



General Assembly

Sixty-third session

First Committee

23rd meeting

Wednesday, 10 June 2009, 11:15 a.m.
New York

Official Records

Chairperson: Mr. Marco Antonio Suazo (Honduras)

The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

Election of the Chairperson and the Bureau of the First Committee for the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 99 (a) of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, this meeting has been convened to elect the Chairperson of the First Committee for the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

I wish first, on behalf of the First Committee, to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session.

On behalf of the First Committee, I would like to convey to the other members of the Committee's Bureau at the sixty-third session — the Vice-Chairpersons, Mr. Ivan Mutavdžić of Croatia, Mr. Martin Zvachula of the Federated States of Micronesia and Mr. Miguel Graça of Portugal, and the Rapporteur, Mr. Coly Seck of Senegal — our appreciation for their valuable contribution and assistance in guiding the work of the Committee.

On a personal note, I wish to thank the Permanent Mission of Honduras to the United Nations, led by Ambassador Jorge Reina Idiaquez, for the support provided me in the exercise of my functions as Chairman. My thanks go also to the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for their confidence in me and in my country, Honduras.

We shall now proceed with the election, starting with the Chairperson of the First Committee. It is my privilege and honour to nominate the candidate of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, His Excellency Mr. José Luis Cancela, Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations, for the post of Chairperson of the First Committee for the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

Ambassador Cancela has served as the Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations in New York since July 2008. From 2005 to 2008, he was Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay. During that period, he also served as head of delegation to several high-level conferences and bodies.

From 2000 to 2005 Ambassador Cancela was Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Uruguay to Spain. Before that, from 1998, Ambassador Cancela was Director of the Economic and Trade Department. From 1996 to 1998, he was Chef de Cabinet of the Political Department of Foreign Affairs. From 1993 to 1996, he served at his country's embassy in Brussels. Prior to that, from 1991 to 1993, he was posted to the Embassy of Uruguay to Bulgaria. Ambassador Cancela joined the Uruguayan foreign service in 1988.

Ambassador Cancela holds a degree in law from the Universidad de la República in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Given his vast experience and impressive credentials, it is truly an honour for me to submit his candidature for the chairmanship of the Disarmament

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and International Security Committee to the Committee today.

Since there are no other nominations, may I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and with established practice, the First Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Ambassador José Luis Cancela of Uruguay elected Chairperson of the First Committee for the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly by acclamation?

It was so decided.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Committee, I congratulate Ambassador Cancela on his election and I pledge my personal support and cooperation, and that of the delegation of Honduras, to him as he carries out his duties throughout the sixty-fourth session.

Regarding the election of three Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur of the First Committee for the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, I would like to inform delegations of the following: the Committee secretariat has received four nominations for the posts of Vice-Chairperson and has not yet received a nomination for the post of Rapporteur. The following persons are candidates for the posts of Vice-Chairpersons: for the Group of African States, Mr. Hossam Aly of Egypt; for the Group of Asian States, Mr. Hilario G. Davide, Jr., of the Philippines; for the Group of Eastern European States, Ms. Tetyana Pokhval'ona of Ukraine; and for the Group of Western European and other States, Mr. Florian Laudi of Germany.

It is therefore necessary to allow some time for consultations as to which candidates should assume the posts of Vice-Chairperson and which candidate should assume the post of Rapporteur of the First Committee. Consultations will take place in the coming days, and the First Committee will revert to this matter at a later date, to be announced in a timely manner.

I now give the floor to the Chairperson of the First Committee for the sixty-fourth session, Ambassador José Luis Cancela.

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairperson, for your kind words and support, which I very much appreciate. I would also like to congratulate you on the

excellent work you have done at the helm of the First Committee.

On behalf of my Government, allow me to say what an honour it is for Uruguay and for me personally to be elected to the chairmanship of the First Committee for the sixty-fourth session. Allow me also to thank my regional group, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, for having placed their trust in me by nominating me for the chairmanship. As Chairperson, it is my hope that I will be able to contribute to continuing to promote the important work of one of the main and most representative bodies of the current disarmament machinery. I trust that I will be able to count on the backing and invaluable support of all delegations in this important challenge for my country. I should like to express the full willingness of the delegation of Uruguay to maintain contacts with all States interested in the issues on our intensive programme of work.

The sixty-fourth session of the First Committee will take place in a much more constructive and encouraging atmosphere than previous sessions. In recent months, we have been especially pleased to take note of a series of initiatives aimed at establishing a world free of nuclear weapons that put forth various ideas and political approaches to bring that about.

The more multilateral attitude of some nuclear Powers, whereby they have taken on greater responsibilities and commitments to negotiate in the area of disarmament; the five points that the Secretary-General introduced at the end of 2008 to achieve disarmament and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons; and the more positive atmosphere in the recently held third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which took place in May 2009: these are just a few positive illustrations of the fact that the political environment has changed and that the United Nations has a crucial role to play in this entire process. The recent adoption of a programme of work by the Conference on Disarmament, following a 12-year impasse, also shows that the multilateral disarmament machinery is a real vehicle for pursuing the ultimate goals of general and complete disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Since its independence, Uruguay has implemented a foreign policy of pacifism and full

commitment to international peace and security. Since it became a founding Member of the Organization, my country has spared no effort to implement the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as attested to by the fact that we are one of the main contributors of troops to United Nations peace missions. As a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which made the Latin American and Caribbean region the first densely populated nuclear-weapon-free zone, Uruguay, along with the other countries of our continent, has also contributed to preventing a potential arms race in the region, as well as to international efforts to promote nuclear non-proliferation in other regions of the world.

It is in that same spirit and with that same philosophy that Uruguay would like to reiterate its full commitment to international peace and security. That will be our guiding principle when we assume the chairmanship of the First Committee and proceed to carry out its duties.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): Before I adjourn this meeting, I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Sergio de Queiroz Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for all the support provided by his Office during our work, as well as to the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, represented by Mr. Timur Alasaniya, for its support to us.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.