

# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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## FINAL RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 21 April 1988, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Dávid Meiszter (Hungary)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 459th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

In conformity with its programme of work, the Conference continues its consideration of the reports of the ad hoc subsidiary bodies, as well as of the special report to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. However, in accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure, any member who wishes to do so may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

As I mentioned in the plenary meeting on Tuesday, the Conference will hold an informal meeting immediately after this plenary meeting on its improved and effective functioning.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of the United Kingdom, Egypt, India, Belgium and Australia. I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Solesby, in her capacity as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons, who will introduce the report of that subsidiary body contained in document CD/820.

Miss SOLESBY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): I have asked for the floor today in order to introduce the special report of the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons, which is contained in document CD/820.

I was fortunate to take over the chairmanship of the Ad hoc Committee from yourself, Mr. President, whose experience of the CD in general and of this subject in particular is well known. Under your guidance in 1987 the Ad hoc Committee decided to establish two contact groups, A and B, to consider respectively the prohibition of radiological weapons in the traditional sense and the prohibition of attacks against nuclear facilities. Each contact group produced a report which reflected in a useful manner the current state of consideration of the issues.

This year the Ad hoc Committee decided to follow the same procedure. Accordingly, contact groups A and B have again been established for the 1988 session, the two meeting in parallel and each chaired by a co-ordinator, Mr. Wayarabi of Indonesia and Mr. Györffy of Hungary. During the spring session, the groups have concentrated on the issues of verification and compliance and other main elements, thus continuing the work undertaken in 1987, and building on earlier work done under these headings. The report you have before you contains the new material produced by them.

In addition to this, the groups were able to devote some time to reviewing the co-ordinators' records attached to last year's report. It was possible in the case of group B to record some change on the part of one delegation which resulted in the deletion of a number of draft alternatives.

Despite intensive efforts by the Ad hoc Committee in both the current and previous sessions, I have to report that different approaches continue to exist with regard to both subjects under discussion.

(Miss Solesby, United Kingdom)

The reports on the contact groups are reproduced as annexes I and II to the overall report of the Ad hoc Committee. Both annexes contain as attachments a co-ordinator's record, reflecting views on possible elements on the questions before the Committee. As was the case in 1987, the records are not binding on any delegation, but I feel that they give a clear account of the state of work on the subjects. This clarity will, I hope, be of use to delegations to the special session as well as to our own delegations here both for our summer session of the Conference and beyond.

Although we are only at the mid-point of our work for 1988, I would like before closing to thank most warmly Mr. Wayarabi and Mr. Györfy for their assistance. They have both worked extremely hard in order to accomplish the tasks we set ourselves in the comparatively short time available to us this spring. I am grateful to them both and indeed to all the members of the Ad hoc Committee for their help and co-operation. I look forward to returning to our work in the summer session. Meanwhile I have pleasure in presenting the special report to you, Mr. President, and to the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons for her statement introducing the report of the Committee. I intend to put the report of the Ad hoc Committee before the Conference for adoption at our next plenary meeting on Tuesday 26 April. I now give the floor to the next speaker on my list, the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Elaraby.

Mr. ELARABY (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, the presidency of this Conference requires great wisdom as well as vast experience, all of which are qualities to be found in you. Your well-known abilities and your leadership of the friendly delegation of Hungary ensure that you will perform your task in an excellent manner, and in such a way as to further the work of this Conference, not only during your term of office but also throughout the current session. Your presidency of the Conference follows that of Ambassador von Stülpnagel of the Federal Republic of Germany, a presidency characterized by decisiveness and achievement, which is what we expected from such an able diplomat. We would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to him. I would also like to pay tribute to the important role played by Ambassador Rose of the German Democratic Republic during his presidency of the Conference last February.

Allow me, Mr. President, to thank you as well as all my colleagues who welcomed my participation in this Conference as head of the delegation of Egypt. It gives me pleasure to return once again after an absence of 12 years to this multilateral disarmament forum in its new form to continue participating in the efforts to achieve the purposes and objectives of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. I would like in turn to welcome the new ambassadors, namely Ambassador Sujka of Poland, Ambassador Marchand of Canada, Ambassador Nasser of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Solesby of the United Kingdom and Ambassador Azikiwe of Nigeria, who have recently joined the Conference, wishing them success in their endeavours.

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

The current session of the Conference is being held in auspicious circumstances following the recent agreement between the USSR and the USA to eliminate an entire generation of medium-range nuclear weapons. It is an agreement that a statement issued by the Government of Egypt welcomed as a historic step, and an important achievement by the international community as a whole, in the field of disarmament. President Hosni Mubarak expressed his hope, and that of the Egyptian people, that the signing of this agreement would lead to further tangible steps in the field of nuclear and conventional disarmament, and to the elimination of the threat of a new world war that would endanger human civilization.

In a few weeks the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament will convene. Like the previous sessions, it will constitute a review conference of disarmament efforts, and of the work of this Conference. Any objective assessment must conclude that little has been achieved in comparison with what was expected and hoped for. The bilateral negotiations and their results to date should not obscure the fact that the nuclear and conventional arms race is being pursued unabated. In fact there is also a persistent effort to extend this arms race from land, sea and air to outer space. These facts compel us to express our concern at the growing trend towards solving problems of arms limitation and disarmament between the two super-Powers on a bilateral level at the expense of the multilateral approach adopted by this Conference on Disarmament.

We do not deny the special responsibility of the two super-Powers in the field of arms limitation and disarmament. In fact we have emphasized this special responsibility on every possible occasion, and stressed the cardinal need for the super-Powers to shoulder it. But at the same time, we have affirmed that bilateral negotiations should not be an alternative to multilateral negotiations through the Conference on Disarmament. Negotiations in the two forums should complement and support one another.

The Conference on Disarmament provides us with a unique framework that makes it possible to deal with questions of disarmament in their entirety, since the Conference includes in its membership all the nuclear-weapon States and enables all States to exercise their legitimate right to participate in disarmament efforts. Consequently, we believe that the framework provided by this Conference deserves our support. It is gratifying to note that 14 Foreign Ministers of member States have addressed this session of the Conference. We hope that this expression of high-level political interest will have a positive bearing on the substantive debate on the various items on our agenda.

It would be appropriate to highlight some of these items, in order to reaffirm the importance we attach to them, and to define Egypt's position in this regard. The Final Document of the 1978 first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, which we rightly regard as a "constitution for disarmament", and as a faithful expression of the world's conscience, affirmed that nuclear weapons constituted the greatest threat to mankind and the survival of civilization, that the nuclear arms race in all its aspects must be stopped and reversed in order to prevent the outbreak of a nuclear war, and that our ultimate aim is the complete elimination of nuclear

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weapons. The Final Document also stressed that the nuclear arms race in no way strengthens the security of nations, but on the contrary weakens it, and increases the danger of nuclear war.

Egypt shares this belief, bearing in mind the tense situation in the Middle East which could induce the countries of the region to acquire nuclear weapons. Egypt is equally aware of the growing nuclear capabilities of a certain State in the region - namely Israel - to the extent that queries no longer remain at the level of whether Israel produces and possesses nuclear weaponry, but revolve around the number of nuclear weapons in its possession, and their delivery systems. With this in mind, Egypt has supported all efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament and at putting an end to the nuclear arms race; Egypt was one of the first countries to sign the non-proliferation Treaty, despite the fact that the situation in the Middle East prevented her from promptly ratifying the Treaty at that time. Eventually Egypt ratified it in 1981, out of her belief in the spirit and objective of the Treaty, and in the necessity of putting an end to vertical and horizontal nuclear weapon proliferation as an important step towards nuclear disarmament.

In the General Assembly in 1974, Egypt took the initiative of calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as a means of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and achieving nuclear disarmament. In so doing Egypt aimed to prevent a nuclear arms race from occurring in this volatile region and sought to safeguard the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations regarding the obligation of States to promote international peace and security. Egypt has continued to raise the subject at the General Assembly, which has adopted to date 14 resolutions on the matter.

Furthermore, paragraph 63 (d) of the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament supported the establishment of such a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and called for urgent practical steps to implement the proposal, stating that it would greatly enhance peace and security in the Middle East. The Egyptian initiative was supported by the international community from the start. In 1980, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Egyptian-sponsored resolution by consensus. That reflected agreement by all States in the region, in addition to the five nuclear-weapon States. We therefore consider it imperative to call for consideration of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and to move from the stage of welcome and support to that of actual implementation, in accordance with defined procedures and an agreed time frame with the participation of all the parties directly concerned. We also call for assistance from nuclear-weapon States, as well as all other States, in the establishment of such a zone.

By issuing an important Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa and calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, the international community has taken a step in the right direction which should be followed by practical measures. Both regions are areas of conflict. It can be said that the establishment of those zones has entered a new phase of success and consolidation of progress through the success of the Treaty of Rarotonga. Thus, Egypt is entitled to ask: What is the international community waiting for, in view of the fact that the

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

Middle East is a region fraught with conflicts and a constantly changing situation? Is it not time to translate this initiative into reality, in order to protect this region and the entire world from the dangers of nuclear blackmail? My delegation intends to raise the question of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as well as the question of the denuclearization of Africa, at the forthcoming third special session devoted to disarmament. We hope that our endeavours will meet with a genuine response.

The Egyptian delegation believes that the time has come for the Conference to move from discussing the item on the prevention of a nuclear arms race and disarmament in informal general meetings, to establishing an ad hoc committee to crystallize the ideas set forth in paragraph 50 of the Final Document. This committee could also submit specific proposals on the best ways and means of starting multilateral negotiations to reach agreement, through appropriate stages, on the necessary verification arrangements for the limitation and reduction of nuclear arms, with a view to their total elimination, in accordance with successive General Assembly resolutions in this regard, the latest being resolution 42/42.

In this connection, I wish to express my delegation's deep regret at the inability of the Conference to adopt the draft mandate for an ad hoc committee on item 2, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament" (document CD/819). A nuclear test ban is related to the cessation of the nuclear arms race and disarmament, for there is near-unanimous agreement that a comprehensive nuclear test ban is the real starting-point for the vertical and horizontal prevention of proliferation, the cessation of the nuclear arms race and the achievement of nuclear disarmament. This fact is not diminished by the persistence of the nuclear Powers in carrying out their nuclear tests, and in giving lame excuses for doing so.

My delegation hopes that the Conference will face up to its responsibility and diligently endeavour to achieve such a nuclear test-ban treaty. We do not see how we can justify the inability of the Conference throughout four sessions to adopt a resolution establishing an ad hoc committee to that end.

We welcome the advanced stage reached in the negotiations on the preparation of a convention prohibiting the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and providing for their destruction. The progress accomplished is undoubtedly due to the change in the position of many delegations regarding the provisions of this convention, and the flexibility shown in this connection. In this respect, we cannot fail to recognize the prominent role and dedicated efforts of the Swedish delegation, headed by His Excellency Ambassador Ekéus, during his chairmanship of the Ad hoc Committee at the last session.

However, in our view, we still have a long way to go before completing the draft convention, especially since some of the remaining differences concern concepts and methodology, and are not confined to drafting details. In our opinion, this convention should be universal in character and acceded to by all States. You may share my opinion that the universality of the

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convention would be promoted if States felt that their accession to it would not jeopardize their national security, and that they would be secure from the use or threat of use of chemical weapons against them, either by States parties or by other States.

Although my delegation is participating very effectively in the negotiations that are taking place in the Conference on Disarmament, in order to achieve the universality of the proposed convention, Egypt considers that the time has come for consultations on the draft articles of the convention with other concerned non-member States that are not participating in the negotiations. This could be achieved through a framework to be agreed upon by the member States, either officially or informally. Such consultations would be a preparatory step to guarantee wide participation and accession and the desired universality. If we all hope for the codification of an effective international régime with the necessary checks and controls, we must start the preparatory stage forthwith, and listen to the viewpoints of the States not participating in the current negotiations.

The Egyptian delegation thus considers that the convention should provide an umbrella for the States parties, in the form of assistance provided by other States parties to limit the effects of the use or the threat of the use of chemical weapons, and to limit the ability of the other party to continue using or threatening to use chemical weapons. In this context, the idea of a possible Security Council resolution providing positive guarantees for the States parties to the convention could be considered. The same approach was applied in 1968 for the NPT, when the Security Council issued resolution 255 (1968). To eliminate the shortcomings in resolution 255, we propose that these guarantees should be more effective and more credible; this is necessary due to the different nature of the two types of weapons, nuclear and chemical. The reason for this proposal is the need to reactivate the role of the Security Council in the field of disarmament as stipulated by the Charter of the United Nations.

On the other hand, the accession of States to the convention depends to a large extent on the principle of the equality of States parties in regard to rights and obligations. They would be equal partners in all procedures, recommendations and decisions to strengthen the convention and enhance its credibility.

Egypt views with deep concern the use of chemical weapons anywhere, and considers that reports to that effect should give further impetus to the speedy conclusion by the Conference of a convention in this connection. In this respect I would like to refer to an article which appeared in the Journal de Genève on 14 April 1988, concerning a United Nations medical report confirming the use of gases by Israeli armed forces against Arab Palestinian demonstrators in the occupied Arab territories. Egypt is most concerned at this development, calls upon all parties to respect international treaties and conventions and reaffirms the importance of adherence to the main principles contained in the 1925 Geneva Protocol. In this connection, I wish to emphasize that Egypt does not produce, develop or stockpile such weapons, which it rightly regards as weapons of mass destruction that should be banned.

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

Like other countries, Egypt realizes that the exploration of outer space could prove very beneficial for mankind through its peaceful uses, but at the same time it poses an increasing danger of the use of space for military purposes. This danger will not be limited to the major Powers with space technologies, but will extend to the rest of the world as well. One can even say that the third world countries will be even more seriously endangered, since they do not possess the technology and capabilities available to the major Powers to defend themselves against such danger. As soon as the arms race in outer space begins, an increasing number of States will hasten to join in, thereby creating a situation the outcome of which would be difficult to predict. We still maintain the hope that concerted efforts will be made to ensure that outer space is used for peaceful purposes only, and to prevent the extension of the arms race to it.

The Ad hoc Committee on Outer Space has examined and defined all issues relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space in the course of three sessions. This year saw intensive deliberations aimed at moving forward with the work of the Committee to a stage consistent with the principles of General Assembly resolution 42/33 adopted on 30 November 1987. The resolution calls upon the Conference on Disarmament "to re-establish an ad hoc committee with an adequate mandate at the beginning of its 1988 session, with a view to undertaking negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects".

My delegation is disappointed at the inability to develop and improve the mandate of the Committee on the basis of the General Assembly resolution, and the inability to agree on means of improving the programme of work to allow the Committee to achieve the desired results. This inability is due to the rigid position of one delegation.

The deliberations of the Ad hoc Committee also indicated that, in spite of the many positive factors inherent in the legal system governing the use of outer space, this system still has some shortcomings that ought to be remedied, as required through the conclusion of a treaty or treaties to prevent an arms race in outer space. Logically, the Ad hoc Committee should proceed to another stage in its work, by examining the proposals that were submitted to prevent an arms race in outer space. Many of these proposals before the Ad hoc Committee deserve study and evaluation. I am referring, in particular, to the proposal to expand the scope of article IV of the 1967 Treaty on outer space to include the banning of all types of weapons, instead of restricting this prohibition to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The proposal further aims at extending the ban from mere placement of such weapons in outer space to their use as well. This proposal fills a serious gap in the legal system currently governing the use of outer space. In view of the fact that the attempts to broaden the scope of article IV have not been successful over the last 20 years, we consider that the time has come to satisfy this requirement, in the light of the increasing and definite dangers of an arms race in outer space. Not too long ago, this was only a possibility, but the danger now is an actual fact.



(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

We must realize the seriousness of the situation, and must adopt the necessary steps to face it, knowing that the element of time is not in our favour. Therefore, we urge the Conference to deal objectively with this item, concentrating on the substance and providing the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee, Ambassador Taylhardat of Venezuela, with the powers and freedom of action required to enable him to guide the work of the Ad hoc Committee towards the attainment of that objective.

I would like to deal now with the item on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament. It would be appropriate to stress the importance we attach to the completion of the draft Programme. Many sincere efforts have been exerted over a period of 10 years - the age of the conference itself - in the preparation of the Programme. I feel we must all spare no effort to ensure that the Programme achieves the purpose for which it was drawn up by crystallizing the principles contained in the Final Document, instead of using negotiations for the preparation of the draft Programme to cast doubt on the credibility and objective of the Final Document. I take this opportunity to express to Ambassador García Robles of Mexico, Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee, our appreciation of his efforts and our conviction that, through his expertise, wisdom and tolerance, the Ad hoc Committee will conclude its task and fulfil its mandate in the best possible manner.

The eyes of the international community and its hopes are directed to the results of the third SSOD, which will convene in New York in the near future. The session will consider the manner in which the Conference on Disarmament has improved its performance and effectiveness during the past decade. A variety of proposals and ideas have been put forward. Egypt is carefully studying these proposals, particularly those concerning the development of our system of work in a manner consistent with events and present reality. Egypt deems it important to preserve the characteristic and limited nature of our Conference, to avoid finding ourselves faced with two deliberating bodies which would turn our Conference into a carbon copy of the First Committee of the General Assembly.

The issues of disarmament in our contemporary world have become urgent and interrelated issues of concern to mankind as a whole, since they affect our present and future lives. For this reason, they require our most diligent attention, utmost effort, and closest co-operation.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of India, Ambassador Teja.

Mr. TEJA (India): In my statement today, I intend to focus on the chemical weapons negotiations. I should, therefore, like to begin by expressing the congratulations of my delegation to Ambassador Sujka, the Chairman for the current year, and also assure him of my delegation's co-operation. We are confident that under his able guidance, we will be able to carry forward our work which was already considerably advanced under the chairmanship of his predecessor Ambassador Ekéus of Sweden.

(Mr. Teja, India)

Our ultimate goal is a convention that will not only prohibit the production, development and stockpiling of chemical weapons but also lead to the elimination of an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. During our spring session, we have listened with attention to the statements made by a number of foreign ministers. The urgency reflected in these statements is a positive sign. On the opening day of our session, Foreign Minister Chnoupek of Czechoslovakia stated:

"... we consider the most urgent issue to be the completion of the drafting of a convention on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons ...".

He went on to add:

"The Conference has come within reach of concluding work on a convention".

At the very next session, we had the privilege of listening to Foreign Minister Genscher of the Federal Republic of Germany, who stated:

"The early conclusion of a convention for the global prohibition of chemical weapons continues to be a matter of high priority, in our view. In reality, they are not weapons, but devices for destroying man and nature."

The position of the Group of 21 is well known. In a statement on 8 March 1988 it was stated on behalf of the Group of 21:

"... the Group of 21 considers that the Conference on Disarmament must intensify, during the present session, the negotiations on the convention and that it must reinforce further its efforts with a view to the final elaboration of the convention at the earliest possible date."

My Government attaches high priority to these negotiations and fully endorses General Assembly resolution 42/37 A, which was adopted by consensus. Our efforts are now close to fruition and, therefore, as stated by Foreign Minister Andreotti of Italy, it is "necessary to impart a decisive impulse to the negotiations". We cannot but note that an undue prolonging of the negotiations could have adverse repercussions on the early conclusion of a CW convention. It is also a fact that chemical weapons are still being produced in some countries and, what is worse, are being used in some regions. The casualties from chemical weapons are also mounting. With new technical developments, there is a resurgence of interest in this field. The new weapons, which are more lethal than the nerve gases of the past, make the task of verification more difficult. We believe that delay in concluding negotiations on a CW convention would increase the risks of proliferation, and this could adversely affect international security.

I would like to reiterate that India does not possess any chemical weapons, nor does it have any intention of producing or acquiring them in the future. We are committed to the objective of a chemical weapons convention that is comprehensive, universal and effective. A limited or a partial

(Mr. Teja, India)

approach, in our view, cannot enhance security. To be effective, the convention must improve the security of all nations and, therefore, must be universal.

Within the convention, verification is one of the most complex areas. A considerable amount of work has been done, though some issues still need to be resolved. The scale of the exercise adds to the complexity. Our approach to the verification issue is based upon certain principles. We believe that these provide an effective set of guidelines for tackling the problems relating to non-production, as also those relating to challenge inspection. The principles of universality and non-discrimination are among the most important for any international agreement. If the chemical weapons convention is to succeed in enhancing global security, then it must be based on a "universal multilateralism".

The verification régime must be appropriate and adequate and should not unduly interfere with legitimate activities. The balance between "appropriate" and "adequate" is a delicate one, especially in the activities covered under article VI. With greater interaction with chemical industry, I believe, we can find the right balance, but there must be understanding on the basic principle that certain parts of the civilian chemical industry will need to be monitored.

In developed countries, considerable importance is attached to the fact that the verification activities should not be unduly intrusive or interfere with normal commercial activities, especially the sensitive areas of R & D, and also that the confidentiality of sensitive information should be maintained. We appreciate this. For the developing countries, the natural correlated concern is that verification measures should not in any way jeopardize the development of a peaceful chemical industry which plays an important role in their national planning. Greater openness and transparency can be an important confidence-building measure and a channel leading to increased peaceful co-operation among the developed and developing countries.

The development of a verification system on the basis of these principles can give us a régime which would be acceptable to all. Quite clearly, the régime under article VI has to be a differentiated régime. It must nevertheless be able to fulfil its basic objective, namely, to prevent the misuse of a facility for prohibited purposes. In doing so, it cannot cover only those chemicals which have been used or stockpiled as weapons in the past, but must also make provision for future developments. In other words, the verification process must be workable and judicious, if it is to serve us well.

A similar approach can also help us in furthering our work on challenge inspection. We agree that such a measure is likely to be invoked as a last resort, when all means, bilateral or otherwise, have been tried and found inadequate. The procedure should, therefore, reinforce this conclusion. A challenging State has a far-reaching right, but one curtailed by the obligation that it is not to be abused. The challenged State is obliged to accept such intrusive inspections, but with a right to demonstrate its

(Mr. Teja, India)

compliance with the convention. In view of the political nature of the exercise, it will be necessary to balance the rights and obligations of both sides. The results of the efforts by the Chairman for 1987 are reflected in an appendix to last year's report, and provide a good basis for further work. The issue of "alternative measures" has yet to be resolved, and this should be done objectively and in the multilateral context. More work is also needed to amplify the procedures in the post-inspection phase. We believe that the principles elaborated earlier can enable us to develop an effective mechanism that will reflect a truly multilateral character.

During the current session, useful work has been done on article VIII, dealing with the organization of the international body which would implement the convention. While new language has appeared regarding the Technical Secretariat, we will soon have to tackle the political issues relating to the composition of the Executive Council and the distribution of work between the different organs. In our view, the universal character of the chemical weapons convention can be best ensured by maintaining the principle of equality of all sovereign States. There seems to be an emerging consensus that the Executive Council should reflect a political balance and equitable geographical distribution. States with large and developed chemical industries could be appropriately represented under the first criterion so as to assist in effective implementation. As the organ responsible for day-to-day implementation, the Executive Council will play a significant role. Unlike the General Conference, which is likely to meet on an annual basis, the Executive Council could remain in session throughout the year. This feature provides the source for the authority of the Executive Council; its powers, though derived from the General Conference, are extensive. At the same time, the General Conference remains the actual repository by virtue of the complete representation of States in it. The papers submitted by the German Democratic Republic (CD/812) and Canada (CD/823) have helped in our work on this article. We are confident that pending problems can be resolved if the above-mentioned elements are kept in mind.

I should also like to comment on two articles which are of considerable importance - articles X and XI. It is a matter of satisfaction that we have commenced serious work on these provisions. Article X deals with assistance. Under ideal conditions, its provisions may never have to be invoked. Guided by this logic, it is necessary that the provisions of article X be adequate. The invoking of assistance under article X by a State party must be seen in the light of the collective security régime that the chemical weapons convention is intended to provide, and not just as a problem of a particular State party.

Article XI deals with economic and technological co-operation for development, and is of special interest to the developing countries, including our own. Recent discussions on it have revealed varying opinions. We believe that security is a broad-based concept, and there can exist non-military threats to security. Article XI, therefore, needs to be seen as a confidence-building measure. Both negative as well as positive assurances need to be included in it. Appropriate wording to this effect would only improve the security-enhancing function of the chemical weapons convention.

(Mr. Teja, India)

The growing interest in and submission of proposals for voluntary disclosure of information is a welcome development. Not only does it convey a signal of commitment to and confidence in the early conclusion of our task, but it also assists in the practical work relating to article VIII and the annexes to article VI. The chemical-weapon States bear special responsibility in this regard. The proposals made by the USSR and the Federal Republic of Germany are encouraging steps and merit a positive response from the chemical-weapon States.

Touching briefly on the discussions held on the final articles of the convention, I should say that the efforts of the Chairman have contributed to development of text on articles XII to XVI. The Chairman's paper will certainly assist in our future deliberations on this subject.

This year, we came up against the issue of the mandate of the Ad hoc Committee. We know that the present mandate stops short of the finish line. As our work proceeds, this issue too will be resolved. But we could assist in the process if parallel efforts are undertaken to transform the "resolved" elements of the "rolling text" into treaty language.

In conclusion, let us acknowledge that we are engaged in a new endeavour and a unique enterprise. While we would all like to be able to produce a perfect convention, we also know that in real life the best is the enemy of the good. We will all conclude our work with perhaps some apprehensions, but on the other hand there will be the sense of achievement of a major disarmament measure. The review process will help to straighten out the odd corners that might remain, as long as we leave open the possibility of improving upon our work. The element of finality is in the objective, not in the means of implementation, which can and must be refined as we gain more experience.

I have dwelt on certain basic principles today because often we need to return to these in order to loosen the technical knots. We are looking for a universal and comprehensive disarmament agreement, for only such an agreement can enhance global security and safeguard the interests of all States. The requirements of universality and comprehensiveness impose their own conditions on the convention, and these must be respected if the convention is to be what we all want - the first multilaterally negotiated disarmament agreement which will eliminate an entire class of weapons of mass destruction.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of India for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium, Ambassador Clerckx.

Mr. CLERCKX (Belgium) (translated from French): I should like to follow the example of the previous speaker, the distinguished representative of India, Ambassador Teja, and contribute some thoughts concerning the negotiations on chemical weapons. In doing so I shall touch upon a certain problem, certain questions that Ambassador Teja also raised, which clearly shows how vitally important they are in our discussions. But first of all, Mr. President, permit me to congratulate you and to express my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you chairing our work during this month of April, and during the period when members of the Conference will be dealing, in other

(Mr. Clerckx, Belgium)

places, with other problems related to our activities. Bearing in mind your great experience in the field of disarmament, your balanced approach and your knowledge of the background, I would like to assure you of my delegation's full co-operation, and here I should also like to thank Ambassadors von Stülpnagel and Rose, who set the Conference on its path with vigour and a deep sense of realism which have been very beneficial to us.

The spring session of the Conference is drawing to an end. We will all readily acknowledge that it has taken place in particularly auspicious circumstances. Everybody here has emphasized the importance of the INF agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union. The conclusion of this agreement, which some people have described as a revolutionary event has opened up prospects in the field of disarmament and arms control which just a few months ago nobody would have dared to believe in. It has been emphasized that this agreement eliminates a whole category of weapons, so it should be possible for other categories to follow. It includes real verification measures, so such measures can be contemplated in other conventions too. It bears within it the germ of extension to a higher category - a 50 per cent reduction in strategic nuclear arms, so it is a link, a first link in a broader and much more diversified process of disarmament.

Rather paradoxically, it is not in the area where this first disarmament breakthrough has been achieved - the nuclear field - that its impact has been felt most strongly in our Conference. In this area we are still at the stage of grand designs, ideas which are generous but which are difficult to tie down in today's political realities, and to which the INF agreement, and even the prospect of a 50 per cent cut in the strategic weapons of two major Powers, cannot, for reasons which I will not go into here, give real impetus. On the other hand, we have seen vigorous progress in the inter-sessional negotiations for the elimination of another category of fearsome weapon - chemical weapons, we have recently recorded particularly welcome and beneficial flexibility in previously frozen positions among various parties, particularly the USSR, a burgeoning of new ideas, concrete contributions to the negotiated texts, which are doubtless the fruit of a thaw between the USSR and the United States that turns on the INF agreement and its consequences and, as a spin-off, offers a basis for real hopes for the reasonably rapid conclusion of a convention for the elimination of chemical weapons.

However, these successes and advances should not lead us into euphoria. The work in which we are engaged here is quite different. The Conference's task is to negotiate a convention of universal scope on chemical weapons. This is something quite different from bilateral negotiations where agreement is reached between two States, however powerful and influential they may be, for which it is much easier to reach a compromise or agree on a quid pro quo because such concessions bind only themselves and their allies. Nor is it a set of negotiations among a number of developed industrial Powers settling chemical issues on the basis of their own political and economic interests. No, there are 40 countries here negotiating a convention which must be applicable to these 40 countries and, above and beyond that, must be universal, in other words, it must be such as to prompt the spontaneous accession of the whole of the world community.

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The result of this is that our objectives are different, as are our negotiating methods. For a convention to become truly universal, it must meet the fundamental concerns of all the potential signatories, and not just some of them, even the most important. Its provisions, too, both as regards prohibitions and as regards verification and monitoring, must be addressed to and designed for all the potential signatories and not just some of them. It is of less interest to know that countries and alliances far away are accepting a ban on chemical weapons than to be assured that your immediate neighbour is offering the same guarantee. So, in order for the convention to be truly universal, the elimination of chemical weapons must be absolute and free of the smallest exception. Merely stating this principle, though it is an obvious one, already poses a major problem. The world contains nations armed with chemical weapons, fortunately in a minority, and a majority of nations with no chemical weapons. Among the chemical-weapon nations, the degree of armament is, moreover, by no means comparable. How can an absolute ban be imposed in such a wide variety of situations without endangering the security of States or bringing about accelerated proliferation?

Belgium has always maintained that only an appropriate adjustment in the order of destruction of existing stocks, spread over the scheduled 9 or 10 years, can provide a solution to this situation for the chemical-weapon States, in the interests of all the States parties and in the context of a total ban on production. Several practical suggestions in this regard are at present being studied. We have no preconceived ideas about them, and will be happy to help to achieve consensus on one or other of the methods suggested. While an absolute ban on chemical weapons for all the signatory States of the convention is certainly the primary necessary element for the universality of the convention, the extent of the area to which it will apply is another. This area of application must also be universal. There cannot be countries where chemical weapons have been abolished and others where they have not.

We are going to have to start thinking about how best in practice to achieve this universality of the area of application. It is not enough for the terms of the convention which is at present being drawn up to satisfy some or suit a limited number of countries particularly concerned; they must be addressed to the world community as a whole, because this is the very objective being pursued by the Conference. Our working methods, therefore, must be appropriate to this end. And first of all, we have to deal with the question of the expansion of the composition of the Conference. This question has been deadlocked for many years. However, the Conference on Disarmament is the subject of very great interest among the community of nations. Indeed, it is enough to note the number of observers who have been following our work here so actively, whose presence my delegation is pleased to welcome. What is at stake is clearly of capital importance, and the more the community of nations participates in and is directly associated with the work of the Conference, the more impact our work will have.

So Belgium speaks out in favour of a rapid expansion in the composition of the Conference, perhaps even beyond the four-seat expansion at present envisaged. Currently there are no less than 13 countries which are candidates. Any opposition to one candidature, however legitimate it may be, should not block the designation of the others. We think that the expansion

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should take place without any linkage being established between the various candidatures before us, and we appeal urgently for initiatives to be taken to break the deadlock and to ensure that the question is not left pending because the CD itself is impotent.

Second consideration relating to our methods of work: the concerns of each of the members of this Conference, however many there may be, and their own perceptions, must be able to be expressed at every stage of the negotiations. On this point I would like to say that my delegation is not in favour of working methods which, although conceived with the best intentions, result in instituting selections, and consequently exclusions, among the delegations which constitute the Conference: here we are thinking not of the various private consultations which chairmen of committees and working groups may quite legitimately and very wisely hold so that progress may be made in our work, but of the occasional establishment of small working groups or groups of a few representatives selected on the basis of political groups when the characteristic of these formulae is that they violate the fundamental provision contained in our rules of procedure, that is that they should be "open to all member States of the Conference unless the Conference decides otherwise", as stipulated by rule 23 of the rules of procedure, confirmed by rule 24 in respect of subsidiary bodies.

We believe that negotiation is not well served by presenting for discussion purposes in our working bodies texts which have already been pre-drafted, and thus in a way pre-agreed, by a limited group of delegations. The delegations which have not been involved in this pre-work are thereby put at a disadvantage from the outset and placed, deliberately or otherwise, under pressure to accept, or in any case to follow, the basic approach which the group of selected delegations, during their pre-work, has already imprinted on the proposals by the time they reach the negotiating table. This is an unjustifiable handicap for the delegations that have been excluded from these pre-consultations and who wish to express different views, because they are obliged to undo what has already been done and has already been publicly approved by a number of delegations. This is certainly not likely to enable the countries that wish to do so to express their own perceptions and their legitimate concerns in a context of equality and equal effectiveness, nor is it likely to promote the universality without which the convention becomes meaningless.

Well, you will ask me, has Belgium a perception of its own to put forward? Indeed it has, and specifically a historical perception. I believe it is not without value to continue to repeat here that it was on the territory of my country that chemical weapons were used for the first time on a large scale, during the First World War, in 1915 - 22 April 1915, to be more precise. This sad anniversary falls tomorrow. In return for the unhappy privilege of being a battlefield for four years during the First World War, we have for 70 years now been digging up, in the west of the province of Western Flanders in Belgium, tons, yes tons of spent unexploded munitions every year. In most cases these munitions are very difficult to identify. It is sometimes impossible to determine whether they are explosive or chemical munitions. The presumed chemical contents are still unknown, because so far as we know none has ever been extracted, since these remnants of munitions are



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generally in such a state of deterioration that it would be very dangerous to handle them - and there have unfortunately already been many victims during removal and sorting operations - recently four people killed in 1986.

At the present time we dig up some 20 tons of such munitions of all types and various origins per year. When you bear in mind that in the First World War, on the western front alone, between 1.5 billion and 2 billion shells of all calibres were "used", about a third of which - 700 million - did not explode and are scattered and buried, it is impossible at present to predict for how much longer our country will have to dig up old munitions, particularly chemical ones. Up to 1952, these old munitions were dropped into holes and destroyed indiscriminately. As this method of getting rid of them created environmental problems, we tried to locate the old chemical munitions, which from then onwards were covered in concrete and dumped in the open sea. New requirements concerning respect for the environment, particularly the Oslo Convention of 1972 and the 1987 North Sea Conference, mean that use of this method is more complicated. Until the Belgian authorities decide upon a final solution, perhaps in the form of a destruction facility, some 135 tons of these old remnants of unusable and dangerous munitions are at present in storage pending elimination.

It is obvious that this particular situation existing in my country falls, we feel, outside the concerns of the convention. The purpose of the convention is to eradicate chemical weapons and their components. Whatever definition we may decide upon, it is obvious that scattered munitions, spent but unexploded, buried in the soil, buried for more than 70 years now, in a state of advanced deterioration, that may be discovered accidentally today or tomorrow, during agricultural or building work, are not, and in our view could never be, chemical weapons in the sense of militarily usable chemical warfare devices covered by the convention. Thus, as far as the Belgian delegation is concerned, none of the provisions of the convention could reasonably be applied to them, either in theory or in practice.

I have illustrated a specific problem which indicates the particular perception that one country, my own in this case, may have during the negotiation of the convention on the elimination of chemical weapons and the possible effects it may entail for the objective of universality of this multilateral convention. There are others. I am thinking here of verification. The way in which verification is designed will determine to a large extent the degree of universality which the future convention manages to achieve. This convention will not be purely declaratory, thank God, like so many other conventions and undertakings to disarm in the past, whose fate is well known. It will contain verification measures. Fundamentally, verification is intended to ensure that the application of a convention takes place in conformity with its stipulations. As far as disarmament is concerned, a second concern arises, that of how to detect possible clandestine violations and how to safeguard one's security against the consequences of failure to respect commitments entered into.

The future convention has a twofold objective: on the one hand, to eliminate chemical weapons for ever where they exist, by making it obligatory to undertake the destruction of stockpiles and manufacturing facilities - that is, by laying down a specific action for the signatory States to take: on the

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other hand, to prevent the resurgence of chemical weapons by prohibiting the manufacture, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer, not only of chemical weapons as such, but also of their components - that is, by laying down that the signatory States must refrain from an action, i.e. by prohibiting that action. That the convention is being applied in conformity with its stipulations may, we feel, be fairly easily checked by the currently planned system of statements, verification by means of on-site inspection, international monitoring and the use of monitoring instruments, as appropriate. On the other hand, this system cannot in our view guarantee to detect clandestine violations of the convention, or offer protection against failure to respect fundamental commitments, even when there is an obligation to do so, because the system for systematic verification of the destruction of stocks and facilities by definition covers only stocks and facilities which have been declared, in other words, which are known; it is powerless to deal with stocks or facilities which have not been declared, in other words, which are unknown.

A fortiori, when it is a question of an undertaking not to do something, to refrain from doing something, a question not only of banning production of chemical weapons, but also of the chemicals which make them up, absolute verification is impossible. It would be futile to submit the entire world chemical industry to an international policing system - clandestine production of illicit products intended for chemical weapons will always remain possible in some part of the world - or of a country. That is why we are not convinced at the outset of the need to submit industry to universal verification measures for the purpose of verifying the absence of production for chemical weapons purposes.

We did not wish to raise obstacles to what other delegations would consider to be progress towards the finalization of the convention, but we remain somewhat sceptical on this subject, except, of course, as I said, regarding plants intended and used for military purposes, which must cease operations as soon as the convention comes into force and be subject to monitoring until they have been totally and radically eliminated. To the extent that the convention fails to submit all present and future plants capable of producing potential chemical warfare agents or their key precursors to effective international verification, the efficacy of the régime for the verification of non-production will, in our view, be limited. In these circumstances is there any justification for trying to increase the present forms of monitoring, to make the convention machinery more cumbersome, to increase the burden it imposes and place it upon the chemical industry, which would ultimately find itself in a veritable strait-jacket?

The example of verification by the inspectors of IAEA in the field of plutonium manufacture shows us that, if the verification of a plutonium plant is to be worth while, the presence of the inspectors is required practically all the time, and for the plant the introduction of this monitoring and verification represents an increase in production costs of something like 15 per cent. This gives us some idea of what would be the burden on private industry if, in order to detect possible abuses in authorized manufacturing of products in schedules 2 and 3, it was necessary to apply an extension or a surrogate of the systematic international on-site verification system applicable to other categories.

(Mr. Clerckx, Belgium)

We do not think it is necessary to create a systematic on-site inspection system for schedule 3 products. In fact, assuming it were reasonably feasible, would it be genuinely useful? We must carefully pinpoint the problem. What exactly is involved, or more precisely, what may be involved? In the context of article VI, the only hypothesis to be feared at the inter-State level and in terms of the convention relates to the clandestine manufacture of a militarily significant chemical weapon. Such a decision is not taken by private chemical industry, but by the State. It is the State which is the only user and the only potential customer for chemical weapons. The State alone can decide on that manufacture. Private chemical industry could at most commit the offence of failure to respect the standards for and bans on the manufacture of certain chemical products laid down by the convention. If it does so for reasons which have nothing to do with the interests of the State, it is the State, as the national authority, which must impose punishment, and not some international body, which cannot substitute itself for the State to ensure respect for its laws and regulations within the jurisdiction of the State. Looked at from the point of view of the convention and the ban on the manufacture of chemical weapons, the danger therefore lies not in misconduct by the chemical industry, which can in any case be detected and punished by a State acting in good faith, but in possible misconduct by States, a State acting in bad faith, that is a State which decides to renege on its commitments and embark on the production of chemical weapons.

Now we must start from the conviction that every signatory State subscribes to the convention in good faith. Moreover, the State does so because it is in its own interest to do so. Chemical weapons - and I think that military experts will agree - are not indispensable in the arsenal which serves to guarantee the security of a State, except as a means of reprisals. With the exception of this last case, giving up the possession and use of chemical weapons does not constitute an undue risk for security. That is why we are in a position here today to work multilaterally for their complete disappearance. Otherwise nobody would be here. Consequently, if the possibility of clandestine manufacture of a militarily significant chemical weapon is to be realized, or the possibility of the existence of secret stocks of such weapons is to prove a reality, we necessarily have to suppose a deliberate intention on the part of the leadership of a State party which, reneging on its commitments, intends to acquire chemical weapons for purposes of armed conflict, or at least for serious political destabilization. Otherwise it is impossible to see why any State party would feel the need to acquire chemical weapons or their components, the precaution of reprisals having become superfluous.

For the same reason, it goes without saying that a State party acting in bad faith would not, in view of the existence of the convention, try to create militarily significant chemical weapons openly and publicly, in other words in installations which are subject to verification, whether these are specific installations which produce schedule 1 and 2 products within authorized limits, or private chemical industry more generally, which is freely manufacturing products on schedule 3, if this industry were effectively subjected to verification and monitoring measures extending throughout the industry. It is quite obvious that a State with such intentions would embark on the manufacture of these weapons in a secret place.

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It follows, in our opinion, that the likelihood of a serious, militarily significant violation of the convention is extremely small, as chemical weapons are not vitally necessary, a clandestine resumption of their manufacture in a world where, under the authority of the convention, they have been eliminated and banned could only result from truly warlike intentions which are, after all, it must be hoped, equally unlikely, and their manufacture is impossible except in secret. It also follows that, from the moment when manufacture must necessarily take place secretly, non-production would seem to a certain extent to be unverifiable, or at all events not always usefully verifiable. It is verifiable for the specific products on schedules 1 and 2 because in these cases verification is limited to a restricted number of products and products which are intended solely for chemical weapons; it is not for the products on schedule 3 because, however broad it may be, it cannot cover the whole of the civilian chemical industry, because it would have to place the industry in a strait-jacket which it would find difficult to bear without seriously hampering its operations, and because it would have to subject the industry to outside interference in the form of monitoring personnel - all this without offering a sufficient guarantee against the non-manufacture of chemical weapons.

Consequently, we do not consider that such supervision of private industry is really justified. The enemy is not private chemical industry, the enemy is the State acting in bad faith. Thus it is here that challenge inspection takes on its true significance: it is the last resort, formal notice at the political level, when there is a suspicion of a serious violation, that is a clandestine violation, and therefore a danger for security. My delegation views this procedure as being the most important instrument for the credibility of the convention, because under it the signatory State acting in bad faith can be backed up against the wall. This is why we have always considered that this procedure should be binding, over and above any concept of national sovereignty and reversing the burden of proof. It must not be trivialized by extending its application to cases other than those which are extremely serious. That is why we consider that challenge inspection should be a measure that can be used as a last resort, only in cases where there is a suspicion of a serious violation, that is a violation of article I - manufacture, possession, transfer of chemical weapons and, of course, use - and that this is a course which should be open to all countries, without any distinction, without any conditions without prior conditions and without the right of refusal.

My delegation is not convinced of the validity of the concept of sensitive military or other installations which have to be protected and consequently could be exempt from challenge inspection. This, we think, would pose the risk of depriving challenge inspection of its significance because if there has been a violation there has been, a priori, deliberate bad faith on the part of the challenged State. For the same reason, my delegation does not see any great merit in the possibility of so-called alternative measures, none of which so far are really satisfactory as valid substitutes for on-site visits. If a requesting State wishes to content itself with alternative measures to be agreed with the challenged State, no obstacle should be put in its way, but in our opinion the option of alternative measures should not as such be an acknowledged right for the challenged State, to be inserted in the Convention.

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The whole procedure of challenge inspection, in the last resort, should be in the hands of the requesting State; it is that State which assumes responsibility for it, it is that State to which the inspectors will hand the factual report that they are to prepare, it is that State which will decide whether or not its fears have been allayed, and it is that State which will opt for retaliatory measures or other consequences to be drawn from the situation, particularly in the light of the threat the situation poses for its security.

The true problem, which arises in the challenge inspection procedure is that of improper (or frivolous) requests. Let us note on this subject that the impropriety of a request may be quite clearly apparent simply in the light of the political context at the time. That is one comment. The second is that, since challenge inspection by its very nature should be reserved for extremely serious suspicions falling under article I, it must oblige the requesting country to indicate precisely the nature of its suspicion (manufacture of chemical weapons, stockpiling, manufacture of chemical products for weapons purposes in quantities which could become militarily significant, etc.), and as far as possible to give all the information needed to uncover the alleged violation, specifying place, time, duration, quantity, etc. The reliability of such information will also help to show whether the request is improper or not, because the verification obligation to which the requested State will submit depends directly on the preciseness of the charge. Lastly, it may be thought that it is ultimately better to tolerate a certain risk of improper requests rather than vitiate the binding nature of challenge inspection which is essential if it is to fulfil its role, through exceptions intended to cover confidential or secret data.

Consequently, in this procedure - which is exceptional - the role of the international body should, in our opinion, remain extremely small. It will receive the request, it will have it carried out immediately by its inspectors - of whom there will be a list agreed upon in advance, from which the challenging State will make its choice - and it will inform all the member States of the initiation of the challenge inspection procedure, with all the necessary information. It will forward immediately to the requesting State, and later to the other States parties, the report of the facts which the inspectors are expected to draw up, and it will receive from the requesting State the judgement and the decisions reached by that State.

I have set out a number of thoughts on fundamental principles which guide us in elaborating a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. They are offered to you in a constructive spirit, in the hope that they may contribute to further delimiting areas which require serious decisions. There are many more questions that have to be dealt with as one moves through the articles. My delegation will have occasion to return to them later.

Very recently, on 3 March last, the heads of State and government of the Atlantic Alliance, in their declaration which was published at the end of the summit, reaffirmed once again that the total elimination of chemical weapons formed part of their global concept of arms control and disarmament. The Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Tindemans, said in this very room on 23 July last year, when he addressed the Conference, that for Belgium the early conclusion of an agreement on the total prohibition of chemical weapons

(Mr. Clerckx, Belgium)

was an urgent priority, and he added that "at present this is the main activity and, I would even say, the main responsibility of the Conference on Disarmament". My delegation will do its best to achieve this objective as soon as possible. My country intends to commit itself fully to that end. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs announced to you during his statement on 23 July 1987, Belgium has offered a possible headquarters for the international body which is to administer the convention. This offer was repeated by the Minister in his statement at the forty-second session of the General Assembly, and I have the honour to reconfirm it to you today.

We will resume our work after SSOD-III. My delegation believes that the time is close when we will be able to get down to the texts available to us, article by article, to reach final political agreement on them and to prepare them to be cast in the legal language of a convention, on which there should be no further delay.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Belgium for his statement, and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia, Ambassador Butler.

Mr. BUTLER (Australia): The following statement is made on behalf of a group of Western States members of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the last plenary session of the Conference, held on 19 April, the distinguished Ambassador of Brazil, speaking on behalf of the Group of 21, presented to the Conference, in document CD/829, a draft mandate for an ad hoc committee on item 1 of the agenda.

Following that action, at the same plenary meeting, the Conference heard a statement by the distinguished Ambassador of Mexico, on the same subject. In the latter statement it was indicated that the sponsors of CD/829 would not be pressing it to a decision by the Conference during this present session. Instead, the hope was expressed that consultations in the near future would lead to unanimity of the Conference on CD/829 so that it could be implemented when the Conference resumes its work in the summer of this year.

The group of Western States for which I am now speaking has studied the draft mandate given in CD/829 and listened attentively to the statements made by the distinguished representatives of Brazil and Mexico. Because the group continues to attach importance to item 1 of the agenda and to the earliest possible re-establishment of an ad hoc committee on that item, it felt it important that an immediate and considered response be given.

First, the substance of the draft mandate given in CD/829 is no different from that which was placed before the Conference in July 1987 in document CD/772 and on which the position of a group of Western States has already been made clear.

Second, the statements which accompanied the presentation of CD/829, in the view of the group, do not alter the relevant circumstances. The group recognizes that it is open to any delegation or group of delegations to claim that their approach is one of flexibility, but such a claim should normally be substantiated by textual change.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

Third, the suggestion which was made to the effect that the text of CD/829 could be made the subject of statements of various interpretations of its terms cannot constitute a sound basis for the conduct of work in this Conference. The group believes that to proceed in this way would confuse and possibly defeat any practical work being conducted in an ad hoc committee established on such a basis. It is also concerned about possible precedents which might be established by the Conference seeking to conduct work on the basis of overtly different interpretations of the nature of that work.

For these three main reasons the group will not be able to join consensus on CD/829. The substantive position of the group is that it wants to see an ad hoc committee on item 1 of the agenda re-established without any further delay. It continues to regret, deeply, that this action has not been able to be taken since 1983. To facilitate such action the group has proposed the draft mandate given in document CD/521, which provides for the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee under item 1 of the agenda

"to resume its substantive examination of specific issues relating to a comprehensive test ban, including the issue of scope as well as those of verification and compliance with a view to negotiation of a treaty on the subject".

It also requests the Conference

"to examine the institutional and administrative arrangements necessary for establishing, testing and operating an international seismic monitoring network as part of an effective verification system".

The group remains convinced that this draft mandate and the associated suggested programme of work given in document CD/621 would enable all necessary and relevant practical multilateral work on a nuclear test ban to be undertaken in the Conference. The group emphasizes that these proposals remain on the table of this Conference.

For such practical work to be fruitful, it clearly must involve the participation of all States members of the Conference which are willing to take part in such work, including the nuclear-weapon States. The draft mandate in CD/521 holds out this possibility. The same is evidently not true for the draft mandate provided in CD/829, because of its substantive terms, and notwithstanding the interpretation that some have suggested may be put upon those terms.

Under these circumstances the group agrees with the appeal made by the distinguished Ambassador of Mexico for further consideration of this issue during the forthcoming period of recess of the Conference, and hopes that an ad hoc committee will be able to be established, during the summer part of the session, under the appropriate mandate and on the basis of the participation of all member States willing to take part in work on a nuclear test ban in the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Australia for his statement. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other member wish to take the floor at this moment? I recognize the representative of the German Democratic Republic.

Mr. ROSE (German Democratic Republic): Comrade President, I would like very briefly to inform the Conference that the Group of Socialist Countries would be ready to agree on the draft mandate submitted by the Group of 21 in document CD/829 dealing with nuclear test ban. We consider this proposal as a good basis for starting the work of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the German Democratic Republic for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I see none.

The secretariat has circulated today, at my request, a timetable of meetings to be held by the Conference during the coming week. In this connection, I should like to note that there will be an informal meeting of the Conference to start the second reading of the draft special report to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, on Tuesday, 26 April immediately after the plenary meeting. We shall take up then all pending questions. I had expected to hold that informal meeting on Monday, but this is not possible in view of the fact that the informal consultations on agenda items have not yet concluded. I do hope that we will be able to proceed through the second reading without reopening matters of substance which have already been discussed at the Conference, as well as at the informal open-ended consultations held to consider the draft substantive paragraphs of the special report. In this connection, the fact that the informal consultations on items 1, 2 and 3 are still proceeding is delaying the processing of documentation, and consequently, although the timetable provides for the time being that the last plenary meeting will be held on Thursday at 4 p.m., we may now have to postpone the closing date to Friday in order to give the secretariat the time needed for the processing of the draft special report which should be adopted on that date.

The informal open-ended consultations on items 1, 2 and 3 will continue this afternoon, immediately after the meeting of the Ad hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament. I hope that work will be concluded today, as otherwise we may need to revise not only our closing date, but also the whole timetable for next week. On that understanding, I would propose that we adopt the timetable. If I see no objection, I will take it that it is adopted.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I suggest that we now adjourn this plenary meeting and convene an informal meeting of the Conference in five minutes' time to continue our consideration of its improved and effective functioning. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday, 26 April at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12 noon