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Chairman: Mr. ALATAS (Indonesia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

OBSERVANCE OF DISARMAMENT WEEK

The CHAIRMAN: As we have done for the past seven years, today the First Committee is holding this special meeting in observance of Disarmament Week. I have the distinct pleasure and honour to welcome to the Committee on this occasion the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Jaime de Piniés, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar.

The observance of Disarmament Week affords all of us the opportunity to reflect on the most basic aspirations of humankind, which are peace, disarmament and security, and on how the international community has striven to achieve these goals.

The chilling reality today is that the arms race has become a global phenomenon and that the weapons arsenals, especially those in the possession of the major military Powers, have grown far beyond any rational requirement of defence. But the lesson that should have been learned by now is that the massive and competitive build-up of arms, particularly nuclear weapons, in the world today, far from promising greater security for any State or any group of States, has actually placed all humanity on the precipice of self-extinction.

One central truth that must be faced by all of us is that, no matter what unilateral choices a nation makes in pursuit of its security, it will remain vulnerable and, thus, ultimately insecure. Hence our vision of world peace cannot but be based on our acknowledgement of the reality that, without common security for all, there may well be a future for none.

I believe there is no better time than the occasion of Disarmament Week, coinciding as it does with the auspicious occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, to rededicate ourselves to our common responsibility and commitment to restore the United Nations in its central role on issues concerning disarmament, to ensure the adequate implementation of its collective security

(The Chairman)

provisions in order that the Organization can exercise its authority and give its contribution to our efforts towards a better world.

As we continue our work in the days ahead, let us therefore do so with this renewed sense of dedication so as to ensure that our efforts here will contribute in as concrete a manner as possible to the advancement of our goals of peace and security in the world.

I now have the pleasure to call upon the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Jaime de Piniés.

Mr. DE PINIÉS (President of the General Assembly) (interpretation from Spanish): I appreciate the invitation extended to me to address the First Committee at this meeting on the occasion of Disarmament Week.

It is in fact appropriate that this year, as we commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the founding of our Organization, we pledge our dedication to the ideals, purposes and principles of the Charter. And one of the priorities - and I would say the fundamental priority - is "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

The United Nations concern for disarmament has been clear since the very first days of its existence. In fact, the first resolution adopted by the General Assembly in 1946 referred to disarmament, specifically to the peaceful uses of atomic energy, then recently discovered, and to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Since then, many initiatives and appeals for disarmament have been put forward in the United Nations. At the present session of the General Assembly, the vast majority of speakers participating in the general debate and in the special commemorative meetings rightly underscored the widespread concern that exists at the dizzying pace of the arms race, and in particular at the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

There is no doubt that the proliferation, in all senses of the word, of the atomic weapon increases the risk of nuclear confrontation. The General Assembly itself has declared that

"Nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States should together take new measures to achieve an international consensus on ways of preventing, on a universal and non-discriminatory basis, the proliferation of nuclear weapons". Let us renew our efforts in that direction.

At the same time, I believe that the efforts being made in various forums to curb the conventional arms race, and most particularly those made in a regional context, should be encouraged. For while it is true that in the last 40 years a global conflagration using nuclear weapons has been avoided, the same cannot unfortunately be said of the many local conflicts which have broken out one after another during that same period, which have claimed so many victims and caused such great damage, and which have been fought with conventional weapons.

We must not let slip the opportunity afforded us by this fortieth anniversary to revitalize the purposes of the Organization by making full use of existing instruments and of the abundant machinery at our disposal. We must not scorn the disarmament efforts being made in other forums, and in this respect we must recall again how anxiously the international community is awaiting the result of the forthcoming meeting between the leaders of the two major nuclear-weapon Powers. But that should not make us forget the primary responsibility and central role of the United Nations under the Charter in the sphere of disarmament.

(The President of the General Assembly)

Disarmament Week, in my view, provides an excellent opportunity to draw attention to the need collectively to reflect, within the framework of the United Nations, the political will to make the fullest possible use of the institutional machinery established by the Organization in the field of disarmament.

The CHAIRMAN: It is my pleasure now to call upon the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: This year, Disarmament Week closely follows the comprehensive review of the goals and achievements of the United Nations made by world leaders at the commemorative session of the General Assembly. It should, therefore, help to maintain emphasis on one of the prime requirements of a peaceful and stable world order. It should also serve as a pointed reminder that, while progress has been made in diverse areas of international life, the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons and restraining the conventional arms race is still unattained.

In recent years there has been an upsurge of feeling in sections of expert opinion about the measureless perils of the arms race, particularly in the nuclear field. The United Nations has responded to this wave of concern by adopting numerous resolutions on the subject. The case for arms limitation and disarmament has been set out with compelling clarity. The calls for concrete measures have become insistent.

Despite all this, however, there has been no abatement in the wasteful accumulation of arms, no halt in the frantic search for more sophisticated weapons, no respite in the ceaseless activity of adding to the world's already huge arsenal of weapons of destruction. Seven years have passed since the General Assembly, at

(The Secretary-General)

its first special session devoted to disarmament, made the categorical pronouncement that mankind is confronted with a choice: we must halt the arms race and proceed to disarmament or face annihilation. But the admonition has remained unheeded.

In a situation of this nature, the question may be asked: What is the purpose of observing a Disarmament Week and paying homage to a goal in word when nothing has been done in deed? Is the observance a mere ritual? I believe the answer is that the non-fulfilment of a goal provides no justification for abandoning the effort. Publicizing the urgent necessity of measures towards disarmament is certainly part of the effort. Were we to de-emphasize that necessity, were we to cease discussion on it, we would accentuate that feeling of hopelessness about the prospects of disarmament which itself has facilitated the arms race. For disarmament to have any chance, it is vitally necessary that the public mind should not settle into a fatalistic stance vis-à-vis the present disastrous course.

As long and as often as it is necessary, the truth has to be repeated that, given rationality and a cool calculation of national as well as international interests, the arms race is by no means irreversible.

It is not a natural or inevitable state of affairs that ours should be the most militarized peace-time period in history. Wars and the growth of weaponry may have been endemic in all previous ages, but one of the prime characteristics of our age is that the nature of war has been transformed, as has that of the weapons of war. Never before in history has humanity been faced with the very real and mounting threat of the death of the whole species. Never before did human society expend as much of its resources on the weapons and technology of destruction as it does now. And never before have resources been so badly needed for the elimination of hunger, ignorance and disease from the earth. The persistence of the arms race constitutes a stark denial of all these truths.

(The Secretary-General)

We must on this occasion take note of some encouraging signs as far as arms limitation is concerned. At one level the Final Document of the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty indicates that national differences can be transcended and consensus achieved if the political will exists to let the common interest prevail. At another level, the forthcoming meeting between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States holds the promise of achieving results that would make the world a safer place for present and future generations.

These, I repeat, are encouraging signs, but they do not warrant complacency about the present state of disarmament endeavours. The goal we pursue is as far-reaching as it is crucial to human survival and progress. By the progressive limitation of arms, we seek to encourage a perception of security in terms other than military. We seek to base international relations on common interest rather than on fear and competition in arms. The pursuit needs to be sustained with a force and conviction that neither partial successes nor temporary setbacks can diminish. This I regard as the purpose of Disarmament Week.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call upon the representative of Nigeria, Ambassador Michael Ononaiye, who will speak on behalf of the Chairman of the Group of African States.

Mr. ONONAIYE (Nigeria): It gives me great pleasure to have the privilege of representing the Africa Group on this occasion. We in Africa have always had a stake in disarmament, in the World Disarmament Campaign and in all efforts designed to facilitate and complement existing programmes of information in the area of disarmament.

The triangular relationship between disarmament, security and development has long been recognized and given due emphasis in various United Nations forums. The arms race has reached an unprecedented stage of expenditure estimated at over \$US 2 billion a day. The military budgets of many countries are far in excess of their budgets for health care and education combined. It represents a major diversion of the world's scarce resources from socio-economic purposes to military pursuits. The report in the study on the relationship between disarmament and development, commissioned by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, was conclusive in proving that the world can either pursue the arms race or move with deliberate speed towards more stable and balanced economic and social development. Certainly it cannot pursue both at the same time because the arms race and development are competing for resources or consumption. At the same time, the problems posed for mankind by the arms race are complex. Consequently the arms race has to be halted and reversed in accordance with the Programme of Action set out in the Final Document, and in particular paragraphs 45 to 50. Aside from these measures, world public opinion has to be mobilized on behalf of disarmament. Information on disarmament has to be made available to the peoples of the world, even at the grass-roots level. Progress in disarmament would be more



(Mr. Ononaiye, Nigeria)

meaningful if public understanding and support could be generated for the objectives of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. It is in this context that we support the establishment of regional disarmament centres for peace and disarmament within the framework of the World Disarmament Campaign. We therefore call on the Secretary-General to render the necessary assistance to those regions of the world that have expressed their common wish to establish regional disarmament centres. The multiplier effect that such centres could generate on the campaign cannot be overemphasized. Suffice it to say that it would be most efficient in reaching the grassroots level with regard to the dissemination of disarmament information and related functions.

In this connection I wish to place on record our appreciation of the efforts of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in organizing various regional seminars and conferences for the promotion of the objectives of the World Disarmament Campaign. Two of these took place in the African region this year. A seminar was held in Cairo in February. A Ministerial Regional Conference on Security, Disarmament and Development in Africa was also held in Lome, Togo, from 13 to 15 August 1985 by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), in co-operation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. The Conference was a success and constituted a milestone in African regional efforts aimed at the attainment of the objectives of the World Disarmament Campaign.

On behalf of the Africa Group I urge the Department for Disarmament Affairs not to relent in its efforts to attain the aims and objectives of the World Disarmament Campaign. For the moment it is indispensable to mobilize world public opinion so that disarmament may become a reality. The United Nations system, Member States and the non-governmental organizations must co-operate towards achieving the objectives of the World Disarmament Campaign. The ultimate goal is world peace and security through disarmament.

(Mr. Ononaiye, Nigeria)

I should like to make some brief remarks on Africa and the disarmament process. As a region Africa was first to take a remarkable regional position on a major disarmament measure, namely, nuclear non-proliferation. The French atomic test in the Sahara in 1960 presented a challenge to African States. It was therefore not surprising that a proposal was made in the General Assembly to prevent nuclear tests in Africa, but it was not pressed to a vote. When, therefore, the first summit of African Heads of State or Government was held in Cairo in July 1964, the issue of the denuclearization of Africa was paramount and led to the celebrated Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa.

The United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 2033 (XX) of 3 December 1965 endorsed the Declaration, calling on all States to respect the continent of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Thus a unilateral denunciation of the right of acquisition of nuclear weapons was first made by Africa, to which a great deal is owed with regard to the concept of the nuclear-weapon-free zone as a major non-proliferation device.

It is sad that the apartheid régime in Pretoria has frustrated the efforts and the common wish of Africans to have the continent a nuclear-weapon-free zone. There is now conclusive evidence that the racist régime in South Africa has nuclear-weapon capability, which constitutes a threat to peace and security in the region and in the world at large. South Africa's nuclear-weapon capability has altered the security balance in the region and left the continent at a crossroads as regards the acquisition of nuclear weapons. African States have to continue to adhere to what may be a delicate non-nuclear option. We therefore call on the United Nations and on the world community at large to bring pressure to bear on apartheid South Africa to renounce nuclear capability, become a party to the NPT and place all its nuclear installations under International Atomic Energy Agency

(Mr. Ononaiye, Nigeria)

safeguards. This is the only guarantee of peace and security in the continent. It is the only way to put an end to the destabilizing factor of South Africa's nuclear-weapon capability in Africa.

All disarmament efforts at the United Nations have failed to yield the much desired results. A series of negotiations aimed at achieving disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament, have not produced the expected results. Several measures have been advocated to prevent a nuclear catastrophe. These include the nuclear freeze, non-first-use, non-use, reduction, prevention of an arms race in outer space and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty.

(Mr. Ononaiye, Nigeria)

The bilateral talks between the two super-Powers are but another attempt to prevent a nuclear holocaust. These measures to date have not been successful in preventing the arms race. Disarmament, to a large extent, is therefore still a failure. Vital solutions lie in the political will and the reconstruction of the Charter concept of collective security as envisaged by the drafters of the United Nations Charter.

In conclusion, may I join those who have appealed to world leaders, particularly the super-Powers, on this fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, to take a backward look and determine where we took a wrong turn and went astray from the path indicated by the United Nations Charter. That should be the new starting point.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call on Ambassador Dia-Allah El-Fattal, the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, Chairman of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. EL-FATTAL (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): It is an honour for me to speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States on the occasion of the observance of Disarmament Week. Disarmament Week, which we are observing today, is the culmination of intensified efforts on the part of the international community which were crystallized in the Final Document of the General Assembly first special session devoted to disarmament in 1978. The profound significance of Disarmament Week is that it enables international public opinion to participate in the discussions of matters posing a danger to international peace and makes it more aware of the increasing danger of war, and especially nuclear war.

The international scene shows a steady deteriorating. Relations between States are fraught with tension, and there is a lack of commitment to the provisions of the Charter, and it is even disregarded in certain cases, an attitude that has been the hallmark for the conduct of certain States. All those

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

elements are the source of the increasing concern felt so deeply by all the nations and peoples of the world, especially in view of the suffering that may be inflicted on them in this nuclear age of ours.

The arms race, and especially the nuclear arms race, has become extremely frightening. Arsenals are being built up in many parts of the world, nuclear tests are being conducted at an increasing rate and must be halted, and chemical weapons are being used in certain regional conflicts. Above all, a lack of confidence is widening the gap between the nuclear-weapon Powers, and especially the two super-Powers.

Such is the sad international situation. To make matters worse, the arms race has spread to outer space and serious attempts are being made to militarize space. We are all aware of the danger of nuclear wars but whether it breaks out on earth or in outer space, the inevitable result is the same, namely, the complete destruction of civilization.

The facts are therefore crystal clear and need not to be belaboured. Destruction threatens all nations, regardless of their size and geographical location and regardless whether they are nuclear-weapon or non-nuclear-weapon States, unless serious efforts are made to bring about nuclear disarmament.

Let us on this occasion mention the second tragic aspect of the arms race. While people in Africa, in Asia and in other parts of the world are dying of hunger, while millions of human beings live in grinding poverty, deprived of the most rudimentary necessities of life, and while the majority of human beings live below generally-accepted health standards, billions of dollars are wasted every year on the development of the war machine.

Consequently, it seems that man, just like the environment in which he lives, has been subjected to changes as a result of nuclear explosions. On this occasion, let us listen to the voice of reason, the voice of conscience, and to the appeal

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab  
Republic)

of the majority of mankind for a nuclear freeze and for a commitment on the part of all the nuclear-weapon States not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. On this occasion, which coincides with the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, let us work for another 40 years of continuous peace and make every effort to put an end to the arms race.

The Group of Asian States, on whose behalf I am privileged to speak today, and to be its Chairman this month, is fully convinced that the dangers threatening mankind are inconceivable. It wishes to affirm its commitment to work for genuine and complete disarmament in the nuclear field. The Group of Asian States devoutly believes in the lofty meaning of Disarmament Week.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on Ambassador Guennadi Oudovenko, the Permanent Representative of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): I have the honour to address the First Committee at this special meeting in my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States.

Disarmament Week is held annually for one single purpose: to contribute to the maintenance and consolidation of peace. Forty years ago the United Nations Charter clearly proclaimed the determination of the United Nations to save the world from the scourge of war which twice in a single lifetime had brought untold sorrow to mankind.

Now, as we are taking stock of its achievements in connection with the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, we cannot fail to note that for two human generations mankind succeeded in preventing the unleashing of a third world war, and the United Nations certainly deserves credit for this.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

Yet throughout those same 40 years, the arms race has not stopped for a single day and, consequently, material preparations for a cataclysmic war have not ceased.

In our age, as never before, there exist the necessary objective conditions for the attainment of mankind's dream of lasting peace. World wars were unleashed by imperialism during the period when it occupied a dominant position in international relations. But much has changed since then. The community of the socialist countries has come into being, has grown stronger and has consistently defended the cause of peace. The independent States of Asia, Africa and Latin America have reached maturity and are united in the Non-Aligned Movement. The broad masses of the people in all countries are clamouring for the elimination of the threat of nuclear war once and for all on behalf of present and future generations.

Contemporary means for the total destruction of all living things on earth have made war suicidal madness. In our day the world is united, not only by common history and comprehensive economic links, information media, communication and transport, but also by the common threat of nuclear destruction and extermination. That is why today, as never before, there is need for the joint efforts of peoples and countries to save mankind from nuclear catastrophe.

We are deeply convinced that the very best way to rid mankind of the nuclear danger is to curb the arms race, and above all the nuclear arms race, and to reduce existing arsenals to vastly lower levels. That is why the entire history of the participation of the socialist countries in United Nations activities has been one of their untiring struggle for disarmament.

The ideal of socialism is a world without war, a world without armaments. The prevention of war and the guaranteeing of durable international security is the most important foreign policy task of the peoples and Governments of the socialist countries. I would even say it is their constitutional aim. For example,

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

article 28 of the Constitution of the Ukrainian SSR provides: "In the Ukrainian SSR war propaganda shall be prohibited." Article 61 of that Constitution provides:

"The internationalist duty of the citizens of the Ukrainian SSR is to promote the development of friendship and co-operation with the peoples of other countries and to maintain and strengthen world peace."

In the socialist countries there has always been warm support for the observance of Disarmament Week as one of the numerous levers used by peace-loving forces to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion of the world's human and economic resources to armaments.

The sum of \$1 trillion spent annually in the world on the arms race is evidence of the fact that the world is still a long way from the goal formulated in Article 26 of the Charter. Whipped up by imperialist desire for military supremacy and stimulated by distrust and hostility, the arms race, even in peacetime, is causing colossal damage to mankind. It deprives millions of persons of their livelihood and the thought of the military threat weighs heavily on their lives.

If the arms race is to be halted, the unattainable and highly dangerous desire for military supremacy must be renounced, barriers of hostility between States overcome and mutual restraint exercised in relations, good will in negotiations and good faith in carrying out the agreements arrived at.

More progress towards disarmament can and must be made. The work of the competent international forums has identified a series of problems which have now matured and on which international agreements and treaties can be concluded. And if, so far, no international agreements have been concluded on the non-first-use of nuclear weapons, the cessation of stockpiling of nuclear weapons and the



(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

non-militarization of space, if the elaboration of treaties on a comprehensive nuclear test ban, the prohibition of production of chemical weapons and the destruction of stockpiles of such weapons has been delayed, and if so far certain agreements which have been drawn up have not been ratified, responsibility for the situation does not lie with the socialist countries.

In the statement on the elimination of the nuclear threat and a turn for the better in European and world affairs, adopted on 23 October in Sofia - just before Disarmament Week - the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty once again confirmed that there is no weapon which the socialist countries would not be prepared to destroy, reduce, or remove from their arsenals and eliminate for ever, on the basis of an agreement with other States and in accordance with the principle of equality and equal security.

The steps taken unilaterally by the Soviet Union, which has declared a moratorium on all nuclear explosions and on the deployment of medium-range missiles in Europe as well as its other initiatives designed to prevent an arms race in outer space and to halt the arms race on earth, are of fundamental importance to the solution of the cardinal task of our age - the cessation of the arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race, and a shift to effective disarmament. The far-reaching proposals made by the Soviet Union just before the meeting of the Soviet and United States leaders for a 50 per cent reduction of nuclear armaments capable of reaching each other's territory, and the cessation of the development, testing and deployment of space strike weapons are of particular importance.

As is noted in the statement adopted by the meeting of socialist States in Sofia, there are other spheres in which the Soviet Union and the United States could set a good example for the reduction of nuclear and conventional armaments.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

The participation of the broad popular masses in anti-war movements is of considerable importance in the implementation of measures relating to Disarmament Week. Particularly commendable are the unselfish activities of such organizations as the World Peace Council, which for 35 years has in word and deed demonstrated its dedication to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter by mobilizing public opinion in support of United Nations decisions conducive to peace and disarmament, the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, which has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1985, and many others. Numerous national organizations whose members include women and young persons, veterans, schoolchildren, realistic religious figures and political leaders have also called resolutely for disarmament.

The appeal addressed by the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty to the Governments and peoples of all countries to combine efforts in the fight against the threat of nuclear destruction which is hanging over mankind is fully consonant with the purposes of Disarmament Week. The socialist countries propose that all international problems, including the most acute and complex, should be solved by political means, negotiation and productive dialogue, on the basis of the legitimate interests of the sides.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

Differences in ideologies, and in political and other convictions must not stand in the way of that. By taking an active and united stand, the forces of peace have it within their power to prevent a nuclear catastrophe and to guarantee the paramount right of peoples, namely, the right to a peaceful life, to independent and free development.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on Ambassador Daza, the permanent representative of Chile, Chairman of the Group of Latin American States.

Mr. DAZA (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): It is a great honour for me to address this First Committee on behalf of the countries members of the Latin American and Caribbean group on an occasion as special as this when we are not only beginning the eighth celebration of the now traditional Disarmament Week, but also commemorating the fortieth anniversary of our Organization.

Today, as we commence this year's Disarmament Week, we should, I believe, recall its origins and purposes. It was instituted at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, with the clear objective of responding to the legitimate desire to involve our peoples in, and to keep them informed about, the work being done to promote disarmament. It is in this context, therefore, that this Week should be considered, particularly at a time such as the present when world public opinion is becoming increasingly concerned by the obvious lack of progress in the tasks entrusted to international organizations in areas connected with the maintenance of international peace and security. Our region, which by tradition conforms to the law in all its activities, has always been guided by and acted in accordance with fundamental principles of the Charter. We believe in them and endeavour to have them applied and strengthened, as we are convinced that their ideals underlying are fully valid today, and that the means they offer are more than sufficient to eliminate the scourge of war and to build an international society based on the rule of law and justice.

(Mr. Daza, Chile)

That is why our region has at all times supported any proposal and any initiative that might lead to general and complete disarmament. That is also why we can present concrete examples, such as the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, achieved through the initiative of our region alone, and whose purpose, as everyone knows, is to keep Latin America definitively free of the terror of nuclear weapons.

Through the Contadora Group, our region has also made great efforts - and is at present negotiating intensely - to reach agreements designed to eliminate any threat to peace in the Central American region through confidence-building, verification and military control measures. Our regional group also resolutely supports the creation of new nuclear-weapon-free zones and all regional disarmament proposals.

We are determined to support firmly all disarmament possibilities, not only in our own region but also in the world at large, until mankind can live in peace and security, until we can eliminate for succeeding generations the danger of war, promote social progress and raise the standard of living of our peoples.

None the less, in spite of so many efforts for peace, we are discouraged at how the spectre of death and destruction holds sway, challenging the higher ideals of the international community. We see the proliferation of armed conflicts, an increase in the stockpiling of and trade in increasingly sophisticated weaponry. Furthermore, the balance of terror has brought with it a much more destructive and onerous race. Experts estimate that by the end of this century over 30 countries will be participating in this horrifying rivalry.

If we draw up a balance sheet, we can see that from one year to the next military expenditures increase by over \$50 billion at a time when mankind is

(Mr. Daza, Chile)

confronting one of the greatest economic crisis in its history. We do not feel frustrated, nor are we inclined to be pessimistic, for we are convinced that, in spite of all the difficulties and all the obstacles that may arise in our endeavours, efforts for disarmament will prevail and ultimately our objectives will be attained.

We believe in the work of the United Nations. On this special occasion we wish to prepare to all the members of this Committee, all the members of the international community, that we should renew our commitments to the principles of the Charter and accord the highest priority to peace and development initiatives for the benefit of all mankind.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call upon the permanent representative of Ireland, Ambassador Robert McDonagh, Chairman of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. MCDONAGH (Ireland): I am honoured to address the First Committee on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States today, which marks the culmination of Disarmament Week. It is a particular privilege for me to do so during the month which marks the fortieth Anniversary of the foundation of the United Nations.

It was at the first special session devoted to disarmament in 1978 that the General Assembly decided to proclaim the week commencing 24 October as a period to be devoted to the objectives of disarmament. Since 1978, our Organization has commemorated Disarmament Week on an annual basis, with the purpose of increasing public awareness of the dangers of the arms race and of creating an atmosphere conducive to progress towards disarmament.

The carefully considered words contained in the Final Document of 1978 have lost none of their force or relevance with the passage of time. With your

(Mr. McDonagh, Ireland)

permission, Mr. Chairman, I should like to quote from the opening paragraph of the Declaration set out in the Final Document which was adopted by consensus:

"Military budgets are constantly growing, with enormous consumption of human and material resources. The increase in weapons, especially nuclear weapons, far from helping to strengthen international security, on the contrary weakens it. The vast stockpiles and tremendous build-up of arms and armed forces and the competition for qualitative refinement of weapons of all kinds, to which scientific resources and technological advances are diverted, pose incalculable threats to peace. This situation both reflects and aggravates international tensions, sharpens conflicts in various regions of the world, hinders the process of détente, exacerbates the differences between opposing military alliances, jeopardizes the security of all States, heightens the sense of insecurity among all States, including the non-nuclear-weapon States, and increases the threat of nuclear war". (Resolution S-10/2, para. 11).

(Mr. McDonagh, Ireland)

With the potential now available to man to destroy not only his own kind but the very planet on which we live, it is scarcely surprising that the cause of disarmament should occupy so much of our time and attention in this Organization. And so it should be. The achievement of positive and significant developments in the disarmament field is an objective which we all pursue, and in that context the importance of ensuring that international public opinion is well informed cannot be emphasized strongly enough.

We, the members of the Group of Western European and Other States, are deeply conscious of the fact that the United Nations provides a unique public forum for the expression of views on this vital issue, and we are mindful of the role that the United Nations can play in serving as a source of information supportive of the disarmament process. It is in this light that today we observe Disarmament Week, and in doing so we rededicate ourselves to the principle of the maintenance of international peace and security, and to the ultimate objective of the efforts of States in the disarmament process - that of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

The CHAIRMAN: We have come to the conclusion of this meeting devoted to the observance of Disarmament Week. It is my sincere hope that the thought-provoking and inspiring words we have heard today will imbue us with a fresh sense of determination to press forward in our continuing search for a world in which people can live lives free of the scourge of war and the deprivation that results from the squandering of resources on the instruments of war.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.