



FIRST COMMITTEE
32nd meeting
held on
Wednesday, 4 November 1987
at 10 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 32nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 48-69 (continued)

CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION UPON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS ON DISARMAMENT ITEMS

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): In accordance with its work programme and calendar, the Committee will embark upon the third stage of its work, namely, consideration of draft resolutions on items 48-69 of its agenda and the decisions to be taken thereon. As the Committee decided at its 31st meeting, the meetings planned for today and Friday will be devoted to the introduction of draft resolutions which are before the Committee and any comments on them.

At the Committee's meeting yesterday, I informed you of my intention to distribute to the members of the Committee an informal document containing a list of all the draft resolutions on the disarmament agenda items arranged in appropriate clusters. Following intensive consultations within the Bureau of the Committee, I am now in a position to present to the Committee a paper setting out the Chairman's suggested programme listing those resolutions under 16 different clusters.

As you are aware, a certain pattern has evolved during the past few years with respect to the clustering exercise, and the Bureau was cognizant of this when it undertook the task of grouping the various draft resolutions on the basis of the most logical and practical criteria available. At the same time, the Bureau endeavoured to group them, to the extent feasible, according to the subject matter dealt with.

In this connection, I would like to reiterate that the Bureau was guided in its task by its desire to facilitate and expedite the work of the Committee with a view to ensuring the most effective and efficient utilization of the time available during this phase of the Committee's work.

(The Chairman)

With regard to the time-table for action on the draft resolutions, and on the basis of precedent, it is my intention to move, in so far as possible, from one cluster to another sequentially upon the conclusion of action on each cluster.

(The Chairman)

Nevertheless, in following this procedure, we shall, of course, maintain the desirable degree of flexibility. Whenever I am in a position to give a precise indication of the days on which any particular clusters will be taken up, I shall advise the Committee.

The procedure during the decision-taking stage on each individual cluster will be that delegations will first have the opportunity to make any statements, other than in explanation of vote, which they regard as necessary with respect to the draft resolutions in that cluster. Subsequently, delegations wishing to explain their positions or votes on any or all of the draft resolutions in a particular cluster before a decision is taken will be able to do so. Then, after the Committee has taken a decision on the draft resolutions contained in a given cluster, delegations will be able to explain their positions or votes after the decision is taken, if they wish.

In order that the Committee's work may proceed in a systematic and efficacious manner, delegations are urged to make, in so far as possible, one statement on the draft resolutions in an individual cluster, whether in explanation of positions or of vote.

May I take it that the Committee is in agreement with the programme of work and the procedures that I have just outlined?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to say one final word on this question before calling the first speaker on today's list.

I have tried to distribute the paper containing the clusters as early as possible. It is my sincere hope that this will enable delegations to undertake the necessary consultations and to seek instructions, as appropriate, from their respective capitals, with a view to facilitating the smooth functioning of the Committee's work during this important phase of our work.

Mr. TADESSE (Ethiopia): The purpose of my brief statement is to underline my delegation's views about some of the draft resolutions that we have sponsored, and at the same time to lend our general support to other draft resolutions that my delegation feels can contribute to the progress of the work on disarmament.

I am pleased to hear this morning, Sir, that under your chairmanship, efforts are being made to consolidate and, if possible, to streamline the large number of draft resolutions. It therefore suffices for me to make a brief observation about groups of draft resolutions, which do not necessarily conform to the clusters that have just been distributed to us.

In general, my delegation has supported those draft resolutions that aim at ensuring the security of non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and those concerned with the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests. In our view, the prevention of nuclear war on Earth is of paramount importance. It is equally important that the extension of the arms race into outer space be prevented.

Implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa is also the subject of a draft resolution presented by the Group of African States. The implementation of the resolutions of the General Assembly's first and second special sessions devoted to disarmament is likewise of great significance to us. My delegation supports the draft resolutions on those issues.

The World Disarmament Campaign aims to promote public interest in and support for the creation of a favourable climate for disarmament measures, the most important of which is general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

A number of draft resolutions urge the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, matters to which my country attaches the highest priority.

All States are also called upon to recognize the importance of public opinion in formulating disarmament policies. My delegation therefore welcomes the initiatives taken by the Secretary-General, the United Nations system as a whole and member countries themselves to inform and educate the public concerning the imminent danger of nuclear confrontation. There is, then, an urgent need to mobilize public support for banning nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Here we must emphasize that resolutions alone cannot wipe out nuclear weapons or the danger of nuclear war. Popular political will is indispensable. In my delegation's opinion, disarmament research and other activities of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the United Nations Centres for Peace, Disarmament and Development should be directed towards the achievement of these goals. Disarmament studies, conferences and fellowships can contribute to a better understanding of the real issues involved in the nuclear and space age. My delegation has supported all the moves in that direction.

Lastly, Ethiopia welcomes the voluntary contributions made by some States for the World Disarmament Campaign, the Regional Centres and other supportive programmes, with a view to achieving the objectives of disarmament. We await with enthusiasm the realization of that important goal and stand ready to participate in the work of the Advisory Board and in the studies of UNIDIR, the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and the United Nations programme of fellowships on disarmament. We look forward with active interest to the outcome of our deliberations in the First Committee and to the

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

forthcoming third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Here again, the draft resolutions on those matters have received our fullest support.

Mr. ENGO (Cameroon): I begin, Sir, by congratulating you on the document you have just distributed and thanking you for it. It does indeed help to speed up our work. My delegation is particularly concerned about the amount of work and the rate at which we are proliferating items, without taking into consideration the linkage between them.

I wish to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/42/L.75, entitled, "Review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament", under agenda item 62 (i), and L.76 entitled, "Rationalization of the work of the First Committee", under agenda item 66.

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.75 are as follows: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Fiji, the Federal Republic of Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Gabon, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, New Zealand, Niger, Panama, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Zaire and Zambia.

As it introduces draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.75, my delegation is encouraged by the progress made on agenda item 62 (i) at the 1987 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. It is rapidly becoming evident that this item has great importance for the effective functioning of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and related international security questions and thus for the raison d'être of the United Nations and the special importance of the role the Organization can and should play in promoting and enhancing meaningful arms control and disarmament measures.

We are particularly mindful of the Commission's view that thorough, realistic and much-needed reforms are required to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of various multilateral forums engaged in the arms control and disarmament process, a process that will eventually respond to our common aspirations by establishing conditions conducive to international peace and security and by supplying a component vital for socio-economic development.

(Mr. Ingo, Cameroon)

We note with some satisfaction that there is an improved political climate and a more businesslike attitude on this item and on other items before the Commission. In the light of new developments in the international political environment, my delegation would hope that the Commission will maintain that momentum and proceed to meet new challenges, both as a political body and as a deliberative and negotiating mechanism. We are of the view that, given political will on the part of States, further advancement will facilitate the conclusion of its work on the outstanding issues on this item, as reflected in annex II of the report of the Disarmament Commission (A/42/42).

Turning now to draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.76, initially submitted by my delegation, we are pleased to inform the Committee that the following States have joined us in sponsoring it: Australia, Bahamas, Canada, the Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, the Federal Republic of Germany, Guinea, Ireland, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, Togo, Zambia and Zaire.

We wish to refer to summit resolution AHG/Res.164 (XXIII) of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which requested that the concerns of Africa about, and its interest in, the problem of disarmament be well understood at all international forums where the matter is discussed. We, the African States, have demonstrated our commitment by adopting the Lomé Declaration, and we wish to emphasize that the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament constitutes an international achievement of significant proportions and a landmark statement in the arms control and disarmament process. Any attempt to distort the Final Document would not serve the basic elements of the international community's commitment to the process of halting and reversing the arms race. Rather, the Final Document and the basic ideas contained in it should be

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

strengthened in a balanced, pragmatic and realistic manner. We regret, however, that consensus on the implementation of the recommendations and decisions, and the Programme of Action of the Final Document has not materialized owing to the lack of effective utilization of the existing machinery, and to the lack of political will among States.

Surely the United Nations cannot achieve its objectives in the disarmament field without the appropriate exercise by States of political will. The United Nations is an instrument. The extent to which we can use it productively will depend on the good faith of States. At the same time, however, we should be prepared to fix that tool when it needs fixing, or to adjust it to deal with prevailing political realities. Certainly, change for the sake of change alone can sometimes be more destructive than helpful, and that should be avoided. Similarly, failure to change in order not to upset habit or routine can lead to potentially crippling complacency and inflexibility.

During the general debate in this Committee several delegations expressed deep concern about the method and approach employed in the work of the Committee. My delegation believes that a variety of circumstances have imposed on the United Nations system the prospect of change - as the Russians would put it, perestroika, or restructuring - for instance, a reformed First Committee, changed and somewhat different from the Committee most of us have been used to. We may not all agree with the reasons or even the motives behind the proposed recommendations contained in draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.76, but we must be realistic; we must be flexible, fixing our attention squarely on the objective we seek, namely an effective First Committee as the key General Assembly organ for disarmament and related international security questions. These recommendations are complementary to the

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

ongoing review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. The very best can emerge only from trial. Flexibility makes room for improvements dictated by future experience in this Committee.

We strongly believe that a rational and realistic approach to the method of work of this Committee is long overdue, and that appropriate action is required at this stage. We further believe that this Committee should take a bold move to abandon routine and ritualistic formal meetings, where national positions tend to be expressed in a form that leaves little room for change in consultations. Meetings for the sake of formality or routine only result in waste, disappointment and, at times, confusion. On the other hand, careful organization of agenda items could involve amalgamation of items with similar objectives. In our view, while nothing should be done to interfere with the right of any Member State to request the inclusion of an item, the Committee's agenda items should be grouped under broad subject titles to provide for a clearer and more orderly consideration of the various agenda items. The merging of draft resolutions would result in maximum effectiveness and efficiency, through the process of organized informal consultations. In our view, draft resolutions should request reports of the Secretary-General only in cases where they are indispensable for facilitating the implementation of those draft resolutions.

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

Furthermore, we are aware of the proliferation of draft resolutions in this Committee, especially at this session where the number has substantially increased to approximately 78, consisting of 187 pages, the production cost of which, we are informed, is about \$US 16,000. Several of these draft resolutions appear to us to be repetitious, based on staggering items which involve unnecessary overlapping. This situation must be remedied to make room for a more concrete consideration of the serious disarmament issues of our age and for the effective and active participation of all Member States in the process of arms control and disarmament. The need for improvement that we share as a perspective must inspire us to close consultations before determining whether or not a draft resolution should be submitted.

In this connection, my delegation appreciates the steps taken by former Chairmen and the present Chairman - and, as I mentioned earlier, especially the indefatigable way in which you, Sir, have tried to bring to bear on our work something of the ideas that we all share - the report of the Group of 18 (A/41/49), the report of the Disarmament Commission (A/42/42), the general formula proposed in document A/C.1/39/9 of 7 December 1984, and proposals of the present and past Chairmen.

In this regard, I shall now proceed to make oral amendments to draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.76 to encompass a much broader and an acceptable set of recommendations for effective implementation by the Committee. The purpose of these amendments is to meet the preoccupations of some members of the Committee and ensure that the draft resolution will include substance that we all share and be presented in a manner agreeable to all.

In the second line of operative paragraph 1 (a), after the word "setting" insert the words "where appropriate", and replace the word "appropriate" in the third line with the word "certain"; so that the subparagraph would read:

(Mr. Enyo, Cameroon)

"The agenda of the First Committee should be rationalized by grouping or merging related items to the extent possible and by setting where appropriate an interval of two or more years for the discussion of certain items;".

Subparagraphs (b) and (c) remain as at present.

Delete the present subparagraph (d).

Replace the present subparagraph (e) with the following:

"A period of time for discussion and for organized informal consultations among delegations should be allocated in the programme of work of the First Committee;".

In the present subparagraph (f), replace the full stop after the words "specific issues" in the second line with a comma and delete the words "More time should be provided for the consideration of concrete proposals and draft resolutions". The subparagraph then reads as follows:

"The First Committee should have a single general debate on all disarmament questions during which delegations may speak on specific issues. in order to ensure the best use of time and resources available;".

Subparagraph (g) remains as is.

Delete subparagraph (h).

Operative paragraph 2 remains as is.

The details will be submitted to the Secretariat.

On behalf of the sponsors, I commend draft resolutions A/C.1/42/L.75 and L.76 to the Committee's attention and express the hope that they will be supported by consensus.

Mr. DJOKIC (Yugoslavia): On behalf of Algeria, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Japan, Madagascar, Mongolia, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nigeria,

(Mr. Djokic, Yugoslavia)

New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Romania, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Tunisia, Venezuela, Viet Nam and Yugoslavia, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.68, on the convening of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The international community attaches exceptional importance to the special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which represent a unique opportunity for all Member States to participate directly in defining the guidelines for further joint action in the field of disarmament.

In present circumstances, when new vistas are being opened for strengthening multilateralism in the field of disarmament, the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is becoming exceptionally important. It should make a comprehensive assessment of the developments in this area in the past period and ascertain to what degree we have accomplished the goals we set ourselves at the first and second special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. At the same time, it should politically encourage and generate the ongoing process of negotiations and provide a fresh impetus for multilateral negotiations on the most important issues of disarmament.

We are confident that the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament will adopt a concrete programme of action which will represent another step forward in the elaboration of the international community's strategy in the field of disarmament. It would thereby make a most immediate contribution to the realization of one of our most important objectives - that of strengthening the United Nations system and its central role in the field of disarmament.

The draft resolution is the result of extensive consultations conducted both during the session of the Preparatory Committee and at this session of the General Assembly. In its main operative paragraph it is decided that the third special

(Mr. Djokic, Yugoslavia)

session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament shall be held from 21 May to 25 June 1988. At the same time the Preparatory Committee is requested to consider substantive issues related to the special session for incorporation in the document or documents to be adopted at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and thus lay solid foundations for successful deliberations and the outcome of that session.

(Mr. Djokic, Yugoslavia)

We are convinced that through joint efforts, we can make the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament mark a new era in relations among States, in which they will base their security not on the continued augmenting of armaments but on disarmament and the development of comprehensive mutual co-operation.

In conclusion, I wish to express the conviction of the sponsors that the draft resolution, motivated by common goals, will be adopted by consensus, as has been the case with all past resolutions related to convening and holding the special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Mrs. URIBE de LOZANO (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation's intention, in asking to speak today was to refer to certain resolutions on conventional-weapons disarmament at the regional level, especially conventional-weapons disarmament in the Latin American region, which is the subject of the draft resolution we joined in sponsoring, namely, the one relating to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America.

The trend towards creating and strengthening communities of nations, either for the purpose of defence against military aggression or in the search for development, may be one of the most constructive contributions to progress towards the consolidation of peace, understanding and co-operation among all peoples and countries on earth, as laid down in the basic documents of the United Nations.

At a time when solidarity is advocated as a norm in international relations, it seems natural that it should begin to operate in certain geographical areas among countries sharing similar problems; and at a time of crisis, such as the present, it is logical that such solidarity should be mobilized towards joint action to combat the underdevelopment and poverty of peoples and to defend their fundamental principles, security and social stability.

(Mrs. Uribe de Lozano,
Colombia)

In that context, Latin America's effort to bring peace to Central America takes on a transcendent importance, and its achievements constitute very positive steps towards the fundamental goal pursued by the agreement signed by the five Central American Presidents at Esquipulas, namely, the achievement of a climate of peace enabling the Governments and peoples currently involved in conflict to undertake social development programmes.

Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS), faced with the need to solve the acute problems besetting the region, have also sought to bring the inter-American system up to date and strengthen it by adapting it to today's political, economic and social circumstances.

One of those problems urgently requiring solution is the enormous waste of resources for military purposes - not only material resources but also technical and human resources, which are needed for the development of all countries.

A document that includes suggestions by the Inter-American Juridical Committee on the desirability of creating a machinery for inspection of weapons and military strength states that the serious problem created by the arms race in Latin America counsels an analysis of juridical criteria relating to forms of voluntary control that could be useful when our Governments adopt a political decision on the subject.

That document also states that arriving at agreements limiting the arms race in the region is not a sufficient basis for concluding that the problem to be overcome, whether in Latin America or elsewhere, is purely of a military nature, because, as is clearly indicated in the study on all aspects of regional disarmament prepared by the Secretary-General (A/35/416), the establishment of zones of peace in the world requires that the countries in such zones should be resolved to keep their area free of interference from outside, not only through arms control but also through the active promotion of interregional co-operation in

(Mrs. Uribe de Lozano,
Colombia)

the economic, social, political and other spheres. To all of the foregoing, in the Inter-American Juridical Committee's view, we should add the urgent need to strengthen international bodies for the maintenance of peace in order that countries may have assurance that any aggression against them will be considered with the necessary speed and that, if necessary, measures will be taken to halt it and to levy sanctions against the guilty party.

In the present circumstances and in the midst of a continuing arms race and an unfavourable international climate, regional disarmament becomes particularly urgent. It is therefore unnecessary to give this Committee's members, who are well acquainted with the importance of regional disarmament measures, a lengthy description of the scope of the Peruvian Government's initiative in the creation of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America, which was inaugurated a few days ago and is based on the Ayacucho Declaration, signed by eight countries - Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Argentina and Panama - in 1974.

That Declaration, reaffirmed in 1978, emphasizes the need to elaborate a continuing and permanent system of peace and international co-operation and to create conditions that would make possible the effective limitation of armaments in order to release resources for the economic and social development of peoples, as well as the effort for voluntary limitation of conventional weapons in the Latin American region.

The "Ayacucho initiative", which culminated in the meeting held at Mexico City in August 1978, marked the first time that a conference open to all States in the region was devoted exclusively to the problems of conventional disarmament.

On that occasion the 20 participating Latin American countries decided to recommend to their respective Governments the establishment of a flexible

(Mrs. Uribe de Lozano,
Colombia)

consultation machinery which would, inter alia: promote study and recommendations on the possible limitation of the transfer of certain types of conventional weapons to Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as between countries in the area; promote study and recommendations concerning the establishment of limitations and prohibitions in the case of certain types of conventional weapons regarded as exclusively noxious or having indiscriminate effects; and serve as a forum for the exchange of views on other matters related to disarmament negotiations, with a view to achieving general and complete disarmament under effective international control, taking as a basis the priorities for those negotiations laid down at the tenth special session of the General Assembly, which was the first special session devoted to disarmament.

(Mrs. Uribe de Lozano,
Colombia)

The foregoing give an idea of the interest and political will of the Latin American countries to set up certain criteria with regard to arms control and, above all, our dedication to peace, the achievement of which demands the involvement of all countries.

The attractive prospect of a weapon-free Latin America dedicated to its own development also presupposes political agreements on a world level, and such agreement can be achieved only with international co-operation, and with the co-operation of the great Powers above all. It is latter which, in the last analysis, have made their rivalries a part of the Latin American scenario, in which small countries with limited resources are being compelled to place themselves under the protective influence of one or another sphere of power. This is a sad fate for countries that were created under the banner of freedom.

To those conflicts fomented from outside we must add tensions that exist between countries in the region for territorial rather than political reasons. The potential danger of such disputes is undeniable, especially because of the emotional content that accompanies them and because of the impetus they give to the arms race.

In this context of outside threats and reciprocal fears, no country can take the initiative on its own to eliminate or limit its own means of defence. What is required is collective, globe action that would include all, without discrimination.

We do not therefore seek an isolated system at the Latin American level. In order for it to be meaningful and practical, such a system must be part of a whole. The introduction of the item on the agenda of the United Nations will contribute to other draft plans for regional disarmament, oriented towards establishing zones of peace, and will help to minimize the danger of the terrible threat that hangs over mankind.

(Mrs. Uribe de Lozano,
Colombia)

Colombia views regional initiatives as a precious part of the disarmament process and feels that they should be welcomed by the international community as an aspiration of the Latin American continent and as a force resolved to fight against any factors that, in whatever way, seek to prevent our countries from achieving the social development that is desirable and resolved also to encourage every factor that can redress the social imbalance and avoid any possibility of disrupting our peoples' peaceful future and their fragile process of development.

Mr. ALZAMORA (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation has the honour, on behalf of the sponsors, to submit two draft resolutions. The first is contained in document A/C.1/42/L.72, relating to agenda item 63 (h) on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America. The draft resolution is sponsored by Argentina, Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Uruguay and Venezuela. The second draft resolution is contained in document A/C.1/42/PV.73, relating to agenda item 62 (g) on conventional disarmament on a regional scale. The draft resolution is sponsored by Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Romania, Uruguay and Yugoslavia.

With regard to the draft resolution on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America, my delegation is happy to inform the Committee that that Centre was recently inaugurated at Lima, with the participation of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Akashi. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its firm support for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Africa, as well as for the proposed regional centre in Asia. It is not mere

(Mr. Alzamora, Peru)

coincidence that those three regions, whose peoples are facing urgent and serious development problems, should have taken the initiative in promoting the establishment of such regional centres, in keeping with our devotion to the cause of peace.

The importance the sponsors attached to the Regional Centre is based on our commitment to contribute specific projects in the basic tasks of the World Disarmament Campaign. This is even more important when we see that in Latin America the political will exists to achieve harmony, solidarity and co-operation for the implementation of measures for peace and disarmament and for the promotion of economic and social development in Latin America.

We are aware that, given the Organization's financial problems, the Regional Centre will have to rely upon voluntary contributions from Member States. In that connection, my delegation has been encouraged by the fact that at the recent pledging conference for the World Disarmament Campaign significant contributions were announced by some countries. This will obviously have an encouraging effect on the rest of the international community.

The draft resolution I am submitting today is the result of broad consultations. In operative paragraph 5 it is recommended that the Regional Centre hold a conference next year on the strengthening of political co-operation in Latin America in the areas of peace, disarmament and security under the World Disarmament Campaign. An appeal is also made to Member States and to international, governmental and non-governmental organizations to make voluntary contributions to the Centre. In operative paragraph 7 the Secretary-General is requested to transmit that appeal to all Member States in order to ensure the normal functioning of the Regional Centre.

Draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.73 has also been the subject of broad informal consultations, and in its operative part it expresses the General Assembly's firm

(Mr. Alzamora, Peru)

support of all regional or sub-regional endeavours, as well as unilateral measures, for arms limitation and a reduction in military expenditures, in the belief that any initiative, whatever its source, that is in keeping with the principles and purposes of the United Nations and that is the result of the special conditions prevailing in its region, deserves the support of the international community in so far as it seeks to strengthen mutual confidence and to guarantee the security of the States involved.

The two draft resolutions before the Committee were the subject of broad consultations with all delegations. Both draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.72 and draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.73 are, in our view, non-controversial, and we therefore hope that the Committee will be able to adopt them by consensus.

Mr. ROCHE (Canada): The realization of a negotiated and verifiable comprehensive test ban treaty has long been, and remains, a fundamental Canadian arms control and disarmament objective.

I believe there are new grounds for hope that genuine progress towards this important objective can be made. The most significant is the decision announced on 18 September by the United States and the Soviet Union to begin full-scale, stage-by-stage negotiations on nuclear testing by the end of this year. This is welcome news for all of us. This body should offer strong encouragement and support. A first step is provided in draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.77, which welcomes the United States/Soviet joint statement. I am pleased to announce today that Canada will sponsor this draft resolution, which is entitled "Urgent need for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty".

In pursuing the objective of a halt to all nuclear testing by all countries in all environments for all time, the super-Powers have a special responsibility. As the producers and guardians of an overwhelming proportion of the world's nuclear explosive potential, they have a key role to play in showing others the lead. Canada fervently hopes that they will fully and creatively give that lead, both in their bilateral negotiations and within the appropriate multilateral forums.

A comprehensive test-ban treaty can never be achieved, however, without the full support and co-operation of all the nuclear-weapon States. Therefore, while negotiations between the super-Powers are of crucial importance, the importance of efforts at the multilateral level must not be underestimated.

That is why the draft resolution, which Canada considers one of the most important on our agenda, focuses particularly on the role of the Conference on Disarmament. The draft resolution urges the Conference on Disarmament to

"initiate substantive work on all aspects of a nuclear-test-ban treaty at the beginning of its 1988 session". (A/C.1/42/L.77, para. 2)

(Mr. Roche, Canada)

In Canada's view, this appeal is at the heart of the draft resolution. It is time for the members of the Conference on Disarmament to rise above differences over how a mandate for the establishment of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament should be defined, so that discussions on the substance of the nuclear-test-ban question can finally get under way. Attempts to impose an approach to this issue which remains unacceptable to key nuclear-weapon States will obviously not bear results. However, when the price is a continuing failure even to begin to address the subject, one is tempted to question the tactics of the advocates of this approach.

At the risk of being repetitious, I want to reiterate Canada's position on this question, which relates to my Government's fundamental approach to arms control and disarmament.

It remains Canada's view that progress towards a more secure, less heavily armed world can be achieved only through measured and balanced steps which are mutually satisfactory to the parties concerned. This approach applies just as much to the process of negotiating reductions in strategic nuclear arsenals as it does to the cessation of all nuclear testing. Experience has shown that declarations and rhetoric cannot hasten the arms control and disarmament process, and may indeed even retard it.

Based upon this rationale, Canada supports a step-by-step approach to the realization of an eventual comprehensive test-ban treaty. A meaningful start within the Conference on Disarmament would be consideration of the questions of scope, compliance and verification. We should not lose sight of the fact that a comprehensive nuclear-test ban is not an end in itself, but is, rather, a means to the ultimate goal - the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. I would submit that the primary purpose of the reduction and cessation of nuclear

(Mr. Roche, Canada)

testing should be to enhance confidence in the global arms control and disarmament process. Engaging in prolonged disputes concerning how this process could best begin will not enhance the process of confidence-building.

Draft resolution L.77 also refers to the progress made by the Conference on Disarmament Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts towards the development of an international seismic monitoring network. An operational network of this kind will be required to verify a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Canada is very pleased at the steady progress which has been made by this important Group, whose work can truly be characterized as the most positive continuing contribution to the quest for a halt to nuclear testing in recent years. As I noted in my statement to the Committee on 13 October, we welcome the selection of Dr. Peter Basham of Canada as co-ordinator for a major global text as part of the development of an international seismic data exchange.

Canada was especially gratified by the strong support for last year's version of the draft resolution before us. For the reasons I have outlined, Canada believes that draft resolution L.77 continues to embody the most realistic and forward-looking approach to this important subject.

We urge a very strong vote for the draft resolution, which is a realistic step to the goal of a safer, more secure world. The time has come for us to move, as a world community, to the cessation of all nuclear tests.

Mr. TEJA (India): I wish to express a few ideas on chemical and bacteriological weapons and then to turn to agenda items 63 (d), 63 (e) and 69.

Our efforts to introduce a ban on the use of chemical and biological weapons pre-date the birth of the United Nations. At the turn of the century there was already a widespread sentiment that such weapons should not be considered as legitimate weapons of war and must be eliminated from arsenals. As a first step,

(Mr. Teja, India)

the Geneva Protocol of 1925 prohibited the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases or bacteriological methods of warfare. The next step came almost 50 years later, when, in 1972, a Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction was concluded. At that time we expressed regrets that chemical weapons had not been included in that far-reaching Convention.

Fifteen years have passed, but active negotiations have been undertaken for only one third of that period. In 1984 for the first time we had a rolling text for a convention banning chemical weapons which indicated in a rough manner the shape of a future convention. This year's progress has been most encouraging, and the Ad Hoc Committee working on the subject in the Conference on Disarmament has come much closer to its stated objective. An examination of the rolling text included in this year's report of the Conference on Disarmament indicates the growing areas of convergence. It would be no exaggeration to state that we can almost see the light at the end of the tunnel.

(Mr. Teja, India)

A lot of ground has been covered in the area of declarations and measures on the elimination of existing chemical-weapons stockpiles. The long-standing difficulties connected with the issue of destruction versus the diversion of existing chemical weapons have been resolved; it is now agreed that all chemical weapons must be destroyed. Perhaps the most important achievement this year was the beginning of a dialogue on what is possibly the most complex political issue, namely challenge inspections. There is no doubt that, given the necessary political will, it should be possible to develop a verification mechanism that would help increase confidence in the convention. It must be recalled that a verification mechanism is only one element of an overall disarmament agreement, albeit an important one. It can be used most effectively in a climate of trust and mutual understanding. This year's developments have largely been a result of greater understanding on the part of some of the significant chemical-weapons countries.

The issues of verification and compliance need to be viewed in balance, however. We must keep in mind that this convention is intended to prohibit - and emphasize the word "prohibit" - the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons, while ensuring the destruction of existing stockpiles, not to prohibit the development of international co-operation in activities related to economic development and peaceful purposes. On the contrary, the convention would be strengthened in meeting its objectives if positive provisions were included, encouraging such international co-operation. We must ensure that none of the provisions of the convention hamper the development of chemical industries for peaceful purposes. More positively, the convention should also contain special provisions intended to promote international co-operation to assist in such development of the chemical industry.

(Mr. Teja, India)

Given the nature of such a convention, it is natural that the organizational structure required to administer it must be a complex one. To enable it to fulfil its task we must search for new initiatives and not necessarily look at past precedents. The chemical weapons convention will be the first multilaterally negotiated disarmament agreement, and its administrative structure must reflect, in equal measure, the legitimate security concerns of every Member State. Only such an approach can enable us to obtain universal adherence. The principle of equitable geographical and political representation must be upheld to ensure the international character of such a convention.

While on that subject, my delegation would like to express its appreciation for the visit arranged by the Soviet Government to the Shikhany chemicals destruction facility, and for the hospitality extended to members of the Conference on Disarmament in October. Most of us who had the privilege of being present on that occasion found the visit extremely useful and illuminating.

Following the positive results of the second Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on bacteriological weapons, held in 1986, an ad hoc meeting of scientific and technical experts from States parties to the Convention was held at Geneva, from 31 March to 15 April this year. The objective of that ad hoc meeting was to develop measures to reduce the incidence of ambiguities, doubts and suspicions on the one hand, and to improve international co-operation in the field of bacteriological activities on the other. The experts' deliberations related to formats for the exchange of information and data led to the promotion of contacts among scientists engaged in research in this field. The positive results of that meeting and the interaction of the experts with specialized agencies of the United Nations were heartening developments.

(Mr. Teja, India)

On behalf of the delegations of Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Romania, Yugoslavia and India, I should now like to take this opportunity to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/42/L.28, entitled "Convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons".

For the past several years the General Assembly has been adopting resolutions calling for the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. Last year it adopted by an overwhelming majority its resolution 41/60 F on this subject. It is significant that two nuclear-weapon States supported that resolution. It may be recalled that this proposal was first submitted by my country at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1982, and includes as an annex the text of a draft convention on the subject.

The Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral negotiating forum, has been expressly mandated by the General Assembly to undertake negotiations with that objective in mind. Accordingly, our draft convention has also been submitted to the Conference on Disarmament for consideration. It is a matter for regret that despite the passage of almost half a decade the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to make any progress towards its goal. At the same time, no reasons have been advanced as to why such a prohibition should not be negotiated. We are, therefore, re-submitting the present draft resolution to underline the utmost importance of prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons for the prevention of nuclear war, with the hope that the First Committee and the plenary General Assembly will be able to adopt this draft resolution by consensus and thus bring the weight of their moral authority to bear on the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on this agenda item.

(Mr. Teja, India)

The principle underlying the draft convention annexed to draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.28 is based on established conventions and practices of international law. It has been recognized by the General Assembly that the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons would be a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and contrary to the laws of humanity. That principle was accepted more than two decades ago, in resolution 1653 (XVI) of 1961. Despite the increasing concern voiced by peoples all over the world, nuclear arsenals have continued to grow. Studies on "nuclear winter" amply bear out the fact that the use of even a small fraction of existing nuclear stockpiles would suffice to convert our planet into a frozen Arctic wasteland.

All nuclear-weapon States support the proposition that a nuclear war must not be fought. Our approach in this draft resolution is to transfer that understanding into a legally binding commitment. A convention on the non-use of nuclear weapons has been suggested with a view to translating these universal concerns into concrete action and removing the legal lacunae concerning the use of nuclear weapons. Prohibition in international law of the use of nuclear weapons would be a significant step forward in the process leading to general and complete disarmament. Further, a decision by all nuclear-weapon States to forswear the use of nuclear weapons would inevitably serve as a catalyst for qualitative change all over the world concerning the maintenance of nuclear stockpiles, and would at one stroke remove the status attached to them as currencies of power.

The preambular part of draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.28 reflects the ideas to which I have just referred. It is our earnest hope that the First Committee this year will be able to provide universal endorsement of the principles which form the basis of that draft resolution.

(Mr. Teja, India)

On behalf of Romania and India, I should also like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.27, entitled "Freeze on nuclear weapons". This is a related question also central to the objective of preventing nuclear war. Once again this is a draft resolution that we have placed before the General Assembly every year since the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1982. The basis lies in the conviction that a nuclear-weapon freeze is a logical primary step to halt the nuclear-arms race before reversing it, that is, commencing nuclear disarmament. Our efforts are focused on the two most significant and easily identifiable elements: the production of nuclear weapons and the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes. The proposal, therefore seeks a simultaneous complete stoppage of both production of nuclear weapons and a cut-off in the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes. That is a practical and readily enforceable measure.

We have already seen that verification is no longer a technical problem in the field of nuclear disarmament. The problem, if one exists, is the lack of political will. Further, with the cut-off in the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes all nuclear facilities will become peaceful and subject to non-discriminatory international safeguards on a universal basis. This factor would once again assist in effective verification. We believe that a freeze should be agreed to by all the nuclear-weapon Powers and not be restricted only to those with the largest nuclear arsenals. Only then can the process of the nuclear-arms race be halted. In addition, this would be a complementary step to the bilateral negotiations on both intermediate nuclear forces and strategic arms reduction talks. We trust that our draft resolution will receive the support of an overwhelming majority of the delegations in the First Committee and the General Assembly.

(Mr. Teja, India)

Finally, on behalf of the delegations of Cameroon, Canada, Cuba, France the German Democratic Republic, Indonesia, Nigeria, Norway, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and India, I should like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.74, entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development".

This has been an issue of the utmost importance. Disarmament and development are linked because they both compete for the world's finite financial and material resources. The arms race not only consumes resources but also distorts economic structures, undermines the economic system and adversely affects the attitude of nations towards co-operation. On the other hand, just and equitable development would make for stability and security and create an environment which would inhibit the arms race.

At its thirty-ninth session the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution 39/160 by which it decided to "convene an international conference on the relationship between disarmament and development". Four sessions of the Preparatory Committee met in New York between 29 July 1985 and 1 May 1987. The Conference itself was held between 24 August and 11 September 1987. India had the great privilege of chairing that Conference, which adopted a Final Document by consensus.

The Conference and the Final Document underlined the acceptance at a United Nations intergovernmental conference of the interrelationship between disarmament and development. It threw into relief the grave implications of global arms expenditure for the world economy and the international economic system and developed a whole range of arguments, based on economic logic, to put an end to the arms race and achieve disarmament.

(Mr. Teja, India)

However I must add, regrettably, that certain objectives were not achieved: they include, for example, provisions for a financial mechanism to channel funds released by disarmament for development purposes. But the Conference remained a very important step and a landmark.

The Conference and its conclusions have since been welcomed by the international community - and, I should add, even by countries which previously entertained certain reservations.

We engaged in extensive consultations in the preparation of the text of the draft resolution under consideration. There has been give and take and a spirit of compromise. That explains the range of sponsors which cuts across geographical and ideological lines.

We commend this draft resolution for consideration by the First Committee, and it is our earnest hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.