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President: Mr. Ismat KITTANI (Iraq)

AGENDA ITEM 8

General debate (*continued*)

1. Mr. TIENTARABOUM (Upper Volta) (*interpretation from French*): Thirty-seven years ago, almost to the day, on 26 June 1945, the founders of our Organization trustingly proclaimed their determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in a lifetime had brought untold sorrow to mankind. Thirty-seven years later we are facing sad reality: the nuclear threat is assuming disturbing and alarming proportions day by day and, far from slowing down, the arms race is intensifying dangerously. In the world today, almost \$600 billion are spent on weaponry. In such conditions it is superfluous to say that the whole of mankind can be wiped out many times over by such an arsenal and that no region of the world is spared from this frenzy for self-destruction.

2. It is against this grim and distressing backdrop that the second special session of the General Assembly on disarmament is taking place, at a particularly troubled time in international relations which is characterized by all types of conflicts, whose most disturbing manifestation is the worsening of violence in the Middle East with, *inter alia*, the occupation of Lebanon by Israeli troops. It is incumbent on us to condemn this barbarous invasion, which gravely imperils world security, and also to reaffirm our support for the just cause of the Palestinian people, who ask only that justice should be done.

3. Never in the history of mankind has the world been so far from peace. Never has our existence been so precarious. Never has our civilization been so threatened. The opportunity afforded by a special session on disarmament is most timely, and it is more urgent than ever to make our search for peace the focus of our concerns and priorities. In our view, this should be the business of the whole international community: those that possess the nuclear weapon and those that do not possess it, large States and small States, industrialized countries and developing countries. This is why Upper Volta, a small country, of course, but an upright and peace-loving one, inspired by respect, friendship and fraternity towards all peoples, would like, through me, to make its humble contribution to the work of this special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

4. At the present time disarmament is multi-faceted and complex. From being general and complete, thus aiming at the progressive reduction and then the total

elimination of weapons, disarmament has become a process enabling, on the one hand, the maintenance of military balance among Powers and, on the other hand, the control and verification of measures taken to put an end to the world arms race. This was the approach taken by the tenth special session, in 1978, the aim of which was to ensure the security of all countries on the basis of the control and limitation of nuclear weapons and the reduction of military budgets. Unfortunately, when put to the test all these measures became but a catalogue of good intentions because in most cases they remained unimplemented. It was therefore necessary for the international community, in a collective and united effort, to take stock of the situation and thoroughly re-examine the principles and key elements of real disarmament based on a precise programme of action. The twelfth special session, Sir, which you have just opened, is based on that need. It must be a session of assessment and action: a session of assessment in that it intends to review what has really been accomplished in the field of disarmament during the past four years, not through a distorting prism but in a realistic and objective way; a session of action because the present forum must give new impetus to our shared will to eliminate from the world the dangers of war and above all of nuclear war.

5. A great statesman thus wrote in his political testament: "Negotiating ceaselessly, openly, everywhere, even though results may not be obtained immediately and the results expected in the future may not be apparent, is something absolutely necessary for the good of States". In the field of disarmament, as in all such delicate issues, negotiation is the only appropriate course that can produce tangible results. The importance and urgency of the situation require that those who hold the key to disarmament, the United States of America and the Soviet Union, should negotiate as they have already done through SALT I and SALT II. From this standpoint we welcome the decision taken by the two super-Powers to resume this very year the negotiations on strategic weapons and to bring the main part of their efforts to bear not only on the limitation but also on the reduction of those strategic weapons. This is an encouraging sign and one more step on the path of détente.

6. We are also encouraged by the fact that the European nations, after having experienced the most deadly wars in the history of mankind, also aspire to détente. The negotiations that they have begun attract our eager attention. Whether on the question of mutual and balanced reduction of weapons or on the project for a disarmament conference, initiatives should be increased in order to reach a tangible decrease in levels of armament. These intra-European negotiations

are fundamental because of the positive effects they can have on international relations. That is why we cannot fail to deplore the circumstances that have jeopardized the Madrid meeting of representatives of the participating States of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

7. Although conventional, biological and chemical weapons are a source of concern to us, it is nuclear disarmament that indisputably constitutes the gravest threat to our civilization. Through what has been called the "nuclear club" attempts have been made to limit the spread of nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons [*resolution 2373 (XXII), annex*], signed on 1 July 1968, was the formal confirmation of this in that it prohibited the manufacture of nuclear weapons by those States that had not carried out nuclear explosions before 1 January 1967. This discrimination has resulted in injustice and has not offered the non-nuclear-weapon States the real guarantees that they are entitled to expect from the nuclear States. Above all, these measures, which were to be imperative, have not prevented South Africa, that bastion of *apartheid*, from embarking recently upon nuclear testing, with the complicity of certain allied Powers.

8. The atomic bomb in the hands of Pretoria is a real danger to Africa and a direct threat to international peace and security. By conferring this power on the South African régime, the Western Powers—for they are the States involved—thus show their contempt for the real aspirations of the African peoples, namely, to make this continent an oasis of peace and prosperity.

9. We trust that IAEA, in its role as a catalyst, will ensure the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and, above all, guide the use of nuclear energy towards peaceful purposes. We also trust that the Committee on Disarmament will see to it that all decisions related to disarmament will be complied with. As in the case of the Convention on the prohibition of "inhuman weapons", entitled Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects,¹ concluded in 1980, the Committee on Disarmament should as soon as possible bring to a successful conclusion the convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and transfer of chemical weapons.

10. The security of all peoples aspiring to peace must be absolutely guaranteed. The peoples of the Indian Ocean have clearly opted for the denuclearization of that region. We should like at this time to welcome and support the initiative taken by the Government of Madagascar for convening next year a world conference on the Indian Ocean for that purpose [*11th meeting, para. 35*]. We hope that it will lead to positive conclusions so that peace may henceforth prevail in the region. No doubt, other countries will be guided by it in order to guarantee their own security and peaceful coexistence for their populations in a regional framework. Since ours is a developing country, we aspire only to peace, which is the one thing that will enable us fully to enjoy our independence and our sovereignty and resolutely to tackle the problem of primary concern to us, that of guaranteeing the material security of our people. It is fitting

that this should be emphasized, since a mere glance shows that most conflicts afflicting the world today are in developing countries. This is the case in Lebanon, Latin America, Western Sahara and Namibia, to mention but a few. Awareness of this situation therefore calls for taking swift effective measures leading to genuine disarmament.

11. The implementation of such measures depends on the reduction of military expenditures. However, we are witnessing a policy that is quite the reverse. The increase in military budgets leads to distrust and compromises peaceful initiatives. Here also, effective control machinery must be established, provided, of course, that all States devote their full attention to its establishment and show their readiness to do so. In this connexion Upper Volta reaffirms the central role and primary responsibility of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

12. From this analysis it becomes apparent that it is the obsession of seeking security that has led to the direct threat to security. We are among those who believe that international security is necessarily dependent on international solidarity. We say to the arms merchants, who tremble at the idea of halting the industries of death in order to produce capital goods, that international co-operation for development offers just as lucrative a field. Our world is very far from meeting the minimum needs of all its inhabitants; this is a reality which should be of concern to us, for remedying that situation is where true security lies.

13. A sincere search for solutions aimed at establishing a new international economic order, taking into account the equitable division of labour, will certainly guarantee for industries that today are turning out weaponry other sources of profits more consistent with safeguarding the resources of our common heritage, the Earth, instead of straining their ingenuity in order to seek means of destroying it.

14. The members of the Assembly will certainly have understood the link I have intentionally brought out. Upper Volta, whose primary goal is to meet the vital needs of man, believes that disarmament is closely linked to development in that development is a factor of peace. Development requires that, in a responsible way and with justice and fairness, we mobilize resources of all kinds to build the future, while the logic of the arms race is to threaten the future. At a time when the Third United Nations Development Decade is showing mediocre results, when global negotiations are at a standstill and when international co-operation is compromised because the very notion of international solidarity is called into question, every nation is duty-bound—above all, the major nations—to do everything in its power to obtain the transfer for development purposes of the vast resources now devoted to armaments. Security, an indispensable element of peace, is possible only if together and resolutely we tackle the task of resolving the problems related to underdevelopment.

15. Man poses a threat not only when he wishes to dominate but also when he is unable to satisfy his hunger, when he is the victim of injustice and ignorance, when he is compelled to live in a state of material deprivation. Security today is therefore a matter of concern not only politically but also eco-

nomically, and, if we must recognize that today's gravest threat is in the East-West confrontation over hegemony, we must equally recognize that that threat arises also from the serious imbalance between North and South. Hence, one of the primary goals of this session is to seek the appropriate ways and means to effect the transfer for development purposes of the resources devoted to military activities and provide for institutional arrangements so as to ensure their transfer to the developing countries through the implementation of disarmament measures.

16. A comparative study of the relationship between peace and development shows that the \$600 billion spent annually for military purposes could be used to make drought-stricken regions bloom, build 1 million schools and as many hospitals, eradicate malaria, onchocercosis, dysentery and measles, provide employment for millions of unemployed and irrigate thousands of acres of arable land.

17. Before concluding, I venture to hope that the decisions taken at this session for the effective implementation of the comprehensive programme of disarmament will not be relegated to oblivion but, rather, help the concerted efforts of the members of the Assembly to promote real disarmament and bring about peace and progress. To that end, one of the solutions to be recommended would, in our view, be a wider mandate for the Centre for Disarmament, while, of course, providing it with the means to carry out its assignment. Other equally important actions should be undertaken, such as enhancing the role of information and education in order to galvanize and mobilize world public opinion in favour of peace.

18. In order to further all these activities, United Nations resolutions should be respected, because, more often than not, it is owing to contempt for those resolutions and the fact that they are not complied with that conflicts arise. It is inadmissible that States arrogating to themselves a certain superiority should violate international rules with impunity and, more often than not, with irony. It is inadmissible that Members of the United Nations should continually defy Security Council and General Assembly resolutions because they do not conform to their selfish interests. In the field of disarmament, sovereign respect for international morality is an imperative for all States Members of the Organization, for it is true—and we shall continue to repeat it—that the search for peace is a collective responsibility.

19. It is from this assumption and on the basis of this view of the world that the principles of non-alignment proceed. Shunning bloc politics, the non-aligned movement, which embodies the aspirations of many millions of human beings inspired by the sincere desire to live in peace, is undeniably the spearhead of the battle joined for complete disarmament. In the search for peace, and with that object alone, the non-aligned movement is at the forefront of the struggle of oppressed peoples to regain their freedom and their dignity. It has opened the way to peace and progress for a large number of States and has thus contributed to the establishment of an international political order based on justice and fraternity. The principles of non-alignment therefore deserve to be strengthened. Respect for its ideals is an urgent need if we are all to avoid cosmo-nuclear disaster. We are faced with

a terrible dilemma: either we disarm or we perish. The choice is very clear, and it is the responsibility of the leaders of this world never to lose sight of it. The objectives of peace set us by the United Nations can be achieved only if there is healthy co-operation among all States and if they renounce any policy of hegemony and domination.

20. Mr. President, you have just launched the World Disarmament Campaign with the objective of effective, general and complete disarmament. May your appeal meet the aspirations of peoples throughout the world that place complete trust in this second session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. May this debate promote the dawning of a new, united world, guided by peaceful coexistence, and of peace in our time and for future generations. This should be the significance of our struggle: peace for southern Africa and for the Middle East, peace in Asia and in Latin America; peace for the nations of Europe; peace for the oppressed and for the exploited—permanent peace for all, for the greater good of all mankind.

21. Mr. MARTYNENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (*interpretation from Russian*): Mr. President, the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR wishes to associate itself with the congratulations addressed to you and to extend its best wishes for the successful conclusion of this forum of the United Nations.

22. The general debate at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is nearing its conclusion. None, or almost none, of the participants in this extensive debate seems to have denied the obvious truth that in the present situation, amid mounting world tensions and the growing threat of nuclear war, no task facing States is or can be more important than that of working out and adopting effective measures to ease tensions and to strengthen universal peace and the security of the peoples.

23. In the years since the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament the Soviet Union and other socialist and peace-loving States have made many efforts to relieve the peoples of the threat of nuclear devastation and ultimately to exclude its very possibility from the life of mankind.

24. It must be noted with profound regret—as many delegations have, indeed, noted in their statements—that the period between the two special sessions did not become a turning-point in solving the basic problems of disarmament. The accumulation of huge stockpiles of armaments of colossal destructive force has continued, the arms race has been stepped up even further and new and ever more sophisticated and destructive means of mass annihilation are emerging one after the other.

25. The main reason for this situation, as has already been said at this session, is to be found in the fact that the nuclear Powers members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO], primarily the United States of America, in a bid to jettison the only rational policy in present circumstances—that of maintaining the existing military balance between the Soviet Union and the United States, between the Warsaw Pact and NATO, or the policy of strategic stability—have embarked on a course of gaining military superiority.

26. When, in 1978, the tenth special session was being held in New York and many of its participants sought to combine their efforts in a search for measures that could indeed put an end to the arms race, Washington played host to the NATO Council summit meeting which took the decision to raise considerably the military spending of NATO member countries for the period up to the end of the century.

27. The same thing is happening all over again. A meeting of NATO's highest body coincided with the opening of the twelfth special session, and its decisions provide yet further evidence that the member States of that bloc are committed to stepping up the arms race. Thus the United States and other NATO members have openly taken a stand against the desire of the overwhelming majority at this special session by further boosting military budgets, by whipping up military frenzy and taking actions which conflict with the obligations they assumed in the 1970s to prevent nuclear war.

28. The opponents of disarmament are trying to substantiate their policy of achieving military superiority and back it up with a kind of theoretical rationalization. For that purpose they are putting forward concepts of so-called limited nuclear war and preventive, demonstrative and other nuclear strikes. All these concepts have but one objective—namely, to blur the distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons, to create a psychological climate of acceptability and admissibility of the use of nuclear weapons and to accustom the peoples to the idea of the possibility and inevitability of a thermonuclear war and to make them resign themselves to an arms race of unprecedented magnitude and to give up the struggle against the nuclear threat.

29. It is no secret to anybody today that the policy of anti-détente and confrontation, of upsetting the existing military equilibrium, is the main source of international tensions and the deterioration of relations between States.

30. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR wholeheartedly supports the statements made from this rostrum to the effect that in today's complex international situation the principal objective of the twelfth special session is to defuse tensions and to give a new impetus to negotiations on concrete, long overdue measures of arms limitation and disarmament, above all nuclear disarmament, and by so doing to help avert a nuclear war.

31. L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, in his message to this special session stressed that

“... if we are to single out what is the most important, the most urgent, the one [item] now worrying people in every corner of the globe and preoccupying the minds of statesmen and public figures in many countries of the world, it is concern for halting the endless buildup of ever more destructive types of weapons, ensuring a breakthrough in the improvement of international relations and averting a nuclear disaster”. [12th meeting, para. 73]

32. The Soviet Union and the countries of the socialist community have repeatedly stated their

readiness to achieve the most radical agreements with other countries in that area. Their specific proposals are well known. The twenty-sixth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union worked out a whole series of ideas and constructive initiatives aimed at radically improving the international climate and curbing the arms race. The Peace Programme for the 1980s adopted then outlines a realistic approach towards lessening the threat of war, deepening détente and developing broad co-operation among States with different social systems. The Programme opens up possibilities of solving complex international problems through negotiations in good faith and on an equal footing, rather than through confrontation.

33. The declaration that the Soviet Union will not be the first to use nuclear weapons, made by L. I. Brezhnev in his message to the twelfth special session, pursues exactly this objective. That unilateral obligation assumed by the Soviet Union became effective at the moment it was made public at this session and constitutes a concrete and tangible step of exceptional importance towards averting a nuclear catastrophe.

34. Indeed, if all the nuclear States assume a similar obligation—and that would be a multilateral action—then there will, in fact, be no first, second or third nuclear strike. The use of all-destructive nuclear weapons, something that is opposed by the overwhelming majority of the countries of the world, will be banned. Hence, military confrontation will become less acute and strategic stability consolidated. The obligation assumed by the Soviet Union contributes substantially to greater confidence in relations between States.

35. Very concrete proposals are contained in the memorandum entitled “Averting the growing nuclear threat and curbing the arms race” [A/S-12/AC.1/11 and Corr.1, annex], which was submitted by the Soviet Union's Minister for Foreign Affairs, A. A. Gromyko, to this session for its consideration.

36. That document answers the main question that is raised daily and hourly, literally in all corners of the world: what should be done, what practical steps are necessary to preserve peace on earth and to preserve what is most precious in the world—human life?

37. The idea of halting any further buildup of nuclear potential and freezing it as a first step in reducing and ultimately totally eliminating nuclear arsenals has recently been gaining ground in the world, including the United Nations. This idea is generally in keeping with our approach to the limitation, reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons.

38. As early as 1978 the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community proposed halting the production of all types of nuclear weapons and gradually reducing their stockpiles until their complete elimination. The idea is to elaborate, adopt and implement step-by-step a nuclear disarmament programme. Despite the repeated appeals of the General Assembly, including those made at its first special session devoted to disarmament, and the numerous attempts of countries of the socialist community to find mutually acceptable approaches, negotiations on this crucial issue have not yet begun.

39. In view of this, the Soviet Union has made new efforts towards an early start of such negotiations. It has expressed its readiness to consider ending the production of fissionable materials used to manufacture various types of nuclear weapons as a first step within the framework of a nuclear disarmament programme. Now it is for the other nuclear Powers to respond. One thing must be perfectly clear: those who are disinclined to examine in good faith the problem of nuclear disarmament bear full responsibility for the consequences of their action. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR is firmly convinced that this special session should urge all nuclear Powers to begin in the near future negotiations on the cessation of the production of all types of nuclear weapons and on the gradual reduction of their stockpiles until their total elimination.

40. The countries of the socialist community support radical measures of nuclear disarmament and on many occasions have expressed their readiness to seek partial solutions that would limit the nuclear-arms race.

41. At present the reduction of nuclear weapons in Europe is the key issue in averting the growing threat of a world nuclear-missile war. The Soviet Union's concrete and far-reaching proposals in that area are well known. It is precisely those proposals that would ultimately bring about a zero option. The Ukrainian people, like all peace-loving peoples, welcome the Soviet-American talks on the limitation of nuclear arms in Europe currently under way at Geneva and are expressing the hope that they will lead to meaningful progress in strengthening peace and limiting the nuclear-arms race. Recently, wishing to facilitate progress at the talks, the Soviet Union unilaterally stopped further deployment of medium-range missiles in the European part of the Soviet Union and is already reducing considerably the number of such missiles. Hence, there is a good basis for the conduct of business-like negotiations to limit nuclear arms in Europe.

42. News of the resumption of Soviet-American talks to limit and reduce strategic arms, on the success of which the destinies of the world will largely depend, has been welcomed with satisfaction in the Ukrainian SSR. Without dwelling on the history of those talks, one important point, however, should be noted, that is, that the Soviet Union has always advocated honest and fair agreements that would not impinge on anyone's interest, and substantial reduction of strategic arms. It is now following the same approach in proposing that all channels for the continuation in any form of the arms race as regards this type of weapon be securely blocked.

43. Of course, if the talks are to be successful, both sides should seek mutually acceptable solutions in a spirit of realism. They should not attempt to secure for themselves military advantages or to seek unilateral disarmament of the other party to the talks, and they should observe the principles of equality and equal security, of maintaining a military strategic balance with full regard for the national interests of States.

44. The ending of nuclear-weapon tests is a high-priority measure for curbing the nuclear-arms race.

It is our view that the special session should give momentum to the talks on the general and complete prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. To solve this long-urgent problem would mean denying the possibility of further improving nuclear arms and developing new types and modifications of them. At the same time, the nuclear-weapon non-proliferation régime would be strengthened. To this end the trilateral talks suspended by the Western participants at their final stage should be resumed without delay. We believe that the multilateral forum of the Committee on Disarmament should be used to the fullest extent for drafting a treaty on general and complete prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

45. Talks to ban the production, deployment and use of nuclear neutron weapons should be initiated. Despite the appeals of the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly, of numerous regional, non-governmental organizations and the protests of many millions of people the world over, such talks have not yet begun in the Committee on Disarmament. They are being blocked by those who are actively working to start large-scale production of this new type of nuclear weapon, which is even more lethal for all living things, and to deploy it on the European continent. Of late Washington has been heard to say that the United States will be able to use neutron weapons in all parts of the world, especially within range of its rapid deployment forces. This barbarous weapon must not be allowed to bring suffering to so many millions of people on our planet. It must be definitively banned.

46. The special session could promote the conclusion of a convention on strengthening the security guarantees for non-nuclear States, of an agreement not to station nuclear weapons in the territories of those States where there are none at present and on the establishment and consolidation of zones free of nuclear arms in various parts of the world.

47. The Ukrainian SSR continues to believe that the early elaboration and conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations would contribute to a better international climate and more favourable conditions for progress in disarmament, in particular in nuclear disarmament.

48. One of the most pressing issues requiring immediate solution is that of ruling out the possibility of the use of chemical weapons through a ban on their production and the destruction of existing stockpiles.

49. The tireless efforts of socialist and other peace-loving States have resulted over the past decade in movement towards an international agreement on the subject. A serious basis had been established for concluding a convention, and the Committee on Disarmament was working hard to achieve agreement on its provisions, but a serious blow was dealt to those efforts when the United States refused to continue the bilateral talks on preparing a Soviet-American initiative on the prohibition of chemical weapons. Furthermore, contrary to the decision of the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the United States has embarked upon modernizing and considerably increasing its chemical weapon arsenal and is engaged in the production of a new generation of lethal chemical weapons, the binary weapons.

50. The Soviet Union has reaffirmed its commitment to the idea of chemical disarmament by submitting to the twelfth special session for its consideration a draft document entitled "Basic provisions of a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction" [A/S-12/AC.1/12 and Corr.1, annex].

51. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR believes that those provisions will promote more intense overall efforts by States in the Committee on Disarmament to draft an international convention on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons. They contain new constructive elements, particularly on verification, which make it possible to achieve a decisive advance in harmonizing, on the basis of mutual acceptability, the provisions of the convention, given the necessary political will on the part of the other participants in the talks.

52. In this connexion the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR feels it is of special importance for States to avoid actions which could complicate the talks and to renounce the deployment of chemical weapons in those countries where there are none at present.

53. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR believes that efforts should be made to intensify also the negotiations on the prohibition of the development and production of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction, on radiological weapons and on the prevention of the extension of the arms race to new environments that man has begun to explore—outer space, the ocean floor and the sea-bed. Of course, we should in no way neglect the questions of reducing conventional armed forces and armaments and military budgets, measures of regional disarmament, limitation of naval activities, and so on.

54. I wish to inform the Assembly that on the very eve of this twelfth special session the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic ratified the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.¹ It would be appropriate for this session to make an appeal to all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify that Convention.

55. Work is in progress now to prepare this session's final documents, which will contain in particular an assessment of the current state of affairs in the field of arms limitation and disarmament and recommendations for the future. It is important, in the opinion of the Ukrainian SSR, that above all they should help avert the threat of nuclear war and step up the negotiating process in all areas, especially in the field of reducing nuclear weapons. It is from this viewpoint that we approach the draft comprehensive programme of disarmament. This long-term programme could play a really useful role if it included a range of measures aimed at halting the arms race and the stage-by-stage implementation of genuine disarmament.

56. At this critical moment—and a whole series of initiatives put forward by the Soviet Union for the consideration of this special session convincingly proves that it is critical—what is required is a serious, responsible approach to solving the problems of arms limitation and of disarmament, and not high-flown

language that covers up the policy of an arms buildup and whipping up tension. The time has come for action—decisive action. The peoples will judge the approach of States to the questions under consideration at this session on the basis of the extent to which those States assist by concrete deeds the advancement of arms limitation and disarmament.

57. The Ukrainian SSR is determined to do everything possible to make the special session give genuine momentum to the negotiations on disarmament. The session should contribute to the conducting of such negotiations in a constructive spirit and to the speedy achievement of practical agreements. It should promote the resumption of negotiations that have been suspended through the fault of certain countries and the beginning of new ones where necessary.

58. It is a distinctive feature of the twelfth special session that it is being held against the background of the powerful rise of the antiwar movement. Now that international tension has been seriously aggravated and attempts are being made to drag the world back to the days of the cold war, the peoples of the world are increasingly determined to defend peace, to oppose the unbridled arms race and to foster disarmament.

59. Tomorrow it will be 41 years since Hitler's Germany perfidiously invaded our country. The Second World War inflicted incalculable hardship and suffering on humanity. Today it is appropriate to recall that the Soviet Union lost in that war 20 million lives, including 5 million in the Ukrainian SSR.

60. The Ukrainian people, like all the peoples of the multinational Soviet Union, whose sixtieth anniversary will be widely celebrated at the end of this year, have spoken strongly in favour of preventing another world war, putting an end to the present slide towards nuclear catastrophe and restoring the process of détente.

61. On the eve of this special session a week of mass action for peace and against the danger of nuclear war was held in the Ukrainian SSR. It was marked by some 8,500 rallies, meetings and demonstrations in towns and villages. Over 3 million people took part. During this mass campaign the working people of the Soviet Ukraine adopted thousands of resolutions, appeals and petitions addressed to the second special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, calling on the participants to do their utmost to avert a nuclear catastrophe and to adopt real measures of arms control and disarmament.

62. We believe that the United Nations cannot stay aloof from the mass movement of the peoples for peace and disarmament. Efforts should be intensified to sustain and mobilize world public opinion in the interests of disarmament. This noble cause could be served by the World Disarmament Campaign, appropriately organized under United Nations auspices.

63. As was stressed in the reply of the Ukrainian SSR to the relevant note of the Secretary-General, the collection of signatures in support of measures to prevent nuclear war, to limit the arms race and to promote disarmament could constitute part of the campaign and a concrete course of activity.

64. The collection of signatures could be undertaken in every country by national means, depending on local conditions, traditions and available experience. To make this action a success a brief text of an appeal should be prepared on the basis of documents adopted by the United Nations dealing with the prevention of nuclear war, the limitation of the arms race and disarmament. Such an appeal, after approval by this session, could be recommended for dissemination in the United Nations Member States and for organizing the collection of signatures.

65. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR is confident that the 1980s can become a period of substantial breakthrough in the field of disarmament if all countries and the leaders of all States, without exception, display a proper sense of responsibility, goodwill and determination to reverse the arms race and to ensure peace. For peace is not merely a matter of security; it is also the prerequisite for solving the major problems of today, the solution of which will determine the future of mankind. For its part, the Ukrainian SSR will strictly pursue the objectives of ensuring peace and international security, achieving real progress in curbing the arms race and moving along the road towards disarmament.

66. Mr. ADAN (Somalia): May I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your unanimous election as President of this special session of the General Assembly. The exemplary manner in which you have guided the deliberations of the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly and the qualities that you bring to your high office have served to reinforce the confidence we have that you will guide this special session to a successful conclusion.

67. Since the tenth special session, which was devoted to disarmament, four years ago, not only has there been no progress towards disarmament goals but there have even been retrograde steps away from the principles and measures established in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session as having the highest priority. Whether we consider nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, or the prohibition of chemical and other weapons of mass destruction, or the curbing of the arms race in conventional weapons, the record shows a serious disregard for the principle of multilateral negotiation and an even more dangerous disregard for the imperatives of global survival.

68. The disappointment and pessimism engendered by this lack of progress are heightened by the fact that we are reviewing the objectives of the Final Document against the background of a troubled and war-torn world. It is a world in which aggression is being used almost casually—and certainly with increasing frequency—as an instrument of national policy. It is a world where the principles of the Charter of the United Nations are ignored and the idea of collective security discounted. It is a world endangered by the resurgence of policies of global hegemony and cold-war competition, by the continued existence of colonial and racist oppression and by the denial of the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination and nationhood. These factors give rise to suspicion and fear, tension and conflict, thus creating situations which fuel the arms race and which in turn are aggravated by the arms race.

69. As we survey the world scene we see the shocking sacrifice of human lives, human resources and hopes for peace and progress in areas as widely separated as Afghanistan, the Falkland Islands, the Middle East and the Gulf, Kampuchea and the Horn of Africa. Even in this month of June when the special session of the General Assembly on disarmament is being held, we have witnessed in Lebanon atrocities of the most brutal kind in the annals of human history, perpetrated by Israel against the civilian population, Lebanese and Palestinian alike. The close link between disarmament and international peace and security emphasizes the necessity for efforts to be directed as much to the root causes of the arms race as to the specifics of disarmament.

70. This second special session devoted to disarmament is therefore faced with even heavier responsibilities than was its predecessor. The General Assembly will, I am sure, reaffirm the validity of the Final Document and succeed in drawing up a comprehensive programme of disarmament acceptable to all States. But this session will attain true success only if it can give effective voice to the demand of the world's people for an end to the madness of the nuclear-arms race and if it can ensure a practical response to that demand.

71. The reduction and eventual abolition of nuclear weapons were of course given the highest priority in the Final Document because of the irreparable consequences of a nuclear war. Nevertheless, the arms race in nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction has been speeding to a point from which there may be no return. Nuclear disaster is made more certain with every qualitative and quantitative development of nuclear weapons and with every increase in the technological complexity of weapons systems.

72. Moreover, the far-reaching effects on the world economy of the arms race in nuclear and other weapons emphasize the fact that its consequences are not confined to the affairs of the major users and suppliers of armaments but touch the lives of people everywhere. The statistics on military expenditure astound us every year, when we take note of the astronomical sums spent on nuclear and conventional weapons—an expenditure which has led to world inflation and precludes the establishment of a more just international economic order. Seen against the background of a world where hundreds of millions of people are malnourished, diseased or illiterate, the expenditure of \$600 billion in a single year is a sad commentary on the priorities which govern our times. According to a paper circulated by UNICEF as recently as 20 May 1982, in the developing countries the infant mortality rate is eight times that of the industrialized countries, malnutrition affects one quarter of all children, and less than 20 per cent of rural children have access to adequate health facilities. Unfortunately, the important recommendation in the Final Document with regard to the reduction of military budgets and the application of such savings to development remains little more than a pious aspiration.

73. Let me say at this point that my Government welcomed the recent announcement that the United States and the Soviet Union would begin talks this month on the reduction of strategic arms and that the United States would observe existing strategic arms

agreements as long as there was equal restraint by the Soviet Union. This timely initiative provides a glimmer of light in the otherwise gloomy atmosphere of nuclear disarmament. We hope that the talks will not be unduly protracted and that this development marks the beginning of a positive response to the hopes and fears of the people of the world. Those hopes and fears are rightly being expressed in a swelling chorus of protest against the irrationality of the nuclear-arms race, as clearly shown by the mammoth demonstration held recently in New York. Certainly the people of the world have the right to demand that the nuclear Powers embark on new constructive initiatives which will break through the vicious circle of mutual suspicion in which they are caught.

74. My Government believes that in order to demonstrate their determination to carry out their grave responsibilities for ensuring international peace and security, the nuclear Powers must take the following steps without undue delay. They must make every effort to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty, so long demanded by the international community, as an essential measure towards the control of nuclear arms. The lack of progress towards the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty and the steady increase in the testing of nuclear weapons are particularly disappointing in view of the fact that the remaining problems of verification are clearly surmountable.

75. There should be a programme of mutual, balanced and significant reduction of nuclear weapons and weapons systems. At the same time, the formulation of a convention on the non-use of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction would provide an atmosphere of confidence in which practical measures could be effected.

76. We hope, too, that the nuclear Powers will give their co-operation and support to the efforts of the Committee on Disarmament to establish effective international arrangements to give non-nuclear States assurances against the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

77. The non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is of course an undertaking which involves responsibilities by both nuclear and non-nuclear States, with the nuclear Powers bearing the heaviest responsibility. Regrettably, the non-proliferation régime has been largely ineffective because of the failure of the nuclear Powers themselves to provide leadership and show restraint. They have not fulfilled their obligation to reduce their nuclear stockpiles. Furthermore, safeguards for the transfer of nuclear technology cannot be said to be effective when belligerent States like South Africa and Israel, which have refused to become parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons [*resolution 2373 (XXII), annex*] and show only contempt for international law, have succeeded in developing nuclear weapons. The undoubted capability and political will of Israel and South Africa to threaten the African and Palestinian liberation movements with nuclear blackmail are therefore a cause of legitimate concern.

78. On the other hand, the right of all States to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes under international safeguards has not been promoted

on a universal and non-discriminatory basis. The outrageous Israeli aggression, carried out with impunity, against an Iraqi nuclear research facility under international supervision emphasizes the need for additional measures to safeguard the right of all States to develop nuclear energy resources for peaceful purposes if they have the desire and capability to do so.

79. My Government believes that for their part the non-nuclear-weapon States should all join in ratifying the Non-Proliferation Treaty. They can also contribute significantly to non-proliferation and to general disarmament by promoting the establishment of zones of peace and nuclear-weapon-free zones. Undoubtedly the example set by Latin America could profitably be followed in areas such as the Middle East where tension and conflict are endemic.

80. Efforts to establish the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace have unfortunately been disrupted following the establishment of a large military presence in the Horn of Africa by a super-Power and its surrogate forces. This massive intervention in regional conflicts is doubly reprehensible, since foreign forces are being directed against the struggle of oppressed peoples seeking their right to self-determination and independence. Such developments lead inevitably to the expansion of the military and naval presence of the great Powers in the Indian Ocean in the context of their global rivalry and to a setback to hopes for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace [*resolution 2832 (XXVI)*].

81. Another dangerous element of the Indian Ocean situation, as I have already indicated, is the strengthening of the military forces and nuclear-weapon capability of South Africa by its allies. My Government hopes that all the States concerned will end their naval, military and nuclear collaboration with the Pretoria régime so as not to encourage the ruling minority in its racist oppression of the majority of the people of South Africa, in its illegal control of Namibia and in its brutal acts of aggression against neighbouring front-line States.

82. The prohibition of chemical weapons is a disarmament priority second only to the question of ending the nuclear-arms race. It is, therefore, a most discouraging aspect of the disarmament picture that there have been a growing number of reports of the use of chemical weapons and also of violations of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction [*resolution 2826 (XXVI), annex*]. The use of these abhorrent weapons is disgraceful in any circumstances, but it becomes even more scandalous when directed, as is frequently the case, against peoples fighting for liberation from colonial and foreign domination.

83. The use of napalm and other inhuman weapons in Namibia, in the Horn of Africa and in the Middle East against peoples that are struggling for their national rights is well documented. To this shameful list must now be added the use of chemical weapons against the peoples of Afghanistan and Kampuchea who are opposing military aggression and foreign domination. Equally alarming are the indications that the super-Powers are preparing to embark on a new race in the development and deployment of chemical

weapons. These developments demand the strongest condemnation by the international community. It is our hope that the Committee on Disarmament will redouble its efforts to conclude a convention prohibiting chemical weapons and to strengthen the Convention against bacteriological weapons.

84. The terrible danger posed by the weapons of mass destruction already developed and widely deployed should warn us of the urgency of the task of prohibiting new weapons of mass destruction. It is no secret that there are weapons with terrifying new properties on the drawing-board and that others are well advanced in their technology. The lesson of the past is that such scientific and technological advances take on an inexorable momentum which defies reversal. We can ignore this lesson only at our peril. It is imperative that the militarily powerful States co-operate fully with the Committee on Disarmament in multilateral negotiations leading to conventions prohibiting radiological weapons of mass destruction.

85. A few years ago reports of laser beams and killer satellites might have been dismissed as science fiction. Today these weapons are a grim reality, and their existence emphasizes the need to strengthen and extend the scope of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies [*resolution 2222 (XXI), annex*], which outlaws weapons in outer space.

86. The conclusion of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects¹ is an important humanitarian achievement. Indeed, it is the only tangible measure taken since the tenth special session. However, the level of sophistication reached in the development of other conventional weapons and their indiscriminate sale by the military-industrial complexes of the power blocs underline the need for further efforts to curb the arms race in conventional weapons.

87. The use of conventional weapons is, of course, inextricably linked to the deployment of armed forces—a measure which normally conforms to the national security needs of States. It is the deployment of armed forces on foreign soil and in foreign military bases which poses grave dangers to regional and international peace and security. The deployment in recent times of over 50,000 surrogate troops in various African countries in order to promote the strategic designs of a super-Power has had seriously destabilizing effects on African affairs. The progressive withdrawal of military forces from foreign territories and the dismantling of foreign bases could only contribute to international peace and security and promote general and complete disarmament.

88. The lack of political will to end the arms race is cited so often that it sometimes seems to be an inevitable and unchanging condition. That condition can be changed by the mobilization of the moral force of international and national public opinion in support of disarmament and in opposition to the negative forces which hamper the achievement of this goal. Indeed, one of the most hopeful developments since the tenth special session is the wide international

response to the World Disarmament Campaign. My Government fully supports the programme of activities drawn up for the Campaign [A/S-12/27] and hopes that Member States will contribute generously to its voluntary fund. We trust also that the limited resources available to the United Nations Centre for Disarmament will be augmented, in view of its important and central role in the World Disarmament Campaign and the increased scope of its activities.

89. It seems clear to my Government that real and substantial progress towards general and complete disarmament demands two separate agendas. One agenda contains broad political issues, such as the re-establishment of a climate of genuine detente, the achievement by all peoples of their inalienable national and political rights, the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, and ending the great disparity between military expenditures and the funds available for urgent human needs.

90. With regard to the other, more specific, agenda which is our immediate concern here, it is more than ever necessary to avoid the temptation of acting as though the reiteration of principles, priorities and programmes in itself constitutes progress towards disarmament.

91. General Assembly resolution S-10/2 does not overstate the case when it maintains that mankind faces the alternatives of ending the arms race and proceeding to disarmament or facing annihilation. The second of these alternatives can be averted only if the same intelligence and ingenuity as created the armaments dilemma are now used for the purposes of world peace, security and the survival of the human race. As the Secretary-General pointed out in his statement to the opening meeting of this session, "What is required of us now is imagination interlaced with realism and deep resolve". [*1st meeting, para. 58.*] I join in his appeal to world statesmen to think anew and act anew so that a fresh and hopeful direction can be given to human affairs.

92. Mr. MBIA (Gabon) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me, Sir, on behalf of the Gabonese delegation, to congratulate you most sincerely on your election to the presidency of this special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. I am convinced that thanks to your wide experience our work will yield positive results.

93. I also wish to congratulate the new Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, on his election to that office and to assure him of the support of the Government of Gabon in the accomplishment of his difficult task.

94. In 1978 the General Assembly, in an atmosphere of euphoria and hope, held its first special session devoted to disarmament. Its goal was to halt and reverse the arms race.

95. In an effort to stress the full importance and universal scope of that special session, the first of the kind especially convened to study the serious problems posed to mankind by the arms race, all countries participated at the highest level. Many heads of State or Government, prime ministers and foreign ministers came personally to express from this rostrum their concerns and their fears for the future, together with

their hopes and their faith in the wisdom of mankind. They condemned, firmly and convincingly, the folly of the arms race, the senseless squandering of fabulous resources in the production and stockpiling of increasingly sophisticated and deadly weapons. They strongly and resolutely called on the major Powers to put an end to their insane policy of over-armament, to ban weapons of mass destruction and to begin a process leading to general and complete disarmament.

96. Four years later we must observe, with a great deal of regret and concern, that the Programme of Action then established remains a dead letter, as the international community has not been able to attain the objectives set in it. On the contrary, the arms race has taken on disquieting proportions, since it now extends to all parts of the world and also affects the oceans and even outer space. Nuclear tests, in spite of the prohibition proclaimed by the 1963 Moscow Treaty² and of the many resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, have increased and continued in many regions of the world. Need we recall the mortal danger that such tests pose to mankind, the environment and the balance of nature?

97. Gabon, through its Head of State, President El Hadj Omar Bongo, fully supports the idea that multi-lateral negotiations on the prohibition of nuclear tests should be undertaken without delay. Gabon fervently hopes that such negotiations will lead to concrete solutions so that a global treaty can be arrived at to put an end to the dangerous anarchy which now prevails.

98. We should like at this point to commend the actions and efforts of the Committee on Disarmament, which since 1979 has been studying this important question.

99. A sense of responsibility on the part of the nuclear States is essential for the conclusion of a treaty acceptable to all, because it is on their will to arrive at agreement that final success or failure rests. The conclusion of such a treaty would not only constitute an important and encouraging step in the direction of general and complete disarmament but would also save our children, as well as future generations, from a nuclear holocaust.

100. In fact, the danger of nuclear war threatens and will continue to threaten mankind as long as the rush to accumulate nuclear weapons goes on. We must therefore exert all our strength to ensure the final elimination of the danger of nuclear war, including limited nuclear war, which would be only the prelude to the blind unleashing of an overall cataclysm that would spare no region of the world and leave little hope of life on Earth.

101. Gabon strongly condemns and rejects the concept of a limited nuclear war, as it does all power politics based on the balance of strength and on nuclear deterrence, and considers itself entitled, as are all non-nuclear-weapon States, to obtain, while awaiting the achievement of general and complete disarmament, unconditional guarantees of security from the nuclear-weapon States responsible for the climate of tension and fear prevailing in the world.

102. The accumulation of weapons is progressing in a massive and disquieting way, and the dizzying

increase in military expenditures, which have today reached almost \$600 billion, proves that the arms race is developing throughout the world.

103. The establishment of vast arsenals and the perfecting of nuclear and conventional weapons, apart from exacerbating international tension, promotes the intensification of conflicts in various regions of the world and thus blocks the process of détente which had been apparent in international relations. The arms race has repercussions on international security, as well as on the economic and social development of States.

104. The arms race is first of all a threat to international security. By its constant expansion, it encourages the development of policies based on military superiority and recourse to force in international relations; it causes many conflicts and maintains the constant threat of nuclear war, with its incalculable consequences. Need we recall that the arms race fosters the distrust and secretiveness which generally go together with doubt and insecurity among nations? Genuine security results not from a constant fear of war but from a deep, comforting feeling of genuine peace, complete mutual trust, which alone make it possible to build the genuine international co-operation—economic, scientific, cultural and other—to which mankind aspires with all its strength.

105. Furthermore, the arms race also has disastrous consequences for development, especially in the third world, because of the senseless squandering of material and human resources that it causes. Need we repeat that it would suffice to release just a part of the vast sums now allocated to military expenditures and devote them to the economic and social development of third world countries to narrow considerably, if not bridge, the gap that now separates those countries from the rich industrialized nations?

106. This special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament should give the international community the moral strength it needs to react and, in a more concrete way, begin a genuine process of general and complete disarmament which will make it possible to achieve a new international order based on peace and peaceful coexistence, in accordance with the basic principles of the Charter.

107. In the view of the delegation of Gabon, this session should encourage the major Powers to co-operate fully with the other nations in order to achieve the objectives of disarmament, especially those set in the Final Document [*resolution S-10/2*] adopted at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

108. The small non-nuclear States also must participate in disarmament debates, which are of concern to the entire international community, because peace has always been of vital interest to all mankind.

109. The present tense and complex international situation adds a further dimension to the problem of strengthening peace in the world, and especially in the developing countries, the principal victims of the tensions and conflicts that result from the arms race. It has become urgently necessary to find legal and political means effectively to strengthen the security of States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

110. As regards legal means, we commend the efforts of the United Nations which in recent years have led to the conclusion of agreements on arms limitation and control. By way of example we might mention the 1959 Antarctic Treaty, which prohibits military activities in the Antarctic; the 1963 Moscow Treaty, which prohibits nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water; the 1967 Treaty on outer space, which prohibits the placement of nuclear weapons in outer space; and the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which entered into force in 1979 and which commits the nuclear States not to transfer, and the non-nuclear States not to accept, nuclear weapons.

111. None the less, there is a lack of the political will on the part of States to ensure that those legal provisions aimed at protecting mankind from the use of increasingly sophisticated and barbarous weapons may be given broad international support.

112. The position of Gabon at this important gathering is simple: we believe that the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament by and large accomplished its task. It gave new momentum to the cause of general and complete disarmament in the field of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It prepared a Programme of Action, for which we can only be grateful and which justifies the hope for considerable progress.

113. The delegation of Gabon believes that the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly constitutes an important contribution to the process of disarmament, to which all peoples throughout the world aspire. The Programme of Action contained in section III of the Final Document sets the objectives and priorities, as well as the measures to be taken to halt the arms race. It strongly encourages efforts for the conclusion of a convention on chemical weapons and the adoption of measures aimed at avoiding the appearance of new and terrifying weapons.

114. With a view to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, the reduction of strategic weapons and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones are envisaged in the Final Document.

115. We must now proceed to implement those measures, which have unfortunately not yet been applied although it is proclaimed everywhere that nuclear disarmament is a priority objective.

116. The blocking of negotiations on the implementation of the Assembly's Programme of Action has caused deep concern among the international community. This new situation has spawned a peace movement throughout the world which demands an end to the arms race.

117. The delegation of Gabon is pleased that the United States and the Soviet Union have decided to resume negotiations on strategic arms limitation on 29 June. We believe, however, that those specific and necessarily limited bilateral negotiations, the resumption of which we commend, since they represent an important contribution to the difficult process of general and complete disarmament, should not replace or impede the multilateral negotiations to be undertaken within the framework of the United Nations.

We believe that the United Nations must continue to be a driving force in disarmament negotiations.

118. Indeed, the Charter makes the maintenance of international peace and security the primary objective of the Organization. The international community should therefore seek to strengthen its authority and effectiveness in order to promote peace, security and co-operation in the world.

119. It must be recognized that so far the United Nations, faithful to the spirit of the Charter, has since the Second World War played a positive and helpful role in resolving many international conflicts which could have degenerated and led to widespread conflagration.

120. Unfortunately, on the question of disarmament—which as early as 1959 the General Assembly considered to be “the most important one facing the world today”—the United Nations has not been able to apply its full potential and capacity, mainly because of the clear lack of will on the part of the great Powers to co-operate sincerely in halting the arms race and in setting in train a process leading to general and complete disarmament.

121. That is why we appeal urgently to those Powers to change their attitude so that the United Nations, whose role it is to maintain international peace and security, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, can continue its efforts and play its rightful part in disarmament negotiations.

122. International public opinion is sensitive to the danger of war and therefore to questions of disarmament and peace, and many people follow our work with interest and hope. We must avoid disappointing them, and we must attempt to translate into concrete action the deep aspiration of mankind to a peaceful life, to a new order of international security based not on the terror of apocalyptic weapons but rather on understanding among all people, mutual trust, peace and peaceful coexistence.

123. The PRESIDENT: Under the decision taken by the General Assembly at its first plenary meeting, I now call on the last speaker for this morning, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Mr. Mostafa Tolba.

124. Mr. TOLBA (United Nations Environment Programme) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like, on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP] and on my own behalf, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over this historic session of the General Assembly. Those of us who are familiar with your distinguished leadership during previous sessions of the General Assembly have no doubt that you will guide these critical deliberations with the skill and authority for which you are so well known.

[*The speaker continued in English.*]

125. Members have heard many eloquent arguments in favour of disarmament. The Assembly's deliberations have served to show the watching world that in 1982 we are still where we were in 1978, facing the same stark choice: survival or annihilation.

126. Modern weapons have the deadly capacity not merely to wipe out cities, industries, even entire

populations, but to destroy the life-giving systems on which we all depend. I am convinced that the need to preserve our shared environment provides the most persuasive argument for nations to stop the dangerously escalating spiral of the arms race. The peoples of the world do not want war; they want the arms race to be reversed and they want the danger of nuclear war to be eliminated. They are puzzled and bemused. They see obvious contradictions in the attitude of the world community to the whole question of military activity. On the one hand, the numerous conventions, treaties and agreements provide clear evidence of a widespread desire to prevent the more devastating forms of warfare. On the other hand, the evidence of mounting military expenditure around the world implies a lack of conviction on the practicability of disarmament, or even on holding forces and arsenals at a constant size. The peoples of the world look to the United Nations to show how we can achieve the security which the arms buildup has not provided. The message, though expressed in a multitude of ways and in many languages, is to act now.

127. UNEP values this opportunity to be part of the call for action. Recently, as many representatives are aware, we completed the session of a special character at Nairobi to mark the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held at Stockholm. In Nairobi, 105 Governments were one in declaring that "the human environment would greatly benefit from an international atmosphere of peace and security, free from the threats of any wars, especially nuclear war, and the waste of intellectual and natural resources on armaments".

128. By a special resolution, the nations assembled at Nairobi appealed to Governments and to the world community as a whole to do their utmost to halt the arms race and thereby prevent a major threat to the environment. They requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to bring this appeal to the attention of this special session of the General Assembly [A/S-12/AC.1/16].

129. The Nairobi sentiment was the same as the one that moved Governments, at the General Assembly in 1980, to proclaim the historic responsibility of States for the preservation of nature for present and future generations and to request the Secretary-General, with the co-operation of UNEP, to prepare a report on the pernicious effects of the arms race on nature [resolution 35/8].

130. My mission today is basically to present to the Assembly the report of the Secretary-General on this subject [A/S-12/9], which is based on the views of Governments, three substantive reports transmitted to Governments and the conclusions of an expert body convened to examine the replies received to the questions we had put before them.

131. The UNEP studies sent to Governments focused on the past, present and future threats posed by weapons and warfare to the complex systems of the biosphere. Wars of the past have had both direct and indirect effects on the environment. They changed agriculture, shifted the margins of deserts and grossly disturbed the balance of ecosystems. The Second World War caused a reduction in agricultural pro-

ductivity of 38 per cent in 10 nations. A modern-day conflagration would have an immeasurably greater effect.

132. A legacy of past wars remains among us in the form of unexploded mines, bombs and shells, which endanger those who disturb them, make land unsafe to farm or develop for other purposes and hinder mineral exploitation. One Government reported that it has cleared more than 14 million land-mines left behind after the Second World War and that clearance was continuing at the rate of 300,000 to 400,000 a year. These remnants of war had killed close to 4,000 people in that country, most of them children, and had injured more than 8,000, of whom about 7,000 were children.

133. Chemical and biological weapons involve deliberate pollution by the release of toxic chemicals or harmful micro-organisms. Chemical deforestation in fragile tropical or semi-arid areas could create rapid erosion and irreversible desertification. Chemical, bacteriological or biological weapons disturb agriculture and the ecological balance for a long time to come. In Viet Nam, as the Assembly will recall, chemical herbicides completely destroyed 1,500 square kilometres of mangrove forest and caused some damage to a further 15,000 square kilometres. Natural recovery is proceeding at a disturbingly slow rate.

134. Tragic though such cases are, it was the widespread social disruption and the uprooting of large numbers of people that created the most persistent human effects of past wars. About 17 million were displaced in the second Indo-China war. Such refugees not only experienced personal suffering and economic loss, but they also exert severe pressures on the environment in the areas to which they migrate.

135. The disposal of stocks of obsolete weapons poses threats to the environment, and the growing volume and destructive capacity of the world's weapons constitute an obvious risk to the biosphere and to the people living within it. And environmental manipulation has added a new dimension to our self-destructive capacity. Now, at this moment in history, the threat of a nuclear holocaust forces us to take a long, hard look at the human and environmental consequences of the event that must never be allowed to occur.

136. We have heard and read that there is talk in some military circles that a nation can win a nuclear war. This is an unrealistic and dangerous notion. A full-scale nuclear war would, among other things, destroy all the major cities in the northern hemisphere, killing the bulk of the urban population there by blast and fire and the bulk of the rural population by radiation. Many millions in the far-away southern hemisphere would also be killed by radiation from fall-out. Though relatively unpredictable, the long-term consequences could, as the Secretary-General has already informed the Assembly, affect the global climate, reduce the ozone layer and induce serious genetic effects. Use of nuclear weapons in a full-scale war would destroy vegetation and lead to soil erosion over vast areas. Ecological recovery in such eroded areas would certainly be extremely slow.

137. A recent study has indicated that, if a nuclear war occurred at the beginning of the growing season,

food production would be almost totally eliminated in the northern hemisphere and that, if sunlight were blocked out by light-absorbing particles lifted up and spread in the atmosphere, much of the plankton which provides the basis for most marine life might die in about half of its oceans. In these grim circumstances, it would be difficult to conceive of continued survival for those who remained alive in the years following such a war.

138. Even if not one single bullet were to be fired in anger, the arms race would still be doing damage to the environment. The Stockholm Conference recognized and the Nairobi Conference endorsed the view that the gravest threat to our environment is posed by poverty resulting from under-development. The way to alleviate poverty is through sustainable development. But this objective will remain elusive as long as military activities continue to jeopardize the process of development by diverting substantial amounts of human, natural and financial resources to arms production. The Assembly has heard endless examples. I should like to quote just one: one estimate suggested that military research and development pre-empt scientific and technological capabilities 10 times as great as those available in all developing countries.

139. There may be room for argument about the details behind the figures for military expenditures and about the general relationship between such expenditures and other national investment. What is not challengeable, however, is the fact that, as members have heard in this Hall over and over again, the increase in military expenditures takes place at a time when more than 70 per cent of the peasants in developing countries lack drinking-water supply services and that more than 85 per cent of them have no effective sanitation, that 450 million are chronically undernourished, that 1.5 billion have no medical services and that 250 million under the age of 14 do not attend school.

140. These and a host of other appalling facts were discussed in the substantive reports circulated to Governments.

141. On the basis of the responses of Governments, UNEP reports and the conclusions of the expert body, some concrete recommendations have been formulated as a first step to protect the human environment against the production, stockpiling and use of arms. They are presented in the Secretary-General's report. This session is expected to consider these recommendations for further action. Eight of them stand out. They are: first, continuing assessment, monitoring and evaluation of the impact of military activity on the environment; secondly, encouraging studies on the relationship between security and the stability of ecosystems at local, national and wider levels; thirdly, demilitarizing ecologically important regions; fourthly, ensuring that outer space is not used for hostile purposes; fifthly, a call upon all Powers that have not yet ratified the Treaty banning nuclear-weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water² to do so; sixthly, development of a treaty by which all nations would pledge themselves not to be the first to use nuclear weapons in warfare; seventhly, inviting the

Conference to be convened to review the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques [*resolution 31/72, annex*], envisaged for 1983, to consider the possibility of banning herbicidal chemical warfare and of strengthening the Convention itself to prohibit all hostile uses of environmental manipulation techniques; and eighthly, establishing a ban on any weapon or technique, existing or potential, which would devastate a wide area and threaten the regional or local ecological balance.

142. I do not underestimate the forces which militate against disarmament: the insecurity which nations feel, the influence of the military-industrial complexes, the ambitions of individuals and so forth. Nor do I underestimate the powerful thrust for peace which, like the environment, knows no political boundaries and for which we look to the United Nations to give form and substance.

143. It is also true that the peoples of our global family of nations have seen that expenditure on arms does not bring security.

144. It is also a fact that, despite overwhelming evidence, there is little recognition in government circles of the extent to which resource exhaustion contributes to economic recession and threatens security.

145. The questions must then be asked: are we nearing the end-point of our evolution? Have the means become all-powerful and the ends obscure? Or is there now developing an affirmation of love of life and the Earth, whose fate we share? Never before in our history has there been a decision of this magnitude to be taken.

146. We have arrived at that point in time when the hand of mankind—which all too often has been the wielder of death and destruction—might yet be transformed into the healing hand with an ethical responsibility to prevent further damage from occurring and to heal an already wounded planet.

147. With a reversal of priorities, it would become possible to deal with the appalling poverty, scarcities and the environmental degradation so prevalent in the world today.

148. And real security can come only when nations co-operate to exploit equitably, wisely and consistently this planet's dwindling treasure of natural resources.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

NOTES

¹ A/CONF.95/15 and Corr.2, annex I. For the printed text of the Convention and its Protocols, see *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*, vol. 5: 1980 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.81.IX.4), appendix VII.

² Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 480, No. 6964, p. 43).