confidential to Antarctic Treaty parties, but this merely reflects standard international practice. The limitation to Treaty parties - and here it is necessary to stress that all parties to the Treaty, and not just the consultative parties, participate in these negotiations - is entirely appropriate given that we are endeavouring to fill a gap in the Antarctic Treaty system. My delegation would stress again that any Member of the United Nations may participate in these negotiations by acceding to the Antarctic Treaty.

I should also emphasize that it is the intention of the Treaty parties that any minerals régime will be open to any State to join, with all parties entitled to undertake mineral activities, and that any such régime should operate in the interests of mankind.

Rather than dwell on countering the arguments of the Antarctic Treaty's critics I should like simply to reiterate the positive aspects of the Antarctic Treaty system and the undoubted contribution it has made in the interests of all mankind, in the fields of disarmament, scientific research and the preservation of the ecology and the environment. Perhaps unexpectedly to its sponsors, the Malaysian initiative has in several ways actually strengthened the Treaty system it originally sought to challenge.

One result of the Malaysian initiative is that it has led to growing recognition by the international community of the value and benefits of the Antarctic Treaty system, in particular of its disarmament provisions, including on-site inspection, the manner in which it has averted political contention, the way in which it has fostered scientific co-operation as well as environmental
protection while at the same time ensuring that those countries which are engaged in Antarctica are bound by the provisions of the Treaty system.

Another result of the focus the Malaysian initiative has placed on the Treaty is that the Treaty system has shown, under public scrutiny, its capacity to grow in a way which has undoubtedly strengthened its operation. The thirteenth Antarctic Treaty meeting in Brussels only last month emphasized the system's effectiveness, cohesiveness and openness. At that meeting the most populous nation on Earth, China, and another State, a South American State of importance, Uruguay, became consultative parties to the Treaty, as had India and Brazil at the previous meeting, while several other countries with a genuine interest in Antarctica have signalled their intention to accede to the Treaty. At the Brussels meeting all Treaty parties were invited to attend future regular consultative party meetings as of right. The report and recommendations of that meeting are being forwarded to the Secretary-General and will be circulated to all Member States, as was the report of the previous meeting in Australia.

I should like now to refer to one aspect of this matter which is important to us and which seems to have been overlooked. There is an established tendency in this Organization to seek regional solutions to regional problems. Australia was surprised, therefore, when Malaysia, a country of the northern hemisphere, launched its initiative for reasons which frankly have never been entirely clear to many countries in the region, and without any prior consultation with those regional countries in the South West Pacific which are members of the Treaty. I should also note in this regional context - and I hope members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of African Unity will also take note of this - that the regional organization of the South West Pacific, the South Pacific Forum, which numbers 13 countries, referred, in its communiqué issued after its sixteenth meeting last August in Raratonga, to the value of the Antarctic Treaty, which is contiguous to the proposed South Pacific nuclear-free zone.
To conclude, I had the good fortune to visit Antarctica, including the South Pole, in January of this year. I found that my personal experience of that vast, quiet and unspoiled continent - the last place on earth, as it is aptly called in a recent book and television series which concluded in New York only last night - completely reinforced, in a personal way, the views I have expressed in this Committee and in the General Assembly on behalf of the Antarctic Treaty parties and the Australian Government today and over the past two years.

Just as Antarctica's unique environment must be protected from exploiters, so must its political and economic future be protected from those who seek to meddle with or to undermine the Antarctic Treaty. The Treaty is of value to all mankind. It should be nurtured and it should be strengthened.

In his commemorative message to this Organization on 23 October, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mr. Mahathir, noted that the United Nations must remain a forum in which "conciliation and co-operation should prevail over confrontation". The Australian Government fully endorses this sentiment, and I was glad this morning to hear the Deputy Foreign Minister of Malaysia also say that Malaysia would be seeking to proceed by consensus this year.
In this context of Antarctic, we are prepared to work for a single consensus resolution on the subject, based on co-operation. But it is not Australia or the other Antarctic Treaty Parties that have initiated this agenda item. We are not the demandeurs, as the French say, and we remain ready if necessary to oppose firmly demands known to be unacceptable and regarded as confrontational by the Parties to the Antarctic Treaty.

Australia does not accept that there is any need for any further institutionalized discussion of Antarctic matters, either in the General Assembly or in some separate United Nations committee. For this and other reasons we hold the view that the debate on this item should preferably be concluded this year and that the now established links between the United Nations and the Antarctic Treaty system be permitted to work unhampered in the interests of all mankind.

Finally, the Antarctic Treaty system has been subject to intense scrutiny and some pressure over the last three years. We believe that has emphasized its value and its capacity for evolution. We believe that the Treaty Parties are doing a good job, and we believe that the best interests of the international community will be best served by acknowledging this and by encouraging the Parties to get on with their job.

Mr. Zegers (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish first of all to convey to you, Sir, my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you preside over our deliberations. We are fully aware of your diplomatic ability and are certain that under your leadership this Committee will achieve good results in its difficult discussions.
(Mr. Zegers, Chile)

Chile has stated its view on the question of Antarctic both when the subject was added to the agenda and during the discussions held at the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions of the General Assembly. Those discussions have made clear the unique nature of that continent, the admirable work carried out there, and the need to continue that work and facilitate its improvement.

The study in the report submitted by the Secretary-General, the replies of States, the three years of debate we have had, and the information given to the United Nations by the Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty constitute a complete picture of the state of affairs in Antarctic and of the existing régime of law and international co-operation there.

We have listened to the opening statements in this debate, by the representative of Malaysia, who introduced this item, and Ambassador Woolcott of Australia, the Co-ordinator of the Consultative Parties. We may conclude from what they said that there are major points of agreement and that there remain differences with regard to the treatment of the item. Those differences might be overcome through a better understanding of what the Antarctic Treaty system is and how it relates to the United Nations.

We note too that once again there is a common wish to approach the item on the basis of consensus, the sole method likely to be compatible with the law of treaties and with the common desire not to interfere with the admirable international co-operation which now exists in Antarctic.

Logically, consideration of the question of Antarctic should begin, as it does in the report of the Secretary-General, with an analysis of the physical, legal and political state of affairs in the region. The point of departure should, therefore, be a consideration of the Treaty which for a quarter century has governed Antarctica, of acts carried out under its terms, and of its supplementary instruments. In other words, we should analyse the Antarctic Treaty system.
(Mr. Zegers, Chile)

The Secretary-General has in his possession the reports of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Regular Consultative Meetings of the Antarctic Treaty, the last of which was just held at Brussels. The Brussels meeting was attended by the 32 members of the Treaty and considered the entire operation of the system that Treaty has engendered.

At that Thirteenth Consultative Meeting members basically completed a process of adapting the system, in terms of its internal maturity and its need to respond to growing interest from outside. The meeting adopted an invitation to all adherents to the Treaty to participate in most Antarctic Treaty meetings. Two new Consultative Parties were admitted - China and Uruguay - fulfilling the Antarctic Treaty requirements for participation in the decision-making machinery. The number stands now at 18. To ensure the unity of the Antarctic régime, it was agreed that there should be a biennial report, prepared at each Consultative Meeting, regarding all parts of the system: the Commission on living resources; the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals; the bodies concerned with scientific research such as the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research; ongoing negotiations, notably those on a minerals régime; and other activities which could include debates such as the present one. Finally, it was decided to continue improving existing information on the Antarctic Treaty and its system, and on its continuing activities and development. To that end it was decided to publish a handbook on the Antarctic Treaty system, containing its agreements, recommendations and decisions, clearly categorized and explained.

Those developments have improved the functioning of the Antarctic Treaty system and its links with the United Nations. We should reiterate that the Treaty reflects the principles and purposes of the Charter, is open to Members of the Organization, and gives appropriate information to and co-operates actively with the specialized agencies.
Information from the Antarctic Treaty itself and from the Assembly's three years of consideration of this item is supplemented by seminars held both in Antarctic and elsewhere and by a wide variety of publications covering the entire scope of the item.

All this information describes the physical reality of a continent which has been preserved in virtually its natural state and which today, despite extreme conditions, is widely known, is linked with and integrated into the rest of the world, and is accessible to human activities. It describes with equal clarity the legal and political reality of an admirable international co-operation régime, which functions even in the most difficult circumstances, constitutes a sub-system harmoniously integrated into the general international system, and which is more effective than the latter.

The success of the Antarctic Treaty system - which has frozen conflicts over sovereignty, fostered uninterrupted co-operation between rival countries, and created the first zone of disarmament and peace, the first ecological preserve and the first scientific laboratory territory - deserves the tribute of this fortieth anniversary session of the United Nations. Few achievements in this century have better expressed the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

None the less, in our long three-year debate that system has been subjected to intense scrutiny in this Assembly, reflecting in part legitimate interest. All human endeavour is susceptible of criticism and improvement. But paradoxically, some take extreme views, calling into question not what is less than perfect but the endeavour itself. There are those who say that the Antarctic Treaty system is secretive, exclusive, self-created and autarchic, and unduly broad, and that it is accountable to no one. In the light of those charges, it might be best to begin explaining the Antarctic Treaty system by saying what it is not.
The accusation of secrecy seems incongruous with our debate and the General Assembly's handling and scrutiny of all the activities connected with the Antarctic Treaty. In the past there has been no Treaty secretariat, since the Treaty operates without institutions; moreover, most States for decades showed little interest in Antarctic matters. Also, there has been a natural discretion regarding not the activities of the Treaty or its Parties, but processes under negotiation, as is general international practice. Thus, there has been no secrecy, but simply discretion in certain cases; the Antarctic countries have not sought and do not seek to hide anything.

It is said that the Treaty system is "exclusive" or "selective". First of all, we should note that any Member of the United Nations may accede to the Treaty by addressing a simple note to the Depositary and that to date this has been done by all those with a specific interest in Antarctic. This is an open multilateral Treaty.

While all members of the Treaty participate in its meetings and have various rights of membership, only Consultative Parties - at present the majority of members - participate in decision-making. The terms of the Treaty are thus because its decisions - dealing in general with refraining from activities, and creating more obligations than rights - are intended mainly to bind the parties which are active in the Antarctic: those with the know-how and experience necessary for the administration of that remote region of the world. That involves no exclusivity or selectivity. The participation of each State depends on two basic criteria: their interest and their activities in the Antarctic. The Treaty is open, just as is what might be called the Antarctic "career". Thus, the number of members of the Treaty has increased from 12 at the beginning to 32 at present; the number of Consultative Parties has grown from the original 12 to 18. The openness of the Treaty has thus been demonstrated in practice.
Some critics state that the Antarctic Treaty system is "autarchic" and "all-encompassing"; that it created itself and has granted itself broad competence and powers in the frozen continent. In fact, the Antarctic Treaty and its supplementary instruments are no different from other multilateral treaties and in no way contradict either the law of treaties or the United Nations Charter; on the contrary, they give expression to them. Nothing prevents - indeed, everything encourages - a group of States with avowed rights, interests and activities in a given area to agree to co-operate there. In the case of the Antarctic Treaty, in addition to the contributions it makes - as we have already noted - to peace and international co-operation, we should reiterate its open nature and the fact that, for quarter of a century, the international community has tacitly agreed to respect it; at times that has been stated explicitly, as at the 1975 Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and in the reports of the Secretary-General.

Antarctic problems are clearly interrelated and call for comprehensive treatment. For example, it is impossible to protect ecology without regulating human activities, including possible utilization of resources. One of the major achievements of the Antarctic Treaty system has been its ability in its wise realism to anticipate problems and to regulate various kinds of activities before their actual practice creates conflicts or difficulties. That was the case with the question of living resources, and now with that of minerals.
(Mr. Zegers, Chile)

The pragmatism, openness and flexibility of the Antarctic Treaty system has brought about a reconciliation of interests and contradictory positions and led to a régime whose operation has been justly admired. We have thus been able to harmonize the reality of existing claims to sovereignty in Antarctica with the position of those who do not necessarily recognize them; to keep that area outside the ambit of the cold war and preserve its unique character; to regulate man's activities there and allow for the participation of all interested parties. An attempt to alter or modify it from outside without the consent of the Parties would be a utopian - or, if carried to extremes, a destructive - task, the outcome of which would be fraught with unforeseeable consequences. It would also obviously be a violation of treaty law, which is so effectively advocated by the United Nations system.

Finally, it is said that the Antarctic Treaty or its Parties are "unaccountable", and it is inferred that they should be accountable in other forums, such as the United Nations. Parties to a treaty are not normally expected to be accountable to another or to others. If third parties wish to participate in an open treaty and system, they can do so by adhering to them and then attempting to bring about change. But it is not the procedure to hold the system accountable or to attempt to impose obligations from outside it. Parties to the Treaty are accountable for their activities within the Treaty system, subject to the obligations set forth under it and to the agreements it progressively adopts.

Chile is an Antarctic country on the basis of titles, rights, geographical and ecological imperatives, vocation and destiny. A two-and-a-half-hour flight separates continental Chile from Antarctica. There, we have permanent stations engaged in carrying out intensive scientific and logistical work, in co-operation with other countries, with the aim of increasing knowledge about Antarctica, of communicating that knowledge to the rest of the world and, thereby, of serving
mankind. This work is carried out, with devotion and sacrifice, as called for by
the terms of the Antarctic Treaty, for that agreement has turned the administration
of the frozen continent and man's thirst for knowledge into a body of obligations
rather than a set of privileges.

Chile, a developing country with all that that implies, has tried to remain
faithful to Antarctica, to the Treaty and its objectives, attaching to it a
priority commensurate with its inexhaustible interest in it and its inseparable
ties to it.

My country has sovereign rights in Antarctica, as is noted in article 4 of the
Treaty, and has had a presence in that continent for over 100 years owing to its
titles, to its proximity and to the continuity expressed in our long-standing
interest in Antarctic matters. On that basis, we have accepted the obligations
ensuing from the Antarctic Treaty and system; but we shall oppose vigorously and
resolutely any attempts designed to undermine or ignore the legal and political
realities they reflect.

The General Assembly has held a lengthy debate that has now lasted for three
years in this Committee. This exchange has been useful in the sense that it has
cast a clear light on all the aspects of the question of Antarctica. There can be
no doubt that it has been and continues to be a positive factor to make the
Antarctic question, as well as the Treaty, its workings and its system, better
known. This debate, which should now be nearing completion, has had this
undeniable effect. Among other things, it has indicated to those who wish to show
a real interest in Antarctica the way that is open to them - that of accession to
the Treaty. However, an attempt to create parallel mechanisms, such as the
creation of an ad hoc committee, would be unacceptable to the Treaty Parties and
incompatible with the nature of the Treaty system and the treaty law.
From our debates it has emerged that we are dealing here with a legal and political régime that works well, that is continually being improved and that admits the participation of all interested parties - a régime that is not only compatible with the United Nations system but that, even more, embodies United Nations principles and purposes. There is therefore no Antarctic problem. Instead, there seems to be a desire for additional knowledge and, eventually, increased participation, which can be duly met by the Antarctica Treaty and its system.

Mr. Wijewardane (Sri Lanka): For the third consecutive year we are considering the agenda item, "Question of Antarctica", in this Committee. In fact, however, the consideration of this item in the United Nations General Assembly has a history that goes well beyond the thirty-eighth session of 1983. In 1956 the delegation of India proposed that the issue of Antarctica should be on the agenda of the General Assembly. Since then, the issue has been raised intermittently. Antarctica constitutes one tenth of the surface of the world and is said to contain substantial quantities of unexploited mineral resources, along with living resources. The world has recognized the environmental, climatic, scientific and economic significance of Antarctica and the vital relationship of that ecosystem to the rest of the world. The Seventh Summit Meeting of Non-Aligned Countries held at New Delhi two years ago concluded that the resources of Antarctica should be developed for the benefit of mankind and used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

As may be recalled, at the New Delhi Summit Meeting it was also decided to call for a study of Antarctica by the United Nations, and that call was adopted by consensus in 1983 as General Assembly resolution 38/77. That wide agreement by the international community reflects the importance of Antarctica to the world community and the acceptance of the basic principle that the development and use of Antarctica should be for the benefit of all mankind.
My delegation would like once again to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General and his staff for the useful report they have submitted. That report reveals that 85 per cent of Antarctica has been unilaterally claimed by a few States on the basis of historical or legal reasons in the colonial era, at a time when many countries, like Sri Lanka, were under colonial rule, having neither the political independence nor the resources to engage upon explorations of Antarctica.
One of the striking features in the Secretary-General's report is that, even after the signing of the Antarctic Treaty, disputes over sovereignty claims still exist. They have been frozen - if I may use that word - only temporarily, although Antarctica has been free of armed conflict over such disputed claims. There is no effective guarantee that this present situation will continue.

The Antarctic Treaty, which was a result of the 1959 Washington Conference, was based on the criteria of participation in scientific research and exploration of Antarctica in the International Geophysical Year. Ever since then, admission to the Antarctic Treaty system has been limited to States that

"demonstrate...interest in the Antarctic by conducting substantial scientific activities there, such as the establishment of a scientific station or dispatch of a scientific expedition."

Therefore, owing to lack of resources and technology, the majority of developing countries such as Sri Lanka have not been qualified in the past to receive invitations. Notwithstanding that lack of universal participation, the Antarctic Treaty contains many praiseworthy objectives, such as that it is

"in the interest of all mankind that Antarctica shall continue...to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and shall not become the scene...of international discord." (United Nations Treaty Series, Vol. 403, pp. 71 et seq.)

The prohibition of nuclear explosions, the absence of conventional weapons and the ban on the dumping of radioactive waste material in Antarctica under the Treaty arrangement are welcome to the international community.

Although the Treaty has suspended or frozen the question of territorial sovereignty and rival claims and consequently resulted in an absence of international discord, that does not resolve the issue of sovereignty claims for all time. Because of the richness of the unexploited mineral deposits in
Antarctica and ownership of such deposits, the problem will not go away. There is no internationally accepted sovereignty in Antarctica, and the Treaty does not provide a régime governing the exploitation of resources. It is clear that the Treaty parties have already shown interest in the mineral deposits of Antarctica. A just and reasonable minerals régime may not be negotiated within the existing framework of the Treaty signed 25 years ago. A universally accepted régime should be negotiated on a just and equitable basis for the common benefit of all peoples. It is equally important to note the impact of other bilateral and multilateral treaties, such as the Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provide for exploitation of the areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Taking into consideration all those aspects and factors, a decision could be made only through the United Nations system with the participation of all interested Member States, on the basis of the principle of sovereign equality embodied in the United Nations Charter and irrespective of the economic and technological stage of development of Members.

The Declaration adopted by the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement held at Luanda in September 1985 stated:

"The Ministers noted that the General Assembly should remain seized of the Question of Antarctica...with a view to taking appropriate action, taking into account the concerns of members of the Movement."

The fact that this issue has been raised for the third successive year at the United Nations shows the importance of strengthening and expanding international co-operation in Antarctica. The principles of universality and interdependence motivate those who would like to see the General Assembly seized of this important subject.
My delegation acknowledges the merits of the Antarctic Treaty. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka stated at the fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly, Sri Lanka does not reject the Antarctic Treaty system but believes it is necessary to study its present operation and to consider relating any improvement of it to the implementation of its objectives to benefit all mankind. The present criteria for joining the Treaty system are selective. As mentioned earlier, we are concerned over the discriminatory aspect, and consider that participation should be based on the sovereign equality of Member States as embodied in the Charter. The two-tiered membership of the Antarctic Treaty system is not acceptable to my delegation because of its exclusivity and unaccountability to the international community. What is involved is the principle of multilateralism and the centrality of the United Nations system which, in this fortieth anniversary year, has been reaffirmed and upheld. We are also confused by the acceptance of membership in this discriminatory Treaty of those who object to similar provisions in other treaties and agreements.

In passing, Sri Lanka would observe that the racist régime of South Africa is also a party to the Antarctic Treaty, and we have serious doubts about the credibility and efficiency of arrangements for the non-militarization and peaceful use of Antarctica on that score. The political objectives of the Antarctic Treaty are as important as the scientific and technological objectives.

As we have already said in our country statement contained in the Secretary-General’s report, we support the call made at the seventh Summit Meeting of countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement and at the Luanda meeting of Foreign Ministers that the subject of Antarctica should remain within the purview of the United Nations. That does not mean, I repeat, that Sri Lanka rejects the Antarctic Treaty system. Because of the political, economic, scientific, geophysical, ecological and meteorological significance of Antarctica, and the
criteria adopted under the Treaty for granting membership, Sri Lanka considers that, by harmonizing the Antarctic Treaty system with the United Nations system, a legal régime similar to the Convention on the Law of the Sea or the Treaty on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space could be agreed upon. The co-operative working relationships that may be established with United Nations specialized agencies and international organizations under article III of the Treaty must be regularized to fall within the United Nations framework. This is best done in the General Assembly rather than through the individual bodies of the United Nations system, and the modalities we have in mind could include participation by specialized agencies if necessary. In order to achieve the above, Sri Lanka suggests that we strive for consensus in working out arrangements for participation by Consultative and Non-Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty and other United Nations Member States, represented on an equal footing. We must undertake that task at this session, focusing clearly on the relationship between the Antarctic Treaty system and the United Nations system. We do not prejudge the outcome of that inquiry. But to deny the right to have such an inquiry held objectively and with full participation is a serious affront to multilateral co-operation.

These proposals are made in a spirit of co-operation. A collective effort by all States in arriving at an agreement on a new legal régime based upon the Antarctic Treaty system would help to create a peaceful Antarctica free of international discord or armed conflict, and would enhance genuine international co-operation.

Before concluding, my delegation would like to express its gratitude to the delegation of Malaysia for its dedication to this task and the hard work it has done - as was amply demonstrated in the statement we have just heard from the Deputy Foreign Minister of Malaysia. We also thank the several speakers who have
preceded me in supporting a universally representative Antarctica régime and its accountability to the United Nations.

Mr. GUMUCIO GRANIER (Bolivia) (interpretation from Spanish): The seventh Summit Meeting of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries held at New Delhi in 1983 noted, in its Final Declaration, the growing interest of the international community in the Antarctic continent and, with a view to expanding international co-operation in that region, it recommended that the United Nations undertake a comprehensive study of Antarctica, taking into account all relevant factors including the Antarctic Treaty.

The ministerial Conference of Non-Aligned Countries held recently in Luanda, following the decision adopted at the seventh Summit Meeting and taking into account the debates held at the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, reaffirmed the interest of the international community in having this question continue to be the subject of careful analysis by our Organization.
As a non-aligned country, and noting with interest the resolution of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) which considers Antarctica to be the common heritage of mankind, Bolivia wishes to reiterate its view that this Committee should continue to devote careful attention to this item with a view to finding common ways of reaching appropriate rapprochement and co-ordination among the States signatories of the Antarctic Treaty which are also Members of the United Nations, the other States Members of the United Nations, and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system which carry out scientific work in Antarctica.

My delegation reiterates its appreciation for the hard work done by the countries signatories of the Antarctic Treaty carrying out scientific research in Antarctica. We also emphasize the efforts and contributions made by a number of South American countries. We wish also to reaffirm the principle of the use of that continent solely for peaceful purposes and that the major Powers should guarantee and verify that none of them uses Antarctica for military purposes.

My delegation nevertheless wishes to draw attention again to the universal dimension of the Antarctic. That must be maintained so that the international community may consider various matters related to that continent on the basis of forward-looking criteria and perspectives. Among these should be recognition that the living marine resources and mineral resources of Antarctica are the common heritage of mankind.

In that connection, the exploitation of those resources should be for the common good, and must be undertaken in keeping with standards established by the international community with due consideration for the conservation of ecosystems and for all other relevant factors of environmental protection.

My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his report submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session, under resolution 38/77. We consider that report to be a first and very valuable contribution to a new approach to a
preliminary analysis of the elements of this complex subject. I stress, however, that this is a preliminary approach, and my delegation would like to see that study supplemented by an additional report to fill some of the gaps left by the initial document. Specifically, my delegation would like to see the United Nations Secretariat pursue the study with a specific view to clarifying the role of the international community - particularly the United Nations - in the development of the Antarctic question, seeking a universalist approach which would allow appropriate co-ordination and harmonization of interests between the parties to the Antarctic Treaty and the rest of the international community, in conformity with the principle by which the wealth of Antarctica is the common heritage of mankind.

To that end, it would be interesting to hear views on the relationship among the régime for the exploitation of living marine resources, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources. Similarly, it would be interesting to investigate the possible relationship between the exploration and exploitation of mineral resources - as set out in the Law of the Sea Convention - and the provisions and practices in this connection agreed upon by the Antarctic Treaty countries.

I wish in conclusion to repeat my delegation's view that this question should be another bond strengthening the links among the members of the international community and maintaining Antarctica as a zone of international peace and security, and that its inestimable wealth, as the common heritage of mankind, should help improve the lives of all the peoples of the world, within a legal régime of international co-operation which respects the rights of all States, including the Antarctic Treaty States and preserving the higher interests of mankind as a whole.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.