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Chairman: Mr. ROCHE (Canada)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

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GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. KAMAL (Pakistan): In its statement today my delegation will be addressing item 53 of the agenda, concerning the urgent need for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, an issue which has, so far, evaded resolution and which continues to tax the abilities of the international community.

The question of the cessation of nuclear tests, independent of agreement on other disarmament measures, was discussed by the General Assembly as early as at its ninth session, in 1954, and has been on its agenda since 1957. Since its thirty-fifth session, the General Assembly has requested the Committee on Disarmament, as a matter of the highest priority, to take necessary steps, including the establishment of a working group, to initiate substantive negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. It is regrettable that, until this year, the Conference on Disarmament has not even been able to establish a subsidiary body on this item.

Ever since the dawn of the nuclear age, the international community has grappled with the problem of the acquisition by some States of the capability of mass destruction through the development of nuclear weapons. Though few and far between, there have been some landmarks in the history of disarmament negotiations with a view to containing and, if possible, eliminating the threat which the nuclear genie has unleashed on our planet. One such landmark was the signing of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water (PTBT), the twenty-fifth anniversary of which was celebrated by the international community this year. By all standards, the conclusion of the PTBT was an historic event which fuelled hopes of follow-up steps to end the nuclear arms race.

(Mr. Kamal, Pakistan)

The PTBT had aroused the genuine expectation that it would be the precursor of further measures to exorcize the demons of nuclear weapons. The expectation was that additional steps would be in the offing, aimed at the discontinuation of all nuclear test explosions for all time in all environments. While welcoming the signing of the PTBT, the Government of Pakistan had expressed the hope that the Treaty would soon be followed by agreements to cease underground tests also and by measures to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons. Pakistan had made clear at that time that, unless other measures of nuclear disarmament were initiated, the removal of the threat of nuclear war would continue to elude us.

Over the past 25 years, we have not only seen those expectations remain unfulfilled, but have also witnessed a mushrooming of nuclear arsenals and a phenomenal increase in their accuracy and destructive capacity. Far from being a factor of restraint, the PTBT has been overwhelmed by the headlong rush of the nuclear arms race. The much-proclaimed goal of a comprehensive test ban remains today as elusive as ever. The nightmare of massive destruction from miniaturized weapons increasingly haunts us as these instruments of doom proliferate unabated.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the nuclear arms race today is propelled by the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. The cessation of all nuclear tests is, therefore, an essential ingredient of efforts to arrest the nuclear arms race. A comprehensive test ban will not only greatly assist this process, it would also be instrumental, at the same time, in checking the horizontal proliferation of these weapons. A comprehensive test ban would thus make a singular contribution to the objectives of nuclear disarmament by addressing the questions of both vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons.

In the past, the issue of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty was complicated by the spectre of technical difficulties which was raised by some co

(Mr. Kamal, Pakistan)

justify the need for their continuing programmes of nuclear testing. Recent technological advances have made it abundantly clear that verification does not pose a problem and that it cannot be used as an excuse for stalling negotiations.

The agreement which the United States and the Soviet Union have reached on full-scale, stage-by-stage negotiations on nuclear testing will not, we believe, lead to the early achievement of a comprehensive test ban. We foresee only a long delay, which would result from the process whereby, after agreement is reached on effective verification measures for the Treaty on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear Tests, of 1974, and the Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes, of 1976, the two sides will proceed to negotiate further, intermediate, limitations on nuclear testing. The above-mentioned Treaties, which accept the 150 kiloton yield threshold, in effect permit almost all the tests required for the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. Their ratification will not impose any restriction on the nuclear weapons programmes of the parties and we would be deceiving ourselves, as well as the international community, by creating the illusion of progress while deferring indefinitely the goal of a comprehensive test ban.

Pakistan has consistently advocated the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and, therefore, feels legitimately disappointed at the absence of any meaningful progress towards the conclusion of such a treaty, despite the fact that the subject has been on the international disarmament agenda since the 1950s. A nuclear test ban, which occupies a central position in Pakistan's overall approach towards nuclear disarmament, should be seen not as a modality for regulating the arms race between the major Powers, but as a significant step in halting and reversing it. The comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty would prevent further sophistication of nuclear weapons, render existing arsenals undependable,

(Mr. Kamal, Pakistan)

and serve non-proliferation concerns. Therefore, acceptance of a test ban is the litmus test of the intentions of the nuclear-weapon States. Delay in the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban does a disservice to the disarmament process and undermines the non-proliferation régime. In view of the United States-Soviet bilateral talks on nuclear testing, it has become imperative for the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament, to commence urgent substantive negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

(Mr. Kamal, Pakistan)

It is a matter of deep regret that the dilatory attitude of some delegations has prevented the Conference on Disarmament from agreeing on an appropriate mandate for an ad hoc committee on a nuclear-test ban. The Group of 21 had, last year, made a constructive proposal in regard to such a mandate. The proposal, which reflects a spirit of compromise, remains on the table. All those countries that regard a test ban as a long-term objective should carefully consider the effects that any delay in the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty would have on efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

Archbishop MARTINO (Holy See): Since this is my first opportunity to speak in the First Committee during this session, allow me to take a moment to congratulate you, Sir, upon your election. My delegation is pleased that the Committee can benefit from your wide diplomatic experience and profit especially from the leadership you have demonstrated on the issue of verification. Moreover, my delegation is particularly pleased that a person who is most sincerely concerned with high moral and spiritual values is leading the Committee through its consideration of the important topic at hand.

It is the focus on moral and spiritual values which I wish to address first in this statement. My delegation was greatly impressed by the many references made in the General Assembly's general debate to moral and spiritual values and to the crucial role which these play in establishing a new foundation on which to rebuild the peace and security of the planet.

This stress on moral and ethical values was similarly most noticeable in the course of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It is true that the session did not produce a document, but it did narrow the differences, and it succeeded once again in stressing a series of moral issues central to the disarmament debate.

(Archbishop Martino, Holy See)

In the same way, it did not fail to situate both the rights of individuals and peoples and the development of third-world societies within the debate on disarmament, while making responsible stewardship of the earth an increasing focus. The Bible tells us that "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof" (Psalm 24:1), yet nuclear arms now threaten that sovereignty and could unravel an ecostructure which for millenia has been evolving under the providential hand of the Creator.

The peoples of the world - many of whom cry out in anguish and anger for the pure drinking water, decent shelter and basic health care that have eluded their families - stand aghast before a tragic world record set by the world's Governments who last year spent one trillion dollars on nuclear and conventional armaments.

Despite this tragic record, the world has taken hope from the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) to dismantle and destroy a whole class of nuclear armaments. Pope John Paul II has praised the agreement, which has changed the atmosphere surrounding disarmament negotiations, for opening up encouraging prospects for the future and for realistically permitting the mutual verification measures that ensure the Treaty's viability.

Nevertheless, this delegation cannot ignore the reality that the weapons being dismantled under the INF Treaty represent less than five per cent of the world's nuclear stock-piles, and experts tell us that new weapons systems will continue to be activated over the next three years as military budgets grow.

The hope of the world is that the INF Treaty is merely a first step on the journey away from a peace based on nuclear terror and towards the still far-off goal of a peace rooted in dialogue and trust.

(Archbishop Martino, Holy See)

It has been said that nuclear arms have saved the world from all-out war and are a kind of angel of peace. I would recall in this connection some words of Pope John Paul II, who remarked that more and more sophisticated weaponry, proliferating among more and more nations, will produce an

"unavoidable escalation leading to destruction on a scale which mankind can never either contemplate or accept".

Therefore we ask: How much longer will deterrence be the main guarantee of peace?

Surely the world cannot remain content with deterrence as a stable basis for security. In his message to the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament six years ago, Pope John Paul II told the United Nations that

"In current conditions, deterrence based on balance - certainly not as an end in itself but as a stage on the way to progressive disarmament - may still be deemed morally acceptable". (A/S-12/PV.8, p. 57)

In a speech the next year in San Francisco, the Secretary of State of the Holy See, Agostino Cardinal Casaroli, referred to deterrence as having an "essentially provisional nature".

Last January, in a speech to diplomats, the Pontiff reiterated that deterrence is "fundamentally transitional" and must not be granted a prolonged lease on life. The doctrine of deterrence, he said, "cannot be a reliable basis for security and peace in the long term", adding that the

"Holy See has always affirmed that deterrence based on a balance of terror cannot be considered an end in itself, but only a stage towards progressive disarmament".

These considerations impel us once again to urge that the INF Treaty be only a first historic step, to be followed by many more substantial cut-backs in armaments. The hoped-for 50 per cent reduction in strategic weapons under:

(Archbishop Martino, Holy See)

discussion by the super-Powers is the next great stage towards the much-desired total elimination of atomic weapons.

Nuclear weapons, of course, are not the sole preoccupation in the complex task of reaching disarmament agreements which at the same time assure nations' legitimate security concerns. Another facet of disarmament involves conventional weapons. Any agreement on these arms must seek to guarantee security at the lowest level of weapons and forces compatible with the legitimate requirements for defence based on a balance of forces.

As the Pope noted in Sollicitudo rei socialis, the arms trade is a trade without frontiers, capable of bridging even the division between East and West and "above all the one between North and South".

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The Pope said:

"While economic aid and development plans meet with the obstacles of insuperable ideological barriers, and with tariff and trade barriers, arms of whatever origin circulate with almost total freedom all over the world". In fact, arms continue to be imported in record quantities by countries whose citizens lack the basic necessities of life.

In some cases capital lent by the developed world has been used in the underdeveloped world to buy weapons.

Recent reports of the use of chemical weapons in regional conflicts have given greater urgency to the finalization of a global convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction. These weapons, which are available to non-nuclear and less-developed countries, have been condemned by the Church as genocidal and unworthy of humanity. They have no place within our world. The same must be said of biological and bacteriological weapons.

As Pope John Paul said earlier this year,

"Disarmament is not all there is to peace".

It is one of the ingredients in the complicated recipe for more stable security; other essential parts of the mix are dialogue, trust and a more intense co-operation on many geographic and geopolitical levels.

In his encyclical Sollicitudo rei socialis, Pope John Paul II challenged the East and the West to redirect their resources to alleviate misery and thus justify their leadership roles by contributing widely and generously to the common good.

He said:

"When the West gives the impression of abandoning itself to forms of growing and selfish isolation, and the East in its turn seems to ignore for questionable reasons its duty to co-operate in the task of alleviating human

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misery, then we are up against not only a betrayal of humanity's legitimate expectations - a betrayal that is a harbinger of unseen consequences - but also a real desertion of moral obligation".

The Pope gave a further example several weeks ago of the regional co-operation on which to build international security, when he called on the European Community to strengthen its historic links with the Europe which extends to the U.S.S.R., links based, in part, on a common spiritual heritage.

In seeking a new foundation for a secure international peace, the Holy See places a high value on the resources of the United Nations. The wider role already being assumed by the United Nations in the work of assuring security needs to be broadened even more, so that the age of deterrence may gradually be replaced by an age of détente and dialogue. The Holy See follows with interest the discussions about a United Nations role regarding a registry of international arms transfers and verification of disarmament treaties, as well as the role of the World Court in settling disputes.

Among the resources of the United Nations are the "Blue Helmets". The Holy See warmly congratulates the United Nations peace-keeping forces, who were justly awarded the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize.

Those forces, however, serve under a constantly mounting deficit, which is a mere trifle when compared to the trillion dollars spent annually on this planet for arms. My delegation calls on all nations to invest instead in the peace-keepers and to eliminate the \$500 million deficit under which United Nations peace-keeping currently works. It does not seem right that the nations contributing personnel to the peace-keeping forces have had to bear the financial burden for those forces, which save the world the costs of continued fighting - both in terms of weapons and human lives.

(Archbishop Martino, Holy See)

In summary, the Holy See joins the community of nations in rejoicing that the journey towards rebuilding world security has begun. It encourages the super-Powers and the whole community of nations to move away with even longer and bolder strides from what the Pope has called an

"unacceptably exaggerated concern for security"

towards a form of peace based on mutual control, realism, dialogue and trust. We are far from arriving at journey's end, and, as Christians the world over prepare to celebrate the third Christian millennium, an appeal goes out to all peace-loving peoples to seize the present opportunity and to construct a secure peace worthy of the human race.

Mr. VILLAGRAN DE LEON (Guatemala) (interpretation from Spanish): This year will without doubt be recalled as the year of a notable and growing improvement in relations between the two super-Powers. Particularly with regard to disarmament, it will be remembered for the conclusion of the Treaty on intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles. We hope that agreement will also be reached on the destruction of strategic weapons, and we believe that there are grounds for that hope.

Although it is true that the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament did not yield concrete results, it is encouraging that it took place and that there is now clearly an atmosphere of optimism and frankness. Therefore, we believe that the First Committee can effectively make concrete progress on such important matters as the limitation of arms and disarmament.

The Government of Guatemala is very pleased that the United Nations has been so effective in intervening to resolve regional conflicts. In the Iran-Iraq war, in Afghanistan, in Cyprus and in Western Sahara the Secretary-General's participation has been positive in the settlement of conflicts. The result has

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been an end to hostilities in some of those regions and at the same time a world-wide recognition of the role being played by the United Nations, which in turn strengthens our Organisation.

There is no doubt that those events earned the United Nations peace-keeping forces the Nobel Peace Prize. I wish to reiterate to the Secretary-General my Government's congratulations on that well-deserved tribute.

However, in spite of the great progress that has been achieved, much remains to be done.

(Mr. Villagran de Leon, Guatemala)

My delegation wishes to express the support of the Government of Guatemala for the initiative taken by the Presidents of the United States of America and the French Republic to convene an international conference on the banning of the use of chemical weapons. It is very alarming that to the tragedy and suffering of armed conflicts among countries we must add the use of chemical weapons, which affects mainly the civilian population. We believe that every effort must immediately be made to strengthen compliance with the Geneva Protocol.

My delegation also wishes to express to the First Committee its support for the efforts being made to achieve a complete ban on nuclear tests. The primary result of such a measure would be the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Here, my delegation supports the initiatives already undertaken to ban all types of nuclear testing, including underground testing.

The Government of Guatemala, as a signatory of the Treaty of Tlatelolco for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America, wishes to appeal once again to those countries that have not yet acceded to that Treaty to take as soon as possible the internal steps necessary to enable them to become full-fledged parties to it.

My delegation also wishes to express the interest of the Government of Guatemala in the earliest possible convening of a multilateral conference to prevent the spread of the arms race to outer space. The Government of Guatemala has closely followed the work of the Conference on Disarmament, in particular as relates to preventing the arms race in outer space. Nevertheless, it is disappointing that multilateral efforts should be made subject to progress at the bilateral level.

The Central American region has for a number of years been disrupted by internal conflicts created by inequality, injustice and the lack of democratic

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procedures, and the imposition of elements of the East-West conflict has only served to polarize the positions of some of the antagonists politically.

Regional negotiations, first within the Contadora framework and then within the framework of Esquipulas II agreements, have achieved some concrete results, one of which has been the Contadora document of objectives and the Guatemala statement of procedure. The Government of Guatemala has pledged to abide by both agreements, and we have complied with the principles set forth in the aforementioned Document of objectives. In that connection the Government of Guatemala promotes national reconciliation through free, pluralist elections; the Government of Guatemala, in the context of the Central American subregion, has agreed to stop the arms race in all its forms; the Government of Guatemala does not take part in international military manoeuvres and there are no foreign military facilities in our country or any foreign military advisers. The Government of Guatemala does not allow the presence of irregular forces in its territory and does not support any group whose aim is to destabilize the Governments of Central American countries.

Within the context of those objectives, my Government wishes to state in the First Committee that it places its faith in the principles of the Contadora agreement and in the principle of national reconciliation through free and pluralist elections.

We believe that the settlement of regional conflicts must be based primarily on the political will of the countries directly concerned to achieve peace. Foreign Powers and elements alien to the historic roots of problems must refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of our countries.

In the document entitled "Study on the economic and social consequences of the arms race and military expenditures", the Secretary-General states that the arms race leads to numerous economic and social phenomena even in the absence of

(Mr. Villagran de Leon, Guatemala)

conflict, representing an excessive burden on the economies of developing countries. The arms race undermines international security and creates a constant risk of war. At the same time, the qualitative increase in the arms race generates insecurity and has a negative effect on chances to achieve disarmament. We must all realize that the competition in armaments between the principal military Powers is by far the most important aspect of the arms race and represents its prime motivating factor. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to reiterate to the Chairman its unconditional support for efforts to achieve concrete results in the work assigned to the First Committee.

Lastly, I should like to quote from the statement made by the President of my country to the General Assembly at its forty-second session. He said:

"The subjects of peace in the world deserve our special attention. That is why we look forward with great hope to the attainment by the great Powers of agreements leading to gradual disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons and all the risks of the destruction of mankind.

"Disarmament and development are two of the problems that weigh most heavily on the contemporary world; they must be understood as two distinct processes that are closely related. Each has a separate development and distinct goals. One complements the other. Disarmament complements development by means of the reallocation of financial resources, which can be put to better use in development programmes, particularly the struggle against illiteracy, disease and malnutrition and the eradication of the poverty that afflicts more than two thirds of mankind." (A/42/PV.6, p. 15)

Mr. LIMON (Suriname): It is generally acknowledged that the United Nations has a specific responsibility with regard to all matters pertaining to disarmament, and particularly to the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

(Mr. Limon, Suriname)

We all know that the United Nations can perform satisfactorily in the pursuit of its goals, including disarmament, only if Member States allow it to do so by abiding by its principles.

Recently it has become increasingly obvious that any further escalation of mutual threats makes no sense. It has also become imperative to renounce the traditional dogmas of diplomacy through force and reliance on military power as the principal and ultimate arbiter in international relations.

My delegation is convinced that in many States, including those with nuclear capability, the belief has taken root that the concept of mutual deterrence, which has up until now been one of the prime movers of the arms race, must be replaced by a new policy-making approach. The new approach must ensure a solution to the problem of strengthening peace on earth and must, as a first step in the gradual process of achieving general and complete disarmament, ensure the reduction and eventual elimination of the threat of nuclear war by taking practical steps drastically to reduce the level of nuclear arms and to strengthen the security of countries and peoples, primarily by political means favourable to greater mutual and global confidence.

(Mr. Limon, Suriname)

The international community has recently witnessed the result of the implementation of this new approach of policy-making in the signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - by the two States which possess by far the largest amount of nuclear armaments. The scope of this Treaty is limited, certainly in terms of the numerical count of the warheads it covers, but the INF Treaty has been welcomed for its political value. It is so rightly said by many delegations when they describe the value of the INF Treaty that this agreement demonstrated that, given political will, it is possible both to stop the arms race and to reverse it. But the INF Treaty is only a first practical step on the way to general and complete disarmament. Much remains to be done.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Suriname in his address to the General Assembly at its third special session devoted to disarmament stated the following:

"The Treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces and other bilateral agreements between the two super-Powers to curb the arms race, however important they may be, are still merely small steps to reduce the tremendous overkill capacity that those States have amassed in their arsenals. They should, therefore, be followed soon by further substantial cuts in the total nuclear forces of those countries, if we are to achieve the noble goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons by the turn of the century."

(A/S-15/PV.9, p. 91)

During the third special session devoted to disarmament, my delegation also voiced the high expectation of the Government and people of Suriname - an expectation also shared by the international community - concerning the contribution of that special session in setting the stage for further practical

(Mr. Limon, Suriname)

steps in the field of disarmament. Unfortunately, that special session did not accommodate the expectation of mankind as it did not succeed in the adoption of a consensus document. However, it did succeed in demonstrating once again the common international desire for disarmament and in outlining the areas of differences and agreement. My delegation considers that it is the task of the Committee to adopt measures that would diminish differences in view and would guide future actions in the disarmament process.

Allow me briefly to state my delegation's position concerning some other disarmament items on our agenda. The delegation of Suriname supports and joins all those who seek the early convening of a conference aimed at the adoption of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. My delegation holds the view that if the international community were to succeed in the adoption of such a treaty, embodying also a multilateral verification system, that would once again give momentum to global efforts for disarmament, strengthen the role and function of the United Nations in the disarmament field, and enhance and strengthen confidence world wide.

During the debate on disarmament and verification the importance of verification, especially multilateral verification, has been stressed by many delegations. Nevertheless, I should like to avail myself of this opportunity, once again to stress the importance of an integrated multilateral verification system within the United Nations. We do so because we believe that this point cannot be emphasized enough; for disarmament is not the obligation or priority of a few States: it is a matter of life or death for all. The international community therefore has the right and obligation to see to it that once we agree on certain disarmament actions we all abide by them.

My delegation, representing a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, welcomes and supports all efforts to establish other nuclear-free zones and, equally, we support the call for the convening of the Fourth Review Conference on

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the non-proliferation Treaty in 1990. My Government considers these international instruments aimed at stopping the further proliferation of nuclear armaments as significant steps in the process of achieving general and complete disarmament.

With regard to outer space, my delegation reiterates its view that an arms race in outer space must be prevented. As the common heritage of mankind, outer space should be explored and used exclusively for peaceful purposes, to the benefit of mankind as a whole.

My delegation deplores the use of chemical weapons by States. It is obvious, taking into account the inhuman suffering the use of these weapons inflicts upon innocent victims, mostly women and children, that concerted international efforts are needed to free mankind from these weapons. These efforts should result in the adoption of measures that will eliminate existing stocks of all chemical weapons and prohibit the future production and stockpiling of such weapons.

It is generally recognized that there exists a close relationship between disarmament, international peace and security, and development. As stated earlier, the international community has renounced the view that international peace and security are served by the escalating race in armaments and therefore mankind has chosen disarmament as the only way to ensure peace and security on Earth.

We are all aware of the non-military threat to security, just as we are aware of the wider concept of international peace. In the view of my delegation, international peace, according to this wider concept, is not merely the absence of war or warlike situations, but also the existence of an international climate that favours respect for human rights, enhances human dignity, and encourages economic and social development.

(Mr. Limon, Suriname)

What that definition acknowledges is the fact that development, as part and parcel of international peace, is also a conditio sine qua non of international security.

One of the commonly shared opinions that arose from the third special session devoted to disarmament is the awareness that the goals of disarmament and arms limitation need to be pursued, not only in conjunction with efforts to resolve conflicts and to build international confidence, but also in conjunction with the promotion of economic and social development. Suriname believes that changing the arms policy into a policy aimed at economic and social development would release significant human and financial resources that could be utilized to promote world-wide development, prosperity, peace and security.

In conclusion, my delegation expresses the hope that the Committee will succeed in outlining concrete proposals aimed at the transformation of this favourable political climate for disarmament into practical measures to ensure peace.

Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana): We have been prompted to intervene in this general debate by an interest in item 145, namely the question of "Liability for the illegal transfer and/or use of prohibited weapons and weapons or substances which cause unnecessary human suffering".

This is a new item on the Committee's agenda but the phenomenon which it seeks to address is by no means a recent one. For centuries man has found it highly profitable to trade in arms and noxious substances. Indeed, giant industries have been spawned and now flourish to satisfy an ever expanding market. So powerful are they that they operate beyond national boundaries and, often, beyond the reach of the law. They care little that their lucrative trade results only in death and destruction.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

The socio-economic and political implications of this trafficking are alarming. For one thing, it diverts scarce resources away from economic development and growth to the production and accumulation of conventional weapons in excess of reasonable security and defence needs. It potentiates the risk of internal subversion and external aggression. It fuels regional conflicts which often develop into wider conflagrations. In the end, it effectively undermines global peace and security and increases the threat of nuclear war. That eventuality is so terrifying to contemplate that the world would do well to halt the spread of this evil.

An important step in this direction has been taken with the clear recognition of its consequences. The non-aligned countries, for example, acknowledged at their ministerial meeting last May in Havana,

"the negative implications for international peace of arms supplies in the areas of tension, particularly illegal arms trafficking, a phenomenon that further aggravates tensions, undermines internal security in some States and regional security and strengthens forces opposed to the disarmament process."

(A/S-15/27, para. 56)

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

Following that declaration, the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament reviewed the question thoroughly and came to the conclusion that arms transfers, in both their overt and their covert forms, were in urgent need of regulation. It would seem that the time is now opportune for the international community to consider what action it might appropriately take to deal with this problem.

In addressing his mind to this problem, my own Foreign Minister averred on the occasion of the special session that

"Several steps suggest themselves for a curb on this practice. The first is universal adherence to international law. Foremost among its principles are those relating to the threat or use of force and the Charter injunction to settle conflicts peacefully. Clearly, there is also a crying need for national action to restrain, and to deal condignly with, the arms pushers who profit from trafficking in the death of others". (A/S-15/PV.9, p. 53)

We reiterate those views in this forum in the hope that they may gain wide acceptance as a basis for future action.

Arms-exporting countries bear a special responsibility in helping to combat the huge flow of arms. Hence the appeal made by the Secretary-General in his own statement to the third special session on disarmament, in which he appealed to arms-exporting countries

"to adopt a policy, based on principle, not to supply those weapons to developing countries which, on objective grounds, are not needed for their security from likely aggression."

Such a policy, he believed,

"could act as a restraint on the proliferation of sophisticated and costly weapons which, apart from the fear and insecurity it has caused, is a heavy and unwarranted burden on the economy of those countries". (A/S-15, V.1, p. 26)

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

We entirely concur with the Secretary-General's thinking and accordingly call on arms-exporting countries to use their authority to restrain the excesses of the arms trade.

At the international level there are parallel measures of control that could be agreed upon. In this context, mention may be made of the proposal by Italy and the United Kingdom for establishing within the United Nations system a reporting mechanism which would serve to monitor the arms transactions of Member States on a universal and non-discriminatory basis. Similarly, both Colombia and Peru have advanced the suggestion of commissioning a comprehensive study of the problem of illicit arms transfers. Such an analysis would undoubtedly probe the full extent of the practice and help identify ways and means for its eradication. In the same vein, the proposal of Trinidad and Tobago appears to be not only of direct relevance, but also eminently logical.

Clearly, those who are found responsible for illegal arms transfers should be prosecuted as criminals to the full extent of the law. Guyana therefore supports the idea of increased international co-operation in criminal-justice administration to combat such transfers. We ourselves have found that at the bilateral level such co-operation in the fight against the twin evil of drug trafficking has been remarkably effective in stemming the tide of imports and exports. We would therefore advocate the conclusion of bilateral and regional agreements among neighbouring States which share the common objective of curbing illegal arms. With the extension and multiplication of such agreements a vast international network could eventually be created to provide wider control. Ultimately, however, our aim should be the formulation of a legally binding convention which would cover all States and all issues. To that end, we urge the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, to place this question on its agenda with a view to expediting an international agreement in this area.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

Having focused on this specific issue, I hasten to add that it is certainly not our purpose to distract attention from our paramount goal of general and complete disarmament. Our priorities are clearly established in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which remains, certainly for us, not only valid but sacrosanct. It may be recalled, however, that that document also recognized the necessity of negotiating restrictions on the transfer of conventional arms. Our approach, I venture to say, must therefore be on all fronts.

My delegation continues to attach great importance to linking disarmament with our aspirations to development. The International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development, which was held last year, accepted, albeit grudgingly, that the two issues should be seen in conjunction. That acceptance must now be translated into a genuine effort to divert the precious resources now lost in the production of weapons to much-needed development.

There is, regrettably, a persistent refusal on the part of some States to accept the linkage between disarmament and development. To justify their rigid position they argue that conversion from one process to the other is not a feasible proposition. However, recent studies would seem to refute that contention and prove it is not impossible to dismantle the machinery of war for reassembly as an instrument of peaceful development. Those States which form the oligopoly of destructive power can therefore easily harness their great industrial capacity in the service of the welfare of all peoples. By doing so they would eradicate the root causes of global insecurity and assist in the promotion of development on a more equitable basis.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

Like so many other delegations which have spoken, my delegation cannot conceal its disappointment at the failure of the third special session on disarmament to make any significant progress in the several areas of our concern. We believe none the less that the comprehensive review and assessment of the disarmament process undertaken at that session has allowed us to determine where we stand in relation to our goal of general and complete disarmament. Our agenda is now, we believe, more clearly defined, and we have a better appreciation of what might be achieved in the area of global security.

Moreover, the high level of debate demonstrated clearly that, with an enlightened attitude and the necessary political will, progress can be made in the field of disarmament. We ourselves were heartened by the continued insistence on enhancing the United Nations role in the disarmament process and on the revitalization of the work of the Conference on Disarmament. That negotiating body should begin to work earnestly on those issues which until now have escaped agreement, namely a comprehensive test-ban treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and conventional disarmament.

In the light of the discussions on chemical weapons that took place during the special session, we are also optimistic that we can soon attain the conclusion of a convention on the world-wide prohibition of those horrible weapons. We look now to the conference on chemical weapons to be held at Paris next January and to continuing work by the Conference on Disarmament to expedite our progress.

We are similarly encouraged by the advances made thus far on verification, particularly the consensus achieved at the session on the commissioning of an expert study on the role of the United Nations in that area. Guyana is strongly in favour of a universal and integrated monitoring and verification system under the aegis of the United Nations, and therefore fully supports the proposals made in that regard under the Six-Nation initiative.

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

Most important, however, was the widespread recognition at the third special session on disarmament that disarmament cannot be divorced from the question of international peace and security. We will, of course, come to these issues later on in our debate. Suffice it to say now that in order to attain complete disarmament the nations of the world must accept the fact that exclusive reliance on armaments cannot guarantee security, that threats to their common security are not exclusively military, and that effective political action in a multilateral framework is the only viable option we have for solving our common problems.

It would appear that there is now a more ready disposition on the part of States, and more particularly the nuclear Powers, to subscribe to that thesis. That attitudinal change is a most welcome development and one this Committee must capture and harness if our efforts are to further the process of arms limitation and disarmament. Judging from the deliberations which have taken place thus far and with the excellent guidance which you, Mr. Chairman, continue to provide, I am led to believe that we shall not fail to grasp this further opportunity to press for even greater achievements.

Mr. HARMON (Liberia): As the last speaker on this the final day of the Committee's general debate on disarmament I have pleasure in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on the managerial skill with which you have conducted the debate. It is also my pleasure to congratulate those who have been your corps of officers during these very difficult and complex meetings.

We have had the advantage of having been informed of various points of view, some of which we endorse fully. Collectively, those who have spoken have given the world what might be described as a comprehensive index of the history of the disarmament issue in its long and heartbreaking past, which contains a grim warning to all mankind that in point of time will not be duplicated in another 43 years of a so-called disarmament which enacted perhaps the most amazing paradox in all traceable history, namely a somersault reversal of its label, its purpose and its function under the Charter - and this after two of the bloodiest world wars in all history.

My country, Liberia, has always maintained a special interest in the disarmament issue. The reason - and this is not generally taught in the history classes in the world's advanced countries - is that Liberia was the first sovereign State in Africa, the grand continent of European colonialism, and was a founding Member of the United Nations. When the former African colonies became Members of the world Organization, Liberia saw those unarmed States subjected to neo-colonialism and new, covert wars by mercenaries and conspiratorial alliances, and suffer the same fate. No prophecy in history was so sternly fulfilled.

Liberia saw a moral triumph in the rise of the African States in the United Nations, but warily noted these States to be unarmed and naked against the rising tide of the Western-Eastern arms race. Thus we kept an unrelenting eye on the disarmament issue and made it our enduring policy to support this undying cause in the United Nations. With this background, it should not be a surprise that at

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every session of the General Assembly Liberia decided to turn its mere voting support into some kind of constructive initiative.

To do something to pull the seemingly hopeless efforts against the arms race out of a rut, we had the honour to present on behalf of my Government what we called "a new philosophy of disarmament rhetoric", which served the purpose of moving the stale debate onto a new track. In a declaration that we issued in the First Committee on 13 November 1976 we carried the implications of the arms race from the valley of militarism and war to the high ground of new implications, new premises and new promises. We pointed out at the time that the race was becoming less ideological and more technological - and vastly more a matter of economics. We pointed out that the vast sums spent on arms threw many poor nations into war with rich nations at a time when their peoples were suffering from hunger, exploitation, disease, malnutrition, infant mortality and, above all, hopelessness.

This situation was threatening to create a new kind of war, while vast sums were being diverted to the production of destructive weapons, in a vicious circle, a kind of molecular chain-reaction as new weapons led to a new acceleration of the arms race, driving nations into new arming. We stated our conviction that a new beginning must be made, and we pointed out the contradiction that the drive for maximum arming coincided with man's greatest effort in contemporary history to attain a new order of final peace. As to the implementation of this new approach, we suggested that it would require a new partnership of Governments, the United Nations and a third party - the people.

Ten years have passed since our initiative, and much has happened, but what is strangely significant is that most of it happened in 1987, showing that the element of time and delay is not a law of nature but is the result of lack of will in man. Can that will be sustained? To answer that question it is essential to see what we

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have. The rising wave of euphoria, it should be emphasized, echoes the rising confidence in the sudden, almost collective salute to the winds of negotiations suddenly blowing from every direction. We salute the two great leaders of the super-Powers for what was accomplished at the last summit. The Iran-Iraq war, the question of Afghanistan and many other issues, it seems, have lately come simultaneously under the wing of the Secretary-General, whose efforts have been augmented by his unprecedented partnership with the Security Council. Precipitously it became almost fashionable to negotiate. This applied even to the stubborn men of apartheid. Suddenly the finger-pointing criticism of the United Nations became the applause of many hands. Even the Secretary-General's fortress of innate modesty collapsed suddenly when, addressing the inherently sceptical and doubting United Nations press on 19 September, he stated "This is a time of pride for the United Nations."

If the prevailing euphoria is warranted by the new climate in general, it can hardly be said that there are similar expectations on the broad issue of disarmament. The history of struggle against the vaunting of weapons of war shows that the counter-struggle prevailed. When the United Nations was being founded the horses of the cold were already being saddled, and that cold war continued right up to the Soviet-United States handshake at the meeting of their armies on the Elbe River, with all its friendly emotions, which were soon lost away under the rubble of post-war hostilities.

(Mr. Harmon, Liberia)

We are, however greatly encouraged at the fact that the current session is taking place in an atmosphere of hope, initiated by the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - truly a first accord.

As can be seen by the demand for a second accord, much hope now rests on the new détente between the two super-Powers and we, the people of the world, are looking forward with eager anticipation to further accords and continued negotiations aimed at eventual complete disarmament.

I am therefore particularly pleased at this point to refer to a recent interview held with you, Mr. Chairman. When you were asked, "What is your major objective for the First Committee", you replied: "A major objective for Canada is to seek broader support for a more pragmatic, realistic approach to disarmament." Realism and flexibility: I hope you will bear with me, but "pragmatic" and "realistic" are the old language for delays.

You also asked for re-thinking. So did Albert Einstein right after the Hiroshima bomb. He said: "We shall require a substantially new manner of new thinking if mankind is to survive." We tried it 10 years ago in our new philosophy on disarmament. But generally what is really behind it all is that, when it comes to the super-Powers, disarmament involves the enormous amount of power the weapons race has given them, and power is what it is all about.

The word "disarmament" is now more than one word. It has ramifications, including the knotty tree of verification, which is being used as the sine qua non of disarmament.

In conclusion, therefore, the issues we have discussed here are, for the time being, far-off events, requiring all of us to remain vigilant and supportive of the urge for peace and stability in our one world. May God bless all of us.

Ms. LIMA (Angola) (interpretation from French): Allow me first of all to offer you the congratulations of the Angolan delegation on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Your election is a personal tribute to your skill as a diplomat and your competence in the field we are now discussing. May I also express to all the other officers of the Committee and to the Secretariat our best wishes for the successful completion of our work.

We are now approaching the end of a decade marked by numerous disputes, a decade during which resort to armed force has often prevailed over dialogue. However, notwithstanding these set-backs, the international situation today is beginning to show signs of hope, which are helping relieve world tension, thus contributing to the international peace and security which the whole international community so ardently desires.

Examples of this new trend include the Treaty between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles; the progress made in the field of disarmament, within the framework of the Geneva talks between the two super-Powers; and the current negotiations aimed at settling, on the basis of dialogue, various regional conflicts around the world.

However, as my Foreign Minister emphasized in the plenary Assembly, it is our opinion that all of these events, however positive they may be, are still insignificant when compared with the numerous problems facing mankind today, problems which call for urgent solutions.

Statistical data make it clear that more than a trillion dollars are devoted to the arms race, whereas in the developing countries some billion people live in poverty, more than 700 million human beings suffer malnutrition and more than 900 million of the inhabitants of the third world are illiterate. If one adds to

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this list the fact that about one and a half billion people from those countries suffer from disease which could be treated if there were medical assistance available, and that those countries are compelled to allocate vast sums of money to meet pressing defence needs to the detriment of socio-economic investments in their own countries, then we must state with great conviction that the damage done by the arms race is twofold in nature.

In the light of the foregoing, we have frequently emphasized the close links between disarmament and development. It is with this in mind that we support the recommendation that immediate and effective measures be taken in the field of disarmament, not only in order to guarantee peaceful coexistence between States but also in order to release resources that could be used for development aid projects of a socio-economic nature in the third world. We are convinced that there can be no development without peace, and the United Nations must never lose sight of that fact.

At its present session the General Assembly must also reaffirm the validity of the Final Document adopted at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, particularly with regard to its objectives, principles and priorities.

The need for practical measures to prevent the outbreak of a nuclear war, the urgent need to put an end, once and for all, to all nuclear-weapons testing are priorities which we cannot neglect. By their very nature nuclear weapons are instruments for the destruction of the human species. On several occasions, the international community has acknowledged that there can be no winners and no losers in a nuclear war.

(Ms. Lima, Angola)

There is also a need for concrete measures to prevent the spread of the arms race to outer space.

The danger of the militarisation of outer space is quite clear. It is therefore essential that efforts be made to freeze the new arsenal that is being prepared for a frenzied arms race in space. After all, space is the common heritage of mankind and should be used solely for peaceful purposes.

Another sphere of concern to us is that of chemical weapons. It is our belief that the international community should redouble its efforts to adopt as soon as possible an international convention prohibiting the use and manufacture of chemical weapons.

We are quite certain that the establishment of international relations based on peaceful coexistence and trust between States and the development of co-operation based on respect for mutual interests should not be subordinated to ideological differences. The arms race is incompatible with the United Nations Charter, as it institutionalizes the use of force in relations between States.

The persistence of colonialism, racism and apartheid in southern Africa would not be possible without the overt or covert support of certain Western countries for the racist régime of South Africa.

The aggressive policy of the apartheid régime and its now confirmed acquisition of a nuclear capability pose a threat to all the countries of Africa, particularly those of southern Africa. Accordingly, it is a threat to international peace and security.

Since this is so, we clearly cannot lay down our weapons. In this context, we believe that the General Assembly should adopt concrete measures to put an end to the danger posed by the apartheid régime and must condemn those countries which have made it possible for that country to acquire that nuclear capability. We must therefore reiterate the document adopted in 1978 and reaffirmed in 1982, in

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particular its paragraph 12, which considers that the large-scale build-up of weapons and the acquisition of nuclear technology by the racist régime are a dangerous obstacle and a challenge to the international community's efforts to implement the disarmament programme.

It is thus imperative to take practical steps towards imposing an embargo on arms and technology for South Africa and to impose mandatory sanctions against that régime, which continues to occupy Namibia and to oppress more than 25 million South African Blacks in their own country, and which at the same time practices a policy of destabilization against the front-line States in general and Angola and Mozambique in particular.

Notwithstanding the hostility of the apartheid régime that has taken the form of direct or indirect acts of aggression, Angola has taken a flexible stance in the quest for just and lasting peace in southern Africa.

Unfortunately, despite the attitude which Angola has always adopted in negotiations through United States mediation between the Governments of Angola and Cuba, on the one hand, and South Africa on the other, the truth is that, the agreement on principles concluded in Geneva notwithstanding, the parties have still failed to reach a final agreement. The racist régime of South Africa is to blame for this state of affairs, because, with the support of its allies, it has brought to the negotiating tables a series of factors which, by their very nature, are nothing more than flagrant acts of interference in the internal affairs of Angola.

Our flexibility, and that of our Cuban friends, should not be seen as a sign of weakness. On the contrary, it evinces the candour and integrity which we have shown in the quest for a just and lasting solution to the problems of southern Africa which will take into account the security of Angola and respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity and make it possible for Namibia to accede to

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independence in accordance with Security Council resolution 435 (1978) and without any elements extraneous to that resolution.

We are not players in the arms race but victims rather, who demand that decisions be made and an agreement concluded for a complete and general disarmament that would guarantee world peace.

In conclusion, let me say that we look forward to seeing the Committee, under your enlightened guidance, adopt resolutions that will contribute to a climate of trust and mutual respect among all nations, so that the vitality of dialogue will prevail over resort to the force of arms. Until those goals have been reached the struggle continues, victory is certain.

The CHAIRMAN: We have concluded the general debate that we opened some two-and-a-half weeks ago and we are ready now to move to the second stage of our work.

I would like to say a word on the debate that we have just concluded and on the progress that I believe we have made.

At the start of the proceedings, I referred to the positive atmosphere that is with us and has stayed with us throughout the debate. It is an atmosphere which, I believe, we can now build upon. The signs of progress have been quite encouraging.

To begin with, we have had a record number of States participating in the general debate. One hundred fourteen States made addresses, compared to 101 States in 1987 and 94 States in 1986. This increase in States' participation reflects a growing recognition of the universal concern with the issues of arms limitation and disarmament.

One hundred twenty-six statements were made in the general debate, and, in addition to the presentation made by the Under-Secretary-General and the eight speeches in the Disarmament Week observance last week, we have had thus far a total of 135 statements.

(The Chairman)

The general tone of the debate has, in my judgement, been constructive and businesslike and the polemics of past years have been noticeably diminished, if not totally eliminated. Serious and sustained efforts have been undertaken to increase the convergence of views on many items, and we have noted that, although there are new items on our agenda this year, the actual number of draft resolutions has remained more or less constant.

(The Chairman)

We have 72 draft resolutions that we are now processing. All of this indicates an effort to rationalize our work, so these developments have been positive.

I would be remiss if I did not at the same time strike a note of caution, for there is much work still to be done, and in order to be effective we must increase our efforts to speak with one voice wherever possible. That means continuing to pursue a convergence of views on similar draft resolutions. We have increased the consultation time, particularly in the period we are now entering, for precisely that purpose - to try to effect mergers wherever possible and to work towards consensus where the possibility exists. So we have sufficient time now to work perhaps more strongly than we have been able to in the past, towards mergers and consensus. I assure the Committee that I shall use my good offices for the sake of any delegation that wishes my assistance in pursuing these goals.

I think our work has definitely been promising and I now look forward to the next stage. Tomorrow we shall proceed to the next phase of the programme of work - consideration of and action on all draft resolutions on disarmament items 51 to 69, 139, 141 and 145. As I have said, the 72 draft resolutions are being processed. Most of them have been distributed as documents of the Committee, and the Secretariat is making every effort to distribute the remaining draft resolutions during the course of the day today.

Beginning tomorrow and continuing until Friday, 18 November, 24 meetings have been allocated for this second phase of our work. I believe we shall be in a position to conclude all action on draft resolutions in the disarmament field by Friday, 18 November. On the basis of that timetable, I propose that beginning tomorrow and continuing until 9 November our meetings be devoted to the introduction of and comments on draft resolutions. I expect that it will be possible for us to begin to take action on draft resolutions - voting - on Thursday,

(The Chairman)

10 November. I encourage the use of the time between now and then for consultation on mergers and consensus for resolutions.

I would urge those delegations wishing to speak during the next phase of our work in order to introduce draft resolutions or to make comments to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible, because early inscription on the list will not only enable us to ensure the full and effective use of the time and services available but will also enable us to avoid holding night meetings and also to avoid an unnecessary extension of meetings beyond the regular hours.

Lastly, I intend to follow the practice that has evolved in recent years of grouping draft resolutions in appropriate clusters so that the Committee's work may proceed in an efficient and systematic manner at the voting stage. This week, and perhaps over the weekend, the officers of the Committee will work on the clustering. I have found out in coming to the Chair for the first time that it is quite an extensive operation to have those clusters done logically and in a sequential manner, so I ask for the understanding of members of the Committee in giving us the time needed to prepare the cluster list in a manner that will be acceptable and useful to them. I expect to be in a position to provide members of the Committee with the cluster list as early as possible next week.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.