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Chairman: Mr. ZACHMANN (German Democratic Republic)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 46 TO 65 AND 144 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. ALHINAI (Oman) (interpretation from Arabic): As this is our first statement in the First Committee's general debate - which is a natural complement to the annual general debate in the General Assembly's plenary meetings - I wish, in spite of the provisions of rule 110 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to convey to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the other Committee officers the congratulations of my delegation on your election to your high posts.

As a developing country, Oman is eager, through its membership of the United Nations and through its participation in all aspects of its work, to reaffirm its genuine desire for international peace and security. It is international peace and security that can give us the freedom to build our societies in an atmosphere of safety and security.

(Mr. Alhinai, Oman)

International peace and security can also help us achieve the greatest possible success in our plans for social and economic development, which are devised in keeping with available potential and desired goals. We reaffirm that, given the present state of the world, it must be understood that we are forced, whether we like it or not, to allocate a significant part of our resources to self-defence and the protection of our countries against foreign conflicts and threats, great-Power hegemony and the consequences of the arms race, matters which cannot but have an effect on the developing countries. Our main concern as small peace-loving nations is to safeguard our unity and safety and protect ourselves from the danger posed by the nuclear, chemical and bacteriological arms race. That arms race, of course, is not being engaged in for peaceful purposes.

The major States that possess these lethal means of destruction continue to test these weapons, with the ultimate aim of terrorizing other peoples. It is their aim also to perpetuate their hegemony and spheres of influence in distant lands. The victims are the small countries of Asia, the Pacific, Africa and Latin America. But the arms race is not confined to those major Powers; the danger has become so widespread that certain countries of the third world are now convinced that they too must become nuclear Powers if they can. They are proceeding on the basis of certain precepts of internal or external security, or on the basis of their own perception of their strategic importance, the size of their population or their status in the international arena, among other factors.

After the Second World War - which led to the establishment in 1945 of the United Nations with the purpose of preventing the outbreak of a third world war - Israel was established, at the expense of a small peace-loving nation, on the usurped territory of Arab Palestine and other holy territories. I mention this

(Mr. Alhinai, Oman)

because many scientists who helped create the nuclear capability of Israel, in the midst of the Arab world, have recently asserted that Israel possesses between 100 and 200 nuclear devices.

In the London Sunday Times the Israeli nuclear expert Mordecai Vanunu recently revealed important military secrets and other facts concerning the threat posed by Israeli nuclear power, based on his own long experience working on the Dimona nuclear reactor in the Negev desert. He affirmed that Israel has become one of the world's premier producers of nuclear weapons and possesses vastly destructive thermonuclear weapons that are capable of destroying entire cities. On the basis of active contacts with other Israeli experts, the Sunday Times revealed the following significant facts. That State, which is inimical to the other countries and peoples of the Middle East region, has built a secret production unit in its facility in the Negev desert and over the past 20 years this has led to the development of a vast arsenal of nuclear weapons with considerable destructive power. Israel is now to be considered the world's sixth nuclear Power, and possesses between 100 and 200 nuclear warheads. It thus comes after China, which possesses 300 nuclear warheads, France with 500, the United Kingdom with 700, and the United States and the Soviet Union, which are the most powerful, each with some 27,000 nuclear warheads.

This Israeli expert revealed before he disappeared or was kidnapped in London by Mossad that Golda Meir, who was Israel's Prime Minister during the 1973 October war, had ordered nuclear weapons moved to Israeli air bases because she feared that Israel's forces would be defeated by the victorious Egyptian forces. He added that the Israeli nuclear production unit made use of advanced European plutonium-extraction technology. Plutonium production has reached 40 kilograms per year, enough to manufacture 10 bombs of varying destructive power. There were

(Mr. Alhinai, Oman)

also revelations about the activities that have taken place at the Dimona reactor, built in 1957 with the help of French experts. Its 27-megawatt capacity has been expanded to 150 megawatts for greater production of radioactive plutonium. A special cooling device helps keep the true production level from being monitored by the rest of the world.

Before he disappeared or was kidnapped, Vanunu also revealed that Israel has the capacity to produce each year 10 nuclear bombs which are much smaller, lighter and more efficient than those of other countries able to produce these lethal, highly destructive weapons.

We must ask whether Israel would have been able to develop and possess this nuclear capability without constant material assistance from certain other developed countries. The answer is clear, and everyone in this room knows it.

Moreover, Israel, which was founded on force and on the threat of force, continues to reject a just and lasting peace in the Middle East region. It rejects the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all the other parties concerned. It also refuses to comply with Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on the questions of Palestine, the Middle East and the occupied Arab territories, not to mention the question of Holy Jerusalem. Israel flatly refuses to accept International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) authority and regulations and rejects the declaration of the Middle East as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Therefore the countries of the region cannot coexist with Israel on a basis of such inequality. Israel's intransigence is a source of danger not only to the countries and peoples of the Middle East but also to international peace and security. This has been made clear in the present debate in the First Committee.

(Mr. Alhinai, Oman)

That is why my delegation, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, requested the inclusion on the agenda of the General Assembly at the current session of an item entitled "Israeli nuclear armament", which, as agenda item 144, has been allocated to the First Committee in accordance with the decisions taken on 13 and 14 October 1986 by the General Committee and the General Assembly, as communicated in a letter from the President of the General Assembly addressed to the Chairman of the First Committee.

As Chairman of the group of Arab States for this month, Oman appreciates the international understanding regarding the request of the Arab delegations, given the present circumstances of the United Nations.

This Committee, of course, is also to discuss other agenda items. I wish to make our views known on those issues frankly and clearly. Foremost among them is the necessity not to place regional conflicts and disputes in the context of super-Power confrontation. Emigration from a super-Power should no longer be used as a bargaining chip in super-Power relations under the banner of alleged respect for human rights in areas of conflict and the territories of others, such as Palestine. We abide by international law and rules. By the same token, we call for respect for our territorial integrity and sovereignty.

We support the immediate convening at Colombo of the International Conference on the Indian Ocean, with a view to turning that ocean into a zone of peace. We also support the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Middle East, South-West and South-East Asia and the Pacific. We affirm the right of each State to develop its capability to make use of nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes, commensurate with its own potential and its development plans. There should be due respect for freedom of navigation and international trade on the high

(Mr. Alhinaï, Oman)

seas and in regional waters, in keeping with the provisions of the law of the sea Treaty. We affirm too that Antarctica is the common heritage of mankind, and should not be monopolized by a handful of countries to the detriment of the interests of the other countries of the world.

The news so far about the Reykjavik summit meeting between the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union makes us optimistic about the significant developments between those two countries in the field of curbing the arms race and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We sincerely hope that success will crown all their efforts on the various issues being negotiated by the bodies concerned with a view to final agreement between the two countries, whether bilaterally or in the context of individual issues such as curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons or linking various issues in an agreement aimed at resolving various regional conflicts.

We believe that such a serious and productive contribution by the two super-Powers would constitute a highly important factor for ending the war between Iran and Iraq, for ending the foreign military interventions in Afghanistan and Kampuchea, and for hastening the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East on the basis described in various United Nations resolutions. We would look forward also to the settlement of such issues as racism, apartheid and racial discrimination in South Africa and the achievement by Namibia of complete independence.

Mr. TADESSE (Ethiopia): Despite my delegation's sincere wish to abide by the procedural guidelines of the General Assembly, I cannot, Mr. Chairman, let pass this opportunity to express my delegation's delight at seeing you guiding the work of the First Committee with such commendable diplomatic skill and efficiency. I

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

should like to assure you and the other Committee officers of our full co-operation in the tasks entrusted to you.

In the contemporary world mankind is beset by much fear and uncertainty about the future of our planet. Yet none of those fears is more concrete than the terror of nuclear war. The dread of nuclear war is not based on imaginary assumptions born out of fear of the unknown, but on the actual destructive potential of nuclear weapons.

It is indeed that fear that led us to hope that the Reykjavik meeting between General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and President Ronald Reagan would result in the adoption of measures that would defuse the tension so widely prevalent in the world today. Regrettably we have learned that the leaders of the two nuclear Powers once again failed to reach an agreement that would have been a sound basis for the attainment of global peace and security, which continues to be jeopardized by the existence of deadly nuclear arsenals.

However, as much we are disheartened by the outcome of the summit meeting we are gratified to note that the meeting enabled both sides to appreciate the difficulties involved in such delicate negotiations and the prospects for the conclusion of mutually acceptable agreements whenever the political will to follow the path of constructive dialogue prevails.

We therefore call upon the two nuclear Powers to continue serious negotiations based on mutual respect for one another's justifiable concerns and on a keen awareness of the pivotal role their conduct is likely to play in determining the ultimate fate of our globe. In the paramount task of of ridding the world of nuclear weapons, no counsel should remain unheeded. Every assistance to be had in this realm should be seriously considered. In that connection, we urge the two

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

Powers to avail themselves of the timely opportunity the six-nation initiative seems to offer in the area of verification, an initiative set out in the Ixtapa document on verification measures issued at the Mexico summit on 7 August 1986. But most of all we urge them to contribute their share to the creation of an international environment where mutual confidence prevails.

In that respect, we welcome the exemplary attitude the Soviet Union has demonstrated by extending its unilateral moratorium on testing until January 1987. Limited though that gesture may seem, it is certain that it would, if matched by similar acts of restraint on the part of the other major nuclear-weapon States, go a long way towards fostering the necessary climate for the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. The early conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty is a matter of the utmost priority to my Government and indeed to the entire family of non-aligned nations.

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

As a member of the only multilateral negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament, Ethiopia continues to attach great importance to the efforts being deployed in the Conference on Disarmament pertaining to a nuclear test ban. Unfortunately, the work carried out thus far by the Conference regarding this quintessential item of priority leaves a great deal to be desired. It is indeed lamentable that it could not even reach a consensus on such a fundamental issue as the definition of a mandate for an ad hoc committee on a nuclear test ban.

Once again, those nuclear-weapon States known to pose the issue of verification as a sine qua non of the elaboration of a comprehensive test ban treaty have prevented the multilateral negotiating forum from embarking upon the task of drafting a comprehensive treaty on the complete prohibition of the testing of all types of nuclear weapons in all environments and by all States. Although it is undeniable that the question of verification constitutes an important component of any meaningful treaty on a nuclear test ban, it is our considered view that it should not be used as a pretext for blocking an entire process. In this important realm of international endeavour any delay portends grave consequences. We therefore call upon those States to heed the voice of the majority of the members of the Conference on Disarmament and to join them in the early elaboration of this long-awaited treaty.

With regard to the ongoing negotiations to draw up a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction, we are glad to note that significant progress has been achieved during the current year. It is our sincere hope that the consensus that seems to be emerging regarding verification will be a good omen for the final adoption of a convention that will gain the support of one and all.

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

Perhaps uppermost among the preoccupations of the international community during these troubled times remains the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The development of a new generation of weapons systems designed for deployment in outer space and in particular the emphasis placed by one of the nuclear-weapon States on the so-called strategic defence initiative have been a cause of concern. However plausible the rationale for developing the strategic defence initiative may appear to the authors and supporters of that programme, it is inevitable that the deployment of such so-called defensive weapons would trigger yet another counter-action that will encumber our planet with a new generation of highly sophisticated arsenals of mass destruction.

For these and other obvious reasons, the Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries:

"called upon all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to adhere strictly to the existing legal restrictions and limitations on space weapons, including those contained in the outer space Treaty and the 1972 Soviet Union-United States Treaty on Anti-Ballistic Missiles, and to refrain from taking any measures aimed at developing, testing or deploying, weapons and weapons systems in outer space".

As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Ethiopia reiterates that clarion call.

We have expressed our grave concern over the unabated spiralling of the arms race, not only because it spells ultimate doom for the only world we have to live in, but also because we are acutely aware that this dangerous race for the perfection of weapons of mass destruction continues to drain scarce human and material resources which would otherwise have been utilized for the purpose of development and the progress of mankind. We had hoped that an in-depth examination

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

of the relationship between disarmament and development would take place at the International Conference that it planned to hold in Paris during the summer of 1986. However, for reasons known to all, that was not possible. In view of the importance the international community continues to attach to this vital issue, it is our conviction that that Conference should take place during the coming year and that a decision to that effect must be taken at the present session of the General Assembly.

I would now like to address myself to an issue which continues to haunt many Member nations in my geographic region. For over two decades the nations of Africa have expressed their strong desire to keep the continent free from nuclear weapons, including their delivery systems. In spite of this, the apartheid régime in South Africa continues to bolster its nuclear capability, with the overt and covert assistance of some nuclear Powers. The implications of this sad state of affairs for the security of our continent - and, indeed, for the maintenance of international peace and security - cannot be overemphasized. Unless the international community pronounces itself on this issue and sends clear signals to the racist régime in Pretoria, the security of all nations in Africa will continue to be threatened. In expressing our regret that the United Nations Disarmament Commission has once again failed to adopt a consensus text on the nuclear capability of South Africa, and in the face of the realities I have just mentioned, we urge all members of the Commission, in particular those that continue to harbour doubts about the established nuclear capability of the apartheid State, to intensify the negotiations aimed at the adoption of a clear-cut stand.

Another issue very much related to the peace and security of the region in which my country is located is the question of the demilitarization of the Indian

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

Ocean. Although the littoral and hinterland States have gone beyond declaring the Indian Ocean a zone of peace, their long-cherished desire for the convening of the International Conference on the Indian Ocean remains unfulfilled. It is the earnest hope of the Ethiopian delegation that the Colombo Conference, which has been postponed on more than one occasion, will finally be held not later than 1988, as called for in General Assembly resolution 40/153. We are equally hopeful that the permanent members of the Security Council will participate actively in the deliberations of that conference and thereby contribute their share to the maintenance of international peace and security, as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations.

Finally, I should like to reiterate Ethiopia's long-standing conviction that issues of war and peace, by their very nature, have global ramifications and, as a result, require global solutions. All nations, big and small, should join hands to rid our planet of all nuclear weapons. As we have repeatedly pointed out, given the global implications of any nuclear war, no State, including the nuclear Powers, can be ensured against damage arising from the impending catastrophe. Our choice, therefore, is either to perish together or collectively to eliminate all nuclear arsenals and live in a secure world. I hope we shall, through our actions, respond to that challenge and opt for the only sound alternative, namely, the eradication of nuclear weapons and the survival of mankind.

Mr. NOWORYTA (Poland): I should like first to extend to the delegation of the People's Republic of Mozambique and, through it, to the Government and people of that country and the bereaved families of the deceased, our most sincere condolences on the tragic and untimely death of President Samora Machel and the members of the presidential party.

(Mr. Noworota, Poland)

It is with particular pleasure that I see you, Mr. Chairman, the representative of the German Democratic Republic, presiding over our important deliberations. As your neighbour, we in Poland greatly appreciate the friendship, alliance and co-operation with the first socialist State on German soil. Let me therefore congratulate you and pledge to you my delegation's full co-operation. I wish also to congratulate the other officers of the Committee.

It is only natural that in the present discussion in this Committee numerous references should be made to the recent summit meeting in Reykjavik. Like the whole world, we in Poland followed with the greatest attention the meeting between General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan. We shared the understandable expectation that at last tangible progress might be made in the efforts to find solutions to mankind's most vital problems - those of averting a nuclear cataclysm and safeguarding durable peace through the elimination of arsenals of weapons of mass destruction. We know that the two leaders were very close to achieving such progress. We were impressed by the remarkable amount of goodwill, flexibility and compromise displayed by the Soviet side to make agreement possible, particularly on the elimination of intermediate-range missiles in Europe and a 50 per cent reduction in strategic nuclear arms, with the prospect of their subsequent complete elimination. Unfortunately, on the American side the lure of superiority to be reached through the unbridled development of military space technologies appeared to take precedence over the real chance of radically diminishing the nuclear threat.

The meeting in Reykjavik dramatically showed the world the choice that it faces today: either to be carried away along the path of ever more sophisticated and less controllable armaments, leading to a catastrophe, or firmly to step out on the road to disarmament as an essential condition of the preservation and consolidation of international peace and security.

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

It is the common hope that the Reykjavik meeting will not terminate the Soviet-American disarmament dialogue. The experience gained there certainly merits serious reflection. The world has the right to expect from both great nuclear Powers a sense of realism and common responsibility for the world's future development. The President of the Council of State of the Polish People's Republic, Wojciech Jaruzelski, recently said the following:

"We trust that the farsightedness and consistency of the Soviet leadership and the pragmatism proper to Americans will - in spite of many obstacles - bear fruit in the continuation of a businesslike dialogue. Poland ... is, because of its bitter historical experiences, vitally interested in the success of the negotiations, the improvement of the international atmosphere and meaningful disarmament agreements."

In considering the problems of disarmament we are aware of the formidable difficulties standing in the way, difficulties caused by policies predicated on military strength, confrontation and intolerance, which are so dangerous and outdated in the nuclear age. However, they are not the dominating trends of the day; the dominating trends are those largely emanating from our debate here - voices of profound concern but also of clear consciousness of the vast ramifications today of the notion of peace and international security, comprehensive and common security. Speaker after speaker in this debate has referred to important facts of current international life testifying to a new, deep understanding of the realities and requirements of the nuclear era and the determination to act accordingly. The Soviet Union's initiative of 15 January 1986 concerning the elimination of nuclear weapons before the end of the present century is one such fact of the highest significance. It is fully supported by socialist States, including Poland.

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

The Soviet unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosions, now well into its second year, is another fact proving determination, wisdom and perseverance in goodwill in the face of continuous American defiance, responding indeed to the first and foremost demand of the international community to the nuclear Powers in the field of nuclear disarmament - the demand for the cessation of nuclear tests.

The Declaration of the non-aligned summit in Harare and the documents issued by the leaders of six States from five continents, particularly the Ixtapa Declaration, have been quoted extensively here. They are significant and forceful pronouncements on disarmament and outline a clear course to be followed by the international community. Nuclear disarmament, starting with a comprehensive nuclear test ban, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, are the major postulates therein. A positive response by the Soviet Union, in this very Hall, of its readiness to accept United Nations recommendations on the verification of a nuclear test moratorium, as suggested in the Mexico Declaration, is a new important move. It should help to intensify international pressure for finally achieving first the bilateral and then the universal cessation of the tests. It is high time for that.

As the experience of Reykjavik has again vividly brought out, it is also high time to take decisive steps to ban the arms race from outer space. That is a key link in the chain of actions to be taken so as to eliminate the spectre of a nuclear disaster from the life of peoples all over the world. We fully share the firm view widely expressed in this Hall in favour of greater multilateral efforts - here in the United Nations and by the Conference on Disarmament - against dragging the world into a new, uncontrollable and unpredictably frightening arms race by extending it to outer space. The first step in the prevention of such an

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

eventuality - as largely agreed by representatives of all shades of political outlook in this room - is reaffirmation of strict compliance with the anti-ballistic missile Treaty, which is a corner-stone of strategic stability.

Referring to the threat of an arms race in outer space, Wojciech Jaruzelski said the following in the General Assembly last year:

"Where this path will end is something that no one is in a position to know."

(A/40/PV.12, p. 28)

He then put forward the idea of a study, under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General, of the diverse consequences of the militarization of outer space. Work has since progressed on such a study by the United Nations Institute on Disarmament Research, with the assistance of an international group of experts. We hope that its early completion will result in providing the United Nations membership with the required authoritative, accessible information on the many serious implications of the "weaponization" of outer space.

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

One disarmament effort that has been welcomed in this Chamber and indeed in the world at large is the strenuous and progressing work of the Conference on Disarmament on the elaboration of the convention on the elimination of chemical weapons. Poland has been actively involved in this work, and is trying to the best of its ability to help to widen and accelerate the extent of agreement. It is our opinion, too, that the work on the convention is now entering its final stage and can be concluded next year, but we realize that much intensive effort is still needed, as well as the necessary political will and a favourable attitude on the part of all concerned, especially the two super-Powers.

In this connection it is worth noting the positive outcome of the Second Review Conference of the Convention on the prohibition of bacteriological (biological) weapons, concluded last month in Geneva. Reaffirming the importance of the Convention, particularly in the light of the scientific progress achieved, the Conference has also proved the possibility of constructive co-operation by States in the implementation and possible further development of their accepted obligations.

It is to be regretted that the Conference on Disarmament, to whose activity Poland attaches great significance, is still unable, much against the will of the great majority of its members, to play the statutory role accorded it by the United Nations on matters on its agenda that are of the highest importance, particularly those concerning a nuclear test ban, nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war. The results of the 1986 session of the Conference with regard to these issues are clearly incompatible with their urgency and the expectations of world public opinion. This situation should be changed.

The success of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures in Europe has been widely acclaimed at this General Assembly session

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

both by its participants and the representatives of States from other parts of the world as an example of good will and compromise, and of the possibility of real progress in East-West relations, on which international peace and security depend so much.

For Poland, an initiator of the Conference and a country that for years has devoted its major efforts to the promotion of disarmament, détente and co-operation in Europe, this success in Stockholm is a matter of deep satisfaction. But, satisfaction apart, the question now is - as was pointed out by Poland's Foreign Minister, Marian Orzechowski, in the general debate - how to take the achievement of Stockholm further, how to build upon it a secure future for Europe.

In our considered view, Europe today has before it a great and unique chance to consolidate its security through a far-reaching disarmament process in both the nuclear and the conventional fields. After the results of Stockholm, and with the real prospect of the total elimination of intermediate-range nuclear missiles from Europe coming closer, there arises a possibility of a serious attack on the formidable problems of deep reductions in the strength of armed forces and conventional armaments on the whole European continent, which are generally considered to be excessive. The programme for such reductions has been put forward by States members of the Warsaw Treaty in the Budapest appeal, and there is a readiness to subject it to businesslike discussions in a way to be agreed upon by all the States concerned in a spirit of good will, mutual understanding and mutual accommodation of interests. It is our fervent hope that the forthcoming meeting in Vienna of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) will take important decisions on the future course of European disarmament negotiations, and we intend to contribute actively in those decisions.

Poland also hopes for a positive outcome in this connection at the Vienna negotiations on mutual reductions of armed forces and armaments and associated

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland,

measures in Central Europe, and it will be working together with its allies to that end. The tedious 13-year long process of negotiation, and the evidently appreciable measure of understanding achieved through them, should at last bear fruit.

Let me now return to the role the United Nations is called upon to play in matters of disarmament. Always a staunch supporter of meaningful United Nations activities in this field, Poland considers that, at the present juncture in international relations, that role must grow to become more effective. Our attention here should be focused on the problems of greatest importance, and stress should be placed on seeking and recommending concrete solutions for them so as to prevent the danger of war. It is generally recognized and agreed what those important problems are: a nuclear test ban and nuclear disarmament, prevention of the extension of the arms race into outer space, and the elimination of chemical weapons. In addition to the forceful expression of opinion at the United Nations, there is an urgent need to activate the Conference on Disarmament on all these questions. We fully agree that the deliberations of this Committee should be oriented towards seeking consensus, but it should also be action oriented. In particular we should like the United Nations consensus on disarmament matters to be seriously heeded in the actions of those Powers whose position in the Conference on Disarmament has so far not been very constructive.

The question of the growing negative effect of the runaway expenditure on armaments on the worsening world economic and social situation, particularly in the developing countries, has for some time now absorbed the attention of the United Nations, the call for disarmament being more and more forcefully underscored by the dire need for development. We share with other countries the regret that a full-fledged discussion of these problems and the elaboration of solutions to them

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

was prevented because of the unwillingness of some States to hold the much desired United Nations Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development in 1986, and we support its convening in the coming year.

We also favour starting the preparations for the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, hoping that it will mark a new phase of effective action by the United Nations in this domain.

The increasing United Nations tasks in the field of disarmament will require greater efficiency on the part of the existing United Nations machinery, including the United Nations Secretariat. A guarantee of such efficiency is the known devotion of the Secretary-General and his aides to the cause of disarmament. In particular we would note the ties between the United Nations and world public opinion within the framework of the World Disarmament Campaign and the attention given to matters of disarmament and international security in the world-wide celebrations of the International Year of Peace.

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

We also note a desirable increase in the scope and intensity of the activities of the Advisory Board for Disarmament Studies, particularly its role in establishing a United Nations link with non-governmental organizations and in providing guidance to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

Of necessity, I have not been able to discuss all the problems before this Committee in sufficient detail. The Polish delegation will deal more fully with some of them at a subsequent stage in our debate. In concluding, I should like to stress two points. One is the time factor - the pressing need to contribute to effective disarmament before armaments overtake us and humanity at large. The second point is Poland's commitment to peace and to the joint construction of a new system of comprehensive international security, of which meaningful disarmament must be an integral part. We are therefore ready, here and elsewhere, to co-operate with all those who cherish that goal.

Mr. GYI (Burma): The delegation of Burma is deeply saddened by the news of the tragic demise of President Samora Moises Machel of Mozambique, a leader renowned for his courage and inspiration in leading his people to national independence. We extend to the delegation of Mozambique our condolences for the sudden and untimely loss suffered by their country and people.

I should also like to take this opportunity to express our congratulations to you, Sir, the distinguished representative of the German Democratic Republic, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee and to say that we look forward to your able direction and guidance of our work.

The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which embodies the collective will of the international community, states that enduring peace and international security cannot be founded upon the accumulation of weaponry and that the goal of general disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons have become the foremost issues of global concern.

(Mr. Gyi, Burma)

The history of disarmament negotiations has all too often shown, however, that efforts made towards disarmament by the major Powers have been neither consistent nor constant and have fluctuated with the vagaries of the international political climate, which has particular relevance to the state of relations between the two most significant nuclear Powers.

Disarmament and a propitious international climate are directly related issues that have a mutually beneficial effect on each other. Progress, or the lack of progress in disarmament negotiations, bears witness to this fact, for since the late 1970s no disarmament agreement has been possible. That state of affairs is very much in contrast to the preceding period, beginning in the early 1960s, when significant agreements were achieved, which today constitute the building blocks upon which more far-reaching measures must be constructed.

The importance of those agreements lies not only in their contents, but also in the fact that their validity and viability are essential for the building of mutual trust and confidence. It has often been stated that the collective threat which mankind faces from nuclear weapons must be resolved collectively - bilaterally as well as multilaterally.

The beginning of 1985 saw the renewal of the bilateral process when the two super-Powers agreed to conduct a comprehensive set of negotiations aimed at preventing an arms race in space and terminating the arms race on Earth. Furthermore, the declaratory principles and statements of intent expressed in the joint statement of the summit meeting in Geneva can be considered a highly positive development. The issues that the two super-Powers agreed to negotiate are issues which not only touch upon their vital security interests but also affect the security interests of the world at large. The international community has therefore been concerned with these developments and has placed great hopes and expectations in the outcome of the bilateral negotiations.

(Mr. Gyi, Burma)

The year 1986 has witnessed the progression of meaningful bilateral dialogue, and proposals and counter-proposals were advanced. At the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the international community was kept informed about the general nature of what was going on in the bilateral talks. The world community waited in hopeful anticipation for the summit meeting in Reykjavik, the results of which will now go down in history as a crucial phase in the disarmament process and as an event which came tantalizingly close to an agreement. But the goal of disarmament has once again proved to be elusive. However, hope springs eternal in the human breast, and bilateral negotiations continue as an ongoing process. The far-reaching measures which were the subject of mutual accommodation at Reykjavik will, we hope, provide the basis for resolving those issues that stood in the way of reaching agreement.

It has often been asserted that 95 per cent of nuclear weapons are in the arsenals of the two super-Powers. There is also the threat of an impending bilateral arms race in outer space. Those developments serve to show that bilateral negotiations and their successful outcome are indispensable for the cessation of the nuclear arms race.

At the same time, it is universally recognized that these are issues that touch upon the vital security interests of all nations, and it is for that reason that the United Nations must continue to play the central role in disarmament affairs. The history of multilateral negotiations bears witness to the fact that multilateral efforts in the United Nations have contributed a great deal to the achievement of agreements. At the same time, issues which were the subject of bilateral treatment have led to the achievement of multilateral disarmament measures. These developments indicate the positive interrelationship between bilateral and multilateral efforts on disarmament.

(Mr. Gyi, Burma)

Today, we see that the arms race is far outpacing efforts on disarmament, and the capacity of the international security system to deal with crises and conflicts is diminishing. Effective disarmament measures are imperative if the system of collective security as envisaged under the United Nations Charter is to be achieved.

Some States, however, continue to equate their security interests with the possession and accumulation of nuclear weapons, with the oft-stated justification that nuclear weapons are necessary for the maintenance of global peace. We do not believe, however, that enduring global peace can be maintained through a reliance on nuclear weapons. Moreover, such a notion of peace has not been able to safeguard the security interests of smaller nations, as wars and conflicts and the use of force continue to be prevalent in the regions of the third world.

(Mr. Gyi, Burma)

The search for security through the possession of nuclear weapons, besides being unable to provide security for smaller States, endangers the security of all States in a variety of ways, the foremost danger being a nuclear catastrophe arising out of the hazards of the presence of these weapons as well as from the doctrines which are predicated upon the option for their first use.

It was not too long ago that the thinking prevailed among policy makers that a nuclear war can be limited and is winnable. But the world can now draw some comfort from the Geneva summit of last year, where the two super-Powers, in their joint statement, agreed that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Such an understanding is also conducive to mutual trust between the two Powers and assuages the fears of the peoples of the world.

Nuclear issues relating to the physical reduction of nuclear weapons, constraints on the deployment of nuclear-weapon systems and other nuclear arms limitation measures by their very nature lend themselves to treatment in the bilateral framework. At the same time, the continuing concern of the international community over the threat to their security calls for treatment in the multilateral context. One important way to redress the lack of effective multilateral treatment of nuclear disarmament is by the initiation of work on an in-depth exploration and elaboration of the principles embodied in paragraph 50 of the Final Document by the establishment of an ad hoc committee of the Conference on Disarmament with the purpose of defining a concrete programme of action. This has been requested year after year in the resolutions of the General Assembly, but to no avail.

Radical measures to eliminate the threat posed by nuclear weapons and to prevent nuclear war can only be realized through a programme of nuclear disarmament. Together with nuclear disarmament, measures that are legal and

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political can also be undertaken. In this regard the role of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons comes into sharper focus. Such a prohibition is particularly significant when we look at it from the perspective of strengthening the existing principles of international law, the practice of the prohibition of the use of weapons of mass destruction before their reduction and elimination from the arsenals of States are possible, and, above all, the need to secure global security through the rule of law.

Many authoritative sources consider the use of nuclear weapons to be contrary to the existing principles of international law. Nuclear weapons were not yet in existence when the laws of war came to be codified. However, the absence of expressed prohibitions does not mean that the weapons in question are lawful, for any new method of destruction must also conform to the fundamental principles of the laws of war and neutrality. The indiscriminate and uncontrollably destructive effects of nuclear weapons far surpass those of the weapons and methods of warfare which were in existence and were prohibited when the laws of war came into existence, and there can be no ambiguous interpretation of the inadmissibility of their use.

However, the need for a legal régime on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons goes far beyond the need to consolidate the humanitarian principles of the laws of war, for this is an issue which concerns the very survival of mankind. This need is evident if reference is made to paragraph 58 of the Final Document, which states, inter alia:

"in particular, nuclear-weapon States should consider as soon as possible various proposals designed to secure the avoidance of the use of nuclear weapons, the prevention of nuclear war and related objectives, where possible through international agreement, and thereby ensure that the survival of mankind is not endangered". (S-10/2, para. 58)

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From this it can be seen that the existence of legal prohibitions on the use of nuclear weapons is essential for the prevention of a nuclear war. Pending the achievement of an international régime on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, commitments by the nuclear-weapon States not to be the first to use nuclear weapons can contribute towards the strengthening of the security of all States, nuclear and non-nuclear alike.

The comprehensive banning of nuclear tests can be seen as an essential first step towards the halting of the nuclear arms race, for in the present phase of the arms race the qualitative aspects of nuclear weapons are considered to be the most destabilizing factor of such a race.

The reduction of nuclear weapons without an agreement on a test ban does not appear to be realistic, as it would be tantamount to curbing the quantitative aspects of the arms race without halting its qualitative aspects. This is made more evident by those that claim by way of justification that the continued testing of nuclear weapons is necessary for maintaining deterrence through the introduction of what they perceive to be new, more stabilizing and safer types of nuclear weapons. This is contrary to the position of the overwhelming majority of the members of the international community, which believe that it is necessary to stop all nuclear tests to prevent the introduction of more destabilizing types of such weapons. The policy of deterrence through reliance on nuclear weapons cannot serve as a rationale for the postponement of an agreement on a test ban. The indefinite postponement of negotiations on a comprehensive test ban is contrary to the wishes of the international community.

At the Conference on Disarmament members of the Group of 21 had reiterated that the existing means of verification are adequate to ensure effective compliance with a nuclear test ban. They have stated that assertions about the absence of

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such means should not be used as grounds for the further development and refinement of nuclear weapons. A moratorium on all nuclear tests pending the achievement of an agreement is a desirable goal. The extension of unilateral initiatives by the Soviet Union can be viewed positively and, if reciprocated, would be a step in the right direction towards the achievement of a treaty.

The recent trends in bilateral efforts augurs well for a nuclear test ban. However, multilateral negotiations are also necessary in view of the multilateral nature of any treaty.

While the prevention of an arms race in outer space in its interrelationship with nuclear disarmament issues has been on the agenda of the bilateral negotiations since the beginning of 1985, it has also been the subject of multilateral discussions in the Conference on Disarmament, where some momentum has been created, although the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee in which discussions were held did not go far enough.

The outer space Treaty of 1967 defines outer space as the province of all mankind. In accordance with the principles of that Treaty, further measures are necessary to keep outer space as an arena free from arms and to see that existing international co-operation be maintained and further enhanced in the interest of all nations. It is also stated that activities in outer space should be carried out in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations in the interest of maintaining peace and security. My delegation therefore believes that all bilateral and multilateral efforts should be directed towards this goal.

This statement would not be complete without a reference to the prohibition of chemical weapons. This has been the subject of long-standing negotiations in the successive multilateral forums as well as bilaterally between the two super-Powers.

(Mr. Gyi, Burma)

The present year has seen the intensification of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. There has been marked progress in several key areas of the structure of the draft convention. Agreements on disarmament have a better chance of succeeding before weapons become firmly integrated into the military arsenals of States, and it is important to clinch a timely agreement before chemical weapons become so integrated. The problem of arriving at a global treaty on chemical weapons is now politically ripe for solution, and agreement on such a treaty would mean the complete banning of one dangerous type of weapon of mass destruction.

Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Over the past few weeks, the general debate in the General Assembly and the discussion of disarmament issues in the First Committee have brought into sharp focus the main problem of concern to mankind today. This is the problem of survival, the core of which is the threat of global nuclear annihilation. I believe that hardly anyone, ideological differences notwithstanding, would challenge that assessment. The planet needs a comprehensive system of international peace and security which would guarantee for each and every State equal opportunities to live and work in conditions of lasting peace.

The events of the Reykjavik meeting between the General-Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mr. Gorbachev, and President Reagan of the United States, is still very much on our minds. That meeting turned out to be a major and most useful political event. The Byelorussian SSR believes that it will have a lasting impact on international relations. The time has now come for a serious analysis and reassessment, which must be followed immediately by constructive action in the field of disarmament. One thing is clear: Reykjavik has created a qualitatively new situation. No longer can anyone stick to the old positions or act as before. The meeting

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demonstrated the possibility of embarking on the road to genuine nuclear disarmament, provided that the United States finally adopts a realistic stand and abandons illusory assessments. People all over the world can and must draw important conclusions from Reykjavik. Everyone will have to think over repeatedly what took place there, and why the persistent efforts of the Soviet Union to achieve a breakthrough and move towards a nuclear-free world under peaceful skies and towards global security have not yet brought about the results desired by everybody.

The results of Reykjavik are multifaceted; they contain elements both of disappointment and of hope. There is disappointment because a historic opportunity has been missed. Never before has the world been so close - within one or two steps - to resolving crucial problems of the nuclear space age. That could have created good prospects for the achievement of comprehensive and equal security for all for centuries to come. But unfortunately that radical change in world history did not materialize, because it would have required shifts in the positions of both countries, not just one of them, based on the principles of equality and equal security.

The Soviet side put on the negotiating table a whole package of important measures which, had they been accepted, could have brought about a new era in human history, a nuclear-free era of peaceful co-operation on Earth and in outer space. The Soviet position was fully endorsed by the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the States members of the Warsaw Treaty.

In Iceland the focus of attention was on the elimination of nuclear weapons within a relatively short time rather than on the mere limitation of the nuclear arms race. One could perceive the possibility of completely eliminating both American and Soviet medium range missiles in Europe, with simultaneous reductions in the numbers of such missiles in Asia, the possibility of reducing strategic

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nuclear weapons by 50 per cent over the next five years and of eliminating nuclear weapons in the five years after that, and the possibility of effectively resolving the problem of adopting a complete and general prohibition of nuclear testing and preventing an arms race in outer space. For decades, mankind has been dreaming about and striving to achieve all that, and it could all have become a reality had the United States concerned itself with preserving life on Earth rather than with making use of outer space to gain military superiority.

The American side rejected the elimination of nuclear weapons only in order to preserve another dangerous type of weapon. That is a dubious achievement from all points of view, even if the primary concern is to ensure super-profits for the military-industrial complex. If a space battle were to break out, both the military tycoons and the military-industrial complex would be destroyed, along with the rest of mankind.

It could be asked why the renunciation of Star Wars is so important. We believe that an exhaustive answer to that question has been given in the course of the debate in this conference room over the past few years. It should be emphasized that practically the entire world community is striving for the reliable prevention of the extension of the arms race into outer space. Only the United States - and Grenada, which is completely dependent on the United States - did not support last year's General Assembly resolution calling precisely for that.

The need to keep outer space free of weapons acquires particular importance in the light of the possibility of reaching agreements on the elimination of nuclear weapons over the next 10 years, the contours of which were taking shape at Reykjavik. If we are talking about radical cuts in and the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons, then we must create a situation that would rule out not only actions but even intentions to circumvent the agreements in some way or to upset strategic stability.

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The implementation of the Star Wars programme would do precisely that, so we must ensure strict compliance with the anti-ballistic missile Treaty and strengthen its régime. But there remains a justified and logical question: If there are no nuclear weapons, why does there need to be a defence against them? The answer given by the proponents of space weapons, that it would be an "insurance policy", cannot be taken seriously. There is yet another question: How can one reconcile the refusal of the United States to guarantee compliance with the anti-ballistic missile Treaty, in which "Each party undertakes not to develop, test or deploy anti-ballistic missile systems or components" which are based in various ways, including space-based systems or components, with the obligation it assumed at Geneva 1985 "to halt the arms race on Earth and to prevent an arms race in outer space"?

Nobody is asking the United States to forgo its security. Renunciation of the Star Wars programme does not mean diminished security. Moreover, even according to American experts the strategic defence initiative is as reliable as a torn umbrella in the rain.

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The elementary logic of equitable international relations - and it is only on such a basis that we can build genuine security - requires that the United States should not ask others to forgo their national security interests. That is why we must preserve and strengthen the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems.

In fact, attempts are being made to replace nuclear weapons by a whole range of different means of destruction looming over the planet, varying in their purposes, fundamental physical principles and uses. Is this the way to ensure stability and security? It is like placing an army tank on the glass roof of a peaceful house.

Reykjavik has also brought about a spirit of hope that the efforts of the Soviet Union aimed at clearing away obstacles and overcoming stereotypes will make it evident to everyone that old, time-worn positions can no longer have validity and that such efforts will clearly underline the necessity for broader approaches and for an understanding of the uniqueness of the present moment in man's history and stimulate the responsibility, political courage and determination so indispensable for resolving vitally important and urgent world problems. The malignant tumor of militaristic thinking must be removed to allow for an unobstructed growth of the healthy tissues of new political approaches.

The whole world acknowledges that the Soviet Union has made radical and timely concessions in search of constructive compromises. Concessions have been made, but made not out of fear of the military power of the United States nor out of the alleged economic or technological weaknesses of the Soviet Union. As the alternate member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, N. N. Slyunkov, pointed out:

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"The whole history of the Soviet Union and of the international socialist system testifies to our capability of finding an immediate effective response, which will render meaningless any challenge, including the notorious star wars programme."

The concessions made were dictated by commonsense; they reflect a new, innovative political mentality and responsibility for the destiny of mankind.

In the quest for a nuclear-free world and peaceful outer space not a single chance can be missed. It is inadmissible that the International Year of Peace and the 1980s, which, incidentally, were proclaimed by the United Nations as the Disarmament Decade, should go down in history as a period of missed opportunities. It is necessary to continue and intensify the work of clearing the way towards genuine disarmament, both in the United Nations and in other international forums. The exciting prospects that opened up somewhat at Reykjavik also require that we reconsider our efforts in the United Nations and raise them to a level consistent with the needs of our time. We note with satisfaction that the debate in the First Committee confirms that an overwhelming majority of States is prepared to respond positively to this challenge.

At its meeting held on 14-15 October 1986 at Bucharest the Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Warsaw Treaty countries stated:

"the fundamental issues of our time are strengthening peace, curbing the arms race, above all the nuclear-arms race, disarmament and removal of the threat of a nuclear holocaust".

The Committee once again expressed its determination to continue the dialogue and to strive to curb the arms race, including the nuclear arms race. It stressed the need for concrete agreements at the Soviet-American talks on nuclear and space

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weapons, taking into account the interests of both sides and of all other States. It stressed the importance of preserving arms-limitation treaties and agreements and called upon the United States to abide strictly by the agreements on the limitation of strategic offensive weapons and the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems.

The Committee of Ministers stated that preparations for the so-called star wars and the involvement of other countries in that process, the development of projects such as the European defence initiative and all activities aimed at militarizing outer space that increase the threat of war must be stopped without delay. It stressed the need to revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament and of all existing disarmament forums and negotiating mechanisms in order to make their work more effective and to prevent them from being used as a screen for an unimpeded continuation of the arms race.

It reiterated the proposals for the strengthening of peace and co-operation in Europe, the Mediterranean, the Asian-Pacific region, the Indian Ocean, Africa and Latin America and for a just settlement of conflict situations.

The Committee once again expressed solidarity with the peoples fighting for freedom and with the strengthening of independence and socio-economic progress, and it expressed its readiness further to expand co-operation with the non-aligned countries in all spheres of international life.

Such is the stand of the States of the socialist community. We are awaiting an answer, above all from the nuclear Powers, to the question: what are they ready to do in the joint effort of the world community to prevent mankind from stepping over the brink into the nuclear abyss?

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The renunciation of the first use of nuclear weapons could be an immediate practical step. The Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China have already assumed such an obligation. Now it is the turn of the other nuclear Powers, who so far have been evading this step under various pretexts. In this connection the delegation of the Byelorussian SSR would like to emphasize that the assumption of the obligation not to be the first to use nuclear weapons is far from being a mere declaration. It entails serious practical consequences. Having undertaken such an obligation, the nuclear Powers must think in new terms, shape their military doctrines, combat instruction programmes, troops and staff training, determine the structure of their armed forces and conduct negotiations on disarmament on the assumption that they will not be the first to use nuclear weapons. Acceptance of that principle will reduce the threat of a nuclear war and improve the prospects for halting the arms race and of disarmament. The renunciation by all nuclear Powers of the first use of nuclear weapons could be embodied in a legally binding instrument.

The familiar references to Article 51 of the United Nations Charter as allegedly justifying the possibility of making a first nuclear strike are not only self-defeating; they also run counter to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. This was convincingly demonstrated in the Study on the Concepts of Security carried out by experts pursuant to the request of the General Assembly. The persistent line towards the strategic nuclear first-strike policy presently pursued by the Western nuclear Powers presupposes their readiness to unleash nuclear war and carries a higher risk of universal conflagration.

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This takes on particularly alarming overtones in the light of reports in the press that huge amounts of money have been invested in the United States in the creation of a command, control, communications and intelligence network most of which is designed to survive in a prolonged nuclear war and to prepare for the fourth world war. Experiments are being conducted with a view to proving the claim that nuclear war can be controlled and that any adverse effects can be mitigated. This is a sort of forcibly imposed nuclear drug, creating illusions which may prove to have very dangerous consequences for everybody, including those who harbour such illusions.

The development of sophisticated nuclear-weapon delivery systems, which are supposed to use the "stealth" effect - with a flight trajectory beyond the zones of radar surveillance - increases the already inadmissibly high risk of an accidental outbreak of war as a result of miscalculation, misunderstanding or error.

The Byelorussian SSR has been attentively following the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Our delegation regrets that so far negotiations on measures to prevent nuclear war have not yet started there. The intransigent refusal by the narrow group of some Western States to proceed to such negotiations - especially in the light of those actions to which our delegation has drawn attention - casts a deep shadow over their position.

The problem of a nuclear test ban has been discussed for decades in different international bodies. Those discussions have left practically no "i's" undotted. However, the most important thing among them - agreement on a comprehensive nuclear test ban - is still missing; but such an accord would be more than just an ordinary step on the road to nuclear disarmament. There are two reasons why it is particularly important. First, a complete nuclear test ban would make it possible to resolve one of the most complicated tasks in the field of nuclear disarmament - the task of preventing the qualitative upgrading of nuclear arms, the development

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of new types and varieties of such weapons and the modernization of nuclear arsenals. The solution of this aspect of the problem would also facilitate their quantitative reductions. Here we come to the second reason for the particular importance of a complete nuclear test ban. To achieve it means opening the door wide for further and more radical steps for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

A nuclear test ban will help lay down the first and most important stretch of the road to real disarmament in the nuclear field. In this connection, it has become evident that the attitude of States towards the task of prohibiting nuclear-weapon tests - as several delegations have already pointed out - is a touchstone on which their true attitude towards actual nuclear disarmament can be tested.

One of the nuclear Powers, the Soviet Union, has, as we all know, unambiguously demonstrated its sincerity by unilaterally ceasing all nuclear tests as of 6 August 1985. The Soviet moratorium has been extended four times, with due regard also for the wishes of the Delhi Six and other countries. It has been in effect for more than a year now. It is not just a mere declaration but a serious measure reflecting the Soviet Union's practical commitment to the new way of thinking. The installation of American seismic equipment by American specialists in the Semipalatinsk area, the area of the test site, is a practical demonstration that a new way of thinking already exists in the Soviet Union. It should be noted that there is no similar Soviet equipment at the American test sites.

The Soviet Union is thinking not of creating a position of strength for negotiations, but rather of creating possibilities for agreement. In Reykjavik it proposed to start full-scale negotiations on halting nuclear explosions once and for all, at the same time resolving particular issues concerning nuclear explosions during the preparation of such an agreement.

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To that end, productive multilateral negotiations are also needed at the Conference on Disarmament. Since verification problems can easily be solved, in view of the constructive steps taken by the Soviet Union, as well as the readiness of the Delhi Six to exercise international control, the continuing refusal of the same small group of States to agree to the mandate for meaningful negotiations in an appropriate subsidiary body of the Conference on Disarmament seems to be absolutely unconstructive.

The Conference on Disarmament should achieve progress also in elaborating a stage-by-stage programme of nuclear disarmament. The Soviet programme of 15 January 1986 for the elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction envisages the possibility of eliminating nuclear weapons by the year 2000. The Reykjavik agreement, had it been reached, would have made this period still shorter. Both those events - the Soviet programme and Reykjavik - and the position of the non-aligned countries, should give a powerful impetus to work on the problem of eliminating the most deadly weapons.

Practical nuclear disarmament measures require the introduction of more stringent verification procedures. The post-nuclear situation demands special responsibility. Verification must be real, all-embracing and convincing; it must create full confidence that agreements are being faithfully complied with, and envisage the right of on-site inspection. We expect that those who initiated last year's United Nations resolution on the verification of disarmament agreements will not in practice renounce their commitment to verification and control.

Clearly, the complete practical elimination of nuclear weapons will demand the elaboration at special negotiations of mutually acceptable follow-up steps. The Soviet programme of 15 January 1986 also envisages the need to reach universal agreement to make the rebirth of such weapons for ever impossible.

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The urgent need for radical nuclear disarmament steps does not exclude the need for urgent measures to limit the spread of nuclear weapons over the planet, both by strengthening the non-proliferation régime for such weapons and establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones or zones of peace.

The socialist States welcome the growing interest in many regions of the world in the establishment of such zones. The Byelorussian SSR takes a favourable view of the measures to this effect taken by the Latin American countries and by States members of the South Pacific Forum. There are also proposals by States to establish nuclear-free zones in Europe and other regions of the world.

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At present the world community is facing gigantic tasks. Past events have shown that these tasks cannot be tackled on the basis of a platform built on rusty structures fastened together by egoism and internal political considerations. Only new, bold approaches and thinking that responds to the demands of the nuclear space era are capable of ensuring a breakthrough towards a peaceful and truly secure future for all mankind. It is the task of every State and the world community as a whole to rise to the level of the demands of our time. The common goal of all States and peoples is to preserve civilization, to save it from the flames of a nuclear holocaust. The United Nations should participate actively in this endeavour and help those that have not yet realized the necessity of taking such a step to do so and to take it.

Mr. DEEN (Malaysia): This being the first occasion on which my delegation has spoken, may I at the outset congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this Committee. Your long experience and active involvement in the field of disarmament are great assets which augur well for the progress of our work. My congratulations go also to the other officers of the Committee.

Disarmament is undoubtedly the single most important issue confronting mankind. On this issue we all face a common challenge: to ensure the survival of the human race. The inability of the great Powers to cut back on their national armaments was one of the reasons for two devastating world wars. Given the destructive capabilities of contemporary nuclear arsenals, it is no exaggeration to say that the fate of this planet may depend on positive efforts towards scaling down and eventually totally eliminating nuclear weapons.

We recognize that no progress towards nuclear disarmament can be made unless proposals originate from the major Powers themselves, but first there must be a genuine desire on the part of the super-Powers for real and qualitative improvements in their relations. Like everyone here, we are disappointed that the

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recent summit in Reykjavik between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev did not result in agreement. Indeed, we are told that a great and historic opportunity was missed. We share the hope that the Reykjavik summit will not be remembered as a failure but rather as an occasion on which important breakthroughs were almost made. The task now is for the super-Powers to break the impasse by building on the positive elements of the proposals that were made in Reykjavik. That the summit took place at all despite the dramatics that threatened to abort it indicates that behind the rhetoric and ideological differences there exists the will to engage in collaborative efforts towards a reasoned and balanced framework for negotiation of the termination of the nuclear arms race. Perhaps that is so because none can be more aware of the destructiveness of nuclear weapons than the States which themselves possess, manufacture and carry out research on them. It is imperative that both sides continue to give momentum to the will that exists in order to build upon it. It is too important a matter for either side to exploit it merely to score propaganda points.

The immense destructive power of nuclear weapons, their great numbers and the accuracy with which they can be targeted guarantee that a nuclear war, should one come, would produce destruction on an unprecedented scale. In the eventuality of such an occurrence no nation, big and small, will be able to escape its horrible consequences. Indeed the question will be who is left, not who has won. Today the number of nuclear warheads is well in excess of 50,000. Unfortunately, despite the awareness of their destructive power, the production of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction has taken on a momentum never seen before. Mindful of the catastrophic consequences of such a conflict and in consonance with the objective of disarmament, my delegation would like to call on all nations, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to halt this dangerous development in order that our future and that of succeeding generations may be assured.

(Mr. Deen, Malaysia)

An issue of growing concern to the international community is the use of chemical weapons in warfare. We are of the view that any disarmament measure must include not only the banning of the use of such weapons but also the banning of new types of chemical weapons and the destruction of existing stockpiles. We view with concern the use, or the alleged use, of those weapons in the continuing armed conflicts in various part of the world. The result of the discussion on this issue in the Conference on Disarmament gives us some encouragement, and we urge all the parties involved to continue as a matter of priority their negotiations on a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

Five years ago the General Assembly adopted a resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. At the initiative of the socialist countries, the General Assembly requested that the Committee on Disarmament begin negotiations on the text of a treaty to prevent the extension of the arms race into outer space. The same year, the Western Group urged the Committee on Disarmament to consider the question of negotiating an effective and verifiable agreement aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space and to give priority to the negotiation of an effective and verifiable agreement prohibiting anti-satellite systems.

Despite the broad understanding between the two Groups, there has not been much progress on the issue. However, this Committee made some progress last year, adopting a draft resolution requesting a study on the consequences of militarizing outer space and urging the Conference on Disarmament to start multilateral negotiations on the topic. We should like to join those calling for urgent measures prohibiting the use of force in outer space. Space should be heralded as part of the common heritage of mankind, and all endeavours related to it must be based on the principle of its peaceful use for the betterment of mankind.

(Mr. Deen, Malaysia)

Malaysia attaches particular importance to the designation of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace and has consistently maintained that the successful implementation of General Assembly resolution 2832 (XXVI) would greatly benefit the interests of peace and security in that region. In this context my delegation participated actively in the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and fully supports the convening of the International Conference in Colombo. Although differences exist on this issue, we believe that they can be narrowed through a spirit of compromise. The Malaysian delegation believes that the establishment of zones of peace in various parts of the globe will strengthen the fabric of regional co-operation, eradicate feelings of mistrust and suspicion and eliminate big-Power rivalry. Consistent with this belief and commitment, Malaysia and her partners in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) will strive for the early realization of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in South-East Asia.

(Mr. Deen, Malaysia)

We are concerned over the escalating arms race in both conventional and nuclear arms, for it represents not only a massive waste of scarce resources but also a veritable threat to international peace and security.

Threats to the world stem not only from nuclear annihilation but, more immediately, from limited local wars and conflicts involving mainly the use of conventional weapons. Many such examples exist, in the Middle East, Kampuchea, Afghanistan and Central America. Since 1945 more than 140 regional wars, involving the loss of millions of lives and massive destruction of property, have been fought with conventional weapons. Most of those conflicts involved countries of the third world. The amount of money spent on the manufacture and procurement of arms is simply ridiculous. It does not speak well for the human race that so much money and talent and so many resources are diverted to such catastrophic investments when half of the world's population is on the verge of starvation.

Notwithstanding the fact that the super-Powers are the leading actors in the matter of disarmament, the rest of the world also has a role to play in regard to this crucial issue. We must all work collectively for disarmament in order to ensure our own survival. Indeed, this is one issue that should transcend ideological lines. Let us display wisdom and vision so that the vast store of knowledge that this great technological age has unlocked is applied not to mankind's annihilation but to its enrichment.

Mr. KATEKA (United Republic of Tanzania): I should like to start by extending to the delegation of Mozambique my delegation's heartfelt condolences on the tragic death of President Samora Moises Machel. The passing of President Machel and his comrades is a great loss to Tanzania. Mozambicans and Tanzanians sealed the bonds of their brotherhood with blood during the FRELIMO

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struggle for independence. As the founding father of Mozambique, President Machel was a charismatic and popular leader, and Tanzanians fondly referred to him by his first name, Samora. We trust that the people of Mozambique will carry forward the revolution that was carried out at such great sacrifice. The struggle continues.

Today more than ever before mankind is faced with the possibility of self-destruction because of the unbridled spiralling of the arms race. While one third of humanity exists in total misery, with abject poverty the order of the day, billions of dollars are wasted in weapons, both nuclear and conventional. The driving force behind this arms race is fear and mutual suspicion, especially among the nuclear Powers. If we are to escape catastrophe it is imperative that we halt the arms race. But, unfortunately, we are nowhere near achieving the reversal, let alone the termination, of the arms race. The record to date shows a negative balance.

One can start the survey of this depressing scene with the recent Reykjavik summit. To the rest of the world, the holding of that previously unscheduled summit was like a bolt from the blue. It was expected to be a tonic that would inject new vigour into arms control efforts and East-West relations. The media also raised a great deal of hope. It was thus an anti-climax to learn after the Reykjavik summit that not only was there no agreement in principle on any form of disarmament, but President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev could not even set a date for their next summit.

The elements of an agreement were lost and must be picked up in Geneva. Meanwhile, the two sides have embarked on a propaganda campaign of blame and counter-blame in the hope of winning over public opinion. But world public opinion, however gullible it may be thought to be, cannot be won over by mere

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rhetoric. It can be won over only by concrete arms agreements that will lead to the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament. Peace-loving people all over the world have a right to know the truth as to why the two super-Powers failed to reach an understanding which would facilitate future agreement. There is even confusion as to who offered what percentage of reduction of strategic weapons and the elimination of intermediate-range weapons in Europe. Each side is claiming credit. Flora Lewis, in her column today, calls it

"the torrent of self-serving argument about who won and lost what at Reykjavik". (The New York Times, 21 October 1986, p. A31)

In his report to the forty-first session of the General Assembly the Secretary-General of our Organisation stated that through the possession of nuclear weapons the nuclear Powers, especially the two most powerful, have assumed a grave responsibility, towards humanity as a whole. Therefore those Powers must justify that awesome responsibility by tangible results. The international community cannot sit idly by while our very existence is threatened. As my former President, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, put it:

"We have a direct involvement in the success of the world campaign to abolish nuclear weapons. It is the future of life on earth - the earth of all of us - which is jeopardised by the possibility of a nuclear war ... We therefore have a right to be heard. As nations and peoples we exist. And whatever other rights our peoples lack, they at least have the right to continue to exist."

A major first step in halting the arms race would be the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban. Pending such an agreement, the nuclear Powers, especially the two leading ones, should observe a moratorium. Tanzania welcomes the unilateral moratorium that the Soviet Union has observed for the past 14 months.

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We urge the United States to follow the example set by the Soviet Union. There is no excuse whatsoever for not observing the moratorium. If it is a question of fears about verification and compliance, there are adequate verification measures, such as on-site inspection and monitoring by seismological stations. The six leaders of the five-continent initiative have gone even further and offered to assist in providing verification arrangements with the United States of America and the USSR, including the establishment of temporary monitoring stations, the development of permanent verification facilities at test sites and the establishment of an international verification system.

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In this regard, we are disappointed and dismayed by the lack of progress in the Conference on Disarmament on this issue. The Conference on Disarmament, which is the multilateral negotiating forum, considered a nuclear-test ban as its first agenda item for the 1986 session of the Conference. But owing to the recalcitrant behaviour of certain Powers, it was not even possible to establish and ad hoc committee to carry out practical negotiations with a view to elaborating a treaty prohibiting all nuclear-weapon tests. In spite of repeated efforts and demands by the Group of 21, the Non-Aligned and neutral States, for the establishment of an ad hoc committee under item 1 of its agenda, the Conference on Disarmament failed and only hope was expressed that it would be possible early in the 1987 session of the Conference to achieve what had eluded the Conference on Disarmament in 1986. This is a sad state of affairs, to say the least.

And yet, these same Powers that have blocked efforts at a nuclear-test ban, have been urging non-nuclear States, including Tanzania, to observe the non-proliferation régime. The nuclear Powers which have not honoured their obligations under article VI of the non-proliferation Treaty have continued with qualitative improvement of their arsenals. As an expression of its displeasure at the lack of meaningful disarmament efforts, Tanzania has refused and will continue to resist entreaties to accede to the non-proliferation Treaty. We will only consider accession to the non-proliferation Treaty when there is an agreement on a comprehensive test ban. This will prove the good faith of the nuclear Powers and as a political gesture, we will adhere to the non-proliferation Treaty. Yes, it is a gesture because Tanzania is not expected to go nuclear any time soon. But we

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cannot accept being nuclear-blackmailed without objection. What right do the nuclear Powers have to hold mankind at ransom?

Equally disappointing in the Conference on Disarmament has been its failure to make any headway on the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament, the prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters, and a comprehensive programme of disarmament. The only field where some progress has been noted is in respect of chemical weapons. But even here, we are told - in the Report of the Conference on Disarmament to the forty-first General Assembly - that whereas the appendix to the report reflects the present stage of negotiations on a chemical weapons convention, the draft texts contained therein do not bind any delegation. It is the hope of my delegation that the Conference on Disarmament at its 1987 session will make a break-through in this draft on chemical weapons which seems achievable, if only an extra effort is made.

Although outer space is the common heritage of mankind, it is now threatened by an arms race. In this regard, I wish to refer to the Mexico Declaration of the six nations of the five-continent initiative of which my country is a member. The representative of Mexico, Mr Garcia Robles, made a detailed analysis of the document at the start of this general debate. Therefore, I need not go into detail. The six leaders at the August summit expressed their objection to the outer space of our Earth being misused for destructive purposes. They urged the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union to halt further tests of anti-satellite weapons, in order to facilitate the conclusion of an international treaty on their prohibition. It seems this call has not been heeded, for we are told that the Reykjavik summit foundered because of the strategic defence

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initiative. After the breakdown of the summit, the world was further told that the strategic defence initiative was an insurance policy against cheating and that it would act as a defensive deterrent. But if the nuclear Powers, especially the two major ones, eliminate nuclear weapons, what will they be defending against? In any case, if a nation has no aggressive intent, what is the purpose of such strategic defence?

As if the preceding scenario I have described was not bad enough certain Powers have compounded it by aiding and abetting one of the most criminal régimes in the history of mankind, in acquiring nuclear capability. While paying lip-service to the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in, and the denuclearization of, Africa, these Powers have helped South Africa to consolidate its position in its military build-up, including the acquisition of nuclear-weapon capability. They have blocked progress in the Disarmament Commission on agenda item 6, namely, substantive consideration of the question of South Africa's nuclear capability. This obstruction was perpetrated despite the request by the General Assembly, in operative paragraph 7 of its resolution 40/89 B, that the Disarmament Commission:

"consider as a matter of priority during its session in 1986, South Africa's nuclear capability ...".

However, the Commission's Working Group, after studying various amendments and engaging in intensive informal consultations, could not reach a consensus. Even efforts by the Commission's Chairman were not successful.

In the process of this kind of dilly-dallying, we have allowed South Africa to acquire military might which it uses for aggressive purposes. It uses its military power to suppress the black majority which is fighting against apartheid. The

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régime is also engaged in military aggression against Namibia and other neighbouring independent States. Certain Western Powers have helped South Africa to build plants that produce weapons under licence. These Powers have enabled the apartheid régime to acquire its first nuclear reactor, Safari I. The régime has converted "the atoms for peace" into nuclear-weapon capability, thanks to these Western Powers. The régime is well provided with potential nuclear-delivery systems. Its Mirages, Buccaneers and even Canberras are all capable of carrying a first-generation fission weapon.

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All this poses a great danger to regional and international security. In its desperation the apartheid régime might try its weapon of last resort - that is, the nuclear weapon. But, let there be no mistake, by commission or omission, those that collaborate with the apartheid régime might unwittingly make an emancipated South Africa the first black nuclear Power.

I started by referring to the colossal waste of resources on an arms race while vast masses of humanity remain underprivileged. It would be a matter of self-interest for resources expended on armaments to be released for global development. That is why I regret the postponement of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development. There was no justifiable excuse for that postponement. We hope that the Conference will be held in 1987.

In order to achieve meaningful arms control and disarmament agreements it is necessary that the forums in which negotiations and discussions are taking place be manageable and well organized for efficiency and good results. There is room for improvement in the existing forums. It has been said by previous speakers that the First Committee could cut down on the number and length of its draft resolutions. My delegation supports that view.

The Conference on Disarmament could also benefit from certain adjustments. For example, the monthly rotation of the office of President is not conducive to continuity. While such a rotation works well in the Security Council, which is a mainly political organ, it is counter-productive in the Conference on Disarmament, which is a specialized technical body. There is a need also to review the consensus rule in the Conference on Disarmament to ensure that it is not abused to blocking progress. We are ready to co-operate in any way that would bring about

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reform in the forums concerned with disarmament and security issues. We need not remind the 40 members of the Conference on Disarmament that, while they are there as representatives of individual Governments, they are expected to represent the views of the majority of the Members of the United Nations, which put them where they are.

While the halting of the nuclear arms race and the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons remains a priority item on the international agenda, we are not so myopic as to believe that it can be achieved overnight. It will take painstaking efforts, patience and expertise to deal with the complex technical matters involved. But that should not be an excuse for not making progress. If we are determined, it will be possible to save mankind from the scourge of the war that could be brought about by the arms race.

The CHAIRMAN: I have to inform members that the following delegations are scheduled to speak at tomorrow morning's meeting: the Philippines, Zambia, Afghanistan, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America, Cameroon and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.