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Summary record of the 2187th meeting

Topic:
Law of the non-navigational uses of international watercourses

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should not be beyond the ingenuity of the Commission to devise a way of bringing the subject within the confines of the topic.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

2187th MEETING

Thursday, 5 July 1990, at 3.35 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Jiuyong SHI

Present: Prince Ajibola, Mr. Al-Baharna, Mr. Al-Khasawneh, Mr. Al-Qaysi, Mr. Arangio-Ruiz, Mr. Barboza, Mr. Barsegov, Mr. Beesley, Mr. Bennouna, Mr. Calero Rodrigues, Mr. Díaz González, Mr. Francis, Mr. Graefrath, Mr. Hayes, Mr. Illueca, Mr. Koroma, Mr. Mahiou, Mr. McCaffrey, Mr. Njenga, Mr. Ogiso, Mr. Pawlak, Mr. Pellet, Mr. Sreenivasa Rao, Mr. Razafindralambo, Mr. Roucounas, Mr. Sepúlveda Gutiérrez, Mr. Thiam, Mr. Tomuschat, Mr. Yankov.

The law of the non-navigational uses of international watercourses (*continued*)* (A/CN.4/412 and Add.1 and 2,¹ A/CN.4/421 and Add.1 and 2,² A/CN.4/L.443, sect. F, A/CN.4/L.445)

[Agenda item 6]

DRAFT ARTICLES PROPOSED BY THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE

ARTICLES 22 TO 27

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Chairman of the Drafting Committee to introduce draft articles 22 to 27 as adopted by the Committee (A/CN.4/L.445).
2. Mr. MAHIOU (Chairman of the Drafting Committee) said that he first wished to thank the members of the Drafting Committee for their constructive spirit and hard work. He also thanked the members of the Commission who were not members of the Drafting Committee but had helped in its work, as well as the Special Rapporteur, whose assistance had been most valuable, and the secretariat.
3. In organizing its work, the Drafting Committee had borne in mind the Commission's stated intention to make every effort to complete the second reading of the draft articles on jurisdictional immunities of States and their property at the present session and to give priority, during its current members' term of office, to the topics of the draft Code of Crimes against the Peace and Security of Mankind and the law of the non-

navigational uses of international watercourses. The Committee had been unable to start with the topic of jurisdictional immunities because the third report of the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Ogiso, which incorporated suggestions on the articles referred to the Drafting Committee at the previous session, had not yet been distributed in all languages at the beginning of the present session. The Committee had therefore decided to devote its first two weeks' work to the topic of international watercourses, on which it had then spent two additional meetings.

4. At the beginning of the present session, four draft articles on the law of the non-navigational uses of international watercourses had been pending in the Drafting Committee: draft articles 16 [17] (Pollution of international watercourse[s] [systems]) and 17 [18] (Protection of the environment of international watercourse[s] [systems]), submitted by the Special Rapporteur in his fourth report (A/CN.4/412 and Add.1 and 2) in 1988; and draft articles 22 (Water-related hazards, harmful conditions and other adverse effects) and 23 (Water-related dangers and emergency situations), submitted in the fifth report (A/CN.4/421 and Add.1 and 2) in 1989.

5. The Drafting Committee had been able to complete its work on those four articles, which were numbered according to the provisional numbering system used by the Special Rapporteur. Thus, in order to complete the draft articles as a whole, the Committee had only to finish work on the articles referred to it at the present session or yet to be proposed by the Special Rapporteur, as well as on article 1, on the use of terms. It was therefore highly likely that the Commission would be able, as it intended, to complete the first reading of the draft articles before the end of the term of office of its current members in 1991.

6. He recalled that the Commission had already adopted the first three parts of the draft at previous sessions. Part I (Introduction) contained five articles, the first of which, on the use of terms, was still under consideration; part II (General principles) consisted of articles 6 to 10; and part III (Planned measures) contained articles 11 to 21. The articles now proposed by the Drafting Committee constituted part IV (Protection and preservation) (arts. 22-25) and part V (Harmful conditions and emergency situations) (arts. 26-27) of the draft.

7. Articles 22 to 25 of part IV corresponded to draft articles 16 [17] and 17 [18] submitted by the Special Rapporteur in his fourth report in 1988,³ which had dealt with pollution of international watercourses and with protection of the environment of international watercourses, respectively. The Drafting Committee had rearranged the provisions of those articles on the basis of the view expressed by several members of the Commission that, because the concept of protection was broader than the concept of pollution, the duty to

* Resumed from the 2167th meeting.

¹ Reproduced in *Yearbook* . . . 1988, vol. II (Part One).

² Reproduced in *Yearbook* . . . 1989, vol. II (Part One).

³ For the texts of draft articles 16 [17] and 17 [18] submitted by the Special Rapporteur in his fourth report and a summary of the Commission's discussion on them at its fortieth session, see *Yearbook* . . . 1988, vol. II (Part Two), pp. 26 *et seq.*, footnote 73 and paras. 138-168, and pp. 31-32, footnote 91 and paras. 169-179, respectively.

protect watercourses should be stated before the duty to prevent or reduce pollution.

ARTICLE 22 (Protection and preservation of ecosystems)

8. The text proposed by the Drafting Committee for article 22 read:

PART IV

PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION

Article 22. Protection and preservation of ecosystems

Watercourse States shall, individually or jointly, protect and preserve the ecosystems of international watercourse[s] [systems].

9. The obligation to protect international watercourses had been stated in paragraph 1 of draft article 17 [18] and, in order to strengthen that obligation as formulated by the Special Rapporteur, the Drafting Committee had deleted the words “take all reasonable measures to”. Moreover, following the model of article 192 of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, it had made the content of the obligation clearer by adding the more active and dynamic idea of preservation to that of protection. In order to ensure consistency in the use of terms, it had replaced the expression “individually and in co-operation” by the expression used by the Special Rapporteur in paragraph 2 of the article, namely “individually or jointly”, which was taken from article 194, paragraph 1, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The obligation to act “jointly” was an application of certain general obligations contained in part II of the draft, in particular in articles 6 and 9.

10. For the rest, the Drafting Committee’s efforts had been aimed primarily at simplification. The Committee had decided that the words “the environment of an international watercourse [system], including the ecology of the watercourse and of surrounding areas” had two disadvantages. First, they were not clear enough because they referred to the vague idea of the environment of an international watercourse; secondly, they lent themselves to conflicting and undesirable interpretations, namely that the environment of the watercourse did not include the watercourse itself and that the environment included areas which had only a very distant connection with the watercourse. The Drafting Committee had therefore preferred to use the concept of an ecosystem, which had a relatively precise scientific meaning, since it referred to the natural systems necessary for the conservation of the river, and which was increasingly being recognized as a legal concept, as shown, for example, by the work of the Economic Commission for Europe on water management. That point would be explained in the commentary to the article.

11. The Drafting Committee had considered that the expression “impairment, degradation or destruction” was unnecessary, since the concepts of protection and preservation of the watercourse were general in scope, and even that it did not fully reflect the intention of the text, which was to impose an obligation on States not merely to refrain from degrading the watercourse, but also to improve its condition, if possible. The Committee had also deleted the words “or serious danger

thereof”, which it had found superfluous because the obligation stated in the text was worded very generally, as well as the words “due to activities within their territories”, which had also seemed unnecessary.

12. He would not comment at the current stage on paragraph 2 of draft article 17 [18] as originally submitted by the Special Rapporteur, because it had served as the basis for a separate article, namely article 25, which he would introduce later. The title originally proposed for article 17 [18] had, of course, been amended to take account of the changes made in the text.

13. Prince AJIBOLA said that he could support the proposed text, but thought that the word “[systems]” should be deleted, since the concept of an ecosystem had been introduced.

14. Mr. AL-QAYSI said that that problem depended on the choice the Commission would make between the expressions “international watercourse” and “international watercourse system”. The question had not yet been settled in connection with article 1 [Use of terms]. It would therefore be better to keep the text as it stood.

15. Mr. MAHIOU (Chairman of the Drafting Committee) said that the word “system” appeared in square brackets throughout the draft articles and not only in article 22: the Commission would decide at the appropriate time whether or not to retain it. He also noted that, in the present instance, the concept of a “watercourse system” was different from that of an “ecosystem”.

16. Mr. Sreenivasa RAO requested the Special Rapporteur to define the concept of an ecosystem in the commentary to article 22.

17. Mr. TOMUSCHAT noted that the expression “individually or jointly” was used in several of the articles proposed by the Drafting Committee. Linked as they were by the conjunction “or”, the two terms seemed altogether mutually exclusive. In the circumstances, it might be better to draw on the wording of Article 56 of the Charter of the United Nations, the key article in that regard, and use the expression “individually and jointly”.

18. Mr. McCAFFREY (Special Rapporteur) said that, in English at least, the expression “individually or jointly” was also understood to mean “individually and jointly”: the conjunction “or” was not strictly speaking disjunctive in that case. Moreover, as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee had pointed out, the expression was taken from article 194 of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, where it was followed by the words “as appropriate”, which the Drafting Committee had apparently considered superfluous. In any case, the commentary would explain that the two terms used in the expression were not mutually exclusive. He nevertheless thought that the Commission should take note of Mr. Tomuschat’s comment in order to come back to it when considering the draft articles as a whole. For the time being, he would leave it to the Chairman of the Drafting Committee to decide whether that change should be made at the current stage.

19. Mr. BENNOUNA said that the text should be kept as it was and that he shared the view of the Spe-

cial Rapporteur. The expression "individually or jointly" meant that the obligation was imposed on each of the States individually when they were not acting jointly by agreement. Actually, when they were acting jointly by agreement, they were also acting individually. If they could do more, they could do less. Acting jointly also meant that States could decide to take unilateral measures, each on its own account, but by agreement. The agreement went beyond unilateral action and included it. "Jointly" included and encompassed "individually", but the reverse was not true: States might well act individually because they had not arrived at an agreement.

20. However, if the expression "individually and jointly" were used, that would imply both individual and joint measures, and the two were not always necessary.

21. Mr. Sreenivasa RAO said he, too, thought that the text should be kept as it was. He was satisfied with the Special Rapporteur's explanation concerning the interpretation of the expression "individually or jointly". Taking measures "individually or jointly" allowed the adoption of individual or joint measures, as necessary. In the case of international watercourses, States were normally expected to take measures relating to the part of the watercourse under their jurisdiction. They thus acted individually in the first place and could act jointly later if there was a need for them to do so. Like Mr. Bennouna, he was afraid that use of the expression "individually and jointly" might make it an obligation for States to act jointly even when that was not necessary.

22. Mr. BARSEGOV said that he endorsed the text proposed by the Drafting Committee: it gave riparian States full freedom to act both individually and collectively and it was in keeping with the type of instrument envisaged, namely a framework agreement.

23. Prince AJIBOLA said that he was satisfied with the explanations given and accepted the text proposed by the Drafting Committee.

24. Mr. MAHIOU (Chairman of the Drafting Committee) said that he shared the views expressed by the Special Rapporteur and by Mr. Bennouna, Mr. Sreenivasa Rao and Mr. Barsegov.

25. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Commission agreed provisionally to adopt article 22 as proposed by the Drafting Committee.

Article 22 was adopted.

ARTICLE 23 (Prevention, reduction and control of pollution)

26. Mr. MAHIOU (Chairman of the Drafting Committee) introduced the text proposed by the Drafting Committee for article 23, which read:

Article 23. Prevention, reduction and control of pollution

1. For the purposes of the present articles, "pollution of an international watercourse [system]" means any detrimental alteration in the composition or quality of the waters of an international watercourse [system] which results directly or indirectly from human conduct.

2. Watercourse States shall, individually or jointly, prevent, reduce and control pollution of an international watercourse [system] that may

cause appreciable harm to other watercourse States or to their environment, including harm to human health or safety, to the use of the waters for any beneficial purpose or to the living resources of the international watercourse [system]. Watercourse States shall take steps to harmonize their policies in this connection.

3. Watercourse States shall, at the request of any of them, consult with a view to establishing lists of substances the introduction of which into the waters of an international watercourse [system] is to be prohibited, limited, investigated or monitored.

27. Article 23 had originally been submitted by the Special Rapporteur as draft article 16 [17]⁴ and its provisions dealt mainly with the definition of, and the obligation to prevent, pollution. While retaining most of the original text, the Drafting Committee had decided that it would be useful to focus more on the definition of pollution and to highlight the obligations relating expressly to prevention.

28. Paragraph 1, which was virtually the same as paragraph 1 of the original text, defined pollution of an international watercourse system as "any detrimental alteration in the composition or quality of the waters of an international watercourse [system] which results directly or indirectly from human conduct". That wording made the paragraph closer to article IX of the Helsinki Rules on the Uses of the Waters of International Rivers adopted by the International Law Association in 1966 (see A/CN.4/412 and Add.1 and 2, para. 69). It did not mention any particular type of pollution or polluting agent. It also did not specify the degree as of which pollution had legal consequences. The definition was not intended to establish a link between pollution and the threshold of tolerance to be respected. It did not prejudge the question of wrongfulness. It thus encompassed all pollution, whether or not the extent of the harm met the criterion for "appreciable harm" referred to in article 8 of the draft. It did not specify how pollution was caused, except that it must result from "human conduct". The Drafting Committee had considered that it would be appropriate to have a general definition of pollution presented in that way and then, in other paragraphs, to establish the link between pollution and the degree as of which it had legal consequences and gave rise to certain obligations.

29. The definition in paragraph 1 did not call for any particular comments. In most instruments on the question, pollution was defined as the "introduction" of something into water, air, the environment, etc. That introduction caused the detrimental alteration. In the case of watercourses, however, the detrimental alteration could also be caused by the "withdrawal" of something or result from a natural cause. The Drafting Committee had considered that the cause of pollution must be human conduct, usually through the introduction of something into the watercourse, but, from a drafting point of view, it was difficult to include that idea in paragraph 1 as it now stood without making it less general in nature. How could reference be made to the introduction of something into a watercourse without saying what it was? That was precisely what the Drafting Committee had been trying to avoid. It had therefore considered it preferable to keep the para-

⁴ See footnote 3 above.

graph as it stood and to explain in the commentary that detrimental alterations were usually caused by the introduction of something into the watercourse.

30. The Drafting Committee had preferred to speak of a “detrimental” alteration rather than using other similar adjectives, such as “harmful”, in order to keep the definition of pollution general in nature. It had considered that it was better not to give any examples of detrimental alterations and to deal with that question in the commentary. Detrimental alterations included harm to living resources, to human health, to the use of the waters for any beneficial purpose, etc. The commentary would also give specific examples of alterations, such as changes in the physical and chemical properties of the waters. The term “composition” included the content of the waters in mineral substances and natural chemical substances, as would also be explained in the commentary.

31. In considering paragraph 1, the Drafting Committee had been of the opinion that “biological” changes in the waters were not really pollution in the sense in which it was usually understood. Biological changes were those resulting from the introduction of alien or new species and the Committee had decided to make changes of that kind, which could be extremely detrimental, the subject of a new article, article 24.

32. Finally, the Drafting Committee had considered that, since paragraph 1 dealt only with the definition of pollution, it might ultimately be better to include it in article 1 on the use of terms.

33. Paragraph 2 was a direct application of article 8, which enunciated the duty of watercourse States not to cause appreciable harm to other watercourse States. In order to give specific form to that idea, the Drafting Committee had drawn on article 194, paragraph 1, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Paragraph 2 was based on four key elements: (a) the obligation of States to act individually or jointly, as appropriate; (b) the obligation to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the watercourse; (c) the obligation to prevent appreciable harm from being caused to other watercourse States—the transboundary effect; (d) the obligation of watercourse States to take steps to harmonize their policies.

34. Two of those elements were new. The Drafting Committee had considered that, in practice, the phenomenon of pollution could be broken down into two phases: the first step was when something happened to cause pollution and the obligation of “prevention” came into play; there then followed the detrimental situation created once the first step had been taken. In such a case, there were two possible courses: either to leave the pollution as it was and simply prevent it from getting worse, or to take steps to reduce the danger and to improve the detrimental situation that had been created. The Drafting Committee had chosen the second solution. That was also the point of view adopted in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Consequently, the obligation to prevent pollution enunciated in paragraph 2 was supplemented by the obligation to reduce and control pollution.

35. The obligation of States to take steps to harmonize their policies was also new. Drawing on article 194, paragraph 1, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Drafting Committee hoped to make it clear that watercourse States had to make untiring efforts to harmonize their policies.

36. The term “ecology”, which had appeared in the original paragraph 2, had been replaced by the term “environment”, which was, in the Drafting Committee’s opinion, broader in meaning and encompassed “ecology”. That interpretation would be indicated in the commentary.

37. Paragraph 3 reproduced the provisions of the original paragraph 3, to which some minor changes had been made to make the meaning clearer. The reference to “species” had thus been deleted, for, as he had explained in connection with the reference to “biological” changes in the original paragraph 1 (see para. 31 above), the Drafting Committee had decided to include a separate article on that subject.

38. The Drafting Committee had amended the title of the article to take account of its content, namely prevention, reduction and control of pollution.

39. Mr. Sreenivasa RAO said that, although he was not a member of the Drafting Committee, he would like to make some comments on article 23. He had no problem with paragraph 1, which contained a general definition. In paragraph 2, however, he was concerned about the use of the indicative mood in the second sentence, which read: “Watercourse States *shall* take steps . . .”. States should, of course, be invited to take gradual and regular steps to harmonize their policies, but they could not be ordered to do so because the harmonization of policies was a lengthy and complicated process. As the Chairman of the Drafting Committee had, moreover, rightly pointed out in introducing the article, it had to be made clear that watercourse States must make untiring efforts to harmonize their policies. He would therefore prefer the use of the word “should” in the conditional mood. He had no objection to the wording of paragraph 3.

40. Mr. BENNOUNA said that his comments would be mainly of a drafting nature. In paragraph 3, there seemed to be a decrescendo in the words “substances the introduction of which into the waters of an international watercourse [system] is to be prohibited, limited, investigated or monitored”, which went from the most restrictive to the least restrictive measures. In that case, should the word “monitored” not come before the word “investigated”? He was also not sure that the word *étudiée* in the French text was really the equivalent of the word “investigated”, for which *analysée* would be a better translation.

41. Mr. PELLET said that, in paragraph 2, the words “pollution . . . that may cause appreciable harm . . . to the use of the waters for any beneficial purpose” did not make sense, because harm could be caused to things or to persons but not to activities. In the case of the use of water, reference should have been made to obstacles or problems. The problem might be solved by introducing a new word in the list and placing the reference to the use of the waters at the end of the sentence, which might then read: “. . . that may cause

appreciable harm to other watercourse States or to their environment, including harm to human health or safety or to the living resources of the international watercourse [system], or problems in the use of the waters for any beneficial purpose.”

42. Prince AJIBOLA said he agreed with Mr. Sreenivasa Rao that the word “shall” made the second sentence of paragraph 2 too restrictive. In paragraph 3, the words “the introduction of which” did not fit into the text very well. He would like the Chairman of the Drafting Committee to provide some explanations in that regard.

43. Mr. KOROMA, referring to the comments made by Mr. Sreenivasa Rao and Prince Ajibola concerning the use of the word “shall” in the second sentence of paragraph 2, said that the word “should” would be just as mandatory.

44. Mr. Sreenivasa RAO said he thought that the Drafting Committee’s intention was to encourage States to harmonize their policies. If the words “shall” and “should” seemed too peremptory, it might be necessary to find other wording and provide explanations in the commentary.

45. Mr. MAHIOU (Chairman of the Drafting Committee), replying to the comments made, said he could agree with Mr. Bennouna’s proposal that the order of the words at the end of paragraph 3 should be changed and that the word “monitored” should come before the word “investigated”. The word *étudiée* in the French text had been chosen for lack of a better term and he did not see any reason why it should not be replaced if someone proposed a better solution.

46. With regard to the comment made by Mr. Pellet, he noted that the wording of paragraph 2 was based on the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which referred to “hindrance to marine activities” (art. 1, para. 1 (4)). The idea of “hindrance” might thus be used and the text could be rearranged accordingly, so as to read: “. . . that may cause appreciable harm to other watercourse States or to their environment, including harm to human health or safety or to the living resources of the international watercourse [system], or hinder the use of the waters for any beneficial purpose.” However, the Commission’s plenary meetings did not seem to be the best place for such drafting work.

47. Replying to Mr. Sreenivasa Rao, he said that the use of the indicative in the second sentence of paragraph 2, namely “Watercourse States *shall* take steps . . .”, was the Drafting Committee’s choice. It was for the Commission to decide whether or not it wished to retain those words.

48. The comment made by Prince Ajibola did not seem to apply to the French text of paragraph 3, whose meaning was quite clear. There were regulations which prohibited the introduction of certain substances into rivers.

49. Mr. YANKOV said that, in his opinion, article 23 reflected the development of environmental law over the past 10 years or so, and particularly since the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environ-

ment. Its provisions were fully in keeping with the Helsinki Rules on the Uses of the Waters of International Rivers adopted by the International Law Association in 1966 (see A/CN.4/412 and Add.1 and 2, footnote 30 (a) (ii)) and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. However, paragraph 2 did not refer to all the types of harm listed in article 1 of the 1982 Convention. He was thinking in particular of the reduction of amenities. Was that omission deliberate?

50. With regard to the harmonization of policies and the use of the word “shall” in the second sentence of paragraph 2, he pointed out that the question of the choice between the words “should” and “shall” had already arisen on other occasions. In the present case, however, what was involved was harmonization, in other words a process that presupposed some agreement between the parties concerned. The meaning of the word “shall” in that context could therefore not be very stringent. He suggested that the article should be based on the various conventions on the law of the sea and that the word “shall” should be retained. The word “should” was not so strict and did not belong in a legal instrument.

51. Mr. McCAFFREY (Special Rapporteur), replying to Prince Ajibola, said he realized that the wording of the last part of paragraph 3 was awkward, but the goal was to draft as precise a text as possible. Since Mr. Yankov had asked why paragraph 2 did not refer to amenities, he said that the Drafting Committee had probably wanted to give only a few examples and had therefore used the word “including” before the list and the word “or” in the list itself. Moreover, the idea of the environment included amenities. Perhaps amenities could be referred to in the commentary.

52. He agreed with Mr. Pellet that it was difficult to speak of harm to a use, but such wording was based on a number of precedents, including the definition of pollution contained in article 2, paragraph 1, of the Montreal Rules of International Law Applicable to Transfrontier Pollution adopted by the International Law Association in 1982 (see A/CN.4/412 and Add.1 and 2, para. 70), which read:

“Pollution” means any introduction by man, directly or indirectly, of substances or energy into the environment resulting in deleterious effects of such a nature as to endanger human health, harm living resources, ecosystems and material property and impair amenities or interfere with other legitimate uses of the environment.

Although he would not insist on its adoption, his proposal was that the end of the first sentence of paragraph 2 should be amended to read: “. . . including harm to human health or safety or to the living resources of the international watercourse [system] or an interference with the use of the waters for any beneficial purpose.”

53. Mr. MAHIOU (Chairman of the Drafting Committee) suggested that the Special Rapporteur’s proposal might be amended slightly to read: “. . . including harm to human health or safety or to the living resources of the international watercourse [system] that may interfere with the use of the waters for any beneficial purpose.”

54. Mr. Sreenivasa RAO said that the plenary meetings were not the place for such drafting questions. He suggested that the Special Rapporteur should be asked to include additional explanations in the commentary to article 23 with a view to the second reading.

55. Mr. BENNOUNA said that it would be regrettable if the text of article 23 did not include the improvement proposed by Mr. Pellet and agreed to by the Special Rapporteur and the Chairman of the Drafting Committee.

56. Mr. MAHIOU (Chairman of the Drafting Committee) said that, following consultations with the members of the Commission concerned, he was proposing the following text for the first sentence of paragraph 2:

“Watercourse States shall, individually or jointly, prevent, reduce and control pollution of an international watercourse [system] that may cause appreciable harm to other watercourse States or to their environment, including harm to human health or safety or to the living resources of the international watercourse [system] or an interference with the use of the waters for any beneficial purpose.”

57. Mr. Sreenivasa RAO said that he could not accept that text because the words “appreciable harm” were qualified by the idea of “interference”.

58. Mr. YANKOV said that it might be preferable to use the wording of the definition of marine pollution which was cited in annex III of the report of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment⁵ and which was virtually universally accepted. To that end, the words “or an interference with the use of the waters for any beneficial purpose” at the end of the text proposed by the Chairman of the Drafting Committee (para. 56 above) could be replaced by the words “or an impairment of quality for use of the waters for any beneficial purpose and reduction of amenities”.

59. Mr. McCAFFREY (Special Rapporteur) said that the Drafting Committee had not overlooked the many different definitions of pollution contained, for example, in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and in the International Law Association’s Helsinki Rules and Montreal Rules. The definition in article 23, paragraph 1, was close to the one contained in the Helsinki Rules, but ILA had departed from it in 1982 in its Montreal Rules. The definition embodied in the Convention on the Law of the Sea related to the marine environment and did not apply exactly to watercourses. A definition could not simply be moved unchanged from one area to another. The definition he had proposed was much more detailed than the one now before the Commission, but the Drafting Committee had considered, rightly, that it was too detailed and that it needed to be simplified. However, paragraph 2 of article 23 and article 24 supplemented it. He thought that a reference to amenities could indeed be added to the list in paragraph 2, but feared that members of the Commission might wish to

add other elements to be protected as well. An “alteration of quality” was the essence of pollution and was therefore implicitly present in the definition of pollution contained in paragraph 1. The idea of interference was indeed an aspect of appreciable harm and its inclusion in the new text proposed for the first sentence of paragraph 2 (para. 56 above) was the result of the grammatical comment made by Mr. Pellet. In his own view, interference was synonymous with harm. For lack of a better solution, he would prefer to use the term “interference”.

60. Mr. Sreenivasa RAO, supported by Mr. BARSEGOV, said that the debate confirmed his impression that the Commission could not act as a drafting committee because there was so little time available to it. It would be better to come back to the problem of wording on second reading.

61. Mr. DÍAZ GONZÁLEZ said that he had a general reservation about the Spanish version of the articles under consideration.

62. Mr. Sreenivasa RAO, recalling that he found the word “shall” in the second sentence of paragraph 2 too peremptory, said that the problem of the harmonization of policies might be dealt with in the commentary.

63. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Commission agreed provisionally to adopt article 23 as proposed by the Drafting Committee.

Article 23 was adopted.

ARTICLE 24 (Introduction of alien or new species)

64. Mr. MAHIOU (Chairman of the Drafting Committee) introduced the text proposed by the Drafting Committee for article 24, which read:

Article 24. Introduction of alien or new species

Watercourse States shall take all measures necessary to prevent the introduction of species, alien or new, into an international watercourse [system] which may have effects detrimental to other watercourse States.

65. The Drafting Committee had reached the conclusion that that aspect of the preservation of international watercourses should be dealt with in a separate provision. Article 24 was based on article 196 of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, entitled “Use of technologies or introduction of alien or new species”, but the Drafting Committee had used only the second of those two concepts, since the first, which related primarily to technologies for the exploitation of the sea-bed, did not apply in the case of watercourses. The commentary would make it clear that the text referred to the introduction of alien or new species into the watercourse itself and did not concern fish-farming enterprises which might be established along the watercourse, although they were separate from it.

66. The expression “prevent the introduction of species” indicated that article 24 applied to activities by government authorities and private individuals, but not to what might happen as a result of the play of natural forces. The Drafting Committee had used the expression “take all measures necessary to prevent”, rather than the words “shall prevent”, in order to indicate that the obligation of watercourse States was to carry

⁵ Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, 5-16 June 1972 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.73.II.A.14 and corrigendum), p. 73.

out the necessary studies and take the necessary precautions so that the introduction of alien or new species would not have detrimental effects for other watercourse States. A watercourse State would therefore not be regarded as having breached its obligation if the introduction of an alien or new species had, contrary to what might reasonably be foreseen, negative consequences for other watercourse States.

67. Mr. ARANGIO-RUIZ said that he was not sure how article 24 related to article 23, paragraph 2, on the one hand, and to article 25, on the other. With regard to the first point, he asked whether the words "or to their environment", which were used in article 23, paragraph 2, had deliberately been left out of article 24 and, if so, why. Perhaps the commentary might give some explanations in that regard. On the second point, since the introduction of alien or new species into a watercourse could have effects detrimental to the marine environment, he was surprised that no link had been established between article 24 and article 25, which related to the protection and preservation of that environment.

68. Mr. McCAFFREY (Special Rapporteur) said that the lack of a reference to the environment in article 24 was probably an omission. If members of the Commission so agreed, such a reference could be included. With regard to the second point, he noted that, because it was so general, article 25 applied to situations such as that referred to by Mr. Arangio-Ruiz, namely where the introduction of an alien or new species into a watercourse had effects detrimental to the marine environment. That could, however, be explained in the commentary to article 25.

69. Mr. YANKOV, noting that article 24 was the only article in which the words "individually or jointly" were not used in connection with the measures to be taken by States, asked whether that omission was deliberate. If it was not, those words should be added. With regard to the comment made by Mr. Arangio-Ruiz, he pointed out that a change in the biological balance of a watercourse could affect the marine environment, but that was not always the case. It was, moreover, quite obvious that article 25 applied to that type of situation, since it was a known fact, for example, that enclosed seas were, in most cases, polluted by rivers. He would therefore prefer the text of article 24 to be retained as it now stood.

70. Mr. AL-QAYSI asked whether the word "species" also meant plant species. He also did not see when article 24 would apply: what did the expression "have effects detrimental to other watercourse States" mean? Did it refer to effects detrimental to the uses of the watercourse or did it also refer, for example, to effects detrimental to the economies of other watercourse States? He would like clarification on that point.

71. Mr. BARSEGOV said that he was not in favour of adding the words "or to their environment" to article 24. It was quite clear that reference was being made to effects detrimental to the environment of other watercourse States and not, for example, to their government machinery. The addition of the words in

question would therefore change the meaning of the provision.

72. Mr. Sreenivasa RAO said that he agreed with Mr. Yankov and Mr. Al-Qaysi that the possibilities for the application of article 24 should be explained. He also agreed with Mr. Barsegov that the words "or to their environment" should not be added. He was, moreover, not sure which legal criterion would be applied to determine whether effects were "detrimental" and how that term differed—from a legal point of view, of course—from other expressions such as "appreciable harm", which was used in article 23, paragraph 2, and in article 8 as provisionally adopted.

73. Mr. NJENGA said that he agreed with the wording of article 24 and feared that, in trying to explain the context, the scope of the provision might be restricted. In reply to Mr. Al-Qaysi, he noted that the word "species" also meant plant species.

74. Mr. MAHIOU (Chairman of the Drafting Committee), replying to Mr. Yankov, said that the omission of the words "individually or jointly" in article 24 was not deliberate and that, if members of the Commission so agreed, those words would be added.

75. Mr. Barsegov had answered Mr. Arangio-Ruiz's first question: in view of the context, reference was being made to the environment within the jurisdiction of watercourse States.

76. With regard to the comments made by Mr. Sreenivasa Rao and Mr. Al-Qaysi concerning the words "effects detrimental", he said he thought that, although those words could also mean effects detrimental to the economy or health situation of other watercourse States, it was difficult to say so in the text of the article without making it less general. Explanations in that regard could be given in the commentary.

77. Mr. CALERO RODRIGUES said that, although he would have no objection if the words "individually or jointly" were added, he thought that their omission in article 24 was reasonable because articles 23, 25 and 26, in which they were included, related to very general obligations and very broad measures which could require joint action by States. Article 24, however, related to a very particular situation involving the introduction of alien or new species, which, in most cases, occurred in the territory of only one State and would only rarely require joint measures.

78. With regard to the fact that article 24 did not refer to the environment, he was of the opinion that, even in the articles where such a reference was included, it was not essential. It was even less essential in article 24, because the likelihood was that the effects of the introduction of alien or new species would be more limited. The problem could, however, be explained in the commentary.

79. On a general point, he was afraid that, if the Commission continued to discuss every word of the proposed articles, it would be repeating the in-depth discussion which had taken place in the Drafting Committee. It could, of course, do so, but it must not forget that it had a schedule to keep.

80. Mr. AL-QAYSI pointed out that article 24 was new, since it had been produced by the Drafting Committee, and that the Commission had never discussed it in a plenary meeting.

81. He asked whether the expression “effects detrimental to other watercourse States” meant effects detrimental “to uses of international watercourse[s] [systems] and of their waters for purposes other than navigation and to measures of conservation related to the uses of those watercourse[s] [systems] and their waters”, as provided in article 2, paragraph 1, on the scope of the present articles, or whether the Drafting Committee thought that the expression also referred to effects in other areas. He would have no objection if article 24 went beyond the scope of the present articles, but, if it did, it should be so stated in the commentary. If, however, the scope of article 24 was limited by article 2, paragraph 1, that should be indicated in the text of the article.

82. Mr. YANKOV said that, while it was clear that, in article 196, paragraph 1, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, reference was being made to prevention of the detrimental effects which the introduction of alien or new species might have on the marine environment—in other words, the environment—the same was not true in article 24. The text of the article should therefore state clearly that it referred to effects detrimental “to the environment of other watercourse States”. He would not insist that the words “individually or jointly” be added to article 24, but he did believe that it should be explained in the commentary why those words were not included, so that it would not be thought that there had been an omission. He was, moreover, of the opinion that those words could be deleted in the other articles, since States could not act otherwise than “individually or jointly” and the words in question only made the texts heavier.

83. Mr. ARANGIO-RUIZ said he would insist that a reference to the environment be included in article 24, first, because that had been done in other articles and, secondly, because of the relationship between article 24 and article 25.

84. Mr. MAHIU (Chairman of the Drafting Committee) said that article 23, paragraph 2, referred explicitly to the environment because it related to pollution in general. Article 24 dealt with a very particular situation, namely the introduction of alien or new species whose possible effects on the environment could not be known. Moreover, harm to the environment was covered by the concept of “detrimental effects”. He would, however, not object if members of the Commission wished to include a reference to the environment in article 24.

85. As Mr. Al-Qaysi had said, article 24 was a new provision. The question with which it dealt had, however, been discussed by the Special Rapporteur in his fourth report (A/CN.4/412 and Add.1 and 2), as well as by the Commission itself, which had concluded at the time that it should be the subject of a separate article.

86. Mr. KOROMA asked Mr. Arangio-Ruiz not to insist that the environment be explicitly referred to in article 24.

87. He also thought that the present discussion proved that the Commission had to have the necessary time to consider the Drafting Committee’s reports. Members of the Commission could not be required to adopt articles in haste.

88. Mr. AL-QAYSI and Mr. MAHIU (Chairman of the Drafting Committee) proposed that the Commission should defer a decision on article 24 until the next meeting.

89. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no objections, he would take it that the Commission agreed to defer a decision on article 24 until the next meeting.

It was so agreed.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

2188th MEETING

Friday, 6 July 1990, at 10.05 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Jiuyong SHI

Present: Prince Ajibola, Mr. Al-Baharna, Mr. Al-Qaysi, Mr. Arangio-Ruiz, Mr. Barboza, Mr. Barsegov, Mr. Beesley, Mr. Bennouna, Mr. Calero Rodrigues, Mr. Díaz González, Mr. Francis, Mr. Graefrath, Mr. Hayes, Mr. Illueca, Mr. Koroma, Mr. Mahiou, Mr. McCaffrey, Mr. Njenga, Mr. Pawlak, Mr. Pellet, Mr. Sreenivasa Rao, Mr. Razafindralambo, Mr. Roucouas, Mr. Sepúlveda Gutiérrez, Mr. Thiam, Mr. Tomuschat.

The law of the non-navigational uses of international watercourses (*concluded*) (A/CN.4/412 and Add.1 and 2,¹ A/CN.4/421 and Add.1 and 2,² A/CN.4/427 and Add.1,³ A/CN.4/L.443, sect. F, A/CN.4/L.445, ILC(XLII)/Conf.Room Doc. 3)

[Agenda item 6]

DRAFT ARTICLES PROPOSED BY THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE (*concluded*)

ARTICLE 24 (Introduction of alien or new species)⁴ (*concluded*)

1. Mr. McCaffrey (Special Rapporteur) said that the Drafting Committee proposed the following revised text for article 24:

“Article 24. Introduction of alien or new species.

¹ Reproduced in *Yearbook . . . 1988*, vol. II (Part One).

² Reproduced in *Yearbook . . . 1989*, vol. II (Part One).

³ Reproduced in *Yearbook . . . 1990*, vol. II (Part One).

⁴ For the text, see 2187th meeting, para. 64.