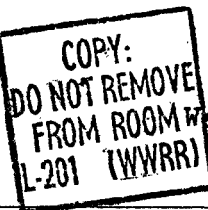


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THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION

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FIRST COMMITTEE
6th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 19 October 1983
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 6th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VRAALSEN (Norway)

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Statements were made by:

Mr. Canales (Chile)
Mr. Florin (German Democratic Republic)
Mr. Cheikh Sylla (Senegal)
Mr. Morelli Pando (Peru)
Miss Dever (Belgium)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

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GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. CANALES (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to convey to you, Mr. Chairman, the warmest congratulations of the Chilean delegation on your election. Your professional qualities and your wide experience in the United Nations are a guarantee of the balanced and impartial conduct of the Committee's work.

The First Committee begins its work this year in a very depressed atmosphere. Multilateral negotiations and bilateral talks held in order to seek agreements on disarmament have not achieved the expected results. They have not met the interests of the majority of the international community or responded to the increasing concern felt by the world public, which has gradually become better informed and sees with alarm the inability to direct the progress of science and technology towards peaceful uses, although that is the only way to ensure the survival of mankind, which is constantly threatened by the possibility of a nuclear catastrophe.

My delegation shares the view expressed in the Secretary-General's report that in no area is the need for a recommitment to the principles of the Charter more important and more closely tied to the survival of millions of people than in the field of disarmament and arms control. We believe, like the Secretary-General, that nuclear disarmament continues to be a matter of the utmost priority for each and every member of the international community and in particular for the major Powers, which have the responsibility and the duty to contribute to the creation of a climate of stability, security and peace.

In paragraph 109 of the Final Document, which was unanimously and categorically reaffirmed at the second special session on disarmament, it was stated that general and complete disarmament under effective international control continues to be the ultimate goal towards which all efforts in this

(Mr. Canales, Chile)

field should be directed, a goal which we fully share. That document sets out the way in which the process of disarmament could be initiated and systematically maintained. It sets out the principles and priorities for the creation of a realistic and pragmatic framework within which matters relating to disarmament could be effectively treated through revitalized, representative machinery, in a process of negotiation and deliberation.

Unfortunately, the reality is very different. The years that have gone by have shown not only that the Final Document has remained a dead letter for some States but also that tensions and conflicts in various parts of the world have contributed to the complete frustration of its purposes and have in fact stimulated an increase in armaments in the countries of the third world, to the detriment of their social and economic development.

We note today, therefore, a very obvious absence of political will on the part of those who hold the historic responsibility for reducing the huge production and accumulation of nuclear and conventional weapons.

The frustrating results of the negotiations on disarmament are in sharp contrast with the world that seeks peace. The appeal of the Secretary-General for vigilance concerning the application of the principles and provisions of the Charter is imperative. The dilemma concerns the choice between the use of force or the threat of the use of force with the attendant risk of a nuclear holocaust and the path of co-operation indicated in the Charter. In this connection, it is essential that we strengthen the rules and procedures set out in the Charter, since they constitute the appropriate framework for our search for just and permanent formulas for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

On this particular aspect, my delegation has on various occasions stated, and now reaffirms, the need to strengthen the legal norms for the compulsory solution by peaceful means of international disputes as the only way of avoiding war and destruction.

In this connection the Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country, in his statement in the general debate in the General Assembly, emphasized the

(Mr. Canales, Chile)

urgency of seeking formulas which

"would allow this Organization to follow closely the evolution of certain problems in order to guide them towards peaceful means of the prevention and settlement of disputes in accordance with international law and human rights. Perhaps some helpful action in regard to unsolved divergencies might be taken when these involve risks of potential confrontation. In this manner there could be timely co-operation in the initial stages with the parties directly concerned, thereby possibly averting confrontation."

(A/38/PV.16, p. 4-5)

We welcomed the approval of the Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes adopted by the previous session of the General Assembly. That Declaration, which originated in the work of the First Committee, stresses the close link between the peaceful settlement of disputes and disarmament and international security.

There is increasing concern at the present stagnation of the principal negotiations, at both the multilateral and the bilateral level, in the field of disarmament. There is no doubt that the international situation has seriously deteriorated, in particular the relations between the major States possessing nuclear weapons. This has had serious repercussions on disarmament negotiations and is a destabilizing factor in the international process. We are convinced that the Committee on Disarmament, with its new programme of work, will be able to work out a more appropriate framework to ensure effective progress. The Committee on Disarmament, the only multilateral negotiating body on this subject, has still not been able to make a detailed analysis of the most sensitive problems linked to nuclear disarmament, despite the many efforts, initiatives and concessions by the Group of 21.

(Mr. Canales, Chile)

The mandate of the First Committee over the past year has been to promote effective progress in the disarmament process. To that end, a large number of resolutions have been adopted which have done little to improve the general international situation.

At the same time, the talks on medium-range nuclear arms and strategic weapons have shown no positive signs of progress. We hope that with an effort of political will, commitments can be obtained that will lead to future progress.

There continue to be different views on the process of disarmament, and the question of disarmament and international security is becoming increasingly critical. The total amount of world military expenditure exceeds \$800 billion annually, and there is every indication that this figure will increase progressively, as it has done thus far.

The scenario within which the process of disarmament must be developed presents serious difficulties, at both bilateral and multilateral levels. We believe it is essential that the United Nations should help, through an effective policy free of any discrimination or demagoguery but characterized by pluralism and dialogue, to rationalize its role in disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament.

Otherwise, every time we adopt a resolution we shall be harming the effectiveness and the image of our Organization. We are convinced that the deliberating bodies of the United Nations should be guided by the principles and recommendations contained in the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, and should make every effort to reflect the true meaning of disarmament as a political objective.

In this connection, my delegation fully endorses the comments made by the representative of the Bahamas last Monday at the opening of the general debate.

My delegation wishes to make some brief comments on the need to seek methods which could help, through imagination and political realism, to ensure implementation of the commitments undertaken when the Final Document was adopted by consensus, in particular paragraph 45, which declares the priority of nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Canales, Chile)

The risk of a nuclear war becomes more likely every day, in view of the present size of the nuclear arsenals and the state of tension which is characteristic of the relations between the major Powers. There can be no doubt that the main responsibility for nuclear disarmament must lie with the major Powers, which together possess 90 per cent of all nuclear weapons. This demonstrates that the vertical disarmament, both quantitative and qualitative, to which the parties to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation have committed themselves, is still not taking place, nor, indeed, has the permanent and legally binding renunciation of nuclear arms been made.

Furthermore, we must bear in mind that if we do not control, reduce and eliminate this type of weapon, then the likelihood of horizontal proliferation will increase, which would lead to even greater difficulties in controlling the arms race and which would further increase the threat of a nuclear war.

This situation requires us to make greater efforts to forestall the dangers implicit in further horizontal proliferation of these fearful weapons of mass destruction, a proliferation which has already happened in a number of countries.

Chile, as a coastal country of the Pacific, reiterates its vehement opposition to any form of nuclear testing in that ocean. Such tests not only affect the marine environment, but also endanger the whole regional ecosystem. We hope that the ad hoc working group of the Committee on Disarmament on the prohibition of nuclear tests will finally achieve some positive results in the course of its 1984 session, as urged in resolution 37/72. We understand that the technical aspects of this problem have already been sufficiently explored.

A total test ban in conformity with the provisions of paragraph 51 of the Final Document, and other substantive disarmament measures, are a matter of political will. We make an appeal to the nuclear weapon States, calling on them to set aside the dubious advantages of such tests, as a contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament, to the non-proliferation régime and to the promotion of international confidence-building.

(Mr. Canales, Chile)

While reiterating our adherence to the aims of vertical and horizontal nuclear non-proliferation, including geographical aspects, we also call for greater international co-operation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

In that respect we believe that it is extremely important to give effective backing to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with a view to giving support to one of its functions, that of controlling the nuclear plans of States through the application of an appropriate and balanced safeguards system, without prejudice to the strengthening of the effective nuclear co-operation which is the principal function of that body and constitutes the most effective means of promoting nuclear development for peaceful purposes.

My country expresses the hope that the next meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Promotion of International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy can reach agreement on the agenda of that Conference. We understand that the central item of the Conference will be the establishment of universal principles for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and nothing else. We hope that that Committee will be able to achieve that, on the basic assumption that proliferation will not be discussed, or that if it is, it will be solely in relation to nuclear weapons in the terms of General Assembly resolution 32/50.

(Mr. Canales, Chile)

My country views with alarm the deterioration of security in the third world. The fragility of the international system is shown by numerous conflicts, seemingly local in nature, which have historic causes of social injustice and territorial disputes, to give a few examples, and which involve many countries in various parts of the world, including the major Powers. These conflicts have also brought about the acquisition of conventional weapons, often exceeding the natural needs of national defence and security.

Until there is appropriate control of the transfer of such arms to the developing countries, the regional arms races will remain a latent problem. In this respect, we believe that the agreements on regional security and disarmament constitute a promising approach. We believe that the Group of Experts can finally present its report in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 36/97 A.

In this respect, my country has encouraged the initiative taken by Colombia to include on the agenda of the next session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States an item entitled "Convention for the Creation of a Mechanism for the Inspection of Arms and Military Equipment in America". Such a proposal makes possible an exchange of views on a matter of great concern to the area.

Chile has been particularly interested in the problems related to outer space and has co-operated in a determined manner with all the scientific and technical efforts aimed at promoting the peaceful uses of outer space. We expressed our concern about this matter in this very Committee 10 years ago.

Our country suggested the creation of a Latin American space agency, which, through regional co-operation, could contribute to keeping space technology for economic and social development. It is precisely this interest which now causes our serious alarm and concern at the increasing proof that the arms race is being extended to outer space. This is an urgent matter, not only because of the need to maintain outer space as the common heritage of mankind, but also because an arms race in outer space would further increase our fears of a nuclear conflagration.

(Mr. Canales, Chile)

The development of space technology could still be used for destruction and death instead of for the peaceful use of outer space. Proof of this is the development of anti-satellite systems. We hope that in the Committee on Disarmament, soon to be the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, there will be the political will to make substantive progress on this item.

My country welcomes the proposed creation of an international satellite monitoring body, which would certainly greatly help to achieve better international understanding and co-operation. We also view with interest the initiatives to extend the principle of the non-use of force to outer space.

The difficulties of fulfilling the commitments that the international community entered into with the adoption by consensus of the Final Document and of taking effective disarmament measures have also had consequences for economic development. As a developing country, Chile considers that the problems of disarmament and development are closely linked. It is undeniable that if there are no resources for development there will not be peace, and those who contribute to the unchecked arms race bear a responsibility that they cannot shrug off, since they threaten the survival of mankind with their armaments policies, in particular with nuclear arms and through their obstruction of the process of co-operation for development to the benefit of universal, lasting peace.

My delegation supports the recommendations of the Group of Experts - governmental experts - on this item. We take this opportunity to reiterate our support for this initiative. In so far as the reallocation of military resources would strengthen the establishment of a new international economic order, our country will encourage any action leading to the attainment of this objective.

The Antarctic Treaty was perhaps the first instrument negotiated at the height of the cold war to contribute to the concept of détente. The Treaty has brought together countries with different political systems in one of the most remarkable and welcome examples of international co-operation.

(Mr. Canales, Chile)

The Treaty created the first zone of peace - demilitarized and denuclearized - in the world, and it undoubtedly constitutes a model agreement on disarmament, one which should be an inspiration to us in our work. The Antarctic Treaty, agreed upon in 1959, established the first - and, unfortunately, the only - on-site inspection system, in which all parties recognized the right to send observers with the broadest terms of reference to control the effective implementation of the principles and purposes of the Treaty. Article 7 gives ample freedom of access, including aerial observation, at any time to each of the regions of Antarctica.

My delegation will refer more specifically to this matter when we deal with agenda item 140.

My delegation is fully aware of the existing political difficulties in trying to reach a consensus on the problems of disarmament, particularly with regard to nuclear disarmament. However, we believe that the survival of mankind is a goal which should take us beyond national interests and which goes beyond ideological controversies and political-strategic and power rivalries. The ending of nuclear tests, the creation of new denuclearized zones and the conclusion of agreements aimed at the total elimination of these weapons will benefit the whole international community.

If we are to achieve that end, we must be able to count on a political effort by the two super-Powers and the **other** nuclear-weapon States to make effective concessions involving balanced reductions as an important step towards general and complete disarmament under adequate international control. Such concessions would be an effective contribution towards creating a favourable atmosphere for initiating realistic disarmament negotiations.

Finally, I repeat that my country will co-operate with any initiative which will contribute pragmatically to nuclear and conventional disarmament. I also reiterate our renewed support for the various approaches offered in the Final Document.

Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic) (interpretation from Russian):

I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the important post of Chairman of the First Committee. I express the hope that under your guidance, and relying on your rich experience and diplomatic abilities, this Committee will conclude its work successfully.

I congratulate also the other officers of the Committee on their election to those posts.

The General-Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic, Erich Honecker, stated the following on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the German Democratic Republic's membership of the United Nations:

"The most urgent task facing the United Nations at present is to unite the efforts of States in the struggle against the threat of war and to mobilize all the potentials and reserves conducive to peace".

Those words describe our relationship to the United Nations since, for us, peace is not merely a moral principle. For our State, in which nobody at all could profit from an arms race; for our State, whose people have set themselves the great and lofty objectives of development and who wish to contribute to the solution of the global problems of mankind, the preservation of peace is the primary priority.

As we speak today in the First Committee at this thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, the situation for Europe and the entire world is indeed a fateful one. The scheduled deployment of new American nuclear weapons in Europe compels us more than ever before to choose between two options: either to set forth upon the road leading us back to détente, removing nuclear confrontation and guaranteeing the military balance between the Warsaw Treaty countries and the NATO countries through a lesser number of weapons; or, by deploying the new American first-strike weapons, to increase precipitously the danger of a devastating nuclear inferno. The German Democratic Republic, which is located on the dividing line between the

(Mr. Florin, German Democratic Republic)

two most powerful military alliances, is doing everything in its ability to take account of the lessons of the past and of the needs of the present and to avert any dangerous development. We cannot allow for the dangers of the outbreak of another war from German soil - this time with American weapons.

The plan to deploy American medium-range nuclear missiles in Western Europe is part of the doctrine that a nuclear war can be fought in Europe and won. It is part of a system of plans which, disregarding the rights and interests of other States, are aimed at the attainment of world supremacy. For that purpose, an unprecedented arms drive on land, on water, in the air and in outer space is now being carried on, and there are many new acts of military intervention and the use of force in all parts of the world, ranging from the Middle East and Africa up to Central America. This is a dangerous course, all the more so because first-strike weapons, in view of their technical parameters, are able to reach their targets in only a few minutes. This means that the peaceful settlement of disputes provided for in Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter would be impossible. At the same time, this is a rather Utopian course.

The States members of the Warsaw Treaty have unequivocally declared that they are determined, and able, to prevent the other side from breaking the military balance and gaining military superiority. The Eastern side does not seek a monopoly - and I need mention here only the French and British nuclear medium-range systems - and NATO should not be allowed, either, to have a monopoly on these weapons systems. There is no doubt that the perpetuation of the escalation of the arms race would continue to aggravate the already extremely tense political situation and to hamper solutions by way of negotiations. Nobody at all could benefit from this.

The security of all States, both European and non-European, would suffer great harm. Although the decisions are taken in Europe, it is not only or exclusively a European problem. One should never forget that those who, despite the destructive power of the present arms potential, especially

(Mr. Florin, German Democratic Republic)

in nuclear weapons, refuse to work for solutions by way of negotiations based on the principle of equality and equal security are following a course that runs counter to the basic requirements of common sense. This is particularly true of the negotiations in Geneva on the limitation of medium-range weapons in Europe.

The proposals of the Soviet Union offer us a basis for working towards results that would deal with the legitimate security interests of all parties concerned. They include many options, ranging from a genuine zero option - that is, the elimination of all nuclear weapons in Europe, both medium-range and battlefield weapons - up to a readiness to eliminate all missiles that will have been the object of a reduction in the European part of the Soviet Union provided that a mutually acceptable agreement is reached on reducing nuclear weapons in Europe as a whole, and including the renunciation by the United States of the deployment of nuclear missiles as well as the reduction of the number of air-based medium-range weapons.

In short, the Soviet Union proposals do not envisage for the Soviet side a single missile, a single aircraft carrying nuclear weapons, a single nuclear warhead more than there would be on the NATO side. There can be no serious argument against these proposals. Therefore, we are convinced that a solution can still be achieved through the Geneva negotiations.

We therefore agree with all those who call for continued negotiations instead of the deployment of new weapons. This historic opportunity must be fully used, as was emphasized in the following proposal made by the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Treaty States on 14 October 1983 in Sofia:

(Mr. Florin, German
Democratic Republic)

"... if agreement is not reached at the talks by the year's end it is essential that the talks should be continued with a view to reaching it in the conditions of the renunciation by the United States and its NATO allies of their schedule for deploying new medium-range nuclear missiles."

This is a fair offer, inasmuch as the USSR has declared that under such conditions it would be willing to continue observing its unilateral freeze on medium-range missile systems deployed in the European part of its territory and to carry out a unilateral reduction of such systems. Those who reject this opportunity to conclude the negotiations successfully have only come to the negotiating table for the purpose of concealing their own over-armament plans.

Talks that representatives of my country have had with a great number of politicians over the past few weeks and months have made it clear that there is grave concern about any further exacerbation of the international situation and that there is an earnest desire to achieve results, through negotiations, which would prevent an escalation of tension.

This, of course, is quite understandable. Any policy that gambles with the fate of mankind must necessarily evoke resistance among all those who, irrespective of their political or ideological differences, oppose preparations for a nuclear war. In order to implement their arms budgets and programmes, those who pursue a policy aimed at gaining military superiority, have recourse to increasingly adventurous methods. The aircraft provocation against the Soviet Union and the accompanying campaign to foment anti-Soviet hysteria were further proof of this. We strenuously reject all attempts to stifle the voice of common sense by whipping up emotions. At the present time there is the arms drive, provocation and the propaganda campaign, all of which have increased the danger of war more than ever before since the end of the Second World War. At this time, we reiterate our urgent appeal that we do everything in our power to lessen tension in international relations and to intensify international dialogue and co-operation.

(Mr. Florin, German Democratic
Republic)

The United Nations should exert its full authority to counter attempts at justifying and propagating a nuclear war and to oppose warmongering. The German Democratic Republic, therefore, fully supports the suggestion of the Soviet Union that this General Assembly should adopt a declaration on the condemnation of nuclear war.

The Final Document of the United Nations first special session devoted to disarmament regards the prevention of nuclear war as the most urgent task of the world today. The measures contained in the Final Document were adopted by consensus. At the United Nations second special session devoted to disarmament there was again a unanimous appeal for urgent action to avert nuclear war.

Following this appeal the thirty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted by an overwhelming majority several resolutions on the prevention of nuclear war calling for urgent and effective measures. The Warsaw Treaty Member States and the non-aligned countries, following summit meetings of their groups, adopted documents which reflect considerable identity of views on practical measures to this end.

At this year's session of the Geneva Committee on Disarmament, representatives of socialist and non-aligned countries submitted working papers containing specific suggestions on effective measures and how to implement them. Important prerequisites already exist for the achievement of concrete steps:

First, there is the general conviction of the urgency of the need to lessen and eliminate the danger of a nuclear war;

Secondly, there is a predominantly uniform view on the practical approach:

Thirdly, there is the demand of peace-loving forces which reflects the increasing desire of peoples in the East and West, North and South that effective measures be taken.

(Mr. Florin, German Democratic
Republic)

It is absolutely imperative to stop the arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race. A relatively simple and feasible step that would be taken could be to put a freeze on nuclear weapons. This world-wide demand is supported by a large majority of States that are represented here and is reflected in resolutions already adopted at the thirty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly. In their Prague Declaration the Warsaw Treaty Member States strongly advocated a freeze on nuclear weapons, starting with the strategic weapons of the USSR and the United States.

In view of the existing approximate balance in the nuclear potential of the USSR and the United States, which has repeatedly been confirmed by Presidents of the United States and in international documents, favourable conditions already exist for such a freeze. The German Democratic Republic welcomes the initiative of the USSR at this session of the General Assembly for a freeze, both quantitative and qualitative, with appropriate verification, on the nuclear arsenals of all nuclear-weapon States, particularly those of the USSR and the United States. This would put a halt to the quantitative build-up of all components of the nuclear weapons arsenals as well as to the deployment of new types of nuclear arms. It would also impose a moratorium on all tests of nuclear warheads, as well as on new types of nuclear delivery vehicles and on the production of fissionable material destined for nuclear warheads.

We fully agree with the letter of the Foreign Minister of the USSR, Mr. Gromyko. We, too, consider the freeze on the nuclear-weapon arsenals as an important starting point for subsequent substantial reductions in nuclear weapons. The thirty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly should adopt an appropriate resolution to this effect.

(Mr. Florin, German
Democratic Republic)

In this connection, we welcome the fact that the Ministers and heads of delegation of non-aligned countries, in their communiqué on the meeting which was held in New York this year, called for a freeze on the production, stockpiling and stationing of nuclear weapons. In addition, it is necessary to have international guarantees against the use of nuclear weapons. At the second special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the USSR solemnly entered into a commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. The People's Republic of China had entered into a similar commitment. However, the other nuclear-weapon States have not yet responded to the appeal made by the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session.

A commitment by all five nuclear-weapon States not to be the first to use nuclear weapons would open up the way to the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, as also called for at the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly by a convincing majority of Member States. We expect the current session of the General Assembly to emphasize still more strongly the demand for a binding commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

Attempts to justify the first use of nuclear weapons, including even attempts to misuse Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, are not only a juridical perversion but also an attack on the basic values of human civilization. Equally wrong is the objection that since we have to deal with the question of preventing wars in general it is impossible to give a pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

The prevention of nuclear war means the prevention of a catastrophe that would threaten the very survival of mankind. This fact should always be cited to counter attempts made to minimize the dangers and say that people might get used to them. For many years the overwhelming majority of States have been calling for the conclusion of an international treaty on the non-use of force. Such a treaty would constitute an important legal instrument for the purpose of preventing wars of any kind.

(Mr. Florin, German
Democratic Republic)

Finally, there is the proposal made by the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty to the States members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) that they conclude a treaty on the mutual renunciation of the use of military force and on the maintenance of peaceful relations. A commitment by the member States of both alliances not to be the first to use nuclear or conventional weapons against each other would put an end to any use of military force. And, of course, this proposal also envisages the prohibition of the use of force against third countries. The treaty would also be open to States which are not members of either of the alliances. Regrettably, we are still awaiting a response from NATO to this proposal.

The Soviet Union, in submitting its proposal on the prohibition of the use of force in outer space and from space against the earth, has made a valuable contribution to ensuring the peaceful use of outer space and preventing a new, dangerous escalation of the arms race. The proposal is fully supported by the German Democratic Republic.

The proposed treaty would not only impose on all States a political and legal obligation to refrain from the use of force in outer space and from space, but also back up this obligation with specific practical measures, such as the ban on the testing and deployment of space-based weapons. Furthermore, this draft treaty would help those States which are particularly interested in the complete prohibition of anti-satellite weapons. It envisages a radical solution to that problem. The unilateral commitment by the USSR not to be the first to deploy any anti-satellite weapon in space is clear proof of its determination to do everything possible to prevent an unrestrained arms race in outer space and to facilitate the conclusion of an appropriate treaty. In view of all this the General Assembly should adopt a relevant resolution at this session.

This session of the General Assembly is also expected to take decisions on other important issues of arms limitation and disarmament, including the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. Our country will continue to advocate the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Europe and other regions.

(Mr. Florin, German
Democratic Republic)

We attach particular significance to the Swedish proposal to create a zone free of battlefield nuclear weapons on both sides of the dividing line between the Warsaw Treaty countries and the NATO countries. The German Democratic Republic is willing to include its entire territory in such a zone and to abide by the principles of equality and equal security.

It is important to strengthen further the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We believe that this session of the General Assembly should begin the preparation of the Third Review Conference of the parties to that Treaty. It is also essential to begin the preparation and implementation of the comprehensive programme of nuclear disarmament. In this connection, priority must be given to the prohibition of neutron weapons.

Attention must also be paid to the prohibition and destruction of all chemical weapons. In this connection, the United Nations should call on all States to refrain from any action that might impede agreement in this field.

Serious negotiations undertaken in good faith on these matters, on the multilateral, the regional and the bilateral level, are urgently necessary. They can be successful if all participants are prepared to work intensively for generally acceptable results. Positive results can be achieved in the present international situation, as was demonstrated by the successful conclusion of the Madrid meeting. What is needed is political realism, common sense and goodwill. The German Democratic Republic contributed quite considerably to opening up new opportunities in Madrid, giving a fresh impetus to détente and peaceful coexistence. This is particularly true as regards the Conference on Confidence and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, which it has now been agreed to hold.

(Mr. Florin, German Democratic Republic)

At this session of the General Assembly, our delegation will do everything possible to make its contribution to improve the conditions for progress towards ending the arms race and ensuring peace. The world must return to the road of common sense and political realism. The process of détente of the 1970s eliminated colonialism, strengthened peace and gave a sense of confidence to mankind. If a few people are dissatisfied with that, it is no reason for others to emulate them. On the contrary, our goals must be to achieve détente, dialogue, co-operation and agreements on the basis of equality and equal security.

Mr. CHEIKH SYLLA (Senegal) (interpretation from French): The Senegalese delegation, Mr. Chairman, would like first to convey to you and the other officers of the Committee our most sincere congratulations on your election to guide the work of our Committee. In carrying out the difficult and demanding tasks which the Committee has entrusted to you, you can be sure of our support and co-operation.

Our contribution to the debate in the First Committee will be that of a small peace-loving third world country which has neither the desire nor the means of causing the slaughter entailed by war. We are, therefore, a country which cannot in any way have any decisive say in the elimination of a scourge, namely the arms race. But peace is a universal aspiration and, in view of our clear interests and our own logic, we are led to speak out for our right. That right is to ensure that our fate, which is that of many other countries similar to our own, should not depend upon fluctuations in the relations between those which today have the power to decide on the destruction of the world.

That right also justifies our demand that the omnipotent of the world show proof of an attitude which is in conformity with the magnitude of the responsibilities their power imposes on them. Such an attitude should show that,

(Mr. Cheikh Sylla, Senegal)

through concerted effort and constructive dialogue, it is possible to make peace an attainable goal. Such an attitude is all the more necessary since the situation in the world today imposes upon us a choice on which the survival of mankind will depend. Those of us who have no voice no doubt carry little weight in this important and vital debate, but we must not become fatalists because neither war nor peace is bound to happen. We should therefore like to continue to believe that if we raise our voices together we shall perhaps one day make ourselves heard.

The fact remains that we are living at a turbulent time in international relations. In virtually every field, the world situation is worse today than it was a year ago. Violence has become a normal fact of our daily life; tensions have increased; the dividing line between military conflict and the massacre of civilians is becoming blurred and passion has become unrestrained. Events have confirmed that man is capable of inventing wondrous devices as well as the most infamous. The question therefore is which choice are we to make.

Are we to choose peace, in which case everyone would have everything to gain, and we would begin with the spirit of justice, tolerance and the recognition of the dignity of nations and peoples on an equal footing? Or is our choice to be that of war, in which case all of us would have everything to lose? That is the choice to which selfishness, prejudice and intolerance lead. That second choice, which seems to be the one that prevails today, would lead to one thing only, namely, that the fires which are being kindled in various parts of the world today would one day burst into a full-fledged world conflagration.

The warnings and appeals made by many international organizations, scientists and eminent personalities and the anxiety expressed by a broad section of public opinion are listened to only half-heartedly by the major Powers, which seem to be caught in a trap

(Mr. Cheikh Sylla, Senegal)

of their own making. The deterrence, implicit or explicit, on which the strategies of the two sides are based, seem to have led to an impasse, for while the stated objective of both sides is to avoid the use of nuclear weapons, neither is actually prepared to eliminate those weapons. In order to ensure that nuclear weapons are not used, it is essential to convince the other side that they could possibly be used against it. Thus discussions are held on limitation, on a freeze or on the reduction of nuclear weapons which, in any case, exist in numbers far larger than those necessary to destroy the planet. The destruction of those weapons, however, is not discussed. And since each side continues to believe that the other side will attack if it has a good chance of winning, weapons continue to be stockpiled. What is more, the technical performance of those weapons has improved, because the more sophisticated the weapon the more it will convince the other side than any hope of winning would be in vain, as if in this type of logic nuclear victory would be possible. The balance of forces, on which we are told world security is based, has a tremendous disadvantage in that it cannot be measured in objective terms. Therefore, everyone measures it according to his own criteria and places the responsibility for disrupting such security on the other side.

The firm tone of the statements and the efforts to keep one step ahead in this infernal race thus increase in proportion to the fear and mistrust of the other side. It is on this psychological problem that the peace and security of the world today rest.

The fact that we are all aware of the dangers inherent in this situation should prompt us to redouble our efforts to create the necessary conditions for dialogue and negotiation, because there is no alternative. The commitment undertaken along these lines by the Non-Aligned Movement, which represents two thirds of the countries of the world, deserves the support of all men of goodwill. It is indeed in order to encourage such negotiations

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that the Committee on Disarmament, a body which is to play the primary role in disarmament questions, was set up in Geneva five years ago. That Committee, whose work has not yet been conclusive, should have directed its efforts towards effective disarmament, in its capacity as a negotiating forum capable of winning the confidence and support of the international community.

However, we must recognize that, despite the efforts made by a large majority of its members, the Committee has been unable to start serious negotiations on questions to which the first special session devoted to disarmament had given priority, such as the total banning of tests and the prevention of nuclear war.

(Mr. Cheikh Sylla, Senegal)

In the same way, the discussions on the proposed comprehensive programme of disarmament, the text of which was the result of several years of work in an ad hoc group, still show no sign of a positive development.

When the Committee on Disarmament fails to make progress on certain items that have been on the disarmament agenda for more than a quarter of a century, perhaps we should concentrate our efforts on increasing our awareness of exactly what is involved so that we may break this deadlock. To this end, the World Disarmament Campaign should be a matter of priority for us as an instrument in the cause of peace. It should enable us to create the collective militant effort which could exert the necessary pressure on Governments to show a little more common sense. Until new disarmament measures are arrived at, we should, I believe, try to put to the best use what has been achieved so far.

In this connection, one question on which the Committee has not made any meaningful progress - and which is not even a disarmament measure - is, in our view, of paramount importance, since it concerns security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States. It has become almost a truism to say that it is only fair that States which have renounced such weapons should be given guarantees against their use or the threat of their use. We see this, together with access to the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, as the legitimate counterpart of the renunciation of such weapons, to which our countries have freely consented. This question is for us Africans of paramount importance, particularly since it should also do away with the threat to our continent represented by the nuclear programme of racist South Africa.

We believe we are all the more justified in stressing this point since certain statements made recently cannot but lead us to doubt the effective value of existing negative security guarantees. Indeed, in his statement to the Committee on Disarmament last April the representative of Venezuela, Ambassador Oliver, referred to an important personality from one of the principal members of a bloc of countries, who had stated in Copenhagen the previous June:

"The problem is not so much to know where these nuclear weapons are stockpiled or located as to know where they will explode ... The truth is quite simply that nuclear-weapon-free zones offer not the slightest protection against the use of such weapons. On the contrary, the only time in history when nuclear weapons were used it was precisely in a nuclear-weapon-free zone and against nuclear-weapon-free towns. Japan did not have the atomic bomb in 1945. Nuclear-weapon-free zones give an advantage to those that wish to attack or threaten them with nuclear weapons. To translate this particular aspect to the present political scene, it may be wondered whether a régime that does not respect the territorial integrity of a nation in time of peace will respect nuclear-weapon-free zones in time of crisis or war. The only protection against the use of nuclear weapons is the possession of such weapons."

Of course this was not a statement of official policy but, nevertheless, it underscores the justification and the urgent need for providing effective security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon-States through precise and binding commitments.

The inclusion on our agenda of the item relating to the Third Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons should enable us, in the light of the discussions held in the Committee on Disarmament on this matter, to go into greater detail on this important problem.

The prevention of war is not simply a matter of the level of armament. Today it is unanimously recognized that the reduction of tension throughout the world necessarily implies taking into consideration the vital need for development, because, if weapons are the means of war, the scourges of poverty, ignorance and sickness are the sources of war both present and future. The study on the relationship between disarmament and development, the result of three years of work, which was presented the year before last constitutes in this regard a highly important document. Therefore we await with impatience the report of the Secretary-General on the study which we requested the United Nations Institute for Training and Research to undertake last year on the possibilities for the creation of an international disarmament fund for development.

(Mr. Cheikh Sylla, Senegal)

We listened with pleasure and interest to the masterly address by the President of the French Republic to the General Assembly, in which he referred to the highly constructive proposals in that regard. The one relating to the convening at the earliest possible date of a conference devoted to the problems concerning the relationship between disarmament and development seems to us to be of particular importance. We hope that the major military Powers will be able to respond to that generous appeal without delay. That would be a big step in the right direction and it would give greater hope that solidarity will prevail over egoism, for the benefit of all.

I will conclude by expressing the satisfaction of my delegation at the fact that the Committee on Disarmament has accepted the principle of increasing the number of its members. Such an increase, which in any case meets the concern that had been already expressed at the two special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, will enable the new members, which we hope will be chosen according to the criteria in effect in the United Nations, to make a positive contribution to the deliberations of that body. It is to the credit of the Committee that it has thus shown the spirit of open-mindedness and understanding which is indispensable for ensuring that the dialogue for peace will make progress, a dialogue which presupposes that each and every one can make himself heard but will also be prepared to listen to what others say with full respect for and understanding of different views.

The CHAIRMAN: I call upon the representative of Peru, who will speak in his capacity as current Chairman of the Committee on Disarmament.

Mr. MORELLI PANDO (Peru), Chairman of the Committee on Disarmament (interpretation from Spanish): I have the honour and pleasure of presenting to the First Committee of the thirty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly the annual report for 1983 of the Committee on Disarmament, which is contained in document CD/421 and Corr.1 and 2. Copies in all the working languages of the report, including the annexes, will be available shortly.

(Mr. Morelli Pando, Chairman,
Committee on Disarmament)

I should like to draw attention to certain matters dealt with by the Committee during the present year. With regard to the recommendation made by the General Assembly last year at the thirty-seventh session, the Committee decided to change its title from the beginning of its 1984 session to "Conference on Disarmament". This new title will not have any structural or financial implications, and the rules of procedure will continue to be essentially the same. Nor will the change of name in any way imply a change in the functions of the secretariat, which will be maintained as defined in the rules of procedure.

The Committee also decided that the number of its members could be increased by a maximum of four States. The new members will be elected by consensus, after consultations with the Chairman. The agreements reached will be communicated to the General Assembly at its next regular session.

(Mr. Morelli Pando, Chairman,
Committee on Disarmament)

All the substantive items of the Committee's programme were carefully considered by the members. With regard to certain important items, the Committee is still in a phase of pre-negotiation, analysing and identifying problems, noting cases of consensus where they exist, and setting aside those items on which there is no consensus for later consideration. On certain items on which negotiations were held, some progress was achieved; generally speaking, the lack of progress in critical areas reflects the adverse climate prevailing in the world today, which inevitably affects disarmament negotiations in all forums.

The two items "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters", and "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", were given particular attention by all members, obviously because of their paramount importance. Their consideration will be continued next year, and in this respect I should like to express the hope that practical agreements and organizational agreements can be rapidly adopted so that those items can be dealt with urgently and in a meaningful and constructive manner. Progress has also been made with regard to the prohibition of chemical weapons. With regard to other items, work will continue next year.

I am sure that the members of the First Committee will give the annual report their particular attention. The report sets out the complex character of the questions at present under consideration, the nature of the existing differences of opinion and the difficulties which will have to be overcome in order to reach the necessary consensus.

Speaking personally, I should like to state that the problems are not insurmountable and indeed must be solved before it is too late. It is essential that the countries principally concerned should make a special effort to create the conditions in which negotiations can lead to fruitful results. If the climate of such negotiations were to improve it would, in my view, be possible to expect rapid agreement on the prevention of nuclear war, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, a nuclear ban, and a ban on chemical weapons. Indeed, we have all been expecting these results for some time now and I am sure that this session of the General Assembly will turn its attention to these items with special care and with urgency.

(Mr. Morelli Pando, Chairman,
Committee on Disarmament)

I believe it is timely to recall that the Secretary-General, in his last report to the General Assembly, after having made a special reference to these same substantive items, made the following comment:

"At its thirty-seventh session, the Assembly adopted a record number of resolutions on disarmament matters, including over 20 dealing with nuclear questions. They reflect the deeply felt concern of many Governments with the present situation. World public opinion is increasingly reacting against the constant threat of extinction hanging over humanity ..." (A/38/1, p. 6)

In conclusion I should like once more to express my gratitude to the members of the Committee on Disarmament for the support and co-operation I have always received from them, and to convey to Mr. Rikhi Jaipal, Secretary of the Committee, to Mr. Vicente Berasategui, and to all the staff in Geneva as a whole my gratitude for their assistance.

Miss DEVER (Belgium) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, at the outset I should like to tell you how happy we are to see you preside over our Committee. Your thorough knowledge of the issues, your interest in disarmament questions and your well-known qualities as an experienced negotiator are certainly good guarantees that our work will proceed smoothly.

Yesterday, we heard the representative of Greece speak in his capacity as President of the Council of the European Community, and we heard him speak of the hopes and fears of the 10 countries that make up that Community. I should like to add to what he said on our behalf a few comments and thoughts on problems to which my country attaches particular importance.

In the last few years, the Government and people of Belgium have seen, with a growing sense of dread, the threat looming over our country and over Western Europe as a whole take sharper and clearer shape, in the form of a new category of nuclear weapons. We realized the gravity of this threat from the outset, and so our Government had to include among the possibilities of what

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might happen to it the possibility that one day it might suddenly find itself faced with a tragic dilemma threatening our very existence as a nation: either yield to threats, or accept the danger that Belgium might simply disappear. That is a fact, a fact which cannot be denied.

Faced with this fait accompli, our allies and we ourselves reacted in a moderate and responsible manner. Because we abide by our obligation to seek a solution to our disputes by negotiation, for we entered into this obligation under the Charter, and also because we are convinced of the ultimate futility of the arms race, we set a deadline of four years for reaching some agreement, four years during which we deliberately refrained from acquiring the means to avert this new threat to us through deterrence.

Who would not feel a certain anguish at seeing that this deadline is now arriving without our having been able, thus far, to avert through negotiation this threat that we denounced four years ago? Yet some people are trying to use this sense of anguish to create an atmosphere of crisis at the approach of the deadline set four years ago. The fact remains that it is not the expiry of the deadline that is responsible for the difficult time we are living through: rather it is the upsetting of the nuclear balance through the unilateral action of the USSR that is responsible. That balance must be restored, and no one can say that we spared any effort to ensure that it be restored at the lowest possible level. Compare the situation existing today with that which existed four years ago when we made our offer of negotiation. Which party has used the time to increase its advantages? As I said earlier, we know the futility and the cast of the arms race. We are also convinced that, in the present circumstances, it is only a balance of force that can guarantee the security of us all. We believe, and indeed we strongly hope, that through negotiations it will be possible to give each of us the same security at a reduced level of armaments.

I felt that I had to take up first of all the problems that are the immediate concern of my Government. But they should not obscure other problems that can affect our not too distant future, and I am thinking in particular of the importance of the United Nations to meet the challenges of today.

(Miss Dever, Belgium)

I can only echo the cry of alarm of the Belgian Foreign Minister,

Mr. Leo Tindemans, when he spoke in the General Assembly and said:

'Multilateralism is in a state of crisis ... This serious crisis, which could be fatal for international society, has manifested itself in many areas.

"In particular, it effects what is done - or rather what is not done - in one area to which we attach the highest priority: that of disarmament."

(A/38/PV.7, p. 87)

The Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, has also said in his recent report on the work of the Organization:

"In no area is the need for a recommitment to the principles of the Charter more important and more closely tied to the survival of humanity than in the field of disarmament and arms limitation." (A/38/1, p. 4)

The Charter of the United Nations indeed created a universal framework within which harmonious international relations were to develop, thereby making it unnecessary to have a high level of armaments. We all know what has happened to this. It is not because we do not have the means, if not immediately to achieve general and complete disarmament, at least to achieve a progressive monitoring of weapons and the elimination of some kinds of weapons, but that we are not making good use of the means available to us. It would seem that the search for what is possible, which is the very crux of any negotiation, is increasingly being sacrificed to mere rhetoric.

The United Nations is not **effectively** using its potential, whether it be in the First Committee, in the Committee on Disarmament or even in the Disarmament Commission. The debates in those forums are too often, to use the words of our Foreign Minister, Mr. Tindemans,

"marked by sterile confrontation, as a result of which each party finds itself back at the starting point with nothing - or at most very little - concrete having been accomplished." (ibid.)

I should like to give some examples to illustrate this and at the same time to suggest some remedies that might improve the situation.

(Miss Dever, Belgium)

The First Committee of the General Assembly should prepare and keep constantly up to date a programme of action, whether to give a new impetus to negotiations at present under way or to open up new fields for negotiations. I am sorry to say this, but we adopt an increasing number of resolutions every year, often parallel and on identical subjects, without making any effort at harmonization. Are we so convinced that we are right that we simply disregard the views of others? Above all, are we sufficiently convinced that the only possible course is that of compromise and thus negotiation?

There is indeed an obvious need to improve our working methods. The initial efforts made this year along these lines under the guidance of our Chairman, Mr. Vraalsen, are indeed commendable and we support them. Belgium hopes that this work will be continued and we are willing to contribute to it. In this connection I should like to make a few preliminary suggestions.

The agenda of our Committee should be rationalized. As it is presented today, it is simply adding one item on top of others from previous years and the only result is that our work is further complicated and unnecessarily overburdened. And what can we say about the recent practice of, at the last minute, adding new items to the agenda formulated in such a way that they systematically ignore the overall framework within which the problems raised in those items would have to be studied? The Officers of the Committee should shoulder broader responsibilities, ensuring that the Committee does not adopt overlapping draft resolutions, and should try to regroup those draft resolutions which deal with related matters. We should also avoid submitting almost identical draft resolutions year after year. I do not think the political messages of the texts would in any way suffer. A representative group could be asked to do more work on these proposed reforms so that they could be applied as from the beginning of the next session of the General Assembly.

Another problem that is paralysing United Nations action is the tendency to impose uniformity on the work of the various bodies dealing with disarmament even though each has its own specific function. I have just described the situation

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in the First Committee. I do not think, either, that the United Nations Disarmament Commission has lived up to the hopes we had for it, despite an initial commendable effort this year. If we are to avoid its duplicating the work of the First Committee we have to try to channel its work better by giving it limited and specific tasks which could create the conditions for negotiating multilateral agreements in specific areas. In this connection we attach particular importance to the role that the Commission could play in preparing guidelines in the area of confidence-building measures which could be applied at both the world and the regional level.

As for the Committee on Disarmament, we fear that it is now losing its essential characteristic as a negotiating forum and is simply being watered down into another deliberative body.

The crisis of multilateralism in the field of disarmament is the result of confused understanding of its possible contribution to the solution of the problems we face, particularly that of the nuclear danger. The responsibility of the nuclear Powers, particularly the two major nuclear Powers, is quite obvious. The role of the United Nations is not to replace them but rather to encourage them to negotiate between themselves measures to reduce their arsenals. That is the justification for our support for the Geneva negotiations on the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons and the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear forces. The recent debates on the prevention of war, particularly nuclear war, have, however, highlighted the role that the United Nations can play. I am thinking in particular here of the Committee on Disarmament, which should try to identify those measures that could be the subject of multilateral negotiations.

At the last session of the Committee on Disarmament the Belgian Foreign Minister proposed that confidence-building measures within the context of preventing nuclear war should be negotiated multilaterally. Such measures could deal with nuclear information, notification of activities in this area, prevention of accidents, the conduct of nuclear States, consultations in the event of crisis, and communications. We are encouraged by the generally positive

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response to our proposal. The measures that we envisage are indeed limited but nevertheless they would be a way of starting, with respect for the positions of each State on the problems of nuclear disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear tests, the dialogue between the five nuclear-weapon States to which I have just referred. Such measures would amount to major progress in easing tension. They would also be a significant political development. The adoption of such measures would also show that multilateral and bilateral efforts in the nuclear field must complement each other, as in other aspects of arms control and disarmament.

(Miss Dever, Belgium)

But what we need most is negotiation and, when conditions permit, the Committee on Disarmament must be fully able to discharge its mandate. There are, of course, problems of crucial importance but they are so complex that negotiation is difficult at this stage. But this should not prevent us from negotiating without any further delay what is now negotiable. The Committee on Disarmament must at last prove its effectiveness by producing draft conventions, modest ones now but, we would hope, more ambitious ones in the future. And indeed, an objective that we should give our full attention to would be the conclusion of a convention prohibiting chemical weapons.

The importance of such an achievement would mean that the Committee on Disarmament should have everything it needs to enable it to conclude these negotiations successfully. Last June, in Geneva, the Belgian Foreign Minister urged the Committee to devote all the time needed to this issue. As yet, his appeal has not been heeded.

In 1983, we will have spent less than three months on this. The credibility, not only of the Committee but of the entire system, would be at stake if we show ourselves unable to remedy this situation early next year. We insist on this all the more strongly because discussions have shown that positions are not frozen. Some points of agreement have emerged, for example, on the scope of application of the convention, on procedures for declaring stockpiles of chemical weapons, and on fact-finding machinery in the event of allegations that the convention had been violated. But there are also grounds for disappointment. Detailed proposals on verification, whether relating to the destruction of stockpiles or to the dismantling of installations used for the production of chemical weapons, or even to non-production of chemical weapons in civilian industry, have not yet been taken up despite efforts on the part of several delegations to explain the position.

We know that chemical weapons constitute one of those areas where there is essential need for adequate verification. There seems to be a meeting of minds on the need to include verification machinery in conventions on disarmament. Negotiations on chemical weapons offer a particularly promising field in this respect. One must move beyond the field of principles and specifically consider the nature of the problem so as to make it less dramatic. The United States

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offer to open up to international verification one of its installations for destroying weapon stockpiles is most welcome. We trust that it will be followed by other similar initiatives, thus leading to further progress in this essential area. I should like at this point to recall the proposals made by Belgium at the second special session on disarmament aimed at resolving the problem of verifying observance of the provisions of the 1925 Geneva Protocol on the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons. These proposals still stand and would apply both to the future convention on the banning of chemical weapons and to the implementation of resolution 37/98 D. We still feel that these proposals offer the most satisfactory framework for a negotiated solution.

We also believe it is still possible to conclude very quickly a convention banning radiological weapons, while continuing work on the infinitely more complex subject of banning attacks against nuclear installations.

We would like to recall what we said earlier about this tendency to be over-ambitious at the risk of achieving nothing. The credibility of the Committee on Disarmament could, indeed, be challenged after five years of futile efforts. The successful conclusion of negotiations on radiological weapons would indeed be particularly welcome in this respect. A complete ban on nuclear-weapon tests and the prevention of an arms race in outer space are also questions which call for the conclusion of important agreements.

Here, again, the Committee on Disarmament has means of action available to it, even if they are still limited. In the first instance, it now has a Working Group which will take up all aspects of verification of a nuclear-weapon test ban, in the second, it has decided, in principle, to set up a working group which could carry out a preliminary exploration of the problems of an arms race in outer space.

(Miss Dever, Belgium)

We feel that we must take advantage of these possibilities and, in this way, significant progress could be made, provided that we can move beyond procedural debates that paralyse the work of the Committee. To want to start off by negotiating treaties when the ground has not yet been cleared would not seem to be a constructive approach. Rather, it would tend to harden existing antagonisms.

Many other aspects of the problem of disarmament to which Belgium attaches the greatest importance, were discussed by the representative of Greece, speaking on behalf of the ten States members of the European Community. I therefore need not dwell on them. However, in a later statement, my delegation would like to take up in further detail the question of the regional approach to disarmament, to which Belgium attaches particular importance.

I should also like to emphasize our interest in the relationship between disarmament and development and in the recent proposals made on this matter by the President of the French Republic. Here, as in other areas of disarmament, Belgium will try to make as effective a contribution as possible. The decisions we have taken, for example, in appointing a special Belgian ambassador to the Committee on Disarmament, and in appointing an ambassador to deal with problems of peace, are proof of our wishes in this connection and of the hopes that we place in the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.