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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 3 May 1988, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. HEPBURN (Bahamas)

- Organization of work
- General exchange of views (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: This morning, before I call on the first speaker to continue the general exchange of views, we have a representative from the Department of Conference Services who will provide some clarifications on the question of records which was raised yesterday by the representative of the United Kingdom, in particular General Assembly resolution 41/177 D to which she referred.

In this connection, I call on Mr. Adolfo Crosa, Chief of the Documents Control Section of the Department of Conference Services.

Mr. CROSA (Chief, Documents Control Section, Department of Conference Services): Various bodies are entitled to one of two different kinds of meeting records: verbatim records or summary records. Under paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 37/14 C, the Disarmament Commission is entitled to receive verbatim records. Resolution 41/177 D covers the provision of summary records and is therefore not applicable to the Disarmament Commission.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank Mr. Crosa for his clarification, which I trust is acceptable to the representative of the United Kingdom.

Miss SOLESBY (United Kingdom): I am grateful for the confirmation by the representative of the Department of Conference Services that this Commission is entitled to have verbatim records. What I questioned yesterday was not only entitlement but whether it was necessary and desirable for this Commission to have verbatim records at this session. If I may, I should like to raise that point again.

It seems to me that the reasons for the Commission not having verbatim records last year are still fully valid. In other words, the financial problems of the

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United Nations are still severe, we still have need for economies and, therefore, it is up to us in each body to be discriminatory and to decide whether or not our body really requires verbatim records. In my delegation's view, last year's experience suggests that perhaps we do not have a pressing need.

Last year we had no verbatim records and, it seemed, did very well nevertheless. I am sure the reason is that this Commission - unlike some other bodies - is a deliberative organ. We are not primarily a debating organ; we are an organ which in our working groups - to which verbatim records do not apply - considers actual drafting documents, and the outcome of the deliberations those working groups appears in the form of reports, which again appear in a composite report from the Commission. So the main reflection of our work is in the form of reports, not in the form of records of plenary discussions.

It therefore appears to my delegation that, for overall United Nations financial considerations, we should look very carefully at the question "Do we need verbatim records". Last year's experience and the basic character of this Commission's work suggest that we do not have a pressing need for them.

Against that background, I should like to suggest that again this year we decide not to have verbatim records. On the basis of this further experience, we will judge in future years whether we should keep to that practice or go back to an even earlier practice. But for this year, given the financial situation of the United Nations, it would be right to continue last year's practice and do without verbatim records.

The CHAIRMAN: I am prepared to call once again on Mr. Crosa, if he feels he has further comments to make on this question.

Mr. CROSA (Chief, Documents Control Section, Department of Conference Services): I have nothing to add, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: In the consultations we have held the question of records came up but we did not pursue it in any great detail. While I am in agreement with the points made in connection with the financial crisis, I would not want the Commission, at this stage, to get into a discussion on whether or not it should decide to abolish the practice for this session. Indeed, I am not clear at the moment whether the Commission could take such a decision.

If I may beg the indulgence of the representative of the United Kingdom, we could hold this in abeyance and continue with our meeting this morning and look into this at a later stage. I shall then come back with an answer to the specific question that she raised.

Miss SOLESBY (United Kingdom): I am very happy to follow the procedure you have suggested, Mr. Chairman, but I take it that meanwhile there will be no production of verbatim records.

The CHAIRMAN: That is precisely the point I am trying to make: I cannot make that decision at this particular moment; the question will have to remain pending until we take a final decision. I would not like to make that decision here without first having some discussion on it.

Miss SOLESBY (United Kingdom): I do not want to hold up the proceedings too long, Mr. Chairman, but as we do have with us a member of the Department of Conference Services perhaps he would like to give us guidance on precisely the point you have raised.

The CHAIRMAN: That is why I said I was willing to call on him, but he declined to make a statement.

I call on Mr. Crosa.

Mr. CROSA (Chief, Documents Control Section, Department of Conference Services): I am afraid that, as a representative of the Department of Conference Services, I cannot say more than what the entitlements of various bodies are. I understand that it is for each body to follow the procedures it considers most appropriate.

The CHAIRMAN: Would you say something about costs. I think the representative of the United Kingdom based her feelings on the costs and the financial crisis. What is the status there?

Mr. CROSA (Chief, Documents Control Section, Department of Conference Services): The verbatim records now being provided to the Disarmament Commission draw mainly on the permanent resources of the Department and only partially has the staff establishment been complemented to prepare them.

Miss SOLESBY (United Kingdom): It seems to me, if I may be so bold, to be clear from the last comment of the representative of the Department of Conference Services that, although we are entitled to have verbatim records, we are equally entitled not to have verbatim records, and it seems to me that it is for us to judge whether we need them. It was for that reason that I suggested that perhaps we could decide - I hope without delaying procedures - again this year to do without verbatim records.

As I understand it we have an entitlement but not an obligation to have verbatim records.

The CHAIRMAN: We have much to do, and this is a question we have been dealing with for some time. If we are to deal with it expeditiously, and the representative of the United Kingdom does not wish to withdraw her comments in terms of what I have suggested, I would propose that, if that is possible, we simply take a decision in the Commission. It is not clear to me that we can take that decision. I would ask if we can do so.

Mr. CROSA (Chief, Documents Control Section, Department of Conference Services): If the decision would be as to whether to waive the Commission's entitlement to verbatim records, the answer is yes. In resolution 37/14, to which I referred earlier, the General Assembly requests all its subsidiary organs entitled to written meeting records to keep their requirements for such records to a reasonable minimum, to dispense with them whenever possible, and to make wider use of sound recordings.

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): Later on I shall express my delegation's pleasure at seeing you guiding our work, Mr. Chairman.

At present we are discussing a procedural matter. I would make two comments. First, the question of verbatim records applies only to plenary meetings, which in

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

our case will be very few in number. Secondly, this is a special year, a year in which a report will be submitted to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. I therefore hope that, bearing this in mind, the representative of the United Kingdom will not press her request.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not want to prolong the discussion on this matter. I would ask the representative of the United Kingdom if she wishes to speak once more to maintain her request or to respond to what the representative of Mexico has said. It appears not, so I shall make a comment.

At the beginning I suggested that since we have started our meetings with verbatim records, we should keep them since it would, I think, be difficult, without further consultations and without prolonging the debate, to have further discussion on stopping verbatim coverage at this time. It is something I think we cannot do. I would now suggest that, given that we are not having verbatim records for all of our meetings but just the plenary ones, we could keep the verbatim records and, as we have done previously, make a decision. According to the resolution, it does not seem the decision is firm enough to indicate whether or not a decision has been taken by the Commission to have verbatim records or not to have them. So I would appeal to the representative of the United Kingdom and suggest that we continue the verbatim records.

Miss SOLESBY (United Kingdom): I must confess that, although I am convinced by the comments that have been made, I am not convinced by the conclusions which have been drawn from them.

If I may refer to the comments by the Ambassador from Mexico, I would have thought that the fact that we were going to produce particularly full versions of reports at this session aimed at the third special session of the General Assembly

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was perhaps another argument against having verbatim records, that they will be even less necessary in view of that.

I think that the comment by the representative of the Department of Conference Services made it absolutely clear that not only do we have a right to decide to waive verbatim records but we have an obligation to dispense with them wherever they are not really necessary, and to keep the use of verbatim records down to an absolute minimum, and to none at all if possible.

I should be very happy for this question to be considered in private consultations if you, Mr. Chairman, so wish at any stage, but I would hope that meanwhile the production of verbatim records would be put on one side until we have reached a final decision.

The CHAIRMAN: As Chairman, it is the last point with which I would probably have some difficulty. I would not want to make the decision to put aside verbatim records. I think that if we are to deal with it, we should do so now and settle it once and for all.

It seems to me that there is only one way of doing that, and that is to put the whole question to a vote. We can follow the rules of procedure, and I can ask two persons to speak in favour, and two against, and then put the question to a vote. That will settle the matter for this time. Otherwise we will have too many discussions going on, and we cannot afford to spend time in that way. I am not willing to make the decision to put verbatim records aside - that is a decision we should have taken at the beginning of our work; it would not be feasible to take such a decision in the middle of our work.

So I should like two representatives to speak in favour of keeping the verbatim records and two against, following which we shall immediately proceed to

(The Chairman)

take a vote. If that would take some time, I would suggest that we continue the meeting while preparing for the vote, and later on in our work today we can do the actual voting on the question.

The United Kingdom has spoken against having verbatim records. Would another representative like to speak against having them, and two in favour of having them?

Miss SOLESBY (United Kingdom): Mr. Chairman, I misunderstood you. I thought you had decided to leave it until later in the proceedings.

I should like first to make one point and then to seek guidance.

I should like to remind you that I did raise this matter at the beginning of our proceedings; you decided we would have to hear from the Department of Conference Services, and that is why we are discussing the matter now rather than at the beginning.

As for the guidance I seek, I just wish to be sure that it is correct for this Commission to take procedural decisions by a vote.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, we can take decisions by a vote. I feel that it is the only way to do it in order to avoid a prolonged discussion on this question, which is not new. It is one, I think, that has come up at almost every meeting that we have had. I think that, to expedite the matter, it would be better to put it to a vote. I should also say that when your question was raised yesterday it was not in the clarity of the cost-effectiveness and all the other factors; I raised that question myself this morning. If I had understood it from that point of view as well, I might have dealt with it immediately rather than at this time.

Therefore, if it is agreeable to the representatives here, we could have one other person speak against, and two others to speak in favour. Then we would put it to a vote.

Do we have one other delegation to speak against the verbatim records?

Mr. MALLY (United States of America): My delegation fully concurs with the rationale of the British delegation and proposes that this body decide to dispense with verbatim records for this session.

The CHAIRMAN: Do we have two delegations to speak in favour of retaining the verbatim records?

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): Yes, Mr. Chairman, you may interpret that my previous statement was in favour.

Mr. DJOKIC (Yugoslavia): My delegation supports the recommendation submitted by the Ambassador of Mexico to keep the verbatim records for plenary meetings of the Commission.

The CHAIRMAN: The representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom have recommended that we dispense with verbatim records; the representatives of Mexico and Yugoslavia have spoken in favour of their retention.

Inasmuch as it is likely to take a while to obtain and distribute ballot papers to the members of the Commission, and in the interests of avoiding an interruption in the flow of our work, I propose that we proceed to vote by a show of hands on the matter of whether or not to retain verbatim records at this session.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

The CHAIRMAN: The result of the voting is as follows: 43 delegations voted to retain verbatim records; five delegations voted to dispense with verbatim records.

Therefore, based on the vote taken, the Disarmament Commission will have verbatim records at this session. It is so decided.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued)

Mrs. THEORIN (Sweden): Mr. Chairman, let me first of all extend my delegation's warmest congratulations on your election. It is a great pleasure to see you presiding over this year's session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

For 16 years, the well-known clock of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist moved steadily toward midnight - the end of our planet. Since January 1984 it has been standing at three minutes before the hour. But, as the editors have concluded, recent events - the United States-Soviet treaty to eliminate intermediate-range nuclear forces, the improvement in super-Power relations, and the increase in international and non-governmental efforts to reverse the arms race - demonstrate that the world's dangerous course can be changed. In recognition of these developments, the clock has now been turned back to six minutes to midnight; humanity has gained some more minutes.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

Since the United Nations Disarmament Commission met last year, the bilateral Soviet-American disarmament negotiations have indeed made progress. The signing of the INF Treaty clearly signifies a breakthrough in Soviet-American relations. It constitutes a landmark in the stagnant or at best lethargic evolution of bilateral nuclear disarmament efforts.

Furthermore, the United States and the Soviet Union have declared their intention to go further by implementing in an actual treaty their agreement in principle on a 50 per cent reduction of their strategic nuclear weapons and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The world community is following with great attention what is unfolding in Geneva, Washington and Moscow. We expect the nuclear Powers to honour their commitments. And we will insist on reminding them of their responsibilities.

After many steps in the wrong direction, the INF Treaty has been a step in the right one. But more steps have to be taken, and not only by the two super-Powers.

I may quote the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, from his eloquent statement in Stockholm in January:

"Even as we congratulate the United States and the Soviet Union, we seek assurance that the treaty they have signed in Washington constitutes the commencement of a time-bound process of nuclear disarmament. ... This small step must lead to many more. The other three nuclear-weapon Powers must be inducted into the process. The process of global nuclear disarmament must be reinforced by those countries which are able to cross the threshold of not doing so. There must be no assistance, surreptitious or overt, to those trying to acquire nuclear weapons."

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

International law and the cause of disarmament have recently suffered a setback in the city of Halabja. I am referring to the large-scale use of chemical weapons in flagrant violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and of customary international law prohibiting the use of chemical weapons.

This horrendous attack has brought agony and death upon civilians, above all among women and children. Such attacks should be universally condemned.

Through the last couple of years a far-reaching and detailed draft chemical weapons convention has been elaborated. The negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament have reached the final stage.

Against this background it must be a priority task rapidly to conclude a non-discriminatory, comprehensive, verifiable and effective convention banning all chemical weapons.

Sweden attaches high importance to naval armaments and disarmament. The arms race at sea, and in particular nuclear weapons at sea, is now a matter of increased public concern and knowledge.

Every fourth nuclear weapon is earmarked for naval deployment. They threaten to bring the nuclear-arms race to all parts of the world.

It is urgent that limitations on sea-borne nuclear missiles are agreed to bilaterally between the major nuclear Powers or in other contexts. It is thus important that reductions in sea-borne strategic nuclear weapons are now discussed between the United States and the Soviet Union within the framework of the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START). An ultimate goal should be to achieve a total ban on long-range cruise missiles.

The principle of freedom of navigation allows the nuclear Powers to move these nuclear weapons over the oceans and to deploy them off almost any coastal point of their choice. Indeed, they frequently do so as a matter of routine. The many

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tactical nuclear weapons on warships have by and large been overlooked in disarmament negotiations.

Tactical nuclear weapons should be brought ashore. The possibility of negotiating measures of restraint on navigation with vessels carrying nuclear weapons on board is an important matter to explore.

As I have pointed out on several occasions, the practice of nuclear Powers neither to confirm nor to deny the presence of nuclear weapons on board any particular ship at any particular time does not build confidence. Quite the opposite. To a growing body of opinion this practice is incomprehensible. It should be abandoned by the nuclear Powers. Whatever the justification might have been it creates legitimate and increased public concern in many countries.

The public concern about nuclear weapons on board ships in a number of countries is closely linked to the question of peacetime port visits by warships. But the policy of neither confirming nor denying has wider implications. It is an obstacle to the implementation of possible confidence-building measures related to nuclear weapons at sea.

The issue of naval armaments and disarmament has been on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission for several years. Some progress has been achieved in the Commission's work. It is, however, regrettable that the most important maritime Power has so far not taken part in the deliberations.

The agreement at the 1986 substantive session on the fundamental principles for arms limitation and disarmament in the maritime domain is very important. This should meet the concern that unequal dependence on sea lanes of communication must be taken into account and that the freedom of navigation should not be infringed upon.

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Sweden welcomes the statement in last year's Chairman's paper that various confidence-building measures in the naval field would be amenable to further consideration and possible negotiation in suitable forums. As a concrete step, negotiations on a multilateral agreement on the prevention of incidents on and over the high seas should, in our view, be initiated. Such an agreement would be a complement to existing bilateral agreements.

Our task on this agenda item should be to continue from the point we reached last year and further elaborate the agreed text in the Chairman's paper. The immediate objective of our work should be to pave the way for a constructive discussion of naval issues at the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly

It has been encouraging to note the growing convergence of views in official statements by major military Powers over the last years in the field of verification. The intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) Treaty also represents a major breakthrough in its provisions on verification. It illustrates a development which can be of utmost importance to future disarmament efforts, bilaterally as well as multilaterally.

Verification of compliance with disarmament agreements is an issue of concern to all nations. Everybody wants to be certain that agreements to destroy weapons, or to refrain from their development, are strictly complied with. International verification in the field of disarmament is thus strongly needed.

This aspect of verification has recently been stressed by the Heads of State and Government taking part in the Six-Nation Initiative. In the Stockholm Declaration they recognize the need for the establishment of an integrated multilateral verification system within the United Nations, as an integral part of a strengthened multilateral framework required to ensure peace and security. They

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declare that their six nations will jointly propose, at the United Nations special session on disarmament, that the United Nations promote the establishment of such a system.

The matter of international verification is complex, with many political, technical, legal and financial ramifications. It would therefore be necessary to explore the question in depth. My Government believes that an appropriate first step in this direction would be to request the Secretary-General to look into this matter with the assistance of qualified experts.

Last year the Disarmament Commission for the first time put the issue of verification on its agenda, thereby placing one of the most important prerequisites for any agreement in the field of disarmament within the focus of its concerns.

Taking as its point of departure the consensus of the first special session, the working group on this item was able to go further and to benefit from the experience accrued over close to 10 years. There is thus a good basis for this session to build upon.

Conventional weapons and forces consume some 80 per cent of world military expenditure. Some 25 million people, men, women and children, have been killed by conventional arms since the end of the Second World War. Today, at this very minute, people are dying in so-called conventional wars.

The resolutions adopted last year by the General Assembly testify to the common interest in pursuing disarmament in the conventional field. The General Assembly stressed the special responsibility of the States with the largest military arsenals. The General Assembly requested them to continue negotiations on conventional disarmament in different forums. And this is a timely request.

At its session a year ago, the Disarmament Commission did not succeed in achieving a great deal of agreement on the agenda item concerning conventional disarmament. A good basis was, however, laid for continued work.

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In Europe, the most overarmed of all continents, there seems to be a joint commitment to start negotiations on conventional disarmament within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE).

All States appear to concur that no durable peace in Europe can be secured without redressing conventional imbalances. There is growing support for the position that this must be done by force reductions and not by rearmament. There is reason to expect agreements on new measures to decrease the risk of destabilizing and uncontrollable military developments as well as surprise attacks. Such measures would be in the spirit of those agreed at the Stockholm Conference.

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The continuous development of military technology also contributes to destabilization in terms of decreasing warning times, increasing pressure in time of crisis and making reasoned and considered political decisions ever more difficult. The establishment of confidence-building measures might counteract that development, enhance security and contribute to military stability at lower levels.

In Europe the 35 States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe have agreed to and have started to implement confidence- and security-building measures in accordance with the Document of the Stockholm Conference. The general purposes of the measures is to increase the predictability of military activities, to decrease the risk of surprise military attack and to restrict and reduce the role of military force in Europe in general.

The confidence-building measures that have been implemented since 1987 - for instance, notification, observation and inspection of military activities - constitute a new experience that will contribute to confidence and security in Europe. The implementation of these measures has by and large been successful.

Sweden is firmly committed to concluding at this session the Disarmament Commission's consideration of the item "Reduction of military budgets", as repeatedly requested by consensus by the General Assembly. It is now time to reach an agreement on the one and only outstanding paragraph of the principles that should govern further actions of States in the field of the freezing and reduction of military budgets. I urge all delegations to co-operate in this endeavour so as to ensure that the Disarmament Commission can submit its report and recommendations to the third special session on disarmament.

Sweden attaches the highest importance to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. One aspect of that problem is specifically included in our agenda: that of South Africa. At the time of last year's General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), South Africa stated that it could

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consider signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty. But there are still no concrete signs of Pretoria moving closer to joining the Treaty. Only such adherence can dissipate the deep and widespread concern caused by the nuclear capability of South Africa. Such concern is of course heightened by the fact that that country maintains highly sensitive facilities, such as a uranium enrichment plant, outside IAEA safeguards.

The régime is obviously determined to silence virtually all expressions of peaceful opposition to the rule of apartheid. With unceasing brutality it maintains its illegal occupation of Namibia. It pursues a policy of destabilization and military aggression against its neighbours. It manifests an arrogant defiance of the vast majority of its own people and of the international community at large.

A consensus on this agenda item during this year's session would be particularly important at a time when the situation in South Africa more than ever calls for united international action. Those who fail to support such action should recall the words of Martin Luther King: "The final tragedy is not the evil of evil people but the silence of good people".

Most of the burning disarmament issues can be solved only in multilateral negotiations. Agreements that take into account the legitimate security interests of all parties can be reached only in multilateral negotiations. Such negotiations also increase the prospects that a large number of nations will adhere to disarmament treaties.

Without wishing to underestimate the significance of bilateral negotiations, Sweden therefore insists on the need to strengthen the multilateral bodies in the field of disarmament, most specifically the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament.

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The Swedish Government regards the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which is to commence in just a few weeks, as a major event in the work of multilateral disarmament. The special session offers a very timely opportunity for injecting new energy into the multilateral disarmament process.

We must make the best possible use of this occasion to agree on guidelines for disarmament in the 1990s. Considering that there will be no more meetings of the Preparatory Committee, the Disarmament Commission provides the most adequate forum for further consultations on the special session.

Progress or failure in disarmament is to a large extent determined by the two major Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. But they do not act in isolation. They too are dependent for their security on the rest of the world. They too have to take into account the positions of other States, and domestic and world public opinion.

Nuclear Powers and allied, neutral and non-aligned States all have their role to play in the efforts to bring about disarmament. Disarmament cannot be realized against the will of or without the nuclear Powers. Nor is it likely to be realized if the rest of the world leaves the matter to them. The results of disarmament negotiations that are now emerging are to a large extent due to the perseverance of a determined and knowledgeable international opinion.

We may today, after the Treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces, discern a pattern of possible disarmament negotiations and agreements: on strategic and other nuclear weapons, on chemical weapons, on expanded confidence- and security-building measures and on conventional disarmament, establishing more defensive military structures.

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Maybe the vicious logic of the arms race is about to be broken, and we shall see a race towards disarmament.

Maybe, as Olof Palme said in his last interview, the distrust will dissolve like the mist on an early morning in spring.

Mr. BELONOGOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation welcomes you, Sir, to the important post of Chairman, and wishes you every success.

Today at a crucial moment - indeed a turning point - for the world, the collective thought and efforts of the world community are especially necessary if we are at last to break free from the vicious circle of confrontation and the arms race. It is an objective fact that the current political situation makes it imperative that we set in motion all the machinery in the field of disarmament, both bilateral and multilateral.

The immense constructive potential of the new political thinking is clearly seen in the Soviet-United States Treaty on the elimination of medium- and shorter-range missiles. That Treaty is incontrovertible proof of the feasibility of disarmament and is a first step in a spiraling chain reaction that will free the world of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and reduce conventional arsenals to the limits of reasonable sufficiency. That agreement was not the result of bilateral efforts alone. A substantial contribution to its attainment was made by a significant number of countries and by public movements.

The forthcoming ratification of the Treaty on medium- and shorter-range missiles will initiate nuclear disarmament. Of course, the elimination of 4 or 5 per cent of existing nuclear weapons is only the beginning of the journey towards

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a nuclear-free safe future. But it is a promising beginning; it opens the prospect of achieving agreement on a radical reduction of nuclear arsenals. The Soviet Union is doing everything in its power towards the conclusion of an agreement on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive weapons within the framework of compliance with the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty as it was signed in 1972 and non-withdrawal from it during a specified time period. We continue to favour completing the relevant documents by the time of the forthcoming Soviet-United States summit in Moscow.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

Experience has shown that solutions to the whole gamut of problems related to nuclear disarmament are indeed feasible and can be arrived at. Our actions and proposals are based on the conviction that nuclear weapons have become totally obsolete and that the concepts of nuclear and other types of armed deterrence must be met by concepts of common security on the basis of balance of interests.

A nuclear war cannot be won and should never be fought. Today, this is a formula for the survival of mankind that opens up prospects for the ultimate disarmament goal shared by all Members of the United Nations, namely, nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The main task of our time is to ensure uninterrupted and unimpeded progress on all fronts towards the goal of freeing the planet from the burden of nuclear weapons and of improving the effectiveness of the disarmament negotiating system - bilateral and multilateral - within and outside the framework of the United Nations.

Multilateral efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament can and should be multiplied and translated into practical deeds. We must redirect the attention of the Disarmament Commission to the consideration of those problems and make it the principal forum for finding responsible solutions to them.

It is important to embark without delay upon a multilateral exchange of views on nuclear-disarmament issues among all the nuclear Powers. Within the United Nations framework the Security Council provides a mechanism for that. The Soviet Union would reiterate its proposal to convene, following the necessary preparatory work, a special meeting or series of meetings of the Council to discuss the goals and tasks of nuclear disarmament.

Of course, in light of the place the elaboration of specific nuclear-disarmament recommendations occupies on the agenda of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, all of us here must overcome the "braking mechanism." We must, in a businesslike and non-confrontational way, set ourselves to the task of

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working out agreements on guidelines for a nuclear-free world and to elaborating routes towards it in the interests of global security. In this connection we believe that it is important to try to submit to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament agreed recommendations on the whole range of nuclear-disarmament problems. The basis for this exists in provisions that have already been elaborated and universally agreed upon, including the consensus resolution entitled "Nuclear disarmament".

We believe in the need to prevent an arms race in space. That is the purpose of the programme for peaceful co-operation in space proposed by the Soviet Union, which includes the creation of a future World Space Organization.

One of the key tasks in curbing the nuclear-arms race should be a prohibition on nuclear-weapons testing. The Soviet Union has consistently striven to begin practical work on this problem within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament and has proposed the preparation of a draft multilateral treaty in as short a time as possible. This is even more important in light of the progress in the full-scale Soviet-American negotiations on nuclear tests, which are aimed at the limitation and, ultimately, the total cessation of such tests.

For our part, we will respond positively to efforts by any State that can contribute to the cessation of testing. We greatly appreciate the role played by a group of six States in activating the disarmament process and we reaffirm our readiness, inter alia, to make use of the services of that group in monitoring the cessation of tests.

We believe that real opportunities exist for an early conclusion of work on the convention on a complete prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons, which would provide for reliable verification procedures, including mandatory challenge inspections without the right of refusal. The acceleration of negotiations would be served by the immediate multilateral exchange of data relevant to the

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elaboration of a convention, as well as by an international testing of the procedures for the systematic verification of the non-production of chemical weapons in the civil chemical industry.

Along with the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, another very important aspect of creating reliable security in the military sphere must be the confining of the conventional capabilities of States to the limits of military sufficiency. Today there is a growing awareness of the need to establish the military balance at ever lower levels, to reduce armed forces and conventional weapons and to eliminate the potential of States and alliances for launching a sudden attack or large-scale offensive operations.

At the same time it is clear that the reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons must not deflect attention from the highest priority, namely, nuclear disarmament. On the contrary, in existing circumstances it is becoming a factor that acts as an incentive to disarmament of all kinds.

This problem is of particular importance to Europe. In this connection, the States signatories of the Warsaw Treaty, at the meeting of the Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs held last March, reiterated their firm resolve to strive for substantial reductions in armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals and to redress the existing imbalances and asymmetries on a reciprocal basis by arranging for the side with an advantage to make the appropriate reductions. We are convinced that special attention must be given to reducing those types of armaments that form the core of the parties' offensive capabilities.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The allied socialist States are prepared to engage in a serious dialogue on conventional weapons. This is evidenced by our proposal for an open exchange of relevant information covering the whole of the Warsaw Treaty and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), each of their member States, and the northern, central and southern regions of Europe. We are prepared to exchange data as soon as possible, and we await a positive response from our Western partners. In this connection we welcome yesterday's statement by the Federal Republic of Germany, on behalf of the Twelve, in favour of publishing data about force levels and military expenditures.

At the same time, this forum should give a real impetus to consideration of the exceptionally acute issue of limiting and reducing naval forces. The absence of agreements on restricting naval activities heightens the risk of the emergence of conflict situations and frustrates efforts to strengthen stability on a global scale. The present situation is such that the risk of military confrontation at sea is as great as it is on land.

Under these circumstances, we believe it is necessary to start negotiations - with the participation of the major naval Powers, especially those possessing nuclear weapons, and other interested States - focusing on the restriction and prohibition of naval activities in agreed areas of the oceans and seas, the limitation and reduction of naval armaments, and the extension of confidence-building measures to the seas and oceans to guarantee the safety and freedom of navigation. The Soviet Union proposes that those issues should be discussed at an ad hoc international conference or at meetings of the Security Council.

The Soviet delegation welcomes the progress the Commission has made in considering those issues. We agree that specific discussion of confidence-building

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

measures and of the security of maritime communications should be begun as a matter of high priority. It is important that, building on the results attained, the Commission should now make agreed recommendations and submit them to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and that they should then be included on the agenda of the relevant negotiating mechanisms.

As to the principles of confidence-building measures, the Soviet delegation believes that it is possible to complete the elaboration of the appropriate document at this session. As M. S. Gorbachev stressed in his article "Realities and Guarantees for a Secure World", we are prepared to switch from confidence measures in individual spheres to a large-scale policy of trust, which is a major factor in the shaping of a comprehensive system of security.

The Soviet Union has consistently advocated the establishment of the most stringent and effective system of verifying agreements on the limitation and elimination of arms and on confidence-building measures.

The conclusion of the treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States on the elimination of their intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles convincingly proved that, provided the partners display the political will, even the most complex issues of disarmament, including those of verification, lend themselves to mutually acceptable solutions. The verification machinery of the treaty is unique in the thoroughness with which the procedures for eliminating nuclear systems and the specific ways and means of monitoring implementation have been worked out. It provides useful guidance for the elaboration of verification systems in future agreements as well.

In expressing support for the internationalization of verification efforts, the Soviet Union attaches particular importance to enhancing the role of the United Nations. We suggest that a mechanism be set up under the aegis of the United

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

Nations for extensive international verification of compliance with agreements on reducing international tension and limiting armaments and on the military situation in conflict areas. We also welcome the Six-Nation Stockholm initiative, which is along the same lines.

Now is the time to deal thoroughly with specific proposals concerning the establishment of international inspectorates to verify the nuclear-weapon test ban, the prevention of the introduction of arms into outer space and the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. The Soviet Union believes that military bases in foreign territories should be open to inspection in order to ensure complete confidence in strict compliance with disarmament agreements.

On the whole it may be noted with satisfaction that the international community is today increasingly aware of the role, principles and ways and means of verification, as is shown particularly by the relevant resolutions adopted by consensus at the last three sessions of the General Assembly. It is essential that the results of a comprehensive consideration of the question by the Disarmament Commission be adequately reflected in the work of the General Assembly at its third special session devoted to disarmament.

The in-depth search for new approaches by non-governmental organizations and broad sections of the scientific community indicates the significance and urgency of the verification issue. The search was given a new impetus in April at a conference on the question of verification attended by experts and representatives of non-governmental organizations, which was convened in Dagomys, in the Soviet Union, in the framework of the World Disarmament Campaign and financed from the Soviet contribution to that Campaign.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

We call for more glasnost and openness with regard to military activities and military expenditures and for reducing military budgets to a level of reasonable sufficiency. The States parties to the Warsaw Treaty firmly advocate the declaration of a moratorium for one or two years on any increase of military expenditures by the two major alliances, with a view to their further effective reduction.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

In order to achieve and successfully implement agreements in this area, it would be of particular importance to ensure a higher degree of predictability, to have an exchange of the necessary information and to establish a stringent and effective system of monitoring and verification of commitments entered into by the parties. The Soviet Union, as is known, has declared its readiness in the next two or three years to approach a realistic comparison of military expenditures.

I should like now to refer to the agenda item on South Africa's nuclear capability. We hope that this year the Commission will finally be able to respond adequately to the international community's concern about Pretoria's nuclear ambitions and come to agreement on meaningful recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration.

In the interests of creating a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world, the role of the United Nations in disarmament must be strengthened. We believe that it is necessary to ensure the internationalization of disarmament efforts, the interaction of bilateral and multilateral measures and improved effectiveness of the relevant negotiating machinery.

Today, more than ever before, the United Nations must become a guarantee for the security of States. To achieve this, it is necessary to strengthen the role and authority of the Organization and its General Assembly, Security Council and Secretary-General. We urge that the Commission make specific and practical recommendations to this effect as well.

Consistent implementation by States of resolutions on disarmament adopted by the United Nations General Assembly should become one of the most important ways of supporting the Organization and expressing the unity of words and deeds. It is significant that the General Assembly at its forty-second session should have unequivocally expressed its view of this matter by adopting resolution 42/38 J. We

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

expect that in accordance with the aforementioned resolution the Secretary-General of the United Nations will submit a detailed report, and we are ready to provide the necessary information.

This session of the Commission has assumed special significance in view of a major event - the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The special session will provide an opportunity to strike a balance of interests of all groups of States and narrow the differences in their conceptual approaches, so that finally it will be possible to negotiate practical actions to dismantle military arsenals. We believe it essential for the Commission to achieve maximum progress on all the issues discussed. This would provide a useful contribution to productive preparations for the forthcoming disarmament forum.

Mr. OTT (German Democratic Republic): On behalf of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic, I should like at the outset to congratulate you cordially, Sir, on your election as Chairman of this year's session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and to wish you success in the discharge of your functions. The recent consultations you held in the German Democratic Republic reinforced our conviction of your great commitment to the United Nations Disarmament Commission and your determination to see it carry out effective work. We assure you and the other officers of the Commission - whom we also wish to congratulate - that the delegation of the German Democratic Republic will participate constructively in the forthcoming activities.

This year has been rich in highlights that are closely linked with the solution of the main questions of our time, namely, warding off the danger of nuclear war, ridding the world of the burden of nuclear and other armaments, strengthening international security and extending international co-operation in the interest of fruitful economic and social development for all peoples and

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Republic)

States. The principle of security through disarmament must become a supporting pillar of comprehensive security. That is also the underlying principle of the joint initiative of the socialist countries for the establishment of a comprehensive system of international peace and security.

The treaty signed last December by the USSR and the United States of America on the elimination of their intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles is not only a historic milestone on the road to nuclear disarmament; it also sets new standards in many respects - not the least in the question of verification. Endeavours "to compensate" the weapons systems to be liquidated under the treaty by intensified armaments in other fields must be strongly opposed. It is now imperative that the treaty enter into force as soon as possible and be implemented speedily.

With the withdrawal of Soviet OTR-22 missiles from the territories of the German Democratic Republic and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, carried out a few weeks ago, and the beginning of their destruction, the socialist States have made an essential accommodation. The start on nuclear disarmament reached with the Washington treaty must now lead to new substantive disarmament steps at the global and regional levels.

The speedy conclusion of an agreement on the reduction by 50 per cent of strategic offensive weapons of the USSR and the United States of America would, while complying with the anti-ballistic missile Treaty, initiate a process of nuclear disarmament and bring about a turn for the better in international relations. As has been underlined by the Head of State of the German Democratic Republic, Erich Honecker, such an agreement would

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Republic)

"change the atmosphere in the world in favour of further disarmament steps to an extent that would make it possible to cause the downfall of all taboos in the field of disarmament".

In that regard we attach particular importance to the summit meeting of the leaders of the USSR and the United States of America to be held at the end of this month in Moscow; and we expect from that summit new impulses for the solution of disarmament questions, such as the reduction of strategic offensive weapons, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, a nuclear-weapon-test ban, and the prohibition of chemical weapons. The manifold initiatives taken by the USSR to that end have the full support of the German Democratic Republic.

In its efforts for disarmament my country is guided by the idea that every State - large or small - can and must make a contribution to saving mankind for ever from the scourge of the nuclear threat. This is also the aim of the initiative of the Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic, Erich Honecker, for an international meeting on nuclear-weapon-free zones, to be held in the capital of the German Democratic Republic, Berlin, from 20 to 22 June of this year.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

In the appeal of the preparatory committee for the meeting, it is said:

"The people of the world want to see further steps along the road of nuclear disarmament, as the danger of a nuclear inferno has not yet been banished. Every path leading to a peaceful world, free of nuclear weapons, must be explored. This includes the creation of regions, zones and corridors free of nuclear weapons. Nuclear-weapon-free zones have already proved their worth in Latin America and in the South Pacific. The idea of nuclear-weapon-free zones is gaining ground in North and South, East and West."

Leading representatives of States, Governments and Parliaments, political parties, trade unions, youth movements, sporting associations, women's organizations, peace movements, associations of scientists and artists, churches and religious communities and other interested groups and individuals are invited to the meeting.

Participants in the meeting will have the opportunity to share experience gained in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace, to discuss concepts and proposals on how these ideas and projects can be filled with substance. We are pleased that this initiative has met with a positive international response also here in the United Nations.

Promotion of the process of disarmament is also the aim of the activities of the German Democratic Republic and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic aimed at ridding Central Europe of nuclear and chemical weapons. After the conclusion of the INF Treaty, the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in the heart of Europe is especially topical. It would lead to the elimination of nuclear tactical and battlefield weapons from that sensitive area.

A chemical-weapon-free zone would not only be appropriate to increase international security but would also help gather important experience for negotiations on a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, in particular

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with regard to the further improvement of verification procedures. This is the aim of the proposal reaffirmed on 5 April by the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Social Democratic Party of Germany to establish such a zone in Central Europe and, in doing so, to apply those parts of the Convention that have been agreed at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, especially with regard to verification.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic is ready, in the interest of that Declaration, immediately to enter into negotiations with the Governments of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany on ridding the territories of the three States of chemical weapons or keeping them free thereof.

In a few weeks representatives from more than 150 States will meet here in New York for the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The most representative international forum for the discussion of disarmament questions offers favourable conditions for analysing the most important aspects of the arms race and disarmament negotiations as well as for drawing relevant conclusions for intensifying the process of multilateral disarmament. This dialogue should lead to a final document that stipulates the main directions for disarmament and for strengthening international security and should contain decisions on further improving the mechanisms of disarmament negotiations and discussions. In the documents of the Berlin session of the Political Consultative Committee and of the Prague and Sofia meetings of the Committee of Foreign Ministers, the Warsaw Treaty member States submitted concrete proposals on all these aspects.

The leitmotiv of this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission must without doubt be to do everything to contribute, through substantive discussions and the adoption of recommendations on essential items of our agenda,

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to the success of the special session. The finalization of a catalogue of recommendations on agenda item 4 would be of special significance. In the view of my delegation it should be possible, given the required political will, to agree, on the basis of the Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and taking into account the latest positive tendencies in the field of disarmament, on texts acceptable to all States with regard to the following points: the prevention of a nuclear war; nuclear disarmament; a nuclear-weapon-test ban; the prevention of an arms race in outer space; and other important questions. The delegation of the German Democratic Republic will render its contribution to that end.

At their Sofia meeting the Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Treaty member States underlined that they attached particular importance to ensuring greater openness and predictability in the military field, the exchange of required information and the creation of a system of strict and effective verification of compliance with obligations undertaken by the sides. As is well known in that connection the proposal was submitted to exchange data as soon as possible on armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe of the Warsaw Treaty and NATO member States - that is, a confidence-building measure and a demand long made by the other side. To our regret, we have not yet received any positive response.

Recommendations on principles, provisions and methods of verification and with regard to further proceedings in that field - for instance, the elaboration of a United Nations study on verification - would without doubt be of great benefit to the entire disarmament process. Accordingly we are endeavouring to bring the activities of the working group on all aspects of verification to a successful conclusion. In that regard the recently held meeting of experts on verification in Dagomys, which was organized by the USSR in co-operation with the Department of Disarmament Affairs within the World Disarmament Campaign, is of particular

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relevance and should without a doubt have a positive impact on our work.

The proposal made in Januaray 1988 in the six-State initiative on an integrated multilateral system of verification in the framework of the United Nations has the support of the German Democratic Republic.

There are good prospects for the finalization of recommendations to reduce military budgets and for confidence-building measures. What is required here too is that all sides be ready for compromise, taking into account the interests of all concerned. Sticking to one-sided preconditions would be detrimental to that approach.

My delegation is in favour of intensifying the activities of the Disarmament Commission on questions such as conventional disarmament, curbing the naval arms race, and South Africa's nuclear capabilities.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic
Republic)

We attach particular importance to the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. In the time before the third special session, in particular, everything possible should be done to give fresh impetus to the multilateral disarmament mechanism. The Disarmament Commission can make an important contribution to that goal by making specific recommendations to the third special session. In doing so it would be carrying out the mandate given to it in the Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Mr. Chairman, let me assure you, in conclusion, that the delegation of the German Democratic Republic will present specific ideas on the subjects to be dealt with by the various working groups in order to contribute to the success of this year's session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

Mr. ROCHE (Canada): Mr. Chairman, Canada welcomes you to the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and we are particularly appreciative of the leadership you have already shown through the wide consultations you held, which enabled the Disarmament Commission to move quickly in putting into place our work programme.

The serious efforts made by the Disarmament Commission to examine issues related to arms control and disarmament provide a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas and seek consensus in this area. Canada remains committed to achieving progress towards meaningful arms control and disarmament agreements and the increased security that they foster.

Recent international developments have contributed to an environment that bodes well for arms control and disarmament. Last December, the United States and the Soviet Union signed the Treaty on Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF), which is the first agreement to eliminate an entire class of nuclear missiles. It

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is a particularly significant document in that it incorporates the principle of asymmetric reductions as well as precedent-setting provisions regarding destruction of these weapons and verification. Progress, even if not as fast as we would wish, is also continuing with respect to an agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union concerning deep cuts in strategic nuclear missiles. Such an agreement would be one of the most significant arms control accomplishments since the Second World War and would have important positive ramifications in many other fields of international relations. Another promising development between the two super-Powers has been the commencement of negotiations aimed at further limitations respecting nuclear testing.

In the multilateral field, the provisions of the Stockholm Document of September 1986 have been strictly observed by all parties. As of mid-April there have been 9 inspections and 21 observations conducted under the Stockholm Document, as part of its verification provisions. Canada, for its part, has participated in all 21 observations.

We welcome these developments, even while recognizing the long distance the international community still has to travel to reach some truly meaningful disarmament goals. At least the current developments represent a positive atmosphere upon which we in the Disarmament Commission should build in our work at this session.

There will be many demands on our time, including the preparation of a report for the third special session on disarmament. So I propose to speak very briefly in this opening statement, concentrating on just two of the agenda items: the role of the United Nations in the fields of disarmament and verification.

Last year's consideration of the role of the United Nations in disarmament saw a useful continuation, under Ambassador Engo of Cameroon, of the exchange of views

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begun in 1985. Through the diligent efforts of a contact group under Ambassador Butler of Australia, a paper was drafted which attempts to meld the views expressed by delegations into a new synthesis. We hope that the work accomplished by the Working Group last year will form the basis for this year's efforts. Canada, for its part, will co-operate with the Chairman of the Working Group to facilitate his task. We attach particular importance to the role that the United Nations can play in promoting realistic arms control measures. In our view, this role can be significantly strengthened through reforms which should produce not only greater efficiency and effectiveness, but some savings as well. For example, to enhance the effectiveness of the First Committee, consideration should be given to rationalizing its work-load and streamlining its procedures. The procedures of the Disarmament Commission might also be scrutinized to help ensure that the Commission's agenda does not become overloaded.

The work of the Disarmament Commission on the role of the United Nations in disarmament has taken on extra significance this year with the third special session coming up. It would therefore be very desirable to have a concrete outcome on this item which could serve to assist the deliberations of the special session.

I turn now to verification. Since last year there have been major developments with respect to the issue of verification, both in a bilateral framework and a multilateral one. The innovative verification provisions of the agreement on intermediate-range nuclear forces, the continuing discussions between the United States and the Soviet Union on verifying a nuclear-test ban, and the challenge inspections conducted pursuant to the Stockholm Document, are all examples of such developments. Verification remains at the very heart of the arms control and disarmament process: for without agreement on effective verification

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measures there can be no meaningful arms control or disarmament. Progress in some areas, as reflected in the developments I have mentioned, is welcome. But much work remains to be done in examining this critical process and the Disarmament Commission has an important role to play.

Last year's Disarmament Commission Working Group on Verification adopted, as we know, a consensus report which contained several significant points respecting this subject, most notably an illustrative list of 10 verification principles. In Canada's view, the consensus achieved last year is a firm foundation upon which further progress this year can be accomplished. The basic ideas agreed to at the meetings of the Disarmament Commission, as well as the momentum from international developments since last year, could provide the raw material for a continued consensus on verification this year, a consensus that will be broader in its scope and stronger in its expression. In our view, a report which builds strongly upon the consensus of last year's Verification Working Group would serve as a prime example of the useful work that the Disarmament Commission can accomplish, and would itself make an important contribution to the work of the third special session on disarmament.

As the Chairman of last year's Verification Working Group, I was deeply impressed and appreciative of the businesslike and co-operative attitude of all delegations in their efforts to address this subject. The forthright exchange of views which characterized last year's Working Group was very useful. Given this same spirit on the part of all delegations, tempered by a sense of realism about what we can hope to accomplish in only three weeks, Canada foresees the successful conclusion of the Disarmament Commission's consideration of "verification in all its aspects" as requested by the General Assembly of the United Nations at its forty-second session.

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Let me conclude my statement now with just a word about the forthcoming SSOD-III. Canada views the third special session devoted to disarmament as an important opportunity to promote an active and constructive multilateral arms control and disarmament process within the framework of the United Nations. It should support and encourage the current favourable arms control and disarmament negotiating environment. For it to do this we must all recognize that major arms control and disarmament goals cannot be achieved overnight. Moreover, it would be unrealistic to expect the third special session to generate new policy or agreements, or to expect nations to agree to a final document that contains policy declarations which run counter to their arms control and disarmament policies. Rather, the session should enhance the global commitment to seeking a world order where international problems are addressed through peaceful political solutions.

In Canada's view the prospects for a successful third special session would be enhanced if the concluding document focused on confirming the policy goals of the international community and on realistic means of achieving them. It should build upon the consensus achieved at the first special session on disarmament, recognizing that conditions have changed and progress in some areas has been achieved since 1978.

Mr. TEJA (India): Permit me to take this opportunity, Sir, to extend the felicitations of my delegation to you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for the 1988 session. We are confident that your experience of many years in the field of disarmament will assist in guiding the deliberations of the Commission to a successful conclusion. I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate other members of the Bureau of the Commission, who will be assisting you in your responsibilities. My delegation should like to assure you of its full co-operation in the discharge of your mandate.

(Mr. Teja, India)

This year's session of the Disarmament Commission takes place against the backdrop of some encouraging developments in the field of disarmament. There is a marked sense of optimism that one perceives in the multilateral disarmament forums. The significance of this session is further enhanced by the fact that it takes place on the eve of the third special session devoted to disarmament. This adds to our responsibility, since, I am sure, the results of our work, as also the atmosphere in which we strive to reach consensus, will cast their shadow on SSOD-III.

The signing of the treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) by President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev in December last year, in many respects, marks a turning point in efforts for nuclear disarmament. For the first time, the two leading nuclear Powers set their seals to an agreement which eliminates an entire class of nuclear weapons. It is a historic step, not for the few thousand missiles that it will dismantle, but because it demonstrates that, in the nuclear age, the road to enhanced security lies through disarmament and not through accumulation of weaponry. It shows that progress in disarmament can be attained if there is a willingness to engage in genuine dialogue and negotiations.

For the last 40 years the nuclear-weapon States have tried to enhance their security by developing larger and more sophisticated nuclear arsenals. While this has led to an unprecedented growth in terms of nuclear warheads - more than 55,000, and in the megaton-age - there has been no appreciable increase in security. The INF agreement vindicates the stand taken by us that, in so far as nuclear weapons are concerned, while a double zero is better than a single zero, a triple zero would be still better, as it would lead to a further enhancement of security. The Joint Statement issued at the Washington Summit lays down the objective of a 50 per cent reduction of the strategic nuclear arsenals of the United States and

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the Soviet Union. Such an agreement in the foreseeable future would be a welcome development, as it would constitute a decisive step towards the ultimate elimination of all nuclear weapons.

The past year has also seen some positive developments in the regional and multilateral forums. The successful outcome of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in Europe is an encouraging sign. At a multilateral level, we favour the intensification of our work in the chemical weapons negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. We especially welcome the renewed commitment for the development of a convention which would be comprehensive, universal and effective. Any partial agreement which does not meet the aforementioned three criteria cannot be a genuine multilateral disarmament agreement aimed at enhancing global security.

These are but encouraging signs, a reflection of a new-found optimism in multilateral disarmament. Concrete and real disarmament agreements have yet to materialize. The arms race has yet to be halted. Under such circumstances, the Disarmament Commission must clearly reaffirm the high priority attached to the questions relating to nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war. It must also re-emphasize that nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction and not weapons of war.

Item 4 of our agenda relates to the consideration of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament, in order to expedite negotiations aimed at effective elimination of the danger of nuclear war. For almost a decade, this item has remained on our agenda. We hope that, given encouraging signs, it will be possible this year to develop a consensus set of recommendations to submit to SSOD-III. This will also enable the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating body, to commence with a negotiating mandate on its related agenda

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items - Cessation of the Nuclear-Arms Race and Nuclear Disarmament and Prevention of Nuclear War and Other Related Matters. The universal multilateralism of the Disarmament Commission provides us with a political and moral authority which it must bring to bear as an input into the work of the Conference on Disarmament. On the question of commencement of negotiations in the Disarmament Commission on a comprehensive test-ban treaty, which has proved to be an elusive goal, it is hoped that the Disarmament Commission can bring its authority to bear on the States that have rejected the concept of negotiations on the basis of arbitrary and inconsistent arguments. The non-aligned and neutral nations have presented a new draft mandate this year, once again demonstrating their flexibility and their keen desire to commence substantive work on this priority issue.

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The question of the reduction of military budgets has also been on the agenda for quite some time. Our deliberations have succeeded in clarifying a number of pertinent aspects regarding the principles which should govern our actions aimed at freezing and gradually reducing military budgets. The only remaining issue concerns the need for initial exchange of relevant data and agreement on a mutually satisfactory format for measurement and comparison of military budgets. A number of delegations have seen merit in the standardized international reporting system already adopted by the General Assembly, which could be introduced and tested with the help of voluntary participation by a number of States. That additional experience would also help in further refining the reporting instruments. Given the fact that last year we were very close to agreement on this issue, my delegation believes that every effort needs to be made to conclude our deliberations on this subject at this session.

Item 6 of our agenda relates to consideration of the question of South Africa's nuclear capability. A more significant threat to regional and international peace and security than that posed by the racist régime of South Africa is difficult to visualize. This dangerous state of affairs is a direct consequence of the abhorrent policies of apartheid, which constitute an affront to the collective conscience of humanity. The situation is rendered more dangerous by South Africa's growing nuclear-weapons capability. Since 1985, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has reported that South Africa is believed to have developed the capability in 1981 to produce approximately 80 kilogrammes of weapons-grade uranium annually. Acquisition of flash X-ray machines in a clandestine manner is a further source of worry. The development of a nuclear arsenal by South Africa is a severe blow to the commitment of the people of Africa to transforming their continent into a nuclear-weapon-free zone. It is the

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responsibility of this Commission to formulate recommendations and pronounce itself clearly and unambiguously on one of the most critical issues facing us.

Last year we commenced work on the issue of conventional disarmament. We share the concern expressed by other countries that the continuing arms race is absorbing far too great a proportion of the world's human, financial, natural and technological resources. This trend has had a severely adverse effect on the global economy and particularly on the ability of developing countries to initiate and sustain their development efforts. It has affected the international flow of trade, finance and technology in addition to hindering the process of confidence-building among States. While we believe that the highest priority should continue to be given to nuclear disarmament, in particular to removing the threat of nuclear war and reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons, attention also needs to be given to conventional disarmament, especially in the global context. This is especially relevant today when we are poised on the threshold of a new arms race which seeks to introduce new technologies such as laser-guided weapons and particle-beam weapons into conventional-weapons arsenals. Priority must also be given to countries with the largest and most sophisticated military arsenals of conventional weaponry as well as to those with the largest expenditures. During the course of our deliberations this year we hope to discuss not only the priorities but also the issues of international arms transfers, the military-alliance arrangements pertaining to such transfers and the related security doctrines.

The relevance of the issue of verification is increasingly being accepted in disarmament forums. The efforts of the Disarmament Commission in this field are of considerable importance. In the past, verification, or the lack of it, has often been used as a pretext to delay negotiations on disarmament agreements. We believe

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that our deliberations will contribute to a better understanding of all three interrelated issues relating to verification of compliance with a disarmament agreement, that is: the collection of data, its analysis and interpretation, and institutional mechanisms to resolve any ambiguities arising out of interpretations.

The understanding that verification cannot be absolute but must be considered in terms of effectiveness and adequacy is a welcome sign. Another welcome understanding is acceptance of the fact that a multilateral disarmament agreement needs a multilateral verification system. The delineation of the principles in this field will also, I am sure, help in our negotiations relating to a chemical-weapons convention.

This year, our work on the review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament will receive additional focus and significance as this item is also included on the agenda of the forthcoming third special session devoted to disarmament. We cannot but accept that there are two aspects to this issue: the political and the institutional. The limitations of one cannot be attributed to the other. Acceptance of that basic truth will help us play a positive role in devising means to strengthen the collective commitment of member States and enlarge the areas of consensus, limited though these may be. The Commission reflects the principle of the Final Document that all peoples of the world have a vital interest in successful disarmament negotiations. All States have the right and the duty to contribute to efforts in the field of disarmament. The Disarmament Commission has played a valuable role in seeking to provide impetus to negotiations on disarmament. In seeking to identify, elaborate and propose various measures for negotiations in the appropriate forums, the Commission has demonstrated its usefulness. It has yet, however, to reach its full potential. For that potential

(Mr. Teja, India)

to be realized it is essential that members, especially all the nuclear-weapon States, accord recognition to the unique role of the Commission as an integral part of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

I have expressed the views of my delegation on some of the key issues relating to our agenda very briefly, keeping in mind the restrictions imposed by the shorter duration of our current session. In view of the need to keep my statement short, I have not covered all items. Nevertheless, we attach priority to the other items too, and will express our views on them in the course of substantive discussions in the appropriate subsidiary bodies.

Mr. ADJOYI (Togo) (interpretation from French): First, I should like to extend to you, Sir, my great pleasure at seeing a friend presiding over this session of the Disarmament Commission. Aware of your profound dedication to the promotion of peace, security and disarmament, as well as your total command of all the implications of those fundamental questions, and without overlooking your keen sense of humour, I am deeply convinced that you will skilfully and efficiently guide our work to a successful conclusion. I should like to congratulate you warmly on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of this session, and I wish to assure you of my whole-hearted co-operation in the performance of your delicate task. I should also like to congratulate the other officers of the Commission; it will be an honour for me to contribute with them to the success of our work.

The 1988 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission is being held in a particularly encouraging international political atmosphere. On the one hand, recent initiatives and new prospects in disarmament show the emergence of a determination finally to come to grips with the challenges posed by international peace and security. On the other hand, the relative failure of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Third Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament is clear indication of the need to mobilize all our energy to strengthen what binds us and to transcend our differences in order to achieve a new historic consensus at the third special session.

Thus, the current session of the Disarmament Commission is at the crossroads and it must promote the success of the next step. We must therefore seize this favourable opportunity to harmonize our views on the basic items on our agenda and adopt clear and precise recommendations reflecting the progress the Commission has achieved. Such recommendations could well lead to the creation of a comprehensive agreement on related points at the third special session of the General Assembly.

(Mr. Adjoyi, Togo)

Within the framework of such an exchange of views, there are four important items that are of particular interest to the delegation of Togo, namely, the question of South Africa's nuclear capability; the review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament; the consideration of guidelines for confidence-building measures; and consideration of the question of verification in all its aspects.

Almost a quarter of a century ago the Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) adopted a declaration on the denuclearization of Africa, unambiguously expressing their commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the concomitant creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Unfortunately, the attainment of that objective has been thwarted by the acquisition of nuclear capability by the racist régime of South Africa and its refusal to make all its nuclear facilities subject to the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

That refusal was confirmed in a letter dated 25 February 1987 addressed to the Director General of the IAEA by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the the Agency. The letter states:

"With regard to the IAEA requirements that South Africa accept total safeguards with regard to all its nuclear facilities, South Africa maintains its position that the IAEA, under its statute, has no right to make any demands of any member State provided that, as a member, such State respects the statute of the IAEA and honours all commitments entered into under any agreement, such as the safeguard agreements concluded with the IAEA ... South Africa, as a sovereign State, cannot and will not submit to unconstitutional and unreasonable demands by the IAEA."

(Mr. Adjoyi, Togo)

Furthermore, in setting unacceptable conditions for the conclusion of safeguard agreements with the Agency and for its adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the racist régime of South Africa is clearly expressing its determination to conduct its nuclear policy in defiance of the safeguards established to ensure non-proliferation and to preserve peace and security in Africa and in the world.

Apart from questioning the credibility of United Nations studies on disarmament and the recognition by the IAEA of South Africa's acquisition of nuclear capability, the objections raised by certain Powers to this matter pose two important political questions: Do we or do we not want a denuclearized Africa? Is it our view that in order to counterbalance the threat created by South Africa's military and nuclear capability other African countries should also undertake to acquire nuclear capability?

In any event, paragraph 63 (c) of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is still pertinent and valid. It states:

"In Africa, where the Organization of African Unity has affirmed a decision for the denuclearization of the region, the Security Council of the United Nations shall take appropriate effective steps whenever necessary to prevent the frustration of this objective." (S-10/2, para. 63 (c))

The main purpose of the United Nations is the maintenance of peace and security and, hence, disarmament. When considering the question of disarmament, it is therefore of basic importance to evaluate the Organization's role in this field.

(Mr. Adjoyi, Togo)

Disarmament is the business of the whole of mankind and not the privilege of a few countries. In this connection I should like to quote General Gnassingbé Eyadema, President and Founder of the Rally of the Togolese People and President of the Republic of Togo, who stated:

"A nuclear bomb does not distinguish between developed and developing countries; when they are used, chemical and bacteriological weapons will not single out their victims but will strike indiscriminately. The unbridled nuclear-arms race is thus a threat to all mankind, poor and rich, developed and less developed, alike."

(Mr. Adjoyi, Togo)

That makes it even clearer why the United Nations, which brings together all States - rich and poor, large and small - has such an important role to play, a role resulting from the will of the States making up the Organization, which must be made aware of their responsibility.

In that regard, the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament have a special mandate, which is not limited to providing information on disarmament; it consists also of dealing with all problems relating to peace and security. Within the framework of the World Disarmament Campaign, the centres will help to educate the public and engender an understanding of and support for the United Nations arms-limitation goals in all parts of the world.

Within the whole range of United Nations activities, the Under-Secretary-General in charge of the Department for Disarmament Affairs bears a heavy responsibility. I wish to take this opportunity to commend once again the excellent work done by Mr. Akashi at the head of his Department. As the maintenance of peace and security is a primary purpose of the United Nations, it is easy to understand why the Department for Disarmament Affairs is so important and why it should have all the necessary resources, financial and human, to carry out its programmes of action. Therefore, my delegation believes that the Department should be given more staff than it has now, in order that it may deal more effectively with the many different aspects of the problem of disarmament.

Strengthening the role of the United Nations as a centre for disarmament is a task of the greatest importance if we are to restore fully the machinery of collective security and reinvigorate the process of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

It is therefore up to us to ensure that the Organization consolidates its work of information and education as well as promoting and co-ordinating progress in

(Mr. Adjoyi, Togo)

bilateral and multilateral negotiations, which would benefit from a dynamic interaction.

In my delegation's view, it is essential to rationalize the work of the First Committee, involve the Secretary-General in negotiations and enlarge the Conference on Disarmament and improve its functioning in order to strengthen the role of the United Nations in disarmament matters.

Furthermore, the Disarmament Commission should constantly try very hard to submit to the General Assembly recommendations capable of having a lasting impact on the work of the First Committee and on negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament.

Taking measures to increase confidence between States is at the very heart of the work of disarmament. The importance of such measures is, moreover, closely linked with the realities of our day - mistrust and suspicion, born of political and ideological confrontation, all kinds of threats to security and militaristic tendencies.

In that regard, it is encouraging to note that at its 1986 session the Commission reached agreement on most of the guidelines for drawing up confidence-building measures.

Since disarmament can be undertaken only in a climate of confidence and security, and with respect for international norms, it is right that certain guidelines should be based on the sacred principles of the Charter as well as the principles and priorities in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

It is also right that the draft guidelines should recognize that confidence-building measures cannot replace disarmament measures or constitute a

(Mr. Adjoyi, Togo)

preliminary to them or reduce their status. On the contrary, as has been indicated, effective disarmament and arms-limitation measures, which limit or reduce the military potential are particularly likely to increase confidence.

With regard to the progress made in this area, it is very much to be hoped that the remaining differences - particularly on increasing international confidence and the exchange of information on armed forces, weapons and relevant military activity - should be carefully considered and be the subject of consensus at this session.

In our view, increasing confidence is an evolutionary process, which should enhance the progress achieved on openness and transparency as well as the concrete initiatives on arms limitation and disarmament. Consensus on the exchange of information could be inspired particularly by General Assembly resolution 42/38 I, "Objective information on military matters". Among other things, the resolution recommends consideration of implementing additional measures based on the principles of openness and transparency, such as the international system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures, with the aim of achieving a realistic comparison of military budgets, facilitating the availability of objective information on as well as objective assessment of, military capabilities and contributing towards the process of disarmament.

The draft guideline has a number of merits, including its emphasis on the fact that confidence-building measures should not be allowed to replace verification measures, which are an important element in arms-limitation agreements and disarmament agreements. Verification is indeed a key issue, and resolving it will have a considerable impact on arms limitation and disarmament efforts. In the light of the distrust so typical of relations between States, particularly those with different socio-political and economic systems, verification is a true test of

(Mr. Adjoyi, Togo)

the real value and scope of agreements reached. It is therefore necessary to ensure, without undue leniency, but also without excessive interference, the monitoring of scrupulous respect for commitments entered into.

(Mr. Adjayi, Togo)

In other words, verification should avoid the conclusion of stillborn agreements, that is to say, agreements the implementation of which would leave the door open for situations that could severely limit or completely eliminate the coverage contemplated and agreed upon.

The Togolese delegation therefore hopes that in the course of this session the Disarmament Commission will go beyond the stage of consensus as to objectives to produce a general agreement on specific verification modalities. In establishing those modalities and arrangements, it should bear in mind the following considerations: first, scrupulous respect for commitments entered into; secondly, provision in agreements for verification machinery acceptable to the parties, including procedures for resolving any dispute which may arise; thirdly, a link between the effectiveness of verification and the building of confidence among States; fourthly, non-use of verification measures for purposes of interference; and, fifthly, the possibility of utilizing the technical assistance of the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to deal with cases of violations of agreements or setting up international verification machinery under the aegis of the Organization.

Our Commission has an important role to play in the promotion of disarmament. Although the complexity and delicacy of the questions considered may justify the slow rate of progress, the fact remains that our deliberations should be inspired by a spirit of constructive dialogue and the determination to overcome our differences.

Inasmuch as the fifteenth special session of the General Assembly will be faced with the fundamental task of revitalizing the process of general and complete disarmament, it is vital for this session of the Disarmament Commission to provide us with an opportunity for overcoming the last remaining obstacles to a broad consensus on important questions for the strengthening of international peace and

(Mr. Adjayi, Togo)

security.

If we bring about this consensus - as my delegation very much hopes - we will have laid down a very firm foundation for the success of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Mr. TANASIE (Romania) (interpretation from French): Allow me at the outset to convey to you, Mr. Chairman, the sincerest congratulations of the Romanian delegation and express our satisfaction at seeing you presiding over the deliberations of the Disarmament Commission. I also wish to congratulate the other elected officers of the Commission. May I take this opportunity to underscore the excellent preparatory work for the session done by you in your consultations in Geneva and New York, which has provided us with a good point of departure and laid the foundations for the positive results which we all await. I assure you of the full support of our delegation in your endeavours.

Needless to say, this year our Commission's work is particularly important in the context of the preparatory work for the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Indeed, reaching concrete results on all the items on the Commission's agenda will be not only a success for the Commission but will also make an effective contribution to the success of the special session.

May I also emphasize that for the Disarmament Commission, a plenary body which considers disarmament issues, with the participation of all States Members of the United Nations, to obtain concrete results would provide practical proof of its usefulness and importance within the over-all structure set up in the disarmament field by the first special session of the General Assembly.

To that end, a brief analysis of ways and means to increase the effectiveness of the Commission's work and the relationship between its responsibilities and those of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva would, in our delegation's view, be very useful.

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

This session of the Commission is taking place in the midst of an international situation which remains serious and complex in view of the continuance of the arms race, in particular the nuclear arms race, the existence and even expansion of certain regional conflicts, policies of force and threat of use of force, and interference in the internal affairs of other States. At the same time, the gap between the rich and poor countries widens further, while the inequitable international financial situation worsens, coupled as it is with protectionist measures and new forms of domination.

The existence of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and of political, economic and military contradictions all call urgently for a radical change in the way in which we think and act in the international arena, as well as for a new, constructive approach to the problems of today's world.

The signing of the Soviet-American Treaty on the elimination of medium-range and shorter-range missiles constitutes a first step towards nuclear disarmament. But we still find in the world enormous nuclear-weapon arsenals capable of destroying mankind in its entirety several times over. That is why in Romania's view the fundamental question at present is precisely to begin the total elimination of nuclear weapons, to halt the arms race, to defend the fundamental law of nations and the fundamental right of peoples to a free and worthy existence, to life and to peace.

We must therefore act consistently and resolutely and work for the realization of new agreements on the elimination, by stages, of new nuclear weapons, halt nuclear-weapon tests and the militarization of outer space. In our view, we should at the same time work for the elimination of chemical weapons and the substantial reduction of conventional weapons, armed forces and military expenditures.

On the basis of this position of principle, the Romanian delegation attaches particular importance to agenda item 5, entitled "Reduction of military budgets".

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

In our delegation's view, this is not only an important and urgent question but also a field in which the Commission throughout the years has made considerable efforts which must and can now come to an end.

We feel that at present all the conditions exist for finding a unanimously acceptable formula for the text of paragraph 7 - the only one still under discussion - which deals with the principle of transparency and comparability of military expenditures.

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

The Romanian delegation has drafted some language on that point which it wishes to put before all delegations for consideration in the consultative group on the question of military budgets. We express our satisfaction that that group has been established, and we count on the active participation of all delegations in its work.

In my delegation's view, after the drafting of paragraph 7 and its acceptance by all delegations, the entire document, entitled "Principles which should govern further actions of States in freezing and reducing military budgets", should be forwarded for adoption by the General Assembly at its special session devoted to disarmament.

Thus the Commission will be able to conclude consideration of an important question that has been on its agenda since it resumed its work in 1979 and contribute to the success of the special session.

Consideration of agenda item 4 calls for a collective effort to make progress in drafting recommendations on the various aspects of the arms race, particularly the nuclear-arms race, and nuclear disarmament. Given the present circumstances of the Soviet-American dialogue on questions of nuclear disarmament, it would be very important to give new momentum to multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament pursuant to the recommendations adopted by consensus at the first special session devoted to disarmament.

The recommendations on which we have started to work should include efforts being undertaken by bilateral as well as by multilateral bodies since they complement each other, have a mutual influence on each other and have the same goal. The Romanian delegation endorses the idea of continuing to work on those recommendations in a committee of the whole.

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

Outside the nuclear field, Romania attaches great importance to the adoption of measures in the area of conventional disarmament. We therefore support the idea of continuing to discuss the agenda item on conventional disarmament with a view to preparing a revised draft report on that item.

As the Commission knows, Romania is of the view that in that field an important role can be played by unilateral measures by States. That principle furthermore is one my country has been implementing since last year; after a national referendum held on 23 November 1986 it proceeded unilaterally to reduce by 5 per cent its conventional weapons, armed forces and military expenditures. Implementation of that measure has in no way impaired my country's security, and bears witness to the real possibilities that exist in Europe for the substantial reduction by stages of conventional weapons without in any way prejudicing the security of the continent or of individual States. I wish in this context to underline the importance my country attaches to the regional approach to questions of conventional disarmament, taking into consideration the specific nature of each region and the adoption of appropriate measures.

In the view of Romania, the situation in Europe - a continent more than saturated with nuclear and conventional weapons, where the two most powerful military blocs confront each other - constitutes a case whose urgency is obvious. That is why Romania has since they began this year paid close attention to the negotiations between the States of the Warsaw Pact and NATO with a view to reducing their conventional weapons, forces and military expenditures.

In Romania's view, any measure aimed at reducing conventional weapons and armed forces should be accompanied by corresponding measures on the reduction of military expenditures. The resources thus freed should be allocated to the social and economic development of all States, and first of all the developing countries.

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

We should also stress that the negotiations that will take place and the agreements that will be concluded in the area of conventional disarmament should be based on the principles contained in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament.

A review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament led the Commission to prepare a document that will lead to the formulation of recommendations and concrete proposals. In that connection the Romanian delegation shares the view that in the context of the third special session of the General Assembly on disarmament the Commission could contribute effectively to the session's success by preparing concrete recommendations on the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. We therefore support the idea that, as in the past, consideration of that question should be turned over to a working group. In the view of the Romanian delegation those recommendations should cover, first and foremost, increasing the contribution and the effectiveness of the United Nations in that field so that the world Organization may have more direct powers in the discussion, negotiating and monitoring of disarmament measures. In our view those recommendations should favour strengthening the role of the General Assembly, of special sessions, of the Secretary-General and of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva with regard to disarmament questions.

Furthermore Romania supports the proposals to create within the framework of the United Nations an international disarmament agency open to participation by all States, which would be called upon to have specific organizational functions and functions concerning the co-ordination of negotiating bodies as well as the monitoring of disarmament measures.

The Romanian delegation also shares the view that confidence-building measures may play a very important role in bringing about a climate favourable to negotiation and to the adoption of measures of disarmament. In this regard I wish

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

to recall that my country participated in the development of guidelines for appropriate kinds of confidence-building measures adopted by the Disarmament Commission at its 1986 session.

With regard to outstanding questions, especially those regarding the exchange of information on armed forces and armaments and the role of unilateral measures, we feel it will be possible to find language acceptable to all. In the view of the Romanian delegation, these issues should provide for the positive role unilateral measures can play as well as exchanges of information and military data and the role they can play in creating an atmosphere conducive to negotiations in the field of disarmament.

We also share the view that the draft guidelines should be accompanied by a more detailed indicative catalogue of confidence-building measures.

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

Such a list could also include measures dealing with the renouncing of manoeuvres and other military activities in the vicinity of international borders, and the establishment along international borders of areas where military activity would be prohibited or where armed forces and armaments would be limited.

With regard to verification, it is our view that the Commission should continue its already considerable efforts with a view to preparing specific recommendations.

We believe that the debates on this subject should focus mostly on the general political issues involved in verification, verification being a means of strengthening confidence between States and making disarmament agreements possible. Concerning the concrete technical aspects of the matter, we believe that they can only be resolved in the process of negotiation, given the nature and the specificity of the measures in question. We should also like to stress the role which the United Nations is called upon to play in the verification of disarmament agreements.

Naval armaments and disarmament are another item which deserve the full attention of the Commission. The Romanian delegation believes that we already have a good basis on which to pursue our deliberations on this subject, and I am thinking here of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Chairman's document submitted last year.

Romania favours the idea of extending confidence-building measures to the maritime sector, since more than one third of the world's nuclear weapons are deployed in naval units. We believe that it would be important to limit naval activities, including, in a final stage, the withdrawal of all military vessels from international waters, the prohibition of the movement of nuclear vessels within a 50- to 100-kilometre-wide zone along the maritime borders of States, the

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

reduction of naval armaments and, in general, the adoption of measures to guarantee freedom of navigation on the high seas to all States.

Those are a few of the considerations which the Romanian delegation felt would be useful in the Commission's consideration of the items on the present agenda. We hope they will make a constructive contribution to the achievement of substantive results.

I could not conclude my statement without assuring you, Mr. Chairman, of my delegation's full co-operation in your efforts to discharge successfully the important tasks entrusted to you.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.