



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. Roche (Canada)

CONTENTS

- GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS (continued)

*This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned within one week of the date of publication to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2 740, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 51 TO 69, 139, 141 AND 145 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. MORTENSEN (Denmark): Let me say first of all, Sir, what a special pleasure it is to see you presiding over this Committee. Your great skill and your dedication to the quest for disarmament are well known. The Danish delegation looks forward to working with you, and I can assure you of our full co-operation in the weeks ahead in making your task as easy as possible.

Last Tuesday the Ambassador of Greece spoke on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community. Denmark, of course, fully subscribes to that statement.

In recent years, an aspect of disarmament has been brought to the forefront of our attention in the most tragic way. Many of us had had what we believed to be a reasonable hope of never seeing one particular type of weapon used again. I am thinking, of course, of chemical weapons. The repeated use of such weapons has demonstrated the urgency of reaching early agreement on a complete, global and verifiable elimination of such abhorrent weapons. We are deliberately bringing this issue up as the first one we want to mention in our general statement in the First Committee this year.

We fully support the initiative for an international conference to uphold the norm against use of chemical weapons as embodied in the 1925 Geneva Protocol. We see it as a timely and important initiative that should underline the political will to pursue a global ban on such weapons and thereby give further impetus to the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. Denmark signed the 1925 Protocol without reservation. We do not have any chemical weapons. We do not want any. That has always been our policy.

Reports of the increased proliferation of chemicals weapons give rise to great concern. All States have an interest in reaching a total ban on those weapons. We

(Mr. Mortensen, Denmark)

welcome the progress made in the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in recent years, although we note with regret that the pace of progress this year has fallen short of our expectations. We recognize that a number of difficulties are still outstanding. They do not, however, seem insurmountable. We were encouraged by the statement made by the President of France in the general debate in the General Assembly with regard to the abandoning of the notion of insisting on security stocks. We appreciate that gesture on the part of France. All States should actively support the negotiations on a global ban on chemical weapons.

In that connection we hope that it will be possible again this year for the General Assembly to speak with one voice in support of negotiations towards a global ban. As a confidence-building measure in support of the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, it would, as my Foreign Minister stated in his statement in the Assembly's general debate, be an important political signal if all countries were to declare their policy with regard to chemical weapons and state whether or not they possess such weapons.

Denmark has for many years felt a special responsibility for keeping the question of conventional disarmament on the United Nations agenda. In our view, conventional disarmament should play a prominent role in our deliberations. There is an urgent need for all countries to explore what each can do to initiate or facilitate efforts aimed at conventional-arms limitation and disarmament.

Although nuclear weapons have the highest potential for destruction, it is conventional weapons that have actually killed millions of people since the Second World War. The accumulation of arms is not limited to a few States. The conventional-arms build-up is present in a very large number of countries all over the world, often at the expense of much-needed resources for development. The fact that all States bear a direct responsibility in this field gives the United Nations

(Mr. Mortensen, Denmark)

a unique role in generating an awareness of the urgency of pursuing conventional disarmament. Ongoing and planned negotiations on conventional disarmament should be encouraged. The regional context seems to be the most practicable for concrete negotiations, such as those now under preparation in Vienna for the continent to which my country belongs.

The United Nations should, however, be capable of addressing the issue systematically, substantially and with vigour. Global negotiations on general guidelines and principles for conventional disarmament would be a positive contribution to regional efforts. We urge the Disarmament Commission to continue its substantive consideration of issues related to conventional disarmament. Conventional disarmament is part of the basic agenda for the Conference on Disarmament. The possibility of incorporating that item into its annual agenda could be considered.

We have noted with interest that a number of States, both in this Committee and at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, have referred to various aspects of the question of transfers of conventional arms. We sympathize with the idea of looking into the possibilities of setting up some kind of United Nations register with a view to creating greater openness and transparency in this field.

Denmark has consistently supported negotiations on nuclear-arms control and disarmament in relevant forums. 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 was in many ways an important landmark and an important first step towards further progress in arms control and disarmament, a process that must include an agreement between the United States and

(Mr. Mortensen, Denmark)

the Soviet Union on a 50 per cent reduction of their strategic nuclear weapons, a complete ban on chemical weapons, the establishment of conventional stability in the whole of Europe and, in conjunction with that, tangible and verifiable reduction of American and Soviet land-based nuclear-missile systems of shorter range as well. While negotiations proceed there must be full compliance with existing arms-control agreements, in the spirit as well as in the letter. My Government attaches particular importance to the preservation and continued observance of the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems.

The Alliance to which my country belongs has repeatedly stated that none of its weapons shall ever be used except in response to an attack. For the Alliance, nuclear weapons serve exclusively to prevent war. While the ultimate goal should be the total abolition of nuclear arms, it is essential to work towards reducing the reliance on nuclear deterrence. It remains a firm Danish policy to strive towards that end. Increased confidence, openness and predictability among States are important ingredients in a process of disarmament and détente. Any blurring of the qualitative distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons must be avoided. Through negotiations a priority must be given to eliminating the categories of weapons that are most destabilizing.

The establishment of conventional stability in Europe at lower levels of arms and forces is essential for reducing the reliance on nuclear weapons. We therefore attach great importance to the coming negotiations in Vienna on conventional stability. The elimination of the capacity for surprise attacks and for large-scale offensive operations would be a major step towards increasing the security of Europe.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains one of the most important arms-control agreements reached to date. The NPT has had a

(Mr. Mortensen, Denmark)

positive effect on international peace and security to the benefit of all States. Any emergence of new nuclear-weapon States is bound to have far-reaching destabilizing effects, triggering unforeseeable developments. Therefore, reports of the nuclear ambitions of certain countries in different parts of the world are extremely disturbing.

We look forward to the Fourth Review Conference on the NPT in 1990. Denmark, together with other parties to the Treaty, will work actively to ensure that that occasion will serve to preserve and enhance the NPT. A successful conclusion of the Fourth Review Conference on the NPT will provide a strong impetus to efforts with a view to achieving a complete cessation of nuclear tests.

(Mr. Mortensen, Denmark)

Strong international support for the non-proliferation Treaty régime should ensure that the nuclear option never becomes an attractive solution to perceived security needs. Suspicion and mistrust must be countered by openness and confidence. The non-proliferation Treaty régime is an important part of building that confidence. We welcome recent accessions to the non-proliferation Treaty and see in this further proof of the importance and vitality of the Treaty. We urge all States at present outside the non-proliferation Treaty to face their responsibility and join the Treaty.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world could be an important contribution to non-proliferation and to the disarmament process in general, especially in areas where not all countries have acceded to the non-proliferation Treaty. Such zones must take into account the characteristics of each region and be based on arrangements freely arrived at between all the States of the regions concerned. Together with the other Nordic countries, Denmark has engaged in a study on the conditions for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in our own part of the world. Any decision in this respect - when we come to that stage - will of course have to be taken in a larger European context and must be seen by all relevant parties as a contribution to the furthering of a process of détente and disarmament in Europe.

An issue closely related to that of non-proliferation is the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Over the years Denmark has urged and supported efforts aimed at the early conclusion of a treaty banning all nuclear tests, in all environments, by all States, and for all time. While not an end in itself a comprehensive test ban would be an important step towards nuclear disarmament and would enhance the attraction of the non-proliferation Treaty régime for non-nuclear-weapon States. As a negotiating body attended by all five nuclear-weapon States, the Conference on Disarmament is the forum where

(Mr. Mortensen, Denmark)

multilateral negotiations on the test-ban issue should take place. The role of the Conference on Disarmament in negotiating an effective and verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test ban is important and complementary to any bilateral negotiations on the matter.

While the international community must continue to call for a complete ban on nuclear testing, we are encouraged by recent progress in the bilateral step-by-step negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union and we hope as a first step very soon to witness the ratification of the two bilateral threshold treaties. The process leading to the ratification of these two treaties has a significance that goes beyond the ratification. The intensive talks and negotiations as well as the joint verification experiment form part of a larger trust and confidence-building process and has marked a qualitative step forward in expanding the area of agreed verification procedures. We welcome this.

Naval armaments and disarmament have recently been given increased attention. The role of naval forces must be examined in an overall military and political context. In this connection it should be noted that the principle of undiminished security has special importance with regard to naval disarmament as a consequence of well-known geographical asymmetries. Denmark supports the deliberations in the United Nations Disarmament Commission on naval armaments and disarmament. Various proposals for confidence-building measures have been put forward including that of an international agreement to prevent incidents on the high seas. Openness, transparency and objective information are important for naval as well as for other disarmament areas. They will serve to create increased confidence and will be a necessary precondition for meaningful disarmament and arms control negotiations.

We met not long ago in this building for an in-depth examination of the whole range of disarmament issues. Regrettably, we were not able to reach consensus on a final document from the third special session devoted to disarmament. It has been

(Mr. Mortensen, Denmark)

said about the third special session that it was a lost opportunity and a set-back for the United Nations in disarmament. That is not the way we see it.

Much valuable work was done during the special session. We reached a convergence of views and a narrowing of differences that can and should be built upon in our further work. The in-depth discussions were a clear illustration of developments since 1978. The shift of emphasis towards conventional disarmament, the role of regional disarmament, confidence-building measures, openness, verification, non-proliferation and the urgent need for a global ban on chemical weapons were manifest throughout the special session.

Multilateral disarmament measures are necessary to complement, support and supplement bilateral arms control and disarmament measures: what the twelve European Community countries have called a constructive parallelism. Therefore it is natural in a multilateral forum first and foremost to focus attention on disarmament measures in which all States have a role to play. This is true not least in times of actual bilateral disarmament negotiations....

In order for our deliberations to have real influence, we must seek common ground and strive towards what could be termed meaningful consensus.

Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria): Last year the First Committee took up its deliberations in a particularly favourable atmosphere - only a few weeks after the successful September meeting in Washington between the Secretary of State of the United States and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union during which both sides agreed in principle to eliminate their intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles.

The work of the forty-third session of the General Assembly and of its First Committee is being held against an even more propitious background than the past session. Much has changed in the year behind us. East-West relations have improved markedly and the arms control process has clearly gained momentum.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

Looking back, the ratification of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - was the single most significant event in the field of arms control and disarmament. A whole category of nuclear weapons is being dismantled and parity will be achieved between the United States and the Soviet Union in this category of weapons at zero level. Similarly we all hope that a breakthrough will take place at the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks and that a 50 per cent cut in strategic nuclear weapons will be agreed upon soon. It is particularly gratifying, however, to note that a new quality in arms negotiations is evolving. While earlier agreements like the Treaty on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (SALT) were rather aimed at channelling the arms race, we are now witnessing a movement away from arms control towards genuine disarmament.

Noteworthy in this connection is, furthermore, the signing during the Moscow summit meeting of two accords, one calling for advance notice of ballistic missile launches and one that enables each side to measure the size of the other's nuclear explosions.

Austria has welcomed the bilateral efforts as important steps towards nuclear disarmament and considers the progress made so far in the field of verification to be particularly encouraging.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

On-site inspections, once a controversial issue, have now become almost a routine matter, both within the framework of the INF Treaty and in the context of the Document of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe.

While wholeheartedly welcoming the historic bilateral disarmament endeavours that have allowed us to enter into a period of new flexibility in East-West relations, I would like to state that international security should be of concern to and a joint venture of all nations and peoples. Arms control should therefore take place not only at the bilateral and regional but also at the multilateral levels. Efforts should be mutually supportive and complementary in nature. Only global co-operation can bring genuine security and lasting peace to the community of nations.

I will now turn to some specific items on the disarmament agenda.

An issue of highest priority and concern to my country is that of nuclear disarmament. Austria, being situated in the heart of a continent with the largest stockpiles of nuclear weapons, follows with particular attention all issues relating to nuclear disarmament.

I would like to recall therefore that the Austrian Government has consistently advocated the renunciation of nuclear testing until the conclusion of a nuclear-test-ban treaty. Furthermore, Austria has called for the strict observance of existing arms-control agreements, emphasizing that only in this way can the upward spiral of armament be halted and reversed.

As far as the verification of compliance with a comprehensive test-ban treaty is concerned - a problem that is considered technically solvable - Austria actively participates in the ad hoc group of scientific experts examining co-operative measures to detect and identify seismic events. The work of this group should help to facilitate the future functioning of a global seismological network, the core of

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

the entire verification machinery. Technological solutions must, however, be accompanied by political will in order ultimately to result in a nuclear-free world, a world substantially less dangerous than the one we live in now and less dangerous than the world we would have should the nuclear-arms race continue.

The high degree of attention being devoted to nuclear issues should not result, however, in overlooking the significance of conventional disarmament. This issue is a matter of great concern to Austria, which is surrounded not only by large numbers of nuclear weapons but also by a high concentration of conventional arms. Conventional disarmament should, in our view, be an integral part of the disarmament process, a process which should take place on a global as well as a regional level.

Let me now turn to a disarmament and security building effort undertaken on a regional level, the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE).

The high concentration of conventional forces and armaments in Europe remains at the core of European security concerns. Securing a stable balance of these forces at lower levels thus constitutes a special challenge to arms control efforts.

Progress on this issue has been elusive to date. The talks in Vienna on mutual and balanced force reductions -- while useful as a means to promote mutual understanding -- have in 16 years not yielded tangible results. Mistrust, excessive military secrecy and rigid negotiating postures have proved daunting obstacles to these talks.

During the past few years, however, some of the basic conditions for successful disarmament negotiations have improved significantly. The common realization of the need to eliminate disparities is one such positive development. Another is the breakthrough in the area of verification as well as the general trend towards greater openness in military matters. In view of these tendencies

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

and against the background of improved East-West relations, it appears evident to us that for the first time in post-war history there is a real chance for conventional disarmament.

Austria, therefore, has welcomed the decision of the 23 States members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and of the Warsaw Pact to initiate a new negotiating process in this field. We note with satisfaction that the consultations on the mandate of these negotiations appear to be near a successful conclusion and we share the desire to begin the new negotiations before the end of this year. We are grateful that Austria's offer to host these talks in Vienna has been so positively received.

That the new negotiations will take place within the framework of the CSCE process is for us a welcome recognition of the fact that the security interests of all CSCE participants - whether alliance members, neutral or non-aligned - will be affected by their outcome. Together with its partners in the neutral and non-aligned group, Austria continues to work at the Vienna meeting for adequate arrangements for non-participants to be informed and to express their views on the progress of those negotiations. We also maintain our position that the integrity of the CSCE process and the aim of the Conference on Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, as expressed in its Madrid mandate, have to be preserved. While we accept that conventional disarmament should begin with States members of the alliances, we believe that in the longer term all aspects of military security having a bearing on the security of the whole continent should be dealt with by all 35 participating States.

In recent years, confidence-building measures have established themselves as an important complement to disarmament measures. Efforts to reduce military hardware must be accompanied by steps to change the software in military establishments so that they become more predictable and less threatening. The

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

success of the Stockholm Conference and the encouraging record of implementation of the Stockholm confidence-building and security-building measures have confirmed the usefulness of confidence-building measures as an instrument for strengthening security.

Austria therefore welcomes the agreement at the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting to continue work on confidence-building and security-building measures and is currently preparing itself for active participation in those talks. They should go beyond the improvement of existing confidence-building and security-building measures. The potential of these measures for European security is far from exhausted. To continue to increase transparency and reduce military instabilities will require ambitious new confidence-building and security-building measures to be elaborated in close co-ordination with the parallel negotiations on conventional forces.

One item in the forefront of disarmament is the question of chemical-weapons disarmament. With deep concern we have taken note of the United Nations reports on the terrible effects of the use of chemical weapons in the Gulf area. Austria is horrified by allegations that these weapons were recently used against civilians. The international community must insist that chemical warfare is a violation of international law and must be condemned. The danger of chemical-weapons proliferation underlines the urgent need to ban those weapons on a global scale.

Austria therefore supports the proposal made by President Reagan in the general debate of this Assembly when he called upon the signatories to the Geneva Protocol of 1925, as well as other concerned States, to convene a conference to consider actions to reverse the serious erosion of this treaty. Austria considers that such a meeting should aim at making a solemn reaffirmation of the commitment

(Mr. Hohenfeller, Austria)

to the non-use of chemical weapons and encourage new accessions to the Protocol, as well as underline the world-wide desire for the speedy conclusion of the work currently being carried out within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

The invitation of President Mitterrand to hold such a conference shortly in Paris, and the wide support this initiative has found in the international community, give us the hope that the conference will not only effect the reaffirmation of the Geneva Protocol but also make a strong impact on the purposeful continuation of the Geneva negotiations on a chemical-weapons convention.

This convention should lead to the elimination of all existing stocks and facilities for the production of chemical weapons and thereby significantly enhance international security. Agreed verification procedures will, of course, constitute an essential element of the future chemical-weapons convention. The issue is complex, and much work remains to be done, but we must not allow ourselves to doubt that the verification problems can be solved.

The control mechanism should be devised in a way that ensures the effective and comprehensive implementation of the principle of the non-production of chemical weapons. For this purpose it seems necessary for all States to provide, at the earliest possible moment, relevant information about all chemical-industry facilities considered as potentially falling under the future convention.

Austria's traditional interest in disarmament affairs has led us to take up an initiative on the exchange of data concerning a chemical-weapons convention. We believe that the timely provision of such information will support the work of the Conference on Disarmament in a substantial way and constitute a confidence-building measure of outstanding importance. In this context, my delegation is grateful for the support shown to us so far. It seems to us that this session of the General Assembly offers a good opportunity to undertake such an initiative, which could be followed up on a broader basis next year.

Another important event in the field of disarmament was the recent convening of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. One hundred and thirty-five delegations, among them 24 heads of State or Government and

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

49 ministers of foreign affairs, made use of the opportunity to address the Assembly at plenary meetings and to present their updated views on disarmament matters. Equally important were their personal contacts, which also helped to enhance mutual understanding.

Regrettably, the extensive deliberations of the special session did not result in the adoption of a final document. However, the final draft reflected broad consensus on a number of points in the areas of verification, transparency of military budgets, nuclear disarmament and confidence-building measures. Moreover, the need for increased effectiveness in the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament was recognized during the special session.

In the view of the Austrian delegation the content of the deliberations is by no means lost; indeed, it has added momentum to the disarmament debate. As far as the elements of the final draft are concerned, we consider that they deserve further treatment in the immediate future and that they constitute a useful working basis for the debate in the First Committee and in the Conference on Disarmament.

I wish now to speak briefly about the central role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and about the need for greater effectiveness and relevance in the Organization's disarmament machinery. Let me be more concrete: its various bodies should be related to each other in a better way, in order to avoid repetition and duplication of work. The rationalization of the work of the First Committee should be pursued. The time available to the Disarmament Commission for deliberation should be spent in a meaningful way and it should concentrate on those issues that are, in the words of the Secretary-General, more likely to lead to multilateral progress, and on the basis of its deliberations the Commission should make specific recommendations to the General Assembly and, through it, to the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

I wish to refer now to the Conference on Disarmament, which, although an autonomous body of 40 nations, is the trustee of the international community as a whole, as the single negotiating body of a global nature.

Allow me, in this connection, to re-emphasize a long-standing Austrian concern. As members know, Austria is among those States which for several years have been candidates for full membership in the Conference on Disarmament. Unfortunately, since the conclusions of the second special session on the enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament were adopted, no progress has been achieved on this question. The international community needs a multilateral negotiating forum in which all States, whether members or not, can participate and make their contribution. As the political organization of the international community, the United Nations has to ensure that the Conference on Disarmament continues to have the trust of the international community as a whole in respect of disarmament. Accordingly, the question of wider access by non-members to the Conference should be kept under active review.

In conclusion I would like to emphasize once more Austria's awareness of the significance of the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union for the further development of international relations so that a stable order may be created in which problems can be solved in the interests of all the parties concerned. The State Treaty of 1955, which re-established Austria's independence, is testimony to that philosophy.

Furthermore, Austria has always taken the view that disarmament is a step-by-step process by which a global military equilibrium should be established at as low a level as possible.

Accordingly, after the ratification of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles we are looking forward to the next steps, which should result in further arms reduction and disarmament.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

In addition to bilateral efforts, I would like to stress with equal emphasis the importance of regional and multilateral efforts. They should be complementary and mutually supportive so that disarmament may be able to make the greatest possible contribution to building the structures of a secure and peaceful world as a joint venture on the part of all mankind.

Mr. AKŞIN (Turkey): Mr. Chairman, it is a particular pleasure for the Turkish delegation to see you presiding over the work of the First Committee this year, not least in view of the excellent relations and close ties of friendship between Turkey and Canada, but also because your personal dedication and Canada's tested commitment to disarmament are the best auguries for the success of the work of the Committee at this session.

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

Statements we have heard in the debate, in particular from representatives of countries which play a key role in disarmament negotiations, have reflected a new climate of optimism and expectation in international relations. This new mood is due particularly to a tangible improvement in the East-West relationship. Indeed, in the past 12 months encouraging developments in the field of East-West relations, arms control and disarmament have taken place. The dialogue and negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union have begun to yield concrete results. The conclusion and ratification of the Treaty on intermediate-range and shorter-range nuclear forces - the INF Treaty - was a historic step envisaging the elimination of an entire class of nuclear weapons. The asymmetrical reductions and the intrusive and effective verification arrangements it entails will set a good precedent for future arms-control agreements. We have already witnessed the beginning of the implementation of those arrangements.

The conclusion of an agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union on the substantial reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms will certainly constitute another fundamental development and be a profoundly encouraging sign for the future of East-West relations and the process of nuclear-arms control. We welcome the positive impact of high-level contacts such as the recent Washington and Moscow summit meetings on the ongoing process of negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on a wide range of issues, including arms control and disarmament. We hope the momentum thus created will be maintained and will continue to contribute to the improvement of international relations.

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

The convening last June of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament provided a welcome opportunity for extensive consideration of the issues involved in the area of disarmament. That important multilateral exercise, by identifying various approaches to the disarmament process and the different perceptions, interests and priorities of Member States, confirmed the close relationship between disarmament and the security concerns of all States and the maintenance of international peace and security. Despite the lack of final consensus, the progress made at the special session will be useful for future disarmament endeavours.

The agenda of the First Committee this year contains an item on the procedural steps to be taken for the preparation of the fourth review conference of parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In that regard, Turkey, as a party to the Treaty, holds the view that strict adherence to the Treaty is of vital significance. While the Treaty has thus far performed its function, the need remains to strengthen further the non-proliferation régime. We therefore urge universal adherence to the Treaty, and hope that the forthcoming review conference will provide an opportunity to encourage greater international co-operation in the field of non-proliferation, as a means of contributing effectively to international security. Similarly, increasing international co-operation in nuclear safety and the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be given firm and universal support.

The question of a comprehensive test ban remains one of the most important issues on the nuclear agenda. In this regard, we note with satisfaction the commitment of the two major nuclear-weapon States to pursue their negotiations on limiting and eventually ending nuclear testing through a step-by-step process. We also welcome the commencement of the joint verification experiment which was agreed upon at the Washington summit in December 1987.

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

With regard to nuclear-weapon-free zones, we continue to support the establishment of such zones with the agreement of all States concerned in regions where nuclear weapons do not exist and where these zones can make a significant contribution to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, in regions saturated with nuclear weapons of all categories the establishment of such zones will not enhance security, but on the contrary will create security gaps, unless region-wide effective disarmament measures are carried out simultaneously.

We also recognize that nuclear disarmament is only one aspect of the general problem. We view arms control and disarmament as a comprehensive process encompassing nuclear as well as conventional arms control, the prohibition of chemical weapons, and confidence-building and security-building measures. It is not possible to deal with nuclear weapons in isolation if we are seeking enhanced global security. Positive steps taken in the field of nuclear disarmament will therefore constitute the first stage in the immense task of establishing a balance of forces at significantly lower levels of armaments. It is essential for the success of future arms-control efforts to keep in sight the integrated nature of the endeavours in various fields.

In evaluating disarmament measures, Turkey keeps in mind the fact that because of its geostrategic location it has historically experienced threats to its security. Turkey is situated between Europe and Asia, adjacent to one of the largest concentrations of military forces in the world. Turkey also borders the Middle East, an unstable and sensitive region. These factors determine the political and military environment of the area. As far as nuclear weapons are concerned, Turkey is within the range not only of long-range and intermediate-range nuclear systems in Europe and Asia, but also of short-range missiles and nuclear

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

weapons. Consequently - and mindful of our geographical location - we have supported in the field of arms control and disarmament those initiatives which hold the chance of being translated into concrete, balanced and verifiable measures without diminishing the individual or collective security of any country or group of countries.

Attention is now being focused on the imbalances between the conventional forces of the two alliances. Indeed, Turkey and its Western partners are working to bring about a new era of conventional arms control. It is no secret that the conventional imbalance is at present one of the most salient destabilizing features of a divided Europe, and it remains at the core of our security concerns. Since the signing of the INF Treaty, the need to re-establish the conventional-force relationship in Europe has become even more vital as the imbalance in this field becomes more pronounced. The need to address the question of overall balance is more topical than ever. If there is no progress in the near future in the area of conventional-arms control, further reductions in nuclear forces may prove to be difficult to achieve, since this would tilt the strategic balance dangerously.

That is why Turkey, along with its partners, looks forward to serious and substantive negotiations with the Warsaw Pact countries to strengthen stability and security in Europe at the lowest possible level of armaments and to eliminate conventional capabilities for surprise attack as well as large-scale offensive action.

In that connection, we look forward to an early agreement in Vienna on the mandate of the conventional-stability talks to be held among the 23 members of the two military alliances.

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

The success of arms-control initiatives depends in the first instance on the establishment of an environment of confidence among the parties concerned. Greater openness on defence issues is indispensable if uncertainty and insecurity are to be avoided. Transparency and comparability in military matters, as well as adequate verification, are essential to the building of confidence and security, and to the success of disarmament negotiations. The fact that confidence-building measures are gaining growing acceptance in the world is shown also by the commendable results already achieved on that issue in the framework of the Disarmament Commission. In that connection, we appeal to all members to make use of the annual United Nations reporting instrument on military budgets as one available means of relaying data on military expenditures. We consider that the statement of the Soviet representative on 18 October here in the First Committee contained interesting and positive elements in that respect.

Any progress in the field of disarmament is directly linked with the security concerns and perceptions of the countries involved. Hence, confidence-building and security-building measures have a primary role to play in that regard. I should like to underline in that connection the significance of the measures undertaken within the framework of the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

Turkey attaches particular importance to the implementation of the confidence and security-building measures adopted at the 1986 Stockholm Conference. We hope it will soon be possible to agree on the mandate for future negotiations among the 35 States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), in order to expand the result of the Stockholm Conference.

Confidence and security in Europe should take into account not only military factors, but political, economic and humanitarian factors as well, and the Helsinki process remains a crucial instrument in that endeavour. Indeed, the Helsinki Final Act, inspired by that concept, acknowledged the indivisible nature of security and urged all States to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms as essential elements of the peace, justice and well-being necessary to ensure the development of friendly relations and co-operation in Europe. Therefore, we believe that all three dimensions of the Helsinki process - security, economic relations and humanitarian issues - are of equal importance for the establishment of mutual confidence and fruitful co-operation in Europe.

Although arms-control and other security-building endeavours have been largely limited to those in Europe and have been dealt with in the East-West context, there is a growing need to extend those efforts to other regions of the world in order to reduce tensions and enhance stability at a global level. With that consideration in mind, the seventeenth session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Amman, adopted at the initiative of Turkey a resolution aimed at starting a process that would contribute to security, peace and stability in the Islamic world.

Subsequently, a group composed of five eminent personalities, which was given the mandate of studying the question of confidence-building and security-building measures among the Islamic countries held its first meetings here in New York on 30 September and 1 October 1988. The group is expected to submit a report to the

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

next meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

With modest and practical aims at the initial stage, we hope that gradually we may be able to discuss other aspects of security and develop a set of measures tailored to the conditions prevailing in the parts of the globe where the Islamic countries are located.

The alarming resort to chemical weapons in recent warfare has become a cause of great concern to the international community, necessitating prompt action for the effective prohibition and elimination of those weapons. Turkey has always stressed on various occasions the growing need to conclude an international convention on the complete and global prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons, with effective and reliable verification systems. We note that progress has been made towards the conclusion of such a treaty by the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons of the Conference on Disarmament, in which my country participates as an observer.

We share the view that until such a treaty is completed there is a need to reaffirm the authority of an already existing international instrument on the prohibition of the use of that category of weapons, namely, the 1925 Geneva Protocol, to which Turkey is a signatory party. We welcome President Reagan's timely proposal for convening an international conference on chemical weapons and France's willingness, as announced by President Mitterrand, to act as host to such a conference in Paris. We appreciate the comprehensive exposé made by Ambassador Pierre Morel during his statement on the objectives and scope of that ad hoc conference. We also understand the necessity of avoiding misperceptions by underlining that the ad hoc conference should not be interpreted as an exercise that might delay or interfere with the work of the Conference on Disarmament but

(Mr. Aksin, Turkey)

should, on the contrary, be seen as an opportunity to give the necessary impetus to the negotiation of the future convention.

Mr. VONGSAY (Laos People's Democratic Republic) (interpretation from French): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this important Committee. We are convinced that under your wise and competent leadership our work will be successful.

It is commonplace to say that the work of the First Committee of the General Assembly opens this year under a happy augury, created, we all agree, by the ratification in Moscow last June of the Soviet-United States Treaty on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty. Some call that international event historic because it is the first time in the history of disarmament that the international community has witnessed the actual destruction of nuclear weapons. The methods of verification agreed to attest to the unprecedented spirit of openness and transparency evidenced by the parties concerned. It is also most encouraging to learn that the two major nuclear Powers, through their negotiators in Geneva, are now intensifying efforts to conclude an agreement on a 50 per cent reduction of their offensive strategic arsenals within the framework of strict respect for the provisions of the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty).

The fortunate international climate, characterized by a general trend towards dialogue, mutual understanding and co-operation in inter-State relations, has thus actively contributed to the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement of a number of regional conflicts. The international community must intensify its efforts to develop and strengthen that positive trend. That is a long-term task and an extremely difficult one, particularly since the road to general and complete disarmament, the ultimate objective of the international

(Mr. Vongsay, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

community, is still filled with pitfalls. Those obstacles and difficulties are not insurmountable, but they are, in our opinion, due in part to the manner in which States conceive their security. For the overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations, including Laos, security in the nuclear and space era can only be comprehensive and equal for all States and peoples of the world, whatever their size, their level of development or their economic, social and political system. That view, of course, runs counter to the one that advocates deterrence, a most dangerous concept for the survival of mankind to which a handful of States obstinately continue to adhere. In other words, peace and security cannot be maintained and strengthened other than through disarmament, and not by the stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction.

My country considers that the role of the United Nations should be further strengthened in the crucial field of nuclear and conventional disarmament. There is agreement by some that since its creation in 1978, at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral negotiating forum, has achieved only meagre results. Thus, on the priority items on its agenda, such as the prohibition of nuclear testing, the cessation of a nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament, and the prevention of nuclear war, including all related questions, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has been unable to establish auxiliary bodies empowered to enter into genuine negotiations. We would wish that in the interests of global security those who oppose the effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament might change their minds. Further, the Lao delegation welcomes the progress achieved in negotiations within the framework of the Conference in the field of chemical weapons.

(Mr. Vongsay, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

The American and French proposal for the convening of an international conference with a view to strengthening the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol on the prohibition of chemical weapons in our view deserves to be supported but in no case should this initiative be presented as a trick unduly to delay the speedy conclusion of a multilateral convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on the destruction. Our fear is justified by the fact that one nuclear Power continues with its programme of manufacturing binary weapons. As to nuclear tests, the Lao delegation considers that the speedy conclusion of a general treaty for their prohibition is a matter to which the international community attaches priority importance. Laos agrees with the position that the prohibition of nuclear tests is an important disarmament measure because it puts an end to the improvement of nuclear weapons and to the development of new types of weapons and because it prevents their proliferation both horizontally and vertically.

We also support the proposal made quite recently by a group of countries for the convening of a conference of States parties to the 1963 Treaty on the partial test ban so that it can be changed into a complete ban. But, for the conclusion of a treaty calling for a comprehensive nuclear-test ban by all States in all environments it is desirable that interim measures which could be negotiated bilaterally or trilaterally be taken as speedily as possible. It is in this spirit that the Lao delegation welcomes the progress made in this field by Soviet-American negotiations currently being held in Geneva.

Further, the Lao delegation welcomes and firmly supports the Soviet proposal as presented in a statement made in this very room a few days ago by Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Petrovsky about the observation by the Soviet Union, on the basis of reciprocity with the United States, of a moratorium on nuclear

(Mr. Vongsay, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

tests for an unlimited or limited period. This is a new proof of frankness and political will on the part of this great nuclear Power which, it will be remembered, has already observed a unilateral moratorium of 18 months in the past.

On the question of prevention of an arms race in outer space, like most States represented here, we express the ardent wish that multilateral and bilateral efforts be intensified with a view to guaranteeing the demilitarization of space which, as the common heritage of mankind, cannot be used except for peaceful purposes for the good of all peoples. While recognizing the primordial importance of the nuclear disarmament problem, Laos, like most Member States, considers that the radical reduction of conventional armed forces and armaments and conventional disarmament must be a matter of special concern for the international community, because it is these weapons which have killed and maimed millions of human beings during numerous bloody regional conflicts of which we were witnesses after the Second World War.

In this context my country considers that the detailed programme which the member States of the Warsaw Pact worked out last July on the radical reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, is indeed likely to strengthen peace and security in this most sensitive part of the world. It goes without saying that such constructive measures, once implemented, would have a healthy effect in other parts of the world, although it is true that the example of Europe cannot automatically be applied elsewhere.

As to the creation of zones of peace and denuclearized zones, the Lao delegation wishes to reaffirm its total support for such initiatives. It is imperative that States possessing nuclear weapons scrupulously respect the spirit and letter of regional declarations and agreements through which these various zones were proclaimed to be nuclear free. In the same context the Lao People's

(Mr. Vongsay, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

Democratic Republic has never concealed its sincere wish to join the efforts undertaken by the States of South-East Asia to transform it into a zone of peace, stability, friendship, co-operation and denuclearization. Thus, during the informal meeting in Jakarta last July which was devoted to the search for a just and lasting political solution to the Kampuchean problem, the head of the delegation of Laos on behalf of the three countries of Indo-China, put forward a seven-point proposal to reach those goals.

My country shares the disappointment felt by the majority of States when confronted with the meagre results achieved by the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament held here four months ago. Indeed, the Final Document of that special session would have been adopted without any problem had some States evinced a political will. Despite that, we consider that that special session was most fruitful to the extent that it enabled the international community to become aware, through their constructive and interesting proposals, of the deeply held aspirations of the great majority of States and peoples to live in a climate of peace, security and friendship with each other. That special session also made possible a better understanding of the growing interdependence of the world today and deepened the conviction that multilateral efforts must be further intensified with a view to deflecting the nuclear danger that weighs so heavily on the future of mankind.

We know that disarmament, nuclear and conventional, is a measure which can have welcome effects for the well-being of mankind, as was shown clearly during the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, and we wish to see the programme of action put into effect without any further delay. The intensification of efforts and multilateral, bilateral, regional and national measures, must in the final analysis aim at reaching the final goal, which

(Mr. Vongsay, Lao People's)
Democratic Republic)

is the building of a world free from violence and nuclear weapons. As to Laos, it will spare no effort to make its full contribution to this task.

Mr. BARNETT (Jamaica): The First Committee is meeting in somewhat different circumstances than in the more recent past. However it is still not clear how much more it can accomplish. A mere reduction in the number of resolutions is obviously an inadequate measure of success. We will need to continue work on a more imaginative use of the Committee in disarmament and arms control and international security.

(Mr. Barnett, Jamaica)

We have had occasion to refer to changes in attitudes, assumptions and perceptions. Inchoate though they may still be, they may point to another direction in international affairs. But the stubborn facts of geography and the weight of history remain. They can neither be forgotten nor ignored. The evolving relations among the major Powers, particularly the two super-Powers, hold out the hope that specific, tangible benefits will accrue to the rest of us.

Unfortunately, the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament did not live up to its earlier expectations. Notwithstanding the mood flowing from the signature and ratification of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - the major Powers did not allow themselves to come to any comprehensive agreement in the field of disarmament and arms control that would have allowed the world to have the necessary respite.

Yet, we have not written it off. Some successes were achieved, not the least of which were the reinforcement of the commitment to specific action on chemical weapons, conventional arms, nuclear-free zones and a widened realisation that a comprehensive test-ban treaty is necessary and the recognition that the United Nations has a role in verification.

We are more conscious and more willing nowadays to accept that a country's security can no longer be defined in purely military or geo-strategic terms. The implications of environmental degradation, under-development and poverty, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), inattention to the observance of basic human rights, illegal drug trafficking and drug abuse suggest that many societies, and perhaps the international community itself, can be under other more indirect and pervasive threats.

(Mr. Barnett, Jamaica)

We cannot minimize the constant threat of war, aggression and conflict which the above issues are able to inflame and stimulate. But neither can we forget that conflict is inherent in the nature of human society. Consequently, the question remains, as it has always been, how to devise arrangements and institutions to deal with that.

Nuclear weapons and the possibility of any kind of nuclear warfare present an acknowledgedly different level of threat to current as well as succeeding generations. Hence the prime emphasis on this category of weaponry. We must repeat that nuclear weapons require a new common and shared sensibility: the reduction, indeed the elimination, of the possibility of nuclear war.

This delegation continues to believe that a nuclear-test-ban treaty is absolutely necessary. It is our view that verification is possible and that the means and systems are presently available to monitor adequately a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The argument for continuance of nuclear tests no longer has any real intellectual or practical foundation. Nevertheless we note the negotiations between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on a step-by-step approach to the ultimate goal of a total ban on all nuclear tests as well as their joint verification tests in support of that objective.

At the same time we persist in the view that the arms control process must be broadened from nuclear delivery vehicles to a total resources constraint on nuclear weapons through limitations on fissionable materials for military purposes.

Similarly, the slow march towards a chemical-weapons treaty should end soon. The world has seen the consequences of this slow movement towards a comprehensive and verifiable treaty banning the manufacture, acquisition, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. The use of these weapons in the last few years has been partially condoned both by failure at the outset to condemn unambiguously their use and by reluctance to work persistently and assiduously enough for a treaty. Here,

(Mr. Barnett, Jamaica)

as in other cases, time is not on the side of comprehensive verification. Increasing sophistication and complexity as well as the emergence of conflicting industrial interests make such verification increasingly difficult and perhaps unattainable. The prospects for an early treaty seem dimmer than they were a year or so ago. The proposed conference of States Parties to the Geneva Protocol of 1925, which we support, is an implicit recognition of this state of affairs.

The impact of scientific and technological advances on weapons development and on the definition of security is a large subject. It cannot be ignored. It seems clear that however much we may agree on the need to retain and nurture unfettered scientific and technological enquiry, there has to be a way to manage the impetuous flow of these ideas into the development of more and more sophisticated weapons systems. Notwithstanding the fact that the application of these ideas does provide economic and developmental sustenance, their ultimate justification, namely the provision of more security, is becoming less and less valid. The stage has almost been reached where the development of new weapons systems has become an end in itself, along the way providing employment for scientists, engineers and industrialists and an opportunity to bring their ideas to realization, and eventually to provide the strategic or doctrinal rationale for the development and use of their products.

But we know that our security, even if defined in the narrowest of terms, is no greater. Something has to be done. The question is still barely open: can negotiators keep pace with scientific advances?

In the meanwhile, so-called conventional weapons are still being widely developed and traded. We would hope that the realization of the drain this produces on the economies of developing countries would induce greater restraint. Here, obviously, the perception of security is a major obstacle. The new interest of the super-Powers in settling regional disputes, some of which they had either

(Mr. Barnett, Jamaica)

instigated or been instrumental in perpetuating, may provide a necessary stimulus to a curtailment of the trade in conventional weapons or the reduction in their build-up. The deleterious effects of this waste of resources on economies are too obvious to need further elaboration.

Jamaica is strongly supportive of the central role of the United Nations in the consideration and adoption of a comprehensive programme of disarmament. The more relaxed relations between the Soviet Union and the United States, while not changing the fundamentals of the national interests of each, allow new possibilities for the Organization. We are pleased to note that attempts are being made to take advantage of this situation.

These preliminary comments attest to our abiding interest in these issues. Our concerns are those of a developing non-aligned country that recognizes the perils of this unsafe world. Peace and development are our requirements.

Mr. SOMDA (Burkina Faso) (interpretation from French): It gives me real pleasure to have an opportunity to speak in this Committee's general debate on disarmament, but before dealing with the substance of that matter I want to address sincere congratulations to Mr. Roche on his election as Chairman. Because of the close links of friendship, solidarity and co-operation between Canada and Burkina Faso my delegation is happy that he should preside over our work. Further, his qualities as an eminent diplomat and his complete mastery of the problems of disarmament and security augur well for the efficiency and success of our work. My delegation would like to extend congratulations to the other officers of the Committee also and to give an assurance of its active co-operation.

When the United Nations was being established its founding fathers set as one of its purposes:

"To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace ... and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace". (United Nations Charter, Chapter I, Article 1)

But what do we see? These noble objectives were very soon lost sight of, and free rein was given to the instinct for domination and violence in the settlement of the many conflicts that broke out in our world - conflicts that were sustained and fed by a frantic arms race.

It was high time for a new wind to blow on mankind, giving renewed hope. The year 1988 has brought that wind, and, as other members have already stressed, the work of the General Assembly at its forty-third session, especially the work of this Committee, is being carried out in a climate of general détente, pregnant with

(Mr. Somda, Burkina Faso)

promise and hope. This détente is due to the many efforts that are being made on the bilateral and multilateral levels. One of its first manifestations was the happy outcome of the negotiations between the two super-Powers and the conclusion of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, which is already beginning to be implemented. This, indubitably, is eloquent testimony to the new spirit that now informs East-West dialogue and is an important step towards nuclear disarmament. All peoples have welcomed this approach unanimously.

However, as was said by my country's Minister for Foreign Affairs in his statement to the General Assembly on 27 September 1988,

"... these negotiations must be pursued further and in other

directions." (A/43/PV.7, p. 61)

My delegation considers that the decision to eliminate intermediate-range nuclear weapons should not be an isolated event; it should rather be an expression of a true change of attitude and approach towards disarmament matters. Therefore we hope that the objective of a 50 per cent reduction in strategic missiles, agreed upon by the United States and the Soviet Union, will be pursued energetically.

The second element of détente lies in the efforts now being made to settle regional conflicts, which still imperil international peace and security. In the case of some of these conflicts the efforts have already had positive results, and in the case of others there is still hope. However, we must be wary of yielding to excessive optimism, because for the international community much remains to be done and many obstacles must still be overcome before the advent of a world of peace, justice and real mutual understanding.

Burkina Faso, like most States Members of the United Nations, was greatly disappointed at the failure of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, but we are open to any effort, bilateral or multilateral,

(Mr. Somda, Burkina Faso)

that would make it possible to continue the dialogue and the harmonising of positions with a view to the achievement of disarmament.

With that in mind, my delegation considers that all the items on the agenda of the First Committee are relevant, and we are quite prepared to make our contribution, albeit modest, on every one of them, since we are convinced of their importance for disarmament and for the security on our planet.

That being so, I should like to make a few observations on some of the items. There is no need to deal with all of them since they have been discussed at length by many other members. I will therefore limit myself to a few points.

My delegation shares the opinion that disarmament is not the responsibility of nuclear Powers only but is a collective responsibility, a responsibility of the international community. All States will have to be involved in the search for solutions in that field, within the framework of multilateral agreements accompanied by effective verification measures. My delegation would also like to express its concern about nuclear tests, which are still being carried out in view of the dangers they present to life and to the eco-system. We are therefore in favour of the conclusion of a treaty calling for a total ban on nuclear tests and for the establishment of denuclearized zones in various parts of the world.

In this connection, we must stress that the vast majority of African States have adhered to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, thus ratifying the Declaration embodying their collective decision to make the continent a nuclear-free zone. Unfortunately, the acquisition of nuclear weapons by the racist régime in South Africa constitutes a real and continuing threat to the security of Africa, particularly to South Africa's neighbouring States - indeed, to the security of the world as a whole - especially since the racist régime in Pretoria has always adopted an attitude of complete contempt for United Nations decisions. Africa must expect of the international community, and especially of

(Mr. Somda, Burkina Faso)

the world Organization, the preparation, adoption and implementation of measures that would guarantee respect for the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa.

Aware of the grave dangers presented by chemical and bacteriological weapons, my country hopes that negotiations carried out within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament will continue to show notable progress in order that there may be speedy progress towards a convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of all chemical weapons and on their destruction.

Another point that my delegation would like to note is that relating to the dumping by unscrupulous industrial concerns of their radioactive and toxic wastes in Africa.

(Mr. Somba, Burkina Faso)

The inclusion of this item on the First Committee's agenda was in response to African concerns about these immoral practices, which have been carried out in total contempt for African life. These practices threaten the lives of inhabitants of the areas in question, and were harshly denounced and condemned at the 24th summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity, held at Addis Ababa in May 1988.

Needless to say, Africa wants discussion of this item at the United Nations to increase the international community's awareness of the grave threat which the storage of such waste poses for the developing countries. It hopes that appropriate measures will be taken to put an end to this state of affairs. My delegation joins its brothers and other speakers in calling urgently for the formulation of an international strategy to combat these deceitful and inhuman practices.

My delegation would like to refer also to the results of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, held at United Nations Headquarters from 24 August to 11 September 1987, which demonstrated the clear links between disarmament and development. The Conference thus highlighted one of the purposes of the United Nations: "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom".

Purposes such as that should inspire nations to invest the bare minimum of human and economic resources in weaponry. But what are the facts? Unfortunately, the reality is that we are very far from attaining that goal: two thirds of humanity is languishing in poverty and misery, with barely one third of the resources, while billions of dollars are being swallowed up every year by the arms race. The international community must bear in mind the relationship that should exist between disarmament and development and must work tirelessly to achieve the noble objectives of the United Nations.

(Mr. Somba, Burkina Faso)

It is up to this Committee to make the appropriate proposals. In this connection, the delegation of Burkina Faso is fully prepared to support any suggestion or initiative that could lead to disarmament in any form, with a view to ensuring the survival of mankind.

The United Nations has regained the respect and confidence of its Members; this was underscored by the recent award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces. We all know that this redounds to the honour of the Organization. But our greatest wish should be that in a few years the world will no longer need peace-keeping forces, all States having understood and accepted the fundamental need to work in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations and to devote all their resources to development and international co-operation and to the progress and well-being of humanity as a whole.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. Before doing so, I would remind speakers that the Committee will follow the procedure outlined at a previous meeting, as follows. The number of interventions in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to two. The first intervention in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting should be limited to 10 minutes, and the second intervention should be limited to five minutes.

Mr. AL-KETAL (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): I wish to exercise the right of reply to the fabrications made this morning by the representative of Iran. This shows, yet again, that the Iranian régime and its representatives have not yet come to grips with peace or with the responsibilities they must shoulder if a just, comprehensive peace between the two countries is to be entrenched.

(Mr. Al-Ketani, Iraq)

It is well known that Iran did not accept Security Council resolution 598 (1987) voluntarily or because it had a deep and abiding awareness of the need for peace with Iraq and with the other States of the Arab Gulf region. Rather, the Iranian régime accepted the resolution only as a consequence of the crushing military defeat it suffered in its war of aggression against Iraq. It may be that resorting to the fabrications with regard to chemical weapons, on the part of the Iranian régime's representative, is an attempt to justify that defeat to the Iranian people.

I wish to make clear the following facts: first, Iran possesses chemical weapons and the capability of manufacturing them. This has been admitted by a number of Iranian officials, such as the Minister responsible for the Revolutionary Guards, who on 2 September said on Radio Tehran: "We have a group working on the production of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons." That was confirmed only two or three days ago by Hashemi Rafsanjani, who said on Radio Tehran that Iran was trying to enhance its capability to produce chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

I stress that these spokesmen referred to nuclear weapons. This is being said, notwithstanding the fact that Iran is a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. How then, in the light of all this, can we view Iran's commitment to its international obligations?

Secondly, the report of the Secretary-General on the fact-finding mission sent to both Iran and Iraq confirms that Iran used chemical weapons against Iraqi citizens in the southern and northern parts of Iraq.

Thirdly, the Red Cross, Turkish Government sources, as well as journalists who visited Northern Iraq after the cease-fire confirm that there is no evidence whatsoever of Iraqi use of chemical weapons in the areas in question.

(Mr. Al-Ketani, Iraq)

Therefore, the fabrications of the representative of Iran are merely fallacious allegations that are part and parcel of the Zionist-orchestrated campaign against Iraq. The frenzied statement by the representative of Iran, who was carried away in making those fabrications, failed to mention the very real threat posed to the whole region by the nuclear weapons introduced therein by Zionism. That is certainly a matter worthy of very deep concern by every State in the region, and every other State that values the cause of peace and security in the world.

Lastly, I should like to reiterate that the people of Iraq, who have defended the precepts of their civilization and have triumphed in a vicious war that was imposed upon them for eight long years, will continue to fight with the same determination to bring a just and comprehensive peace to the region.

Mr. MASHADI-GHAHVEHCHI (Islamic Republic of Iran): I will be brief. I would just like to refer to certain facts. The Islamic Republic of Iran has accepted Security Council resolution 598 (1986) and we wish for the speedy implementation of that resolution. At the present juncture, the negotiations and peace talks are continuing and, in fact, the talks will be resumed in Geneva next week. We hope that the resolution will be fully implemented.

Therefore, the statement made today by the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran was not made with any intention of becoming embroiled in mutual recriminations. The issue of chemical weapons, which is an important issue in this Committee, is totally and completely independent of the war. For us, the war is over. For us, the war is finished. But the use of chemical weapons and the issue of chemical weapons will continue and will be one of the most important issues in disarmament for the future.

I would like to emphasize that the issue of chemical weapons is totally independent of the issue of bilateral relations and bilateral issues between the

(Mr. Mashadi-Ghahvehchi, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

two countries of Iran and Iraq. Here, I would like to call upon the representative of Iraq to read the report of the team dispatched to the area to investigate the use of chemical weapons, the reports of the Secretary-General, the statements of the Security Council and the resolutions adopted by that body, namely, resolutions 612 (1988) and 620 (1988), to see which country has used chemical weapons, which country has created a holocaust and the massacre at Halabja, and which country is responsible for the use of chemical weapons.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate here that the issue of chemical weapons is not a bilateral concern. It is a universal concern, and it is in that context that our Ambassador made his statement this morning and that we are speaking again now.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.