

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.336
4 February 1986

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SIXTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Tuesday, 4 February 1986, at 10.30 a.m. and 3.30 p.m.

President:

Mr. Richard Butler

(Australia)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Algeria:

Mr. N. KERROUM
Mr. A. BENGUERINE
Mr. A. BELAID

Argentina:

Mr. M. CAMPORA
Mr. R. GARCIA MORITAN

Australia:

Mr. R. BUTLER
Mr. R.A. ROWE
Ms. M. LETTS

Belgium:

Mr. C. CLERCKX
Mr. P. NIEUWENHUYS

Brazil:

Mr. S. de QUEIROZ DUARTE

Bulgaria:

Mr. K. TELLALOV
Mr. V. BOJLOV

Burma:

U. TIN TUN
U. MYA THAN
U. HLA MYINT
DAW AYE AYE MU

Canada:

Mr. J.A. BEESLEY
Mr. D. ROCHE
Mr. A. DESPRES

China

Mr. QIAN JIADONG
Ms. WANG ZHIYUN
Mr. TAN HAN
Mr. HU XIAODI
Mr. SUO KAIMING
Mr. SHA ZUKANG
Ms. WANG WEI
Mr. LI DAOZHONG

Cuba:

Mr. C. LECHUGA HEVIA
Mr. P. NUÑEZ MOSQUERA

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. M. VEJVODA
Mr. A. CIMA

Egypt:

Mr. S. ALFARARGY
Mr. S.A. ABOU ALI
Mr. M. BADR
Mr. F. MONIB

Ethiopia:

Ms. K. SINEGIORGIS
Mr. F. YOHANNES

France:

Mr. J. JESSEL
Mr. G. MONTASSIER
Mr. H. RENIE

German Democratic Republic:

Mr. H. ROSE
Mr. W. KRUTZSCH
Mr. F. SAYATZ
Mr. J. DEMBSKI
Mr. M. SCHNEIDER

Germany, Federal Republic of:

Mr. H. WEGENER
Mr. F. ELBE
Mr. W.-N. GERMANN
Mr. M. GERDTS
Mr. H. PETERS

Hungary:

Mr. D. MEISZTER
Mr. F. GAJDA
Mr. T. TÓTH

India:

Mr. A.S. GONSALVES
Mr. S. KANT SHARMA

Indonesia:

Mr. S. SUTOWARDOYO
Mr. N. WISNOEMOERTI
Mr. A. EFFENDI
Mr. R.I. JENIE
Mr. A.M. FACHIR
Mr. A. MASBAR AKBAR
Mr. F. QASIM

Islamic Republic of Iran:

Mr. N. KAZEMI KAMYAB
Mr. M.D. KAMALIAN
Mr. S.D. KAZZAZI
Mr. V.A. ASTANEH

Italy:

Mr. R. FRANCESCHI
Mr. F. PIAGGESI
Mr. G.A. BRACCESI
Mr. M. PAVESE
Mr. E. SIVIERO

Japan:

Mr. R. IMAI
Mr. M. KONISHI
Mr. K. KUDO
Mr. T. ISHIGURI

Kenya:

Mr. D. AFANDE
Mr. F. JOSIAH

Mexico:

Mr. A. GARCIA ROBLES
Ms. Z. GONZALEZ Y REYNERO
Mr. P. MACEDO RIBA

Mongolia:

Mr. L. BAYART
Mr. S.-O. BOLD

Morocco:

Mr. E. BENHIMA
Mr. O. HILALE
Mr. S. BENRYANE

Netherlands:

Mr. R.J. van SCHAIK
Mr. J. RAMAKER
Mr. R. MILDERS

Nigeria:

Mr. B.O. TONWE
Mr. B.A. ADEYEMI
Mr. A.A. ELLA

Pakistan:

Mr. M. AHMAD
Mr. K. NIAZ

Peru:

Mr. J.C. MARIÁTEGUI
Mr. J. GONZALES TERRONES
Mr. J.F. RUBIO CORREA

Poland:

Mr. S. TURBANSKI
Mr. J. RYCHLAK
Mr. J. CIALOWICZ
Mr. G. CZEMPINSKI

Romania:

Mr. I. VOICU
Mr. G. CHIRILA
Mr. V. FAUR
Mr. A. POPESCU

Sri Lanka:

Mr. J. DHANAPALA
Mr. P. KARIYAWASAM

Sweden:

Ms. M.B. THEORIN
Mr. R. EKEUS
Ms. E. BONNIER
Mr. H. BERGLUND
Ms. A.M. LAU
Mr. J. PRAWITZ
Ms. E. WALDER BRUNDIN

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. V.L. ISSRAELIAN
Mr. G.V. BERDENNIKOV
Mr. E.K. POTYARKIN
Mr. G.N. VASHADZE
Mr. G.V. ANTSEFEROV

United Kingdom:

Mr. R.I.T. CROMARTIE
Mr. R.J.S. EDIS
Mr. I.P. CHALMERS
Mr. D.A. SLINN

United States of America:

Mr. D. LOWITZ
Mr. T. BARTHELEMY
Mr. L. BELGARD
Mr. P.S. CORDEN
Ms. L. BRONSON
Mr. J. ENGLEHARDT
Mr. P. GARDNER
Mr. S. GARNETT
Mr. D. LAMBERT
Mr. C. GOBRECHT
Ms. S. MANNIX
Mr. A. LIEBOWITZ
Mr. J. GRANGER
Mr. R. GOUGH
Mr. R. NELSON
Mr. R. LEVINE
Mr. R. MIKULAK
Ms. M. WINSTON
Mr. G. LOVELACE
Mr. R.L. LUACES
Mr. B. TUA

Venezuela:

Mr. A.R. TAYLHARDAT
Mr. O. GARCÍA GARCÍA
Ms. J. CLAUWAERT GONZÁLEZ

Yugoslavia:

Mr. K. VIDAS
Mr. M. MIHAJLOVIĆ

Zaire:

Mr. B. ADEITO NZENGEYA
Mr. B. KAMA
Mr. O.N. MONSHEMVULA

Under Secretary-General for
Disarmament Affairs:

Mr. J. MARTENSON

Secretary-General of the
Conference on Disarmament
and Personal Representative
of the Secretary-General:

Mr. M. KOMATINA

Deputy Secretary-General of
the Conference on Disarmament:

Mr. V. BERASATEGUI

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 1986 session and the 336th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I am sure that all members of the Conference have learned with sadness the news of the passing away of Mrs. Alva Myrdal. Mrs. Myrdal devoted a good deal of her life to the cause of disarmament, both as a private citizen and as a member of the Swedish Government. She was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 1982, together with a distinguished member of this Conference, Ambassador Alfonso García Robles. She was Minister of State for Disarmament in Sweden and leader of the delegation to the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament and the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. She played an outstanding role in the multilateral disarmament negotiating body and her contribution to various disarmament agreements was immensely significant. She also wrote and lectured widely on disarmament, becoming a pioneer of new approaches and ideas in this field. I feel certain that the Conference would wish me to convey on its behalf to the delegation of Sweden, and Mrs. Myrdal's family its deep-felt condolence and its expression of gratitude for the life's work of Alva Myrdal.

May I now express our appreciation to Ambassador Mario Cámpora of Argentina for his brilliant and effective Presidency of this Conference during the period of his office last year.

As President of the Conference, I should like to extend a warm welcome in the Conference to the new representatives who are joining us for the 1986 session. One of them is well-known to us, as he was President of the Conference in March 1985. I am referring of course to Ambassador Alfonso Taylhardat of Venezuela. I should also like to welcome on behalf of the Conference Ambassadors Nouridine Kerroum of Algeria, Constant Clerckx of Belgium, U Tin Tun of Burma, Alfred Gonsalves of India, Roberto Franceschi of Italy, Denis Afande of Kenya, El Ghali Benhima of Morocco and José Carlos Mariátegui of Peru. We are all looking forward to co-operating with you in the work of the Conference.

I wish also to extend a cordial welcome to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations, Mr. Jan Martenson, who is present at this opening meeting. I should also like to note the presence in the Conference on Disarmament of our host, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Mr. Eric Suy, and I would like to thank him for the services his office provides to our Conference.

I should also like to express on behalf of the Conference our sympathy to the United States delegation and to the people of the United States for the tragic loss they suffered over Cape Canaveral a week ago today.

Now, as President of the Conference, I have the honour to present to the Conference, a statement on the occasion of the beginning of our work in 1986 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, the Honourable Bill Hayden, MP. The following is Mr. Hayden's statement.

"1986 has been proclaimed by the United Nations as the International Year of Peace.

As the Conference on Disarmament begins its negotiations in Geneva this year, governments, organizations and individuals all over the world are preparing to mark this year with special programmes designed to strengthen the United Nations and to focus attention and encourage

(The President)

reflection on the many basic requirements of peace in our contemporary world. Perhaps more than at any time since its inception, therefore, the Conference on Disarmament will come under close scrutiny this year by the world community. People will be asking: what is the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, doing to promote world peace?

Australia strongly supports the United Nations decision to declare 1986 as the International Year of Peace. The extensive programme of activities my Government has planned to mark this year reflects our profound commitment to the goals of peace and disarmament. The Australian public, for its part has responded with proposals for hundreds of projects aimed at the fulfilment of the IYP objectives at the local, the national and the international levels. This response is a clear expression of a longing for peace in all sections of our community, who see the International Year of Peace as an opportunity for a new beginning. We as a Government are accountable to our people in their aspirations for a future free of war and conflict. In the same way, this Conference is accountable to all humanity and must meet the particular challenge of this International Year of Peace.

At this time last year, the Conference on Disarmament began the seventh year of its work in its contemporary form. That was just one month after the foreign ministers of the United States of America and the Soviet Union had met in Geneva and had issued the agreement of 8 January on the resumption of bilateral nuclear and space arms control negotiations between their two countries. Their joint statement and the agreements it embodied were universally welcomed. The issues on which they had agreed to resume their bilateral negotiations are widely recognized as amongst the most crucial issues of our time. Their decision to resume their negotiations was thus of immense significance.

Naturally, at this time last year, there was widespread hope that the resumption of negotiations between the two most militarily significant Powers would have a stimulating effect upon the work of this multilateral negotiating forum. Our work in this Conference last year made a greater degree of progress than had been the case in immediately preceding years but it fell short of the expectations of the members of the conference and certainly of the world community as a whole. That community met in a Special Session of the General Assembly, devoted to disarmament for the first time, in May/July 1978.

That First Special Session constituted the largest and most representative meeting of independent nations ever held to consider disarmament issues. The Final Document, adopted unanimously by it, remains a document of irreducible significance. The Declaration which forms the first part of the Final Document is a brief one comprising only 31 paragraphs, but it sets forth the key goals and concerns of the international community with regard to disarmament, the maintenance of "enduring international peace and stability", and it incorporates a reaffirmation by all States Members of the United Nations of "their full commitment to the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and their obligation strictly to observe its principles as well as other relevant and generally accepted principles of international law relating to the maintenance of international peace and security". Just as the Charter of

(The President)

the United Nations established a common responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and affirmed the signal importance of disarmament and arms control to that end, so the Final Document of the First Special Session emphasized both the special responsibility of nuclear-weapon States to ensure that progress is made in disarmament, particularly with regard to nuclear weapons and the prevention of nuclear war, and the rights and duty of all States to participate on an equal footing in multilateral disarmament negotiations.

The present form of the Conference on Disarmament was brought into existence by that Final Document of the First Special Session. A fundamental concept involved in the stated role and purpose of the Conference on Disarmament is that of our common responsibility for ensuring that disarmament plays its required role in the maintenance of peace and security and in the fabric of international relations established under the Charter of the United Nations. But equally important is the universal recognition that success in our endeavours towards arms control and disarmament require participation by the wider international community and an active and successful process of multilateral negotiation of arms control and disarmament agreements. There is a good reason for this. It would be ridiculous to fail to recognize, realistically, the crucial importance of success in the bilateral negotiations presently underway between the United States and the Soviet Union. But it would also be short-sighted to dismiss the role and importance of multilateral engagement in the vital issues of arms control and disarmament.

In the Australian view, what must be done between the two major Powers and what we must do in this multilateral context has a necessary and organic relationship. The one requires the other if we are to fulfil the urgent tasks we face.

The two major Powers have special responsibilities, which they acknowledge, for the prevention of war, for reducing tensions and for the reduction of nuclear and conventional arsenals but every country has a responsibility to contribute to these objectives within its means and its area of competence. Membership of this Conference itself confers added responsibilities on each of us.

The identity of the concerns shared by the United States and the Soviet Union in their bilateral negotiations and those which we have in this unique multilateral disarmament negotiating forum was illustrated by the joint statement issued on 21 November 1985 by President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev following their summit meeting in Geneva. The President and the General Secretary recognized their special responsibility for maintaining peace and "agreed that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought". They further emphasized the importance of preventing any war between them and of eschewing military superiority. A number of the items on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament address the same issues. There is clearly an area of common concern in which our actions in this conference and the actions taken in major bilateral negotiations can and should be able to be made complementary.

(The President)

We should all welcome the declaration by the President and the General Secretary that they will give new impetus to their bilateral negotiations, including on the basis of the principle of 50 per cent reduction in their nuclear arms, as well as the idea of an interim agreement on intermediate-range nuclear forces. The same is true of their pledge to prevent an arms race in space and to terminate it on earth.

Again, there are items on the agenda of this Conference directed to the same ends. This conference should, this year, establish the required mechanisms to conduct work on the relevant items on its agenda in order to play its part in complementing the important objectives that have been agreed to by the President and the General Secretary.

It was also of very great significance that the President and the General Secretary declared, on 21 November 1985, that they favour a general and complete prohibition of chemical weapons and the destruction of existing stockpiles of such weapons. They stated that "they agreed to accelerate efforts to conclude an effective and verifiable international convention on this matter". In this context, they stated that they had agreed to intensify bilateral discussions on such a chemical weapons ban, including discussions on the question of verification.

The only place within the world community in which a full-scale and serious effort is being made towards the negotiation of a universal chemical weapons convention is in this Conference. There is perhaps no more lively and positive instance of the relationship between what must be done bilaterally and what must be done multilaterally than the subject of chemical weapons. Simply, a bilateral agreement or some other form of agreement limited to a number of States or a region of the world on the issue of chemical weapons would be of very little value. What is required with regard to those abhorrent weapons is a universal convention. For this purpose all must participate and no one should look for a partial or limited solution.

It is appropriate at this point to note that during the past seven years, although substantial and significant political negotiations have taken place within this Conference, there have been few concrete results in terms of practical progress towards disarmament agreements. We all have a vital interest in changing this situation and there is no area more likely to fulfil that vital interest, in the short term, than the area of chemical weapons. It is the Australian Government's earnest hope that in this eighth year of the Conference, real progress on a universal chemical weapons convention will be made. Every passing day makes more urgent the need to conclude this convention.

In referring to the lack of concrete results during the last seven years I have in mind, in particular, the failure of the Conference to deal adequately with major issues involving nuclear weapons - a nuclear test ban, prevention of nuclear war, cessation of the nuclear arms race.

A nuclear test ban has been called for by the international community and indeed pledged in relevant international treaties and agreements for almost a quarter of a century. There should be no further delay. It would be foolish to fail to recognize that a nuclear test ban

(The President)

outlawing all nuclear tests by all States in all environments for all time is an issue on which there are varying opinions and approaches. These differences must be resolved and certainly should no longer be submerged or hidden from by reference to procedural or other disputes. I call upon this Conference to make practical progress this year towards the negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

For that purpose we need to establish the means of verification of such a treaty. This includes seismological and other means. With regard to seismological verification we must build further on the work of the Group of Scientific Experts. Some Member States declare that the means of verification of such a treaty are already available. We believe it is incumbent on them to join with the Conference on Disarmament in demonstrating the capabilities of the system. Those who are not convinced that the means of verification are adequate should explain their difficulties in detail and, together, we should seek solutions. A major aspect of the interrelationship between the multilateral and bilateral negotiation of disarmament agreements is the opportunity which this conference has to advance prospects for agreement between the nuclear Powers on a nuclear test ban. That objective would be advanced by the Conference on Disarmament undertaking substantive work on the practical matters which must be resolved before a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty could be concluded. Australia deplores this Conference's failure to date to avail itself of this opportunity.

It is surely also the case that this Conference can and must make a useful contribution towards the deeply serious and fundamental issue of the prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters. Multilateral measures can supplement the measures already taken by the nuclear weapon powers. The Conference must establish, early in this session, an appropriate committee on this subject on which a start can be made towards identifying further means of ensuring that nuclear war never occurs.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is another urgent and complex issue and one that is on the agenda both of this Conference and the United States-USSR negotiations on nuclear and space arms. There is a compelling need and ample scope for this area to be a fruitful example of complementary work in the two forums. This Conference should establish an appropriate committee to identify and address the dimensions of the outer space issue that will maximize its contribution to the objective of preventing an arms race in outer space.

Reference to these issues which have been contentious in the past in the Conference on Disarmament, introduces some questions regarding the working methodologies of the Conference which, in many respects, have served us well but in some respects have come to hinder real progress towards the fulfilment of our responsibilities. Paragraph 120 of the Final Document of the First Special Session gave this Conference the clear responsibility and duty to negotiate disarmament and arms control agreements. It also allows the Conference to determine its own working methodologies. The rules of procedure of the conference give the Conference complete facility to take whatever decisions it deems appropriate for the effective discharge of its responsibilities. Under these circumstances, extended argument on form as against substance, on mandates for ad hoc committees as against their programme of work and,

(The President)

more importantly, arguments preventing decisions to establish the required committees and get work under way are sterile and unnecessary arguments. My Government is deeply concerned that, with respect to some items on the agenda of this Conference, those formal arguments have assumed an importance that contradicts the terms of paragraph 120 of the Final Document and the responsibilities of this Conference.

During the month in which Australia holds the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament we will seek, in consultation with others, to solve this problem. We will do so on the basis that we do not believe that any formal argument can be more important than this Conference conducting practical work on each of the items on its agenda. I ask for the co-operation of all Member States in this Conference in an attempt to find a way to sort out the relationship between form and substance, to find a way to bring to bear the flexibility that is available to us under our rules of procedure so as to ensure that no one will be able to say again that we preferred to argue about form rather than to get on with substantive work.

It is also important for the outcome of our work to be reported to other members of the world community not directly represented in this Conference. I have in mind our annual report on our work to the General Assembly. It has become of considerable concern to my Government that the process of constructing that annual report has become unnecessarily tortuous. Again, during the month of our Presidency we will enter into informal consultations on an approach to the construction of the annual report of the Conference which will seek to remove the adversarial procedures which have been followed in the past and put in their place an approach which is clear, constructive and factual. There is no need for our report to repeat statements which have already been made and are readily available in the verbatim records of the plenary.

All of us who sit in this Conference are privileged to do so. We have been asked to carry out work which is viewed as vital, around the world. All of us here are present at great cost and effort to our Governments and the peoples we represent. All of us here work hard in seeking to find solutions to the enormous problems which confront us. Thus it makes no sense that we should so often fail to get to the point of addressing these problems -- some of us preferring formal dispute to practical progress. None of us here, no matter the differences between us in terms of political perspective, economic development, or the length of time in which we have been self-respecting and independent members of the world community, have an interest in seeing the Conference on Disarmament continue to fail to produce the agreements for which it has been made uniquely responsible. None of us here ever state that we think this work, this responsibility, is too hard or not worth our efforts. Thus our commitment and our vision should impel us to work together in fulfilment of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the goals set forth in the Final Document of the First Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

There are great disparities of power and responsibility between those few States that have great military power, indeed great destructive capability, and those that share this earth with them. But the body of

(The President)

principles which brings us together in this Conference takes account both of this disparity and also of our inescapable interdependence. This relationship is an organic one: we need to work together because none of us can ultimately survive without a great co-operative effort.

While the reduction and ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons depends fundamentally on the actions of a few of us, the development of a climate of confidence within which such reductions will be able to be negotiated requires the contribution of all of us. The negotiation of effective measures of disarmament is one of the highest priorities of Australian policy. Thus the Australian delegation will again play a full and active part in the work of this Conference in 1986. The appeal of my Government to this Conference is this. We should seize the opportunities that are now before us, in the light of what has occurred during the last 12 months.

We should make 1986, the International Year of Peace, the year in which the modern Conference on Disarmament came into its own and made a direct and positive contribution to disarmament and the maintenance of international peace and security."

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Miljan Komatina who, in his capacity as Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, will read out a message addressed to us from Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar.

Mr. KOMATINA (Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): The following is the message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the 1986 Session of the Conference on Disarmament:

"Last year, on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the United Nations, there was a broad renewal by Member States of commitment to the purposes and principle of the Charter, with particular emphasis on those directly related to the maintenance of international peace and security. I believe that this commitment must, to be meaningful, necessarily entail concerted and sustained efforts toward disarmament. The intensification of such efforts during the past months is most welcome as essential to the achievement of the world of peace and well-being for which the United Nations was established.

The summit meeting in Geneva between leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States brought forth a number of important proposals which are presently under negotiation. The declaration made by them to the effect that nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, and that neither side will seek to achieve military superiority, has profound significance. Great importance must be attached, too, to the agreement of the two sides to accelerate their negotiations towards the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons as well as to recent proposals put forward separately on the subject. The constructive nature of the discussions in Geneva, have, moreover, resulted in an atmosphere more conducive to productive negotiations on many issues related to international security.

(Mr. Komatina, Personal Representative of the
Secretary-General of the United Nations)

I am confident that this will find reflection in the deliberations during the present session of the Conference on Disarmament. Some recent developments with regard to the verification aspects of specific arms limitation and disarmament measures may also facilitate productive negotiations. I believe that a prospect of significant progress has been opened.

The general improvement in the international climate, however, in no sense decreases the size of the task of reaching tangible agreements which still lies before us. The dangers stemming from the existence of large arsenals of nuclear weapons have not diminished and to these are added the ever-increasing stocks of conventional weapons. In many places, the use of force continues to bring destruction and death and to hold in jeopardy the needed increase in international confidence, the growth in global military expenditures has not yet been halted, while vast areas of the world suffer a serious lack of resources for development.

As the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body of the international community, the Conference on Disarmament, has a major role in the completion of the practical disarmament agreements which are so badly needed. It is the appropriate and competent forum where the positive developments which have recently emerged should also find expression in specific agreements. Numerous resolutions of the fortieth session of the General Assembly, in requesting you to endeavour to achieve concrete results on arms limitation and disarmament, give recognition to the unique potential of this Conference. Your agenda encompasses major areas of international concern which impinge on the future of humanity. No task can have greater importance than developing and reaching agreement on effective and practical measures to prevent nuclear war. In this context, the conclusion of a complete ban on nuclear testing should surely continue to have the highest priority. The urgency of this question is underlined by the evident dynamism of the technology of nuclear destruction. Just as the human mind is challenged by the seemingly limitless possibilities of technological advance, it must be challenged by the even more important possibility of ensuring that these advances serve only the well-being and peace that humanity needs. So, I believe, it should be with the Earth's resources and with the space that surrounds and shields our planet as a whole.

The complete and effective prohibition of chemical weapons has been, for a number of years, the most productive area of negotiation within the Conference on Disarmament. Given the work already done in elaborating a Convention and the summit commitment of the two major Powers to accelerate agreement on a comprehensive ban on these weapons, it seems reasonable to expect that the remaining obstacles can be overcome during 1986. Indeed, I would hope that the multilateral negotiating process may regain a momentum which will lead to progress on many outstanding issues.

1986 is the International Year of Peace, the theme of which is the safeguarding of peace and humanity. It has begun under hopeful auspices of new opportunities to deal constructively with problems which threaten international security. Foremost among these is the problem of disarmament. The hope with which the Year begins can be fulfilled only

(Mr. Komatina, Personal Representative of the
Secretary-General of the United Nations)

if the foundations for significant measures of arms limitation and disarmament are speedily laid. All Governments know that, in this nuclear age, any major conflict carries with it the risk of world-wide disaster. All must recognize the common responsibility which this imposes for the maintenance of peace and the strengthening of international security. Your Conference has a major role to play in making it possible for this responsibility to be met.

I wish you every success in your negotiations."

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for his statement. I would ask him to convey to Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar our appreciation for his message to the Conference and for the interest he shows in our work.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Mexico, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Sweden, Cuba, Czechoslovakia and Canada.

I now give the floor to the first speaker of the 1986 session, the representative of Mexico, Ambassador García Robles.

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, from a strictly chronological point of view you are not one who can boast of being among the longest standing members of the Conference on Disarmament. But while long standing membership is certainly valuable, it is not of course decisive, nor can it be compared to the possession of outstanding personal qualities such as those you have already displayed so often in your participation in the discussions of this multilateral negotiating body, in your brilliant chairmanship last year of the Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons and in the effectiveness with which you have been able in the General Assembly to advance the projects initiated by your country on the subject of a comprehensive nuclear test ban, to which both Mexico and Australia attribute the utmost importance.

What I have just briefly said more than suffices to explain, I think, why my delegation is happy to see you directing our work in this first month of the session of the Conference for 1986, which the United Nations has designated as the "International Year of Peace".

I think it opportune to emphasize that we fully share the views stated by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia in the message just read out by our President regarding the need to observe the principles and to put into practice the purposes of the Final Document of the First Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted to Disarmament, which my delegation, in order to highlight its significance to us, usually refers to as the Bible of Disarmament.

I should also like to reiterate my congratulations to your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Mario Cárpora for the exemplary manner in which he chaired our Conference during what is the longest period of each year, from August to early February. I should also like to associate my delegation with your words of welcome to the distinguished representatives who are taking their place in the Conference for the first time, and once again express our

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

pleasure at the presence among us of the Under Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Martenson, and the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Komatina and Mr. Beresátegui, and the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Mr. Suy.

In a totally different frame of mind, I should like, in this place where her spirited eloquence in the cause of disarmament was so often to be heard, to voice my profound grief at the death of Alva Myrdal, with whom I had the privilege of sharing the Nobel Peace Prize in 1982 and whom I ventured at that time to refer to as my old friend and companion in numerous battles for the same cause in the forums of multilateral diplomacy. As the Nobel Committee rightly said when it gave the reasons for its choice of that year, she undoubtedly contributed through her outstanding activity in the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament and in the early years of the conference of the Committee on Disarmament to opening the world's eyes to the threat facing mankind as the nuclear arms race continued.

Lastly, I should also like to express the similar sentiments with which my delegation heard the news of the tragic accident which destroyed the space shuttle Challenger and annihilated its seven crew-members. Their names will certainly go to join those who have given their lives for the conquest of space, something which we trust can take place one day, bearing in mind that its exploration and use must, as the international instruments in force already envisage, be for exclusively peaceful purposes.

Today sees the start of the eighth session of this body which the General Assembly described in the 1978 Final Document as the "single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum".

As was to be expected in a year like that which has just ended, one in which the United Nations celebrated its fortieth anniversary, the number of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly based on recommendations by its First Committee exceeded the already high level of the previous year and reached the number of 67.

As is usual, these resolutions have been transmitted to us by the Secretary-General with indications as to which of them confer responsibilities on the Conference on Disarmament and which are also concerned with disarmament affairs but do not expressly require any intervention by the Conference.

It is not my intention in this first statement with which, in accordance with honoured tradition, it devolves on the delegation of Mexico to initiate our discussions for 1986, to endeavour to consider all these resolutions. I shall merely try to make a brief analysis of three out of the eight which the General Assembly devoted to the items which occupy the first three places on the agenda of the Conference, all concerning nuclear disarmament; for reasons which I shall explain in due course, I shall add to them a fourth resolution which deals with the fifth item of the agenda.

The item which from the start has headed the agenda of what we now call the Conference, and which in 1978 was called the Committee, is that entitled "Nuclear test ban", on which the Assembly this year adopted no less than four different resolutions. I am here only going to consider the first, which bears the number 40/80 A, since this was the resolution which received the largest number of votes in favour -- 124.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

The resolution has many points in common with that adopted last year. For example, it stresses that the question has been examined for more than 25 years and is a basic objective of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament, to the attainment of which the General Assembly has repeatedly assigned the highest priority. It also stresses that on eight different occasions the General Assembly, the most representative body of the international community, has condemned nuclear tests in the strongest terms and has stated its conviction that the continuance of testing "will intensify the arms race, thus increasing the danger of nuclear war". It also reiterates the assertion made in several previous resolutions that, "whatever may be the differences on the question of verification, there is no valid reason for delaying the conclusion of an agreement on a comprehensive test ban".

The resolution also includes some new paragraphs in its preamble dealing with very recent events subsequent to the adoption of the latest resolution on the subject. One of these recalls that the Secretary-General, addressing a plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 12 December 1984, after appealing for a renewed effort towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty, "emphasized that no single multilateral agreement could have a greater effect on limiting the further refinement of nuclear weapons and that a comprehensive test-ban treaty is the litmus test of the real willingness to pursue nuclear disarmament". Another of these new paragraphs is the penultimate paragraph of the preamble in which it is noted that "the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in its Final Declaration approved in September 1985, called on the nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty to resume trilateral negotiations in 1985 and on all the nuclear-weapon States to participate in the urgent negotiation and conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty as a matter of the highest priority in the Conference on Disarmament".

The innovations contained in the resolution are even more important in the operative section, in which two paragraphs, if strictly complied with, could have a decisive influence on achieving the aim which has been pursued for so long.

The first of these two paragraphs is paragraph 5, in which the General Assembly "appeals to all States members of the Conference on Disarmament", in particular to the three depositary Powers of the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963 and the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 "to promote the establishment by the Conference at the beginning of its 1986 session of an ad hoc committee to carry out the multilateral negotiation of a treaty on the complete cessation of nuclear-test explosions".

The second of the two paragraphs to which I referred is paragraph 6, which follows on from the previous paragraph, because the General Assembly recommends to the Conference on Disarmament that it "instruct such ad hoc committee to establish two working groups which will deal, respectively, with the following interrelated questions:

Working Group I - Structure and scope of the Treaty

Working Group II - Compliance and verification".

The resolution concludes, in a form very similar to the five consecutive resolutions approved annually by the General Assembly since December 1980, by calling upon the depositary States of the Moscow Treaty and the

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

Non-Proliferation Treaty to "bring to a halt without delay all nuclear-test explosions, either through a trilaterally agreed moratorium or through three unilateral moratoria, for which they would then proceed to negotiate the establishment of appropriate means of verification", and by deciding to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-first session an item with the same title of "Cessation of all nuclear-test explosions".

There are some pertinent new elements I shall now enumerate, which would tend to allow for a reasonable dose of optimism regarding the receptiveness of the Conference to the appeal by the General Assembly.

The six Heads of State or Government who issued a joint statement in May 1984 -- Argentina, Greece, India, Sweden, Tanzania and Mexico -- signed another declaration in New Delhi on 28 January 1985, urging nuclear-weapon States "to immediately halt the testing of all kinds of nuclear weapons, and to conclude, at an early date, a treaty on a nuclear weapon test ban", describing the latter as one of the two specific steps which "today require special attention". The value of this appeal is enhanced if it is borne in mind that the New Delhi Declaration led to the award to its authors of the "Beyond War" prize on 14 December.

It should also be borne in mind that the General Assembly adopted resolution 40/94 L on 12 December, by 131 votes in favour and none against. In this resolution, inter alia, it stresses the "fundamental importance of full implementation and strict observance of agreements on arms limitation and disarmament if individual nations and the international community are to derive enhanced security from them" and urged "all States parties to arms limitation and disarmament agreements to implement and comply with the entirety of the provisions subscribed to". The significance of this resolution in the case with which I am concerned here is still greater when it is remembered that the draft on which it was based was submitted to the First Committee on 7 November by one of the States which had hitherto been opposing the establishment in the Conference on Disarmament of a subsidiary body to deal with the cessation of all nuclear-weapon tests. The substance of the resolution which I have just mentioned, which is adequately illustrated by the two paragraphs I have quoted, leads us to hope that this year that State will temper its opposition, since the cessation in question is expressly provided for in two treaties -- the Partial Test Ban of 1963 and the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 -- both of which are international instruments to which the State referred to is not only a State party but also one of the three depositaries.

It should also be mentioned that the recent conduct of another of the three depositary States in this regard is extremely encouraging, since in addition to having voted in favour of the resolution which I have been describing, its Government made a statement on 29 July 1985 to the effect that it had decided to halt unilaterally all nuclear explosions between 6 August and 31 December 1985, adding that this moratorium would "continue in effect beyond that date if the United States, for its part, refrains from carrying out nuclear explosions". As we know, the term fixed was subsequently extended by an additional three months as from the date mentioned in a further statement on 15 January of this year in which the new expiry date of 31 March 1986 is expressly left open to extension if the conditions mentioned in the previous statement are met, namely, the suspension of nuclear testing by the United States.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

Lastly, it should be borne in mind that inadequate means of verification, an argument adduced on previous occasions as an excuse for not accepting a comprehensive nuclear test ban, can no longer be considered an obstacle, since the Soviet Union has, for its part, in the statement of 15 January I have already quoted, expressed with the utmost clarity its acceptance that appropriate measures of verification should be ensured entirely by national technical means and by international procedures, including on-site inspections, should this be necessary. Again, the six authors of the New Delhi Declaration in the message addressed to President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev on 24 October 1985, after proposing the suspension of all nuclear tests for a period of 12 months, stated that:

"The problems of verifying the suspension we propose are difficult, but not insurmountable ... Third-party verification could provide a high degree of certainty that testing programmes have ceased. We propose to establish verification mechanisms on our territories to achieve this objective."

With regard to the item which has invariably occupied the second place in the agenda of this multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, namely, the item entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", two resolutions were devoted wholly to this among those adopted by the General Assembly at its fortieth session; resolution 40/152 P, the title of which is identical to that of the agenda item, obtained the larger number of votes in favour: 131.

The resolution contains in its preamble a recapitulation of the background to this issue and particular mention may be made of the statement by the General Assembly in the 1978 Final Document that "the nuclear arms race, far from contributing to the strengthening of the security of all States, on the contrary weakens it and increases the danger of the outbreak of a nuclear war".

The preamble to the resolution also stresses what the General Assembly had said in paragraph 47 of the Final Document, namely, that nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of civilization, that it is essential to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race in all its aspects and that the ultimate goal in this context is the "complete elimination of nuclear weapons".

The resolution also includes a paragraph intended to place special emphasis on the fact that "all nations have a vital interest in negotiations on nuclear disarmament because the existence of nuclear weapons in the arsenals of a handful of States directly and fundamentally jeopardizes the vital security interests of both nuclear and non-nuclear weapon States alike".

In the operative part, the resolution notes -- and this is of particular interest to the members of the Conference -- that the initiation of bilateral negotiations on nuclear and space arms in no way diminishes "the urgent need to initiate multilateral negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament". It therefore again requests the Conference to establish an ad hoc committee at the beginning of its 1986 session to elaborate on paragraph 50 of the Final Document by means of the process indicated, which should culminate in "substantial reduction in the existing nuclear weapons with a view to their ultimate elimination".

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

At its most recent session, the General Assembly also adopted two resolutions specifically devoted to the item occupying the third place on our Conference agenda, namely, "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters", of these the resolution which received the larger number of votes in favour -- 136 -- was resolution 40/152 Q. In this resolution the General Assembly reiterated, inter alia, that "it is the shared responsibility of all Member States to save succeeding generations from the scourge of another world war, which would inevitably be a nuclear war", and reaffirmed once more its conviction that "the prevention of nuclear war and the reduction of the risk of nuclear war are matters of the highest priority and of vital interest to all peoples of the world". It is obvious from this that "the prevention of nuclear war is a problem too important to be left to the nuclear-weapon States alone".

On the basis of what was said in the preamble to the resolution, the General Assembly noted with regret that the Conference on Disarmament has been unable even to establish a subsidiary body on the question, and reiterates its conviction of the urgency of this matter. It again requested the Conference on Disarmament "to undertake, as a matter of the highest priority, negotiations with a view to achieving agreement on appropriate and practical measures for the prevention of nuclear war and to establish for that purpose an ad hoc committee on the subject at the beginning of its 1986 session".

As I announced at the beginning, in addition to the resolutions which I have just reviewed and all refer to questions of nuclear disarmament, I shall now consider another resolution that also falls in the category of those which entrust specific responsibilities to the Conference on Disarmament and which, for reasons which to me seem obvious, should be given the same degree of priority as the others, both because of the importance of the topic and because of the impressive result of its adoption by 151 votes in favour and none against, thanks to the arduous negotiations co-ordinated by the distinguished representatives of Egypt and Sri Lanka in the First Committee.

The resolution in question, resolution 40/87, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" is, with reason, somewhat lengthy. In the preamble, it reaffirms the wish of all States that the exploration and use of outer space should be for peaceful purposes, that they "shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries" and that they "shall be the province of all mankind". It also reaffirms the provisions of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, particularly those of articles III and IV, and those of paragraph 80 of the 1978 Final Document, in which it was stated that "in order to prevent an arms race in outer space, further measures should be taken and appropriate international negotiations held in accordance with the spirit" of the Treaty I have just mentioned.

The General Assembly has also expressed its grave concern "at the danger posed to all mankind by an arms race in outer space and in particular by the impending threat of exacerbating the current state of insecurity by developments that could further undermine international peace and security" and create obstacles to "the peaceful uses of outer space".

As to the operative part of the resolution, it would seem useful fundamentally to emphasize the following:

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

The call to all States, in particular those with major space capabilities "to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and to take immediate measures to prevent an arms race in outer space in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international co-operation and understanding".

The exhortation, addressed to the United States and the Soviet Union, urging them "seriously to pursue their bilateral negotiations in a constructive spirit aimed at reaching an early agreement for preventing an arms race in outer space, and to advise the Conference on Disarmament regularly of the progress of their bilateral sessions so as to facilitate its work".

Thirdly, the call to all States, especially those with major space capabilities, "to refrain in their activities relating to outer space, from actions contrary to the observance of the relevant existing treaties or to the objective of preventing an arms race in outer space".

Lastly, I have intentionally left the two quotations which I am now going to recall, from paragraphs 6 and 9 of the resolution, to conclude my series of quotations, since both refer expressly to the Conference on Disarmament.

In paragraph 6, the General Assembly reiterated "that the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in all its aspects in outer space".

In paragraph 9, the General Assembly unequivocally requested the Conference "to re-establish an Ad Hoc Committee with an adequate mandate at the beginning of its session of 1986, with a view to undertaking negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent an arms race in all its aspects in outer space".

As this statement is becoming somewhat lengthy, I shall leave until later my concern, which I hope to be able to express, regarding a number of other items to which my delegation attributes particular significance, such as the prohibition of chemical weapons, on which the work of the Ad Hoc Committee has been so ably directed by the distinguished representative of Poland, Ambassador Turbanski, and now has fairly encouraging prospects of achieving the desired conventions; the comprehensive Programme of Disarmament, on which we venture to hope that the Conference can give a positive response at the request of the General Assembly by submitting a complete draft for the Programme at its next session; the World Disarmament Campaign for which Mexico had the privilege of taking the initiative in 1980; the nuclear weapons freeze which the General Assembly has been recommending periodically so as to ensure that nuclear-weapon stockpiles do not continue to grow while disarmament negotiations are going ahead, and the nuclear winter, regarding which the General Assembly, rightly alarmed by the data contained in the report by the Secretary-General, has asked the latter to make a study on the climatic effects and potential physical effects of nuclear war, including its socio-economic consequences.

For the moment, I should simply like to emphasize that the number of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, a number which, as I have already said, is the highest ever recorded in the annals of the Organization, would be entirely worthless if

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

Member States made no effort to implement them. Among them are several like the four I have considered here, whose implementation is anxiously awaited by all the peoples of the Earth and a start could at least be made on them, should it still be necessary to make distinctions in this respect, by applying what the six Heads of State or Government stressed most particularly in the New Delhi Declaration when they said that "two specific steps today require special attention: the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and a comprehensive test ban treaty".

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Mexico for this statement and for the kind words addressed to the President.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Ambassador Issraelyan.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, allow me, first of all, to congratulate you on your assumption of the responsible post of President of the Conference for the month of February. I wish to express the hope that it will be possible during this month to make progress in our work and to resolve the organizational questions which have frequently taken up so much of our time in the past. We also hope that during the session of the Conference on Disarmament which is opening today the positions of our delegations will be brought closer through further contacts; in our opinion, this will be in keeping with the spirit of the times.

We also express our gratitude to Ambassador M. Cámpora of Argentina, who presided over the Conference on Disarmament in August 1985 and represented it with such distinction during the intersessional period.

I should also like to welcome our new colleagues, the representative of Algeria, Ambassador Kerroum, the representative of Burma, Ambassador U Tin Tun, the representative of Venezuela, Ambassador Taylhardat, the representative of India, Ambassador Gonsalves, the representative of Kenya, Ambassador Afande, the representative of Morocco Ambassador Benhima, the representative of Belgium, Ambassador Clerckx, and the representative of Italy, Ambassador Franceschi. I express the hope that relations of mutual understanding and co-operation will develop between the delegations headed by them and the Soviet delegation. As far as we are concerned, we shall do everything in our power to that end.

It is with deep regret that we have learned of the death of Mrs. Alva Myrdal, the eminent Swedish diplomat, world-renowned disarmament specialist and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. We extend our condolences to the delegation of Sweden and request it to convey them to her family and friends.

We have already expressed our sympathy to the delegation of the United States of America in connection with the tragic loss of the crew of the space shuttle Challenger.

Mankind has entered the year of 1986, which was proclaimed the International Year of Peace by a decision of the United Nations. We see now favourable possibilities for overcoming the confrontational trends that have

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

built up in world politics in recent years, for beginning to clear the ways to the curtailment of the arms race -- and first of all, the nuclear arms race -- on Earth and to the prevention of the appearance of weapons in outer space.

The results of the meeting between the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, M.S. Gorbachev, and the President of the United States of America, R. Reagan, that took place here in Geneva in November 1985 have already had a certain positive influence on the political and psychological climate in current international relations. The agreement reached between the leaders of the two Powers and expressed in the joint Soviet-American statement to the effect that nuclear war must never be fought and cannot be won has been welcomed with approval everywhere in the world. The recognition by both sides of the importance of preventing any war between them, whether nuclear or conventional, and the statement that they will not seek to achieve military superiority are of fundamental significance.

It is particularly important to create conditions that would enable the good seeds of the Geneva meeting to produce good, sturdy offspring, since big differences on problems of principle, including the central issues of security, do remain between the USSR and the United States. The Geneva meeting created a real chance to reduce the military threat, to restore confidence as an element of international relations. Present-day world politics of today are not so rich in positive elements as to let slip that chance, to allow the gleam of nascent hope to die out. Practical deeds and new actions are needed to prevent that and to ensure a real change for the better, to move, finally, from the arms race to arms limitation, from confrontation and banking on force to co-operation and consideration for each other's legitimate interests.

The Soviet delegation has come to this session of the Conference on Disarmament with a firm resolve to achieve a change in the work of the Conference, to put an end to the period of stagnation which has been characteristic of its activity for many years now.

Life demands the putting into motion of the entire existing system of negotiations, the securing of the highest possible efficiency of the existing mechanisms of disarmament, including, naturally, the single global multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament issues, the Conference on Disarmament, whose agenda includes all the central issues relating to the preservation of peace.

The most important event of the year that has just begun and one which has justly been evaluated all over the world as a courageous and constructive step towards the solution of the most vital problems of world development, has been the statement made by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, on 15 January. (At the request of the Soviet delegation, this statement has been distributed as an official document of the Conference, CD/649).

The statement contains a concrete programme for complete nuclear disarmament within the next 15 years. The USSR proposes that agreement be reached without delay on entering the third millennium without nuclear arms, achieving the complete elimination of the chemical and other types of weapons of mass destruction, and preventing the spread of the arms race into outer space.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

The acceptance of the programme of nuclear disarmament proposed by the Soviet Union would, undoubtedly, have a favourable influence on the talks that are held in bilateral and multilateral fora. Such a programme would fix precisely defined routes and targets, establish specific time-limits for reaching and implementing agreements and give the talks on the issues of nuclear disarmament direction and purpose.

The Soviet delegation is confident that the comprehensive programme of disarmament set forth in the statement by Mikhail S. Gorbachev will be of real help in the Conference's substantive work on all the items on its agenda. We express the hope that all States represented at the Conference will support the proposals contained in that statement. We urge particularly the United States delegation to confirm in deeds its country's declarations about its commitment to the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons, to translate into the language of practical actions the joint Soviet-American agreement to the effect that efforts in the area of the limitation and reduction of armaments should result in the liquidation of nuclear weapons completely and everywhere.

One of the most important elements of the Soviet programme is the cessation of nuclear weapon tests, which is justly considered everywhere as one of the most effective measures of nuclear disarmament.

As no other issue, the banning of nuclear weapon tests has been thoroughly studied from all aspects, it is the issue on which concrete results -- weighty and tangible ones -- are already within reach. The Soviet Union is resolutely in favour of starting the relevant negotiations without delay.

The Soviet Union has shown by deeds its readiness for practical steps leading to the immediate cessation of all nuclear-weapon tests. As is known, on 6 August 1985 the Soviet Union introduced a unilateral moratorium on all nuclear explosions. However, the United States did not follow that example, it responded to the demands of the overwhelming majority of States and world public opinion with new American nuclear blasts. Naturally, the Soviet Union had every right to resume nuclear testing after the moratorium expired on 31 December 1985. We nevertheless took a different decision, we extended our unilateral moratorium until next 31 March. That was not an easy decision, but we took it because we are guided by the supreme interests of international security.

As Eduard A. Shevardnadze, Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR pointed out, "If the American Administration avails itself of this new opportunity it has been given and stops nuclear-weapon tests, that would, naturally, create a more favourable background for the summit meeting of the leaders of the two countries. If it does not do that, the atmosphere in our relations would look utterly different, including the area that is relevant to the dialogue at the highest level".

It goes without saying that the reduction and subsequent elimination of nuclear weapons are possible only in the event of the solution of the question of the prevention of the arms race in outer space, which rightfully occupies one of the central places in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. As M.S. Gorbachev stressed the other day, "The Soviet Union has been and remains an irreconcilable opponent, as a matter of principle, of the 'star wars' project. And that is not because the project is American. We in Moscow

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

regard this matter in the following way. It is impossible to create a universal space defence, it is, at best, an illusion and that from the technical, economic and political viewpoints. Any 'space shield' can, however, very easily be turned into a 'space sword'. And he who holds that sword may fail to resist the temptation to use it. That is the crux of the matter, that is the origin of our position, which is dictated by the interests of maintaining peace and by nothing else".

An important place in the statement of Mikhail S. Gorbachev was devoted to the problem of the prohibition and complete elimination of chemical weapons, including the elimination of the industrial base for their production. These provisions are directly relevant to the negotiations being conducted within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

Together with the withdrawal of weapons of mass destruction from the arsenals of States, the statement contains new proposals by the USSR regarding agreed reductions of conventional weapons and armed forces, confidence- and security-building measures and disarmament in Europe. It advances the idea of banning the development of non-nuclear weapons based on new physical principles, whose destructive capacity is close to that of nuclear arms or other weapons of mass destruction.

As stated by the Soviet leadership, the Soviet Union is on the whole gratified by the way the new Soviet proposals have been received in the world -- by our friends and allies and by those who are responsible for the policy of the Western Powers. They have become the subject of attentive study, of analysis, of comments by politicians and by the press of every orientation, by a broad spectrum of the public in practically all countries. It is already evident that many have been able to see through to the heart, the very essence of the Soviet plan: a serious attempt to come to grips with the problems of international security, to concentrate attention on the pivotal task of finding ways of ensuring the survival of humanity.

Of course, we in the Soviet Union did not and do not expect that the implementation of the proposals advanced by the USSR to be simple and easy. Complex negotiations will be required. We are confident, however, that these difficulties can be overcome, given a mutual aspiration to agreement and the political will to rid mankind of the threat of nuclear war. It is important to take a fresh look at many issues, to approach their solution from unbiased positions, without prejudice and free from the burden of mutual mistrust that has been accumulating year after year. As the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, M.S. Gorbachev, has observed, "Many habitual convictions and traditionally held views that were possibly correct 30, 20 or even 10 years ago are now hopelessly outdated. In this nuclear age, the world that is armed to the teeth and continues arming itself is fraught with the possibility of the outbreak of nuclear war even assuming that nobody wants that". The Soviet proposals open up a practicable path to the exit from the nuclear deadlock, to the reliable securing of peace on the entire planet.

The Soviet delegation expresses the hope that 1986, which began under favourable omens, will occupy a befittingly important place in the history of the Conference on Disarmament. We believe that, by joint efforts of all the States represented at the Conference, it will at last be possible this year to achieve final agreement on certain items of the agenda and tangible progress in the negotiations on others. The Soviet delegation is prepared to make its contribution to this joint endeavour.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President.

I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden, Ambassador Theorin.

Ms. THEORIN (Sweden): Mr. President, it is with a sense of great loss that the Swedish people has learned about the passing of Alva Myrdal.

For the Conference on Disarmament, the name of Alva Myrdal carries a special significance. She participated from the outset in 1962 as the Swedish delegate in the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENDC) in Geneva and later in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament until she retired from public service in 1973. From 1967 she served as Minister for Disarmament in the Swedish Cabinet.

During this period, from 1962 to 1973, Alva Myrdal participated in shaping the role of the smaller States and in identifying the task of the neutral non-aligned States in the multilateral disarmament negotiations.

Based upon well-researched facts, she developed a critical attitude towards the major nuclear-weapon States. Alva Myrdal saw early the importance of factual competence in the multilateral disarmament negotiations. In Sweden she managed to turn some military resources into scientific research in support of the disarmament negotiations.

In her effort to build up a competence among the neutral and non-aligned States sufficient for a correct analysis of the many complex issues under negotiation, Alva Myrdal was instrumental in the establishment of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI. The activities of SIPRI should be well known to the Conference.

A complete record of Alva Myrdal's work for disarmament cannot be made within the time available at one meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. I will just mention a few of her initiatives.

Alva Myrdal initiated several proposals that became fundamental in subsequent negotiations. In the early days of the ENDC she spent a great deal of effort on a ban on nuclear tests. In August 1962 (ENDC/PV.64), she suggested that verification of a test ban should be based on the findings of the scientific community of the world, and not on bilateral and mutual observations by the intelligence services of the super-Powers. Her model was the project of the International Geophysical Year of 1957.

This idea was later followed up by the proposal, in 1965 (ENDC/154), of the "detection club" and the setting-up of an advanced seismic observatory in Sweden the next year. The detection club constitutes the origin of the work of the Group of Scientific Experts.

In 1966 Alva Myrdal developed the "verification by challenge" concept in a comprehensive effort to solve the test-ban verification problems (ENDC/PV.247).

Generally speaking, Alva Myrdal by these concepts opened the test-ban issue to negotiation, co-operation and verification for all States, not only for the nuclear-weapon States. Her line of openness was continued in the

(Ms. Theorin, Sweden)

proposal in 1972 for general access to satellite data for verification purposes, an idea that was rejected by the leading space Powers at the time, but has since been pursued by others.

Alva Myrdal generally stood for comprehensive solutions to issues under consideration. She favoured a ban on both biological and chemical weapons, not only the biological and toxin ones. She favoured a ban on all weapons on the sea-bed, not only those of mass destruction. She favoured the application of IAEA safeguards on the peaceful nuclear activities in all States, not only in the non-nuclear-weapon States. But, to her sincere regret, she and all others who worked for the same cause were overruled by co-chairmen compromises.

Alva Myrdal took a very active part in the negotiations on the Non-Proliferation Treaty. For her this work also included the final writing-off of nuclear weapons by Sweden, her own country.

In the summer of 1973 Alva Myrdal successfully took the lead in the international protest against the idea of developing mini-nuclear weapons.

In 1982, together with Ambassador García Robles, Alva Myrdal was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. She donated her prize to continued work for peace.

Finally, I would like to mention her work for denuclearization of the seas and oceans of the world. In 1984 she initiated an international symposium on the subject, contributing to the subsequent work in this field of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. She will not be able to learn about the result of this work.

Alva Myrdal insisted, particularly in moments of despair, that it is beyond human dignity to give up. The best way to pay tribute to the memory of Alva Myrdal is never to resign in front of the difficulties, but to meet the challenges with constructive action.

Mr. President, may I express my delegation's pleasure at seeing you in the Chair, Ambassador Butler, as President of the Conference on Disarmament for the month of February. On behalf of the Swedish delegation, I wish to express gratitude for your most kind and commemorative words about Alva Myrdal. You have expressed the sentiments of the Conference and your words will be conveyed to the family of Alva Myrdal. I will also express my deep appreciation of the words of sympathy regarding Alva Myrdal expressed to my delegation by the leader of the Mexican delegation, Ambassador García Robles, and by the leader of the Soviet delegation, Ambassador Issraelyan. I would like to extend to your predecessor as President of the Conference, Ambassador Cárpora my sincere thanks for the skilful way in which he guided the Conference during the closing month of the previous session and up to the opening of this session. I would also like to direct a heartfelt welcome to nine other colleagues, Ambassador Kerroum of Algeria, Ambassador Clerckx of Belgium, Ambassador U Tin Tun of Burma, Ambassador Gonsalves of India, Ambassador Franceschi of Italy, Ambassador Afande of Kenya, Ambassador Benhima of Morocco, Ambassador Mariátegui of Peru and Ambassador Taylhardat of Venezuela. I wish to pledge to our new colleagues the full co-operation of the delegation of Sweden.

(Ms. Theorin, Sweden)

During the early years of this decade we witnessed a continued arms build-up in many parts of the world. Tensions between the main actors on the world stage increased. Their allies, as well as non-aligned nations, were also affected. The economic and social situation in many developing countries deteriorated.

Today's situation is, of course, far from satisfactory. But at least the two leading military Powers seem to realize that they have more to gain through co-operation than confrontation. A political foundation has been laid for progress in the field of disarmament as well as in other areas. It is now vital that efforts be pursued to achieve concrete results.

This Conference has an important role to play in this process.

Last year's session of the General Assembly coincided with the Fortieth Anniversary of the United Nations, which provided us with an occasion to assess what had been achieved so far by the Organization. It also gave us an opportunity to set our sights at the challenges of the future.

Although negotiations in the field of disarmament have produced some concrete results, which should not be underestimated, there was a general concern that the nuclear arms race continues unabated. During the Assembly, and especially in the work of the First Committee, it was made abundantly clear that the most urgent task is to reduce, and ultimately to eliminate, the risk of nuclear war.

The work in the First Committee took place in a constructive spirit. The sterile and unproductive polemics between the military alliances, which have so often infected the atmosphere of the Committee, were almost absent from the debate. The change in the political climate could also be noted in the approaches to certain resolutions. A feeling of guarded optimism regarding the future inspired the delegations.

The summit meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev and their joint statement, as well as the positive outcome of the Third Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), were important factors in creating favourable conditions for the work in the First Committee.

It is to be hoped that the positive spirit of the First Committee will be strengthened in the Conference on Disarmament. The General Assembly urged the Conference to begin negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty and to conclude the elaboration of the comprehensive programme of disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament was also requested to consider, as a matter of priority, the question of preventing an arms race in outer space, and to accelerate its negotiations on a multilateral convention prohibiting the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. Furthermore, the Conference was requested to continue its negotiations on the subject of radiological weapons.

The Conference on Disarmament should now, without delay, agree on appropriate mandates so that the actual work can start. The Conference must live up to the expectations and demands of the international community.

During last year's session of the Conference no progress was made towards achieving a comprehensive test ban treaty. In spite of this discouraging fact, the question of such a ban did play an essential role at the Third NPT Review Conference and in the First Committee.

(Ms. Theorin, Sweden)

Let us first look at the preliminary statistics on nuclear explosions according to the National Defence Research Institute in Sweden. A total of 1,567 nuclear explosions were registered between 1945 and 1985. The United States of America leads this gloomy competition with 801 explosions: 212 in the atmosphere and 589 underground, followed by the Soviet Union with 563 explosions: 161 in the atmosphere and 402 underground. France, the United Kingdom and China have conducted 135, 38 and 29 nuclear explosions respectively. And India has carried out one nuclear explosion.

A total of 30 presumed nuclear explosions were detected throughout the world in 1985. The corresponding number for 1984 was 55. The considerably lower figure for 1985 was mainly due to a halt in Soviet testing between 6 August and 31 December. Last year, France, in fact, overtook the Soviet Union in this morbid competition and carried out eight tests in the South Pacific. The Soviet Union carried out seven explosions and the United States 15. No tests were detected for either the United Kingdom or China.

Our analysis of the seismic data for the explosions of the United States and the Soviet Union in 1985 is consistent with the a priori assumption that the yields from the observed explosions were below the Threshold Test Ban Treaty limit of 150 kilotons. One of the French explosions had an estimated yield in the order of 150 kilotons.

The fact that the total number of tests has declined could be greeted with satisfaction. And in this context a smaller figure is naturally better than a larger. But, in my view, this gives no real reason for satisfaction. A treaty prohibiting all tests in all environments for all time is still expressed as being only a long-term goal by one nuclear-weapon State. Another nuclear-weapon State continues testing in a distant region, where the nations in this region are strongly opposed to the tests.

In this connection, I would like to warn once again against some gradual or threshold approaches to a test ban. Such approaches will not stop the development of new nuclear weapons or over time render existing weapons obsolete. This can be achieved only by a comprehensive test ban treaty. A threshold approach is acceptable to Sweden only if it is directly linked to an effective comprehensive test ban from an agreed date, and if the phase-out period is kept short.

Let me refer to last year's Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The Conference was successful to an extent that few had expected. Still, harsh criticism was raised against the nuclear-weapon States for not having fulfilled their obligations under article VI.

In the Final Declaration, regret was expressed that a multilateral treaty banning all nuclear tests by all States in all environments for all time had not been concluded so far. A call was made on the nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty to resume trilateral negotiations already in 1985. In addition, all the nuclear-weapon States were called upon to participate in the urgent negotiation and conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty as a matter of the highest priority in the Conference on Disarmament.

The nuclear-weapon Powers parties to the NPT have always expressed a commitment to the authority, efficiency and survival of the Treaty. There

(Ms. Theorin, Sweden)

could, in my mind be no better way to demonstrate such a commitment than to heed the call for a comprehensive test ban treaty. Such a treaty is the key factor in any process of nuclear disarmament.

Just as Sweden welcomed the temporary unilateral moratorium on testing proclaimed by the Soviet Union last summer, we welcome its recent decision to prolong this moratorium. We still nourish the hope that the United States and other nuclear-weapon States will join the moratorium and that it will last until a comprehensive test ban treaty enters into force.

The adoption by the General Assembly last year of some important resolutions on the issue of a nuclear test ban, as well as other events, display clearly the strong demand of the international community for a halt in the nuclear testing.

This body can no longer, in the face of these developments, afford not to take action. Sweden is among those countries which have worked actively for a comprehensive nuclear test ban for many years. The draft treaty text (CD/381) submitted in 1983 is but one example. We have insisted on the start of negotiations. At the same time, differing views on how a mandate for an ad hoc committee should be formulated must not prevent the start of substantive work on this important question, which has the highest priority on our agenda.

Disarmament negotiations in other areas have taught us that, by creating a working process, many unsettled questions can be solved and a deadlock be broken, leading up to full negotiations. It is true that a body working according to the principle of consensus must take all views into account and, in the most constructive manner possible, resolve outstanding issues. At the same time, the Conference should not accept to be prevented from carrying out its task on the first item on its agenda by a small number of delegations, let alone only one.

I should like to take this opportunity to underline the importance my Government attributes to the Group of Scientific Experts. It is essential that it be able to continue its work on the verification issues related to a comprehensive test ban treaty. Once the political decision to stop nuclear testing is taken, the conclusion of a treaty must not be delayed because of outstanding technical matters. There is rapid technical development. It is important that it be taken fully into account in the verification systems, and that such systems not be permitted to lag behind.

The so-called Five-Continent Peace Initiative has underlined the importance of being able to monitor all nuclear explosions. Together with the other States behind this initiative, Sweden has announced its willingness to take part in the monitoring of a comprehensive test ban. The data centre that Sweden operated as part of an international experiment in the autumn of 1984, and which we have offered to run and finance as part of our commitment to a test ban, can be put to use at very short notice.

The question of verification has for decades been put forward as the main obstacle to a comprehensive test ban. The two major nuclear-weapon States have not been able to agree on what is needed in order to verify such a ban. That period now seems to be over. The Soviet Union has stated its willingness to accept international procedures including on-site inspections in order to verify compliance with a reciprocal moratorium. Both sides thus seem to agree on a basis for a verification system.

(Ms. Theorin, Sweden)

Sweden therefore proposes that negotiations on a comprehensive test ban treaty start immediately. We feel that the establishment of an international verification system including on-site inspections should be initiated at an early stage in the negotiations. The co-operative measures worked out by the Group of Scientific Experts could serve as a basis for that, and monitoring be started by using existing facilities around the globe. These facilities could be rapidly improved using modern technology and methods. In this way, the entry into force of a future treaty will not be delayed for technical verification reasons.

Sweden was gratified that last year the Conference on Disarmament managed, although late in the session, to establish a Committee to deal with the agenda item "Prevention of an arms race in outer space." We expect the Committee to continue and intensify this important work and to seek concrete ways to prevent an arms race in outer space. We urge all members of the Conference to work together in a constructive manner to ensure that substantive work can take place at an early stage. The procrastination that left the Committee with only nine substantive sessions last year must be avoided.

At their meeting on 8 January 1985, Foreign Ministers Shultz and Gromyko agreed "to prevent an arms race in space and to terminate it on Earth". This was confirmed by the leaders of the two main nuclear Powers in their Geneva meeting in November last year. We take this as a firm commitment by President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev to prevent an arms race in space.

It is, however, obvious that meaningful agreements on the prevention of an arms race in space cannot be reached only on a bilateral level. An ASAT ban not adhered to by all States with a future ASAT capacity would make many important satellites potential objects of attacks. It would also leave the satellites of the Soviet Union and the United States themselves vulnerable to attacks by ASAT weapons of a third State. A multilateral approach to ASAT weapons would thus be in the interest also of the two major space Powers.

It is important to elaborate a legally binding international instrument or instruments prohibiting ASAT weapons and ASAT warfare. Because all States are directly or indirectly involved, the Conference on Disarmament must immediately consider in what way it can take action to this effect.

Both the Soviet Union and the United States now in fact observe a moratorium on ASAT testing. This is a most welcome development, which should facilitate the negotiations of a multilateral comprehensive ban on ASAT systems.

Much attention has been given to the question of ballistic missile defences. The Swedish Government does not believe that security can be achieved through such defences. BMD systems in outer space -- if technically feasible -- might be vulnerable to attack and could be overcome by an increase in the number of nuclear weapons. It is difficult to see how destabilization and an increase in the risk of nuclear war could be avoided in the process to establish technically advanced BMD systems. The arguments that led to the conclusion of the ABM Treaty are still valid. This Treaty remains one of the most important achievements in the field of arms limitation. It is essential that the ABM Treaty be maintained, that its provisions be strictly observed and that measures be taken to prevent its erosion.

(Ms. Theorin, Sweden)

The possible development of ballistic missile defence systems is a concern not only for the Soviet Union and the United States. Because of its implications we, the non-nuclear weapon States, like all other possible victims of nuclear war, have the right to expect from the bilateral negotiations concrete measures which will decrease the risk of nuclear war, enhance stability and, thus, the security of all of us.

Let me, in this context, underline that there are also multilateral treaties which contain obligations of relevance to the question of advanced BMD systems. Even if this insufficient, multilateral legal framework does not explicitly prohibit weapons in orbit around the Earth -- or on Earth, in the atmosphere, at sea or below -- Sweden thinks that their development, testing and deployment would run counter to the spirit of the Outer Space Treaty. Its article I states that the use of outer space "shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries". Article III states that the Parties to the Treaty shall use outer space "in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international co-operation and understanding". It is indeed difficult to reconcile these intentions with activities aimed at developing weapons for use in space.

One of the technologies considered for space-based BMD systems is the X-ray laser. X-ray lasers require pumping by very intense radiation which, in practice, has to come from a nuclear explosion. The testing of X-ray lasers in outer space, if involving nuclear explosions, would be a breach of the prohibition of such explosions in article I of the Partial Test Ban Treaty. Already the placing of such X-ray technology in orbit around the Earth would be a violation of article IV of the Outer Space Treaty.

To spread the arms race into outer space is incompatible with the spirit of the treaties I just mentioned. Respect for international law must be upheld.

Last year the negotiations in the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons advanced in a slow but steady fashion. The 40 pages of CD/636, making up the present draft for a Convention, are no small achievement and speak for themselves.

The process of defining and listing relevant chemicals is now well under way, after having been dead-locked for some time. This work is fundamental to the continued elaboration of several other parts of the Convention. It should therefore be actively pursued during the 1986 session. The question of identifying chemical weapons production facilities as well as measures for their elimination is another area usefully dealt with during the last months. A substantial amount of work remains, however. There are certain prospects for further progress this year.

Other issues which necessitate major efforts during 1986 are the elaboration of principles for the elimination of existing stocks of chemical weapons, as well as régimes to ensure that new chemical weapons do not emerge within the framework of the chemical industry. Last, but not least agreements must be reached on the principles, procedures and organization for ensuring all States parties that the forthcoming Convention is being complied with in all aspects.

A certain momentum has been created in the negotiations on the chemical weapons Convention. This was confirmed when the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union met here in Geneva a few months ago. The role and the

(Ms. Theorin, Sweden)

responsibility of the major Powers in the Conference on Disarmament are crucial to the successful conclusion of a Convention. Their concerns and approaches to the issues involved cannot be overlooked. Direct talks between the United States and the Soviet Union have proved useful in the past. Such contacts could and should reinforce and speed up the negotiating process.

Chemical weapons are, however, at least theoretically, accessible to all States, should they choose to acquire them. Furthermore, all States are potential victims of the use of such weapons. Consequently, the future Convention must be elaborated in such a way that the concerns and interests of States from all parts of the world are met. This can only be done in a multilateral context. All members of the Conference on Disarmament should therefore make full use of this multilateral negotiating forum.

There are other initiatives, outside the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, which are intended as steps towards ridding the world of chemical weapons. Certain statements indicate that efforts are under way to prevent the spread of chemical weapons. The proposal to create a chemical-weapon-free zone in Europe is another initiative, which is important from a political point of view.

Sweden is strongly in favour of all efforts that can diminish the threat of chemical weapons in Europe as well as in other parts of the world. At the same time we remain convinced that the most effective way of achieving this is through a comprehensive convention like that being negotiated in this forum. Geographically or otherwise limited initiatives should not become alternative solutions, but should be pursued in such a manner that they support and strengthen the multilateral negotiations of a comprehensive convention. Enough substantial and preparatory work has already been done for such a convention to be feasible within a reasonably near future. No additional measures would then be needed.

In order to further the negotiations, all countries producing or considering producing chemical weapons -- binary or others -- should refrain from such production during the negotiations on a convention. Disarmament can never be furthered through increased armaments.

The meeting of the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States in Geneva in November 1985 has given some hope about improvement of the climate for international negotiations in the field of disarmament. They stated that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. They recognized that any conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States would have catastrophic consequences and emphasized the importance of preventing any war between them, whether nuclear or conventional. They declared their intent not to seek to achieve military superiority.

Now their joint understanding should be transformed into concrete disarmament measures in the form of multilateral or bilateral agreements or conventions.

The comprehensive programme recently proposed by the Soviet Union, leading to the elimination of all nuclear weapons and chemical weapons as well as to reductions of conventional forces, deserves serious consideration.

If we acknowledge the fact that mutual, deeply-rooted suspicions block the road to disarmament, then confidence-building is in many ways the heart of

(Ms. Theorin, Sweden)

the matter. In this context, the Stockholm Conference on Security- and Confidence-building Measures and Disarmament in Europe obviously has an important role to play.

As the host country and as a neutral State in Europe, Sweden naturally has a particular interest in the success of the Stockholm Conference. Recent statements by President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev as well as by a number of recently high-level visitors to the Conference give reason for cautious optimism.

For the negotiators in Stockholm, less than eight months remain until the Conference will adjourn before the CSCE follow-up meeting in Vienna. It is our sincere hope that the Stockholm Conference will reach a substantial agreement this year, enabling the Vienna meeting to decide upon widening the mandate to include also genuine disarmament measures.

An agreement in Stockholm should reflect the complementary nature of the political and military aspects of security. It should contain measures of openness enlarging the confidence-building measures agreed in Helsinki, that is to say, prior notification and exchange of observers in connection with military activities in Europe. It should also contain measures of military constraint and arrangements for communication and consultation. The obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force should also be duly reflected.

This year has been proclaimed as the International Year of Peace. This proclamation should be a serious challenge to peoples and Governments to make all possible efforts for peace and disarmament.

There could not be a better occasion than this International Year of Peace,

To start negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty,

To begin the reduction of nuclear arsenals,

To prevent an arms race in outer space,

To finalize the chemical weapons Convention,

To bring the Stockholm Conference to a successful conclusion.

The peoples of the world are eagerly waiting for concrete agreements on disarmament. Let us not leave them in disappointment as so often before. Let us work hard in order to avoid the darkness and the coldness of a nuclear winter. Let this International Year of Peace bring with it a spring of disarmament and a summer of peace!

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Sweden for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the President.

We have now exhausted the time available to us this morning and we still have a number of members of the Conference listed to speak today. Consequently, I intend to suspend now the plenary meeting and resume it at 3.30 this afternoon in order to hear those statements.

(The President)

Before suspending the plenary meeting however, may I mention with regard to this afternoon's proceedings, that, as agreed during the informal consultations held last week, I intend, immediately after having heard the list of speakers this afternoon, to hold a brief informal meeting to consider the provisional agenda and programme of work of the Conference. If, in that informal meeting, we confirm the consensus which I believe does exist, and which emerged during the consultations last week, then we will be in a position this afternoon, to resume the plenary meeting in order to adopt the agenda and programme of work for 1986. If no other delegation wishes to take the floor I would suspend this meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 1.05 p.m. and reconvened at 3.30 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: The 336th meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed.

On the speakers list for this afternoon are inscribed the names of the representatives of Cuba, Czechoslovakia and Canada. I would like to express my thanks to those delegations for agreeing to hold over their statements to this afternoon's meeting.

I would now propose to hear those statements and begin by calling upon the distinguished Ambassador of Cuba to address the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. LECHUGA (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, I extend a welcome to you from my delegation as you take the chair for this first month of our work. We pledge you the co-operation of the Cuban delegation in your undertakings, which will certainly be aimed at success in our endeavours.

We congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Mario C  mpora, on his able guidance of the Conference at the close of the session last year and he demonstrated to us once again, his diplomatic skill and his adherence to the cause of disarmament by his work in the First Committee of the General Assembly.

We join in the welcome you extended to our new colleagues in the Conference, to whom we convey our warmest greetings.

It is a pleasure to welcome among us again Under-Secretary-General Jan Martenson. We also wish to greet Ambassador Komatina, the Secretary-General of the Conference, and Ambassador Beras  ategui, the Deputy Secretary-General.

To the distinguished delegation of Sweden, we convey our deepest sympathy on the death of Mrs. Alva Myrdal, who fought ardently for the cause of disarmament. Her passing is a loss that affects us all.

To the delegation of the United States, we wish to say that the people of Cuba are not insensitive to the feeling of profound grief that afflicts the people of the United States as a result of the tragic space vehicle accident that caused the death of several persons, including a young schoolmistress. For this reason, we express our condolences.

(Mr. Lechuga, Cuba)

This year we are embarking on the session of the Conference with cautious expectations, despite the fact that multilateralism is coming under repeated attacks throughout the United Nations system. It is very difficult to venture beyond such a prudent attitude in view of the lengthy history of frustration in this body and the virtual absence of any results in the talks held outside this forum. But at the same time, we shall not allow ourselves to be disheartened by feelings that we are powerless. As the universal saying goes, one must make the best of a bad job, and we trust that the first thing we shall proceed to do in the Conference is negotiate. For this purpose, obviously, it is essential to demonstrate by deeds that the political will does exist to discuss in detail the problems on the agenda we now propose to adopt, so as to arrive at effective disarmament measures, and to refrain from using the discussions as a smoke screen to shirk the responsibility that has been entered into.

The context in which the Conference is starting out on its work is different from the programme last year. The proposals made by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union are so momentous that they cannot be ignored and the apparent headway being made in the negotiations to ban chemical weapons fosters some hope of arriving at a satisfactory agreement. Unquestionably, the proposal to eliminate nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth within a period of 14 years under a logically structured plan is a challenge to all the major military Powers, but above all to the militarist sectors of those Powers in which the emblem of their foreign policy is military superiority and the maintenance of international tensions as tools to achieve their objectives.

The Soviet initiative opens up tempting prospects, a window through which the world can glimpse an end of the century that is more promising than the present years of anguish. For this reason, the initiative has generally been greeted with satisfaction and even those who display the greatest reluctance towards the idea of disarmament have had to admit that it is a plan which deserves serious consideration, but of course, we have to be realistic. It would be unwise to imagine that general disarmament within a space of 15 years will be accepted easily, for powerful interests benefit from the arms race. We know that the implementation of a programme of such magnitude calls for abundant doses of good will on the part of those whose view of the world is such that the use of force is the main ingredient to be used in the final analysis, when all the other means to secure their aims fail.

However, it would not be the objective truth to deny that, despite these patent facts, there is no real possibility of working effectively to achieve the aim of gradually reducing and then completely eliminating weapons of mass destruction. This, the aspiration of all peoples, is the Conference's great task: to contribute, by its endeavours, to the attainment of this goal.

We firmly believe that it is possible, for to think otherwise would be to resign oneself to the idea of collective suicide, which can in the present circumstances, only mean a nuclear conflagration, to accept as inevitable a steadily deteriorating situation in terms of world security and an end once and for all to any prospect of economic improvement for the overwhelming majority of mankind, now suffering from the burden of countless misfortunes for lack of the requisite resources to overcome them while astronomical sums are being spent on arms research, manufacture and emplacement. No people can accept this bleak future, or allow itself to be led into such a situation from which there is no way out.

(Mr. Lechuga, Cuba)

The Conference on Disarmament is under a special and specific obligation to do everything within its grasp to carry this undertaking through to a successful conclusion. In short, it is the only negotiating body freely established by the international community to carry out that task. It cannot constantly disappoint public opinion by failing to act on the topics of paramount importance for discussion in its programme of work.

If we look at the agenda, there is no valid reason or argument, for example, for not embarking promptly on negotiations for a nuclear weapon test ban. Neither inside nor outside this forum does anybody understand the logic of the countries which deny that nuclear weapon tests are harmful to the cause of security, when it is obvious, when it is plain and when it is an incontrovertible fact that continued tests spur on the demented arms race and build up further obstacles in the way of the negotiations on disarmament. Nuclear weapon tests are needed not to make the world safer but, on the contrary, to carry on perfecting current weapons and experimenting with other more destructive weapons so as to achieve military superiority over the opponents, something which in fact nobody can manage in the world of today. We are not living in the times of the colonialist share-out, when the imperialist Powers could, almost with impunity, line up their cannons against the inferior weapons of the peoples they went out to oppress and exploit. Those times have gone for ever.

Another question that is sufficiently ripe for the negotiations to be concluded successfully is the prohibition of chemical weapons and the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiled in the various arsenals. Again, there is no reason to extend the negotiations beyond what is necessary, as has been happening. It would be unforgiveable to let slip the impetus that now seems to exist and fail to take advantage of this moment to meet yet another aspiration of mankind, which is the elimination of such horrifying weapons. In this connection, the recent Soviet initiative contains a positive factor which opens up the way for concluding the treaty, and it is the question of verification, namely, the proposal for strict control, including on-site inspections. There is no reason not to make rapid headway in the negotiations.

The arms race is not only a destabilizing factor and a source of latent dangers of a military confrontation but also a factor that greatly undermines the world economy, one of the main causes of the profound crisis that is being experienced on all continents, and particularly the continents with the developing countries. It is for this reason that the struggle for peace is now closely tied in with the efforts to solve the most pressing problems of those countries, with their hundreds of millions of human beings, and it is at the same time linked to the struggle for an international economic order that is more just and equitable than the order that now governs inter-State relations. Peace which, furthermore, must be beneficial to all regions and must be within the reach of all peoples. Peace by half-measures, peace with discrimination, are not possible.

As long as untold resources are being squandered on the arms race, there is little likelihood of international co-operation in the economic field. Development and disarmament go hand-in-hand and, fortunately, every day more sectors of public opinion in all countries are coming to realize this fact, and above all, what is more important, are deciding to wage the struggle for this cause.

(Mr. Lechuga, Cuba)

It is truly a crime against humanity to assign such hitherto inconceivable financial, scientific, technical and human resources to the manufacture of instruments of death and destruction at a time when millions of men and women, young people, old people and children are dying from lack of nourishment or medicines or medical treatment, when there are hundreds of millions of human beings with no schools or hospitals or when such facilities are not enough to meet the requisite needs.

There is blithe talk of fantastic investments to design space weapons when the world is deep in one of the most tragic economic crises for many a year, when the external debt of numerous countries is a noose that is strangling their opportunities to better themselves for many years to come, an external debt that even now cannot be paid off because, in the present situation, the economic capacity to do so is missing. And it is in precisely these circumstances that, with unparalleled wastefulness, funds are being allocated for such truly luxury projects, apart from what they signify in terms of aggravating international tensions, destabilizing the existing precarious balance and, consequently, making the achievement of peace more remote.

One of the Conference's tasks, in our opinion, is to dispel the scepticism surrounding it. We have to admit that it is virtually paralysed and this does not help its effectiveness and that its lack of efficiency is the reason for the distrust displayed towards it in broad sectors of public opinion. It is a vicious circle that can be broken only by the will to work in good faith. We hope that such good faith can be demonstrated by deeds at the session we are now embarking on.

Good faith is needed to complete the comprehensive programme of disarmament and overcome the stagnation into which it has sunk, so as to work with an effective mandate on this very important subject, namely the prevention of nuclear war. Good faith to advance the work on the subject of the cessation of the nuclear arms race and on nuclear disarmament, which is the responsibility of everyone and the privilege of no one.

Without losing sight of the modest character of our contribution to the business of the Conference, the delegation of Cuba stands ready to commit itself with others to fulfilling the responsibility that has been laid upon us by the international community.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Cuba for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the President.

I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Czechoslovakia, Ambassador Vejvoda.

Mr. VEJVODA (Czechoslovakia): Mr. President, it is, at the same time, a privilege and a commitment for you to chair our work in the opening month of this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament. Guiding the work of this body is always a privilege, and it becomes more of a commitment today, when the Conference is undoubtedly going to try to translate into concrete deeds certain positive developments in the international situation. I pledge you the full support of my delegation in your effort to launch our work effectively and in the right direction.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

Let me welcome among us our new colleagues, Ambassador Clerckx of Belgium, Ambassador Kerroum of Algeria, Ambassador Gonsalves of India, Ambassador Franceschi of Italy, Ambassador Benhima of Morocco, Ambassador Afande of Kenya, Ambassador U Tin Tun of Burma, Ambassador Mariátegui of Peru and Ambassador Taylhardat of Venezuela, with whom we have already had a chance to work together. I am looking forward to the same fruitful co-operation I enjoyed in working with their predecessors.

Let me not forget to thank Ambassador Cámpora of Argentina for the efficient guidance of our work at the end of last year's session. We were also very happy to see the Under Secretary-General Martenson here, and of course we are happy to see Ambassador Komatina in the seat of the Secretary-General of our Conference, with Ambassador Berasátegui at his side.

It is with a deep sense of sadness that I express condolences to the delegation of Sweden in connection with the passing away of Alva Myrdal, the distinguished Swedish diplomat and Nobel Peace Prize Winner. I knew well her dedication to peace and disarmament, since I had an opportunity to co-operate with her closely here in Geneva and at the sessions of the General Assembly. I would ask the Swedish delegation to transmit our condolences to the relatives of Alva Myrdal and to the Swedish Government.

Only a couple of months separate us from the end of last year's session. We ended it on the already usual, rather sombre mood, with no special reason for optimism. It is therefore encouraging to note that during our break, important, positive developments took place. Immediately after the Conference recessed the Third NPT Review Conference took place. In spite of a number of difficulties, it ended positively, reaffirming the validity of the non-proliferation régime and calling for its further strengthening. Certainly, much still has to be done in order to close definitely all avenues for possible nuclear weapons proliferation and my country is ready to join in this common effort. In this respect, the Third Review Conference was, in spite of all forecasts about its failure, a step in the right direction.

Needless to say, the best guarantee against the proliferation risks would be the achievement of specific measures ensuring the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. The readiness of the WTO member States to achieve such measures was again unequivocally confirmed at the meeting of the political consultative committee of the WTO in October of last year in Sofia. The participants at the meeting stressed that "urgent measures are necessary which would make it possible to stop the arms race, prevent its extension into outer space and achieve drastic cuts in armaments, nuclear ones in particular".

Later, in November, we witnessed here in Geneva an event of extreme political significance. The Soviet-American summit meeting, the first since 1979, was generally regarded as a positive turn in the development of relations between the USSR and the United States. It quite naturally aroused expectations about the possibility of the adoption of specific steps aimed at the cessation of the nuclear arms race and the elimination of nuclear weapons. People in Czechoslovakia followed the summit meeting closely, maintaining as well that concrete measures to stop the arms race should be undertaken, the sooner the better. The joint communiqué of the meeting, indicating areas of discussion, common understanding on various matters and further tasks to be solved was welcomed.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

Right after the summit meeting, Mikhail Gorbachev met with the highest representatives of the WTO member States in Prague and informed them of the results. They fully supported the constructive approach of M. Gorbachev during the negotiations with President Reagan and welcomed the fact that the two sides reaffirmed their commitment of January 1985 to look for ways and means to prevent an arms race in outer space and to end it on Earth.

The great significance of the Geneva meeting stems from the fact that it represents the beginning of a dialogue aimed at positive changes in Soviet-American relations and in the world in general. It creates favourable conditions for improvement of the international situation and for a return to détente. It was quite natural that, after the summit meeting, we were waiting for further action to be taken, especially in connection with the approaching resumption of the bilateral Soviet-American talks on nuclear and space weapons last month.

On the eve of the opening of the fourth round of these talks, on 15 January, the Soviet Union advanced a far-reaching programme aimed at the elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000. This proposal met with keen interest in my country. The Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Czechoslovak Government welcomed that initiative and declared, inter alia, that it represents "a complex of new proposals expressing the constant peaceful nature of the internal and foreign policy of the Soviet Union, which corresponds also to the vital interests of the Czechoslovak people. These balanced, realistic, clear and deeply human proposals reflect the highest responsibility for the future of human civilization and meet the interests of all countries without distinction. Their aim is to stop the arms race on Earth, to avert the militarization of outer space, to improve the overall international situation and to ensure the development of peaceful, mutually advantageous co-operation".

The Soviet disarmament programme is indeed unprecedented in its bold approach, ambitious goals and detailed, specific nature. Thus, right at the beginning of the International Year of Peace, the world was offered a chance for peace and for a radical solution to the problem of a continuous arms race which more and more threatens the existence of human civilization and squanders immense material and human resources. We note with satisfaction that the generally positive reaction throughout the world shows that peoples identify themselves with the goals of the programme and political leaders understand its historic significance. It is not the kind of initiative which could be ignored or downplayed. The questions it raises are primarily aimed at how best to implement it.

A number of issues addressed in the recent Soviet initiative will also be inscribed in our agenda. It would therefore seem only natural for us to look at these issues again, trying to find new, more efficient ways of dealing with them.

Let us look in the first place at the problem of the nuclear test ban. We consider it unquestionable that either we did not deal with it at all, or when we did, the method we chose was inappropriate. We do not share the view that the Working Group's activity in 1982 and 1983 demonstrated that a number of verification problems still needed to be solved. What it really indicated was that some remaining verification problems cannot be settled if treated separately from other basic provisions of the test ban. The same applies to the activity of the Group of Scientific Experts on Seismic Events. In a

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

couple of weeks this Group is going to finalize its third report. With the evaluation of the results of the first two practical experiments of the transmission of seismic data the third report could indeed represent a positive contribution. But a contribution to what? If the negotiations on the NTB are going to be blocked again, then the valuable work of the Group of Scientific Experts will be bound to remain just an exercise in modern seismology, an opportunity for experts to exchange information and experience and a check of the communication channels of the World Meteorological Organization. On the other hand, if negotiations on all aspects of the NTB were to start, the third report of the Group of Scientific Experts on Seismic Events could become a real contribution to the future establishment of a system for the transmission of seismic data, which would constitute an important part of the NTB verification procedures.

In addressing the NTB problem the Conference on Disarmament has to take into account new, important developments related to this question. During the second half of last year, one of the two major military Powers was left alone on the road of active nuclear testing. The Soviet leadership in an effort to break the usual "logic" of the arms race, introduced a unilateral moratorium on nuclear-weapon tests. Regrettably, the other side ignored the invitation to reciprocate and to render the nuclear testing moratorium a lasting measure until a general and complete ban is negotiated. Thus, this major country remained in this respect a lonely zealous competitor in an awkward arms race with just one participant. And even after the expiry of the six months originally proposed, the "solo race" continues, since the Soviet Union prolonged its unilateral moratorium for the next three months. We consider this additional measure an extraordinary example of the only approach that could break the vicious circle of the arms race.

Nor can the problems of verification serve any longer as an excuse for not joining the moratorium and for the deadlock in the NTB negotiations. The Soviet Union stated unequivocally that verification is no problem so far as it is concerned. Appropriate verification of compliance with the moratorium -- should the United States join it -- would be fully ensured by national technical means as well as through international procedures, including on-site inspections whenever necessary.

Mr. President, we are aware that the delegation of your country pays due attention both here and at the United Nations General Assembly to the necessity to stop nuclear testing. In fact, one of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly last year on this question was sponsored by your country. The three resolutions addressing the problem of nuclear weapon testing, resolutions 40/80 A, 40/80 B, 40/81 and 40/88 indicate, that there are certain differences on how to deal most effectively with this question. But basically they agree on the importance and urgency of the cessation of nuclear testing. We are confident that you will use the term of your Presidency to search for a most appropriate framework for the Conference to deal with what is again going to be its top agenda item. In this respect I pledge to you the full support and co-operation of my delegation. We shall be flexible, but we shall continue to proceed from the basic criterion -- our activity here must be directed towards the early conclusion of a treaty on general and complete prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

We are also in favour of establishing working bodies for proposed items 2 and 3 of our agenda. There is an urgent need to adopt measures aimed at decreasing the danger of the outbreak of nuclear war, to stop further senseless stockpiling of nuclear weapons and gradually reduce them until they

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

are completely eliminated. An argument was advanced previously that it was not clear what the Conference should negotiate on within these items. We maintain that this argument can no longer be put forward seriously. A number of specific proposals were submitted on the question of prevention of nuclear war. The group of socialist countries submitted the proposal for a stage-by-stage nuclear disarmament as far back as 1979. In the new Soviet proposal, the three-stage programme for the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons is very detailed and specific. It is realistic, since in designing the stages and participation in them it takes fully into account the unequal potentials of individual nuclear-weapon States. Here, in this body, we have all five nuclear-weapon States represented and we are supposed to discuss disarmament. Would it be appropriate if we did not touch on the subject of nuclear disarmament at all? To say the least, it would be total disregard of the almost unanimous opinion of the international community as expressed in General Assembly resolution 40/151 F on the convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, resolution 40/152 A on the non-use of nuclear weapons and prevention of nuclear war, resolution 40/152 Q on the prevention of nuclear war and resolutions 40/152 C and 40/152 P calling upon the Conference on Disarmament to proceed without delay to negotiations on the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament.

Outer space still might seem to some of us a distant and remote sphere. But it becomes more and more obvious that what happens there, especially from the military point of view, is going to concern all of us very closely, and probably very soon. In a couple of weeks it will be already three years since the day when one major country proclaimed one form of the militarization of outer space as its official doctrine. From then on, year by year, huge financial resources and the skill of thousands of technicians were dedicated to that programme. As the years go by, more and more will be poured into this enterprise until one day it may become an unstoppable self-supporting machinery. Let us hope that this day will not come sooner than the negotiations on the non-militarization of outer space are given a fair chance. Otherwise it is inconceivable that, with the progressive militarization of outer space, any significant results in the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament can be achieved.

My country has sent a cosmonaut into outer space and in close co-operation with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries participates actively in the peaceful exploration of outer space. We, certainly, do not consider ourselves a space power, but even as a small earthly country we would feel directly threatened by the eventual introduction into orbit of attack space weapons. Already now we have to face an immense threat to our territory from a multitude of sources, including modern missiles with nuclear warheads stationed just a couple of kilometres from our border. If an additional source of threat were to be introduced, this time from space, with practically no chances for defence, an explanation that these weapons should allegedly play a defensive role would hardly dispel our worries. And this potential threat is steadily gaining more and more specific shape. Nuclear-weapon testing in Nevada continues intensively, aimed at the perfectioning of X-ray lasers to be placed in outer space. Declarations on the non-nuclear nature of the so-called Strategic Defense Initiative thus seem rather misplaced and one should not be surprised if they are soon forgotten completely. At the same time, militarized space is not going to replace the old dangers but merely add to them. Just last week, Defense Secretary Weinberger stated that the SDI now shares the "highest priority" among Pentagon programmes, equal in status to the five-year campaign to modernize nuclear missiles.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

In view of these developments, Czechoslovakia welcomes what the recent Soviet proposal has to say on outer space. It is suggesting a completely different approach which would not bring a threat to all countries, and in the long run also to the initiator of the arms race in space, but on the contrary it would definitely close outer space for military confrontation and would also create favourable conditions for nuclear disarmament. In the statement by M. Gorbachev, introducing the new Soviet initiative, the following question is put: "Instead of wasting next 10-15 years by developing new extremely dangerous weapons in space, allegedly designed to make nuclear arms useless would it not be more sensible to start eliminating those arms and finally bring them down to zero?". Apparently, no political leader would openly question this simple truth. Nor, let us hope, will it finally be denied through the actions of any country.

The Conference on Disarmament should contribute to multilateral efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space. We therefore support early resumption of the activity of the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space. As to its mandate, we made it clear last year that we want a committee empowered to negotiate specific measures ensuring prevention of an arms race in outer space. After last year's useful exploratory work we are even more convinced that time has come to move forward and to speak specifically on what new measures could ensure that outer space remains free of the arms race. General Assembly resolution 40/87 calls for nothing less than that.

We hope that the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons will continue its work without undue delay. It should build further on what was achieved last year and in January of this year under the chairmanship of Ambassador Turbanski of Poland. We note with satisfaction that the atmosphere in the Committee recently improved substantially. This, together with the opening of the bilateral Soviet-American consultations last week, gives us a good negotiating pattern wherein multilateral and bilateral efforts could mutually complement each other. Thus, all constructive proposals could be made use of and lead towards the solution of the remaining problems outstanding.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons is, in fact, the only working body of the Conference negotiating on a specific problem of disarmament. It has been working hard during the recent years on the elaboration of a chemical weapons convention and we may say that all delegations are paying special attention to its work. Let us hope that the activity of this Committee would serve us as an example of how we should organize our work also on other priority items. Otherwise, the Conference on Disarmament could soon be associated merely with the negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons. And we would like to believe that this organ of multilateral negotiations on disarmament would eventually be in a position, and why not this year already, to address other urgent problems too.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Czechoslovakia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President.

I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Canada, Ambassador Beesley.

Mr. BEESLEY (Canada). On this opening day of the 1986 session of the Conference on Disarmament, may I begin by welcoming our nine colleagues who have recently joined us, the distinguished Ambassadors of Algeria, Belgium, Burma, India, Italy, Kenya, Morocco and Peru and welcome back with pleasure the distinguished Ambassador of Venezuela. May I also express my personal and official congratulations to you, Ambassador Butler, as our President during the month of February. It is already evident that under your very able guidance, the Conference has got off to a good start. I should also, of course, like to join other delegations in expressing our appreciation to Ambassador Cámpora for his skilful diplomacy during the difficult month of August and since, indeed, I may have to look to him for technical assistance, since I am destined to be the President for the month of August which is usually a difficult one. Before commenting on our agenda, I would like to express the deep sense of loss we all feel at the death of the distinguished former Swedish disarmament minister and Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Mrs Alva Myrdal, who made a unique and lasting contribution to our work. I join others also in extending to the United States delegation our sincere condolences at the tragic loss of the shuttle Challenger and its young crew of seven.

As we began our deliberations here a year ago, there was a note of cautious expectation in the air. The Governments of the USSR and the United States of America had only recently agreed to resume negotiations on the central arms control and disarmament issues of our time. Moreover, in taking this step, which entailed considerable statemanship on each side, the two Governments set themselves agreed negotiating objectives which are impressive in their scope and comprehensiveness, namely: "The prevention of an arms race in space and its termination on Earth, the limitation and reduction of nuclear arms, and the strengthening of strategic stability." They stated as an ultimate goal "the complete elimination of nuclear weapons." We, and the watching world, saw a glimmer of hope.

Now, little more than a year later, that flame of hope not only remains alive, but burns a little brighter. Negotiators for the two Governments completed three rounds of negotiations in Geneva during 1985. President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev met in Geneva in November and issued an important Joint Statement, affirming inter alia the intent to accelerate the work of their negotiations. The fourth round of negotiations is already underway.

Happily, this process has produced more than rhetoric. Detailed and substantive proposals and counter-proposals have been made, reflecting a readiness on both sides to agree to major reductions in their respective nuclear arsenals as a first step toward implementing the agreed negotiating objectives in their entirety. Thus, in the Canadian view, the good faith and serious intent of each of the parties to these negotiations have been persuasively demonstrated. We applaud the constructive beginning which has been made in this all-important negotiation. We recognize that the negotiation is likely to be long and arduous and that to expect quick, comprehensive solutions on the many outstanding issues would be unrealistic. We urge the two parties to continue their negotiating efforts with all the determination, skill and patience that the importance of the subject matter demands, as they have pledged to do. Canada, for its part, pledges that in the Conference on Disarmament and all other relevant international fora, we will support, facilitate and attempt to reinforce these crucial bilateral negotiations.

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

It is a reality of our time that the United States and the USSR, by their separate and joint decisions, will determine central aspects of any international framework for preserving global security. But of course, the establishment of a stable basis for enduring international peace and security must not and cannot be a proprietary monopoly of the two super-Powers. Their negotiations are of vital concern to all peoples, as Canada's Prime Minister has recently affirmed, peace and security is everybody's business. It is for every responsible Government, through its national policies and by constructive participation in international fora such as the Conference on Disarmament where such issues are addressed, to make its own contribution to the collective international effort to come to grips with the complex and seemingly intractable issues involved in creating conditions for stable, enduring international peace and security. The Canadian Government reaffirms its determination to do just that.

In this forum, the seriousness of Canada's commitment to the pursuit of realizable arms control and disarmament measures is well known. Canada's long-standing approach to arms control and disarmament, sometimes criticized as idealistic, is not starry-eyed but directed to the pursuit of practical and achievable goals. We see arms control not as separate from, but intimately bound up with, the legitimate concern of all States for their national security. The essence of our approach has been expressed succinctly by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney: "The world at large should recognize that arms control is a component of, not a substitute for, a healthy national security policy. A wise and correct approach to security cannot ignore the virtues of arms control, just as arms control cannot ignore the requirements of national security. The search for either at the expense of the other is fruitless. And the search for both is imperative."

The Canadian Government has set for itself six arms control priority objectives. These have been publicly stated by Canada's Prime Minister and were spelled out by Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Joe Clark, in the Canadian Parliament on 23 January. These six priority objectives are: (1) negotiated radical reductions in nuclear forces and the enhancement of strategic stability, (2) maintenance and strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation régime, (3) negotiation of a global chemical weapons ban, (4) support for a comprehensive test ban treaty, (5) prevention of an arms race in outer space, and (6) the building of confidence sufficient to facilitate the reduction of military forces in Europe and elsewhere.

We intend to pursue these objectives actively and by all means at our disposal. We will be pressing our views and policy objectives in bilateral talks with our allies, with Governments of the socialist bloc and with the People's Republic of China and with the Governments of neutral and non-aligned countries. We will play an active and constructive role in various multilateral fora, here in the Conference on Disarmament, in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, at the United Nations Disarmament Commission, in the Mutual Balanced Force Reduction talks in Vienna and at the Stockholm Conference and other CSCE meetings which address broad security-related issues.

We see this Conference however, the Conference on Disarmament, as pre-eminent among the multilateral fora dealing with arms control and disarmament. A heavy responsibility weights on its 40 members. We are, in a very real sense, negotiating on behalf of the international community as a

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

whole. It therefore behoves us to approach our tasks with as much energy, patience, skill and wisdom as are at our command. Our Governments must be prepared to seek out common ground which can become a basis for practical, operable measures.

Our collective record in recent years is not something about which we can boast. In the decade since the conclusion of the ENMOD treaty, we have failed to reach agreement on a single arms control measure. The reasons for this are multiple. It cannot be attributed entirely to the parlous state of East-West relations, though this has at times been an important factor. On occasion, agreements which have seemed within reach have eluded our grasp sometimes because some of us have pressed to expand the scope of an agreement beyond what has been effectively negotiable in this forum. The objectives sought were legitimate, but there may have been too much readiness to pursue the ideal at the expense of the achievable.

However, not all of our difficulties are due to divergent purposes or failures of political will. There is an increasingly pressing need to re-examine our procedures and processes with a view to ensuring the optimal use of the limited time, resources and energy at our disposal. I shall not dwell on the matter at this time, having intervened more than once during our 1985 session to make this very point. Suffice it to say that there are several procedural habits and routines which have evolved in this forum which could usefully be reassessed in order to make our work more efficient and, just as important, less contentious.

I would urge again that you as our Conference President, as you have already pledged to do with the support and co-operation of all delegations, give priority attention during this session to exploring and examining ways by which we might, by agreement, improve and streamline our processes and procedures so that we might better serve our Governments and the peoples whom they represent.

Whatever our concerns about procedural matters, however, it is our primary task to deal with the substantive items on our agenda. I have alluded already to the Canadian Government's generally positive appreciation of the course of the negotiations thus far between the United States and the USSR. While this should be a source of encouragement to us here, it should not prompt us to slacken our efforts but rather to intensify them. It should entitle us to a heightened expectation that in this forum, where our first obligation is to seek out common ground and expand areas of agreement, we will be able to avoid political polemics, invective and recriminatory exchanges, which are out of place in any serious negotiating forum.

As in recent years, the negotiation of a verifiable, comprehensive ban on chemical weapons is a priority item on our agenda. Modest but detectable progress was made on this item during the 1985 session but there is still cause for disappointment in spite of the strenuous efforts of our friend and colleague, Ambassador Turbanski of Poland, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee. Known instances of recent chemical weapons use should add to our collective sense of urgency to attain the earliest possible conclusion of such a ban. We note with particular attention the affirmation by President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev in their Joint Statement of their intent to "accelerate their efforts to conclude an effective and verifiable international convention" as well as their intention to "initiate a dialogue on preventing the proliferation of chemical weapons."

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

As others have pointed out, and indeed my delegation has in the past, it will be of limited utility if we get an effective bilateral convention which is not a comprehensive convention in both senses in extending to all the main issues under negotiation and comprising a genuine non-proliferation convention. It is our understanding that this latter initiative is not intended in any way to divert efforts from the priority need to conclude a comprehensive chemical weapons ban, so too with respect to the statement contained in the proposals most recently made by General Secretary Gorbachev raising the possibility of "certain interim steps," possibly involving multilateral agreement on matters relating to the non-transfer of chemical weapons.

Despite the considerable progress which has been made, there remain several difficult issues to be resolved if a chemical weapons ban is to be concluded. Among these, the verification provisions of the treaty will require especially serious and dispassionate effort if agreement is to be achieved. It will be recalled that in April 1984, almost two years ago, the Vice-President of the United States of America tabled in this forum a draft treaty text which is the most comprehensive proposal yet before us, setting out in detail the kind of verification régime his Government prefers and would regard as adequate. Canada has indicated its readiness in principle to accept and apply the kinds of verification provisions contained in the United States text. However, while there has been much criticism of these proposals, no delegation has thus far come forward with concrete, substantive alternative proposals which would delineate with clarity the area of common ground and the areas of disagreement, thus providing a basis for serious negotiation with a view to arriving at verification provisions which would be acceptable to all.

The Canadian Government noted, and welcomed, the reaffirmation by the United States spokesman in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly on 31 October 1985 that "No imbalance in inspection obligations is either desired, intended or contained in any provisions of the United States draft convention banning chemical weapons." The Canadian Government has also noted with particular care and interest the recent statement by General Secretary Gorbachev that, with reference to declarations of the location of chemical weapons production facilities, the cessation of production, the destruction of production facilities and the destruction of chemical weapons stocks, "All these measures would be carried out under strict control including international on-site inspections." We are greatly encouraged by this statement. We hope that during the present session of this Conference the delegation of the USSR will be in a position to further elaborate on its particular meaning. The task of seriously negotiating effective, operable and politically acceptable verification provisions for a chemical weapons treaty will be difficult and time-consuming. However, it should not be postponed any longer.

During the session, the Canadian delegation intends to continue to make substantive inputs to the negotiation of a chemical weapons ban. We will be submitting a HANDBOOK FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGATIONS OF THE USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS. The Handbook identifies procedures, equipment and standard formats which could go a long way toward ensuring that the findings of an investigation of alleged chemical weapons use would be as conclusive, convincing and impartial as possible. It reflects Canadian experience and expertise and our longstanding interest in various aspects of verification.

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

It should be of particular value in relation to the provisions of a chemical weapons treaty dealing with a verifiable ban on chemical weapons use, as is being negotiated in this forum. We will also be submitting a technical working paper dealing with identification of chemical substances. We will also be making available to all delegations through the Secretariat a compendium of all chemical weapons documentation of this Conference during the period 1983-1985.

Another important item on our agenda is the prevention of an arms race in outer space, a subject on which there is widespread and legitimate public anxiety. Last year, an important step forward was taken when we were able to agree on a mandate for an Ad hoc Committee on this item. I pointed out at the time that it was a realistic mandate which takes into account and both complements and accurately reflects the realities concerning the bilateral negotiations already then under way between the United States and the USSR, but does not undermine or undercut or prejudge or in any way interfere with those negotiations. At the same time, I expressed the hope that the mandate would not expire at the end of 1985 bearing in mind the wishes of some delegations who would like something more and something better. The view I then expressed continues to be the view of the Canadian Government. The mandate has enabled us to make a beginning, but it has no means been exhausted. It was attained only with great difficulty, skill and perseverance. Any attempt to negotiate it or renegotiate it could almost certainly involve further lengthy discussion at the expense of substantive deliberation, with little prospect of agreement on a new mandate. Moreover, the political and negotiating context in which the mandate was agreed has not appreciably changed. Indeed, to the extent that the United States and the USSR are seriously coming to grips with the negotiating objectives they have set for themselves, including the prevention of an arms race in outer space, our need to ensure that our deliberations are complementary to, and not disruptive of, those negotiations is enhanced. Finally, I would note that, due to regrettable procedural delays, our substantive discussions on this item last year were seriously curtailed and as some delegations have pointed out, we were able to have only nine meetings. Nevertheless, those discussions, in the Canadian judgement, got off to a reasonably good start. They were substantive. They were for the most part objective. They went some way toward elucidating the complexities and intricacies -- technical, legal and political and we have heard of some of them today -- involved in this process. However, they remain incomplete. The importance and difficulty of the subject demand that we discharge our last year's mandate with determination and dispatch before we embark on a new one. The reputation of this Conference would not be enhanced by procedural wrangles on this item. As was the case last year when we submitted a broad survey on the existing international legal régime in outer space, the Canadian delegation intends to make concrete contributions to substantive discussions. In the process, we will be making available to all delegations, through the Secretariat, a compendium of the 1985 Conference on Disarmament documentation on the subject.

The question of a comprehensive nuclear test ban remains an especially important item on our agenda. It has, unfortunately, become one of the more contentious issues. The intensity of feeling it generates reflects both the inherent importance of nuclear weaponry as a core element of the strategic policies of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and the profound public anxieties arising from an awareness of the massive and relatively indiscriminate destructive power of such weapons. Because the use of such weapons on any significant scale would have serious repercussions not only for combatant

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

States but, almost certainly, for all others as well, the active interest in this item shown by all delegations of this Conference is legitimate and understandable. In these circumstances, there may also be a consequential need to take care that the strength of our views and concerns, and the vehemence with which they may be expressed, do not become a hindrance to rational discussion of the central issues involved. Here or elsewhere, polemics will not lead the way to better understanding.

I wish to emphasize that a negotiated, verifiable comprehensive nuclear test ban remains a fundamental objective of the Canadian Government. Canada continues to favour a careful, step-by-step approach to a nuclear test ban, both on procedure and substance although we respect the views of those who differ. The Canadian Government is clearly on record as favouring the re-establishment in the Conference of a subsidiary body to address this subject, and I now reiterate that position. Such a body must have a concrete and realistic mandate which would enable the immediate resumption of substantive work, with a view to negotiation of a treaty. We suggest that priority attention be given to reaching agreement on a programme of work, which might address the issues of scope, as well as verification and compliance, with appropriately structured working groups. We sense among the countries represented in this room a growing recognition of the potential value of a focused approach along these lines. The Canadian delegation would be ready to take an active and constructive part in implementing an agreed work programme. We hope too that, in support of such efforts, there could be general agreement to press ahead with our important work on seismic exchanges.

Finally, although it is not a separate agenda item here, I would like to speak briefly on the broad issue of verification. As is well known here, this is a subject of longstanding priority for Canada, going well beyond mere rhetoric. Significant amounts of the scarce financial and personnel resources available to the Canadian Government are being devoted to a serious and methodical examination of the problems and issues connected with verification. Within Canada's Department of External Affairs, for example, a special verification research unit has been established, with an annual budget of a million dollars. As one concrete step, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs announced at the fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly that the Canadian Government has decided to upgrade in a substantial way its seismic facility in our Northwest Territories. By this and other means, we intend to accumulate a store of experience and add to our expertise which can increase Canada's ability to contribute in practical and constructive ways to the international negotiation of effective, verifiable arms control measures.

This Canadian approach reflects our firm belief that the verification aspects of arms control and disarmament agreements are in no way subsidiary or secondary elements but are integral and essential parts of such agreements, in some cases amounting to pre-conditions to final agreement, but not obstacles to be utilized to obfuscate or postpone serious negotiations. This approach reflects our view that questions of confidence are central to all arms control negotiations. The reconfigurations of national arsenals which arise from arms control agreements both reflect and reinforce a certain level of reciprocal confidence in the intentions and capabilities of the parties. When it is appreciated that States are being asked to give up security based on weaponry in return for security based on arms control agreements, the importance of this element of trust and confidence is readily apparent. If the necessary levels of confidence are to be sustained and increased, all parties to such

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

agreements must be able to assure effective compliance through adequate verification. Conversely, the inability adequately to assure compliance can lead to reduced levels of confidence, an increase of mistrust and, through a vicious spiral, could bring the whole arms control and disarmament process to a halt. We, of course, recognize that the legitimate need for adequate verification can be abused. For our part, we are convinced that a rational and imaginative approach to verification, far from being a smoke-screen, is a prerequisite in every serious arms control negotiation. In circumstances when all parties are negotiating in good faith, meticulous attention to verification provisions will not be a hindrance to the negotiatin progress. On the contrary, it should facilitate such negotiations.

From this perspective, the Canadian Government was especially gratified at the adoption by consensus at the fortieth session of the General Assembly of a resolution reaffirming resoundingly the importance of verification as an essential element of the arms control negotiating process. This confirms to us the high importance of effective verification in disarmament and arms control agreements -- not as a partisan issue but as a matter on which there is international consensus. This consensus may be fragile, yet it is a foundation on which we can build. It is in this context that the Canadian delegation will shortly be making available to all delegations a comprehensive, cross-indexed compendium of verbatim statements on verification which have been made in this Conference and its predecessors during the period 1962-1983. These records, the sheer size of which some of you may find intimidating, are in fact instructive in indicating the extent to which there is common ground on which we can expand. I trust that this compendium will prove to be a valuable tool for our collective work. The compendium has already been referred to variously in the Canadian delegation. The polite ones call it "heavy stuff". Others say it has a very weighty tone. But these adjectives mean these are the three volumes that were prepared to be made available to the delegations that are interested in it.

Mr. President, may I conclude with the hope that 1986, the International Year of Peace, will prove to be a year of concrete achievement by this Conference, a year which we will one day look back upon as a turning point in the history of arms control and disarmament.

THE PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Canada for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President.

That concludes the list of speakers for today. Does any other member wish to take the floor at this stage?

In accordance with rule 29 of the Rules of Procedure, I have requested the Secretariat to circulate a Working Paper under the symbol CD/WP.198, entitled "Provisional agenda for the 1986 session and Programme of Work of the Conference on Disarmament". As announced this morning and as agreed, I intend now to suspend the plenary meeting and convene an informal meeting of the Conference to consider that Working Paper. If there is no objection, we shall proceed accordingly.

The plenary meeting is suspended.

The meeting was suspended at 5 p.m. and reconvened at 5.15 p.m.

THE PRESIDENT: The 336th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is now resumed.

I wish to put before the Conference for decision Working Paper CD/WP.198, dated 30 January 1986, containing the provisional agenda for the 1986 session and Programme of Work of the Conference on Disarmament. In submitting that Working Paper for adoption by the Conference, I wish to make the following statement:

"With respect to the adoption of the agenda for the year 1986, it is understood that the question of the nuclear neutron weapon is covered by item 2 of the agenda and can be considered under that agenda item."

If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts its agenda for the 1986 session and the Programme of Work for the first part of its annual session.

It is so decided.

I am grateful to the members of the Conference for their co-operation in adopting, at this first plenary meeting, the agenda and programme of work. I believe this augurs well for our consideration of other organizational matters and for the substantive work of the Conference in 1986.

As agreed at our informal meeting earlier today, I intend to convene an informal meeting of the Conference on Disarmament on Thursday, 6 February, immediately following our completion of the list of speakers, in order to consider the question of the establishment of subsidiary bodies, as well as requests from non-members to participate in the work of the Conference. I see no objection.

It is so decided.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 6 February at 10.30 a.m. The plenary meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.