

CD/PV.69
17 March 1980
ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SIXTY-NINTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 17 March 1980, at 3.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. YU Pei-Wen (China)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Algeria: Mr. A. BENYAMINA

Argentina: Mr. A. DUMONT
Miss N. FREYRE PENABAD
Mr. R.C. FERNANDEZ

Australia: Mr. A. BEHM

Belgium: Mr. A. ONKELINX
Mr. P. BERG
Mr. J-M. NOIRFALISSE

Brazil: Mr. C.A. DE SOUZA E SILVA
Mr. S. DE QUEIROZ DUARTE
Mr. P. BORIO

Bulgaria: Mr. P. VOUTOV
Mr. I. SOTIROV
Mr. P. POPTCHEV

Burma: U NGWE WIN

Canada: Mr. J.T. SIMARD
Mr. J.C. LEGG

China: Mr. YU Pei-Wen
Mr. LIANG Yu-Fan
Mr. YANG Hu-Shan
Mr. PAN Zhen-Qiang
Mr. YANG Ming-Liang
Mr. XU Liu-Gen

Cuba: Mr. F. ORTIZ
Mrs. V. BORODOWSKY JACKIEWICH

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. P. LUKES^Š
Mr. V. ROHÁL-ILKIV
Mr. J. JIRŮSEK

Egypt:

Mr. O. EL-SHAFEI
Mr. M. EL-BARADEI
Mr. N. FAHMY

Ethiopia:

Mr. F. YOHANNES

France:

Mr. F. DE LA GORCE
Mr. J. DE BEAUSSE

German Democratic Republic:

Mr. G. HERDER
Mr. M. GRACZYNSKI
Mr. J. DEMBSKI
Mr. KAULFUSS

Germany, Federal Republic of:

Mr. G. PFEIFFER
Mr. N. KLINGER
Mr. H. MÜLLER

Hungary:

Mr. I. KÓMIVES
Mr. C. GYÖRFFY

India:

Mr. S. SARAN

Indonesia:

Mr. M. SIDIK
Mr. D.B. SULEMAN
Mr. HARYOMATARAM
Mr. H.M.U. SILABAN

Iran:Italy:

Mr. V. CORDERO DI MONTEZMOLO
Mr. M. MORENO
Mr. C. FRATESCHI
Mr. F. DE LUCA

Japan: Mr. Y. OKAWA
Mr. T. NONOYAMA
Mr. R. ISHII

Kenya: Mr. S. SHITEMI

Mexico: Mr. A. GARCÍA ROBLES
Miss L.M. GARCÍA

Mongolia: Mr. D. ERDEMBILEG
Mr. L. ERDENECHULJUN
Mr. L. BAYART

Morocco: Mr. M. CHRAIBI

Netherlands: Mr. R.H. FEIN
Mr. H. WAGENMAKERS

Nigeria: Mr. T.O. OLUMOKO

Pakistan: Mr. M. AKRAM

Peru: Mr. J. AURICH MONTERO

Poland: Mr. B. SUJKA
Mr. H. PAĆ
Mr. J. CLAŹOWICZ
Mr. A. GRADZIUK

Romania: Mr. C. ENE
Mr. T. MELESCANU

Sri Lanka: Mr. I.B. FONSEKA

Sweden: Mr. C. LIDGARD
Mr. L. NORBERG
Mr. J. LUNDIN

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. V.L. ISSRAELYAN
Mr. B.P. PROKOFIEV
Mr. V.I. USTINOV
Mr. V.H. GANJA
Mr. A.I. TIOURENKOV
Mr. Y.P. KLIUKIN
Mr. B.I. KORNEYENKO

United Kingdom:

Mr. N.H. MARSHALL
Mr. P.M.W. FRANCIS

United States of America:

Mr. C. FLOWERREE
Mr. A. AKALOVSKI
Mr. J. CALVERT
Mr. M. DALEY

Venezuela:

Mr. A.R. TAYLHARDAT

Yugoslavia:

Mr. D. DJOKIĆ

Zaire:

Secretary of the Committee on
Disarmament and Personal
Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. R. JAIPAL

The CHAIRMAN: The Secretariat has circulated revised versions of working papers 7 to 10, containing draft decisions for the consideration of the Committee and, in the case of working papers 7/Rev.1 and 8/Rev.1, proposed statements to be made by the Chair in connexion with the draft decisions submitted in those working papers.

I suggest that we take up each of the working papers in turn, in the order in which they have been numbered.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. Chairman, as you will recall, draft decisions before the Committee have previously, throughout our informal and formal sessions, been considered simultaneously. My delegation therefore suggests that the best procedure would be for you to read out the four decisions and the statements to be made in conjunction with two of them, after which the Committee could take a formal decision on all four papers at the same time.

Mr. KOMIVES (Hungary): Mr. Chairman, although I do not deny the fact that the development of the present texts was interconnected, I am of the opinion -- which I am sure many colleagues share -- that, as each draft decision has its own merits, each requires separate handling and separate adoption, as you proposed at the very beginning.

Mr. ERDEMBILEG (Mongolia) (translated from Russian): My delegation would like to suggest that decisions on the proposed statements by the Chairman, contained in working papers 7/Rev.1 and 8/Rev.1, should be taken after the Committee reaches a decision on the requests of States not members of the Committee to participate in its work.

Mr. ENE (Romania): Mr. Chairman, I am sorry I have to revert to an issue that I think we discussed two or three meetings ago, but the statement proposed by you and contained in the papers that have been circulated is the result of long consultations, of understandings and, finally, of an unofficial decision which we are supposed to adopt officially today; I therefore very much hope that we will not re-open this question. My understanding was that agreement had been reached fully to confirm and adopt at this plenary meeting all that had been decided in unofficial meetings during the last two or three weeks and I think that this is the only way in which to proceed.

Mr. FLIN (Netherlands): Mr. Chairman, may I suggest that you read out all four working papers, namely, Nos. 7, 8, 9 and 10, and that we then proceed to adopt them consecutively.

Mr. EL-SHAFEI (Egypt): Mr. Chairman, I am not intervening on the proposal of my distinguished colleague from the Netherlands, but in connexion with the proposed statement of the Chair which appears in working paper 7/Rev.1. Our recollection, Mr. Chairman, is that this is a statement to be read in conjunction with each draft decision concerning the application of rule 32 of the rules of procedure on the presence of representatives of non-member States. We may be mistaken, but I think that that was the situation.

The CHAIRMAN: Allow me to explain that this question was clarified at our last informal meeting on Friday; the revised versions of working papers 7 and 8 were accepted after thorough consultation during the past two weeks. Working papers 9 and 10 are different, and the Chairman does not propose a statement on them.

Mr. FONSEKA (Sri Lanka): Mr. Chairman, I think that at the end of our meeting on Friday the distinguished representative of the Soviet Union remarked that we had a very fragile arrangement which should not be disturbed, and you fortunately adjourned the meeting and let it stand. I think that the texts now produced by the Secretariat as working papers 7/Rev.1, 8/Rev.1, 9/Rev.1 and 10/Rev.1 are an exact record of that fragile arrangement, and if you were to proceed with the suggestion made by the distinguished representative of the Netherlands, which is a fair compromise between the two proposals heard earlier in the afternoon, we might be able to adopt all the decisions.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now read all four texts, after which we shall take decisions on the drafts one by one. I think, as pointed out by the representative of Sri Lanka, that we should adopt a compromise between the views suggested earlier.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to upset the existing delicate compromise in any way, but I fear that the reading out of all four texts may disturb it. I should like to address a question to all those present. Is there any need to read out these texts? Of course all 40 representatives could read the texts out loud or, if you wish, could even sing them in chorus. After all, we have before us documents which are familiar to us all. Would it not be possible to adopt the texts one by one and thus conclude the matter?..

Mr. KOMIVES (Hungary): Mr. Chairman, the best procedure would now be to accept the proposals before us one by one, as you suggested at the beginning of this meeting.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. Chairman, the position is as follows: we have four working papers which we have all agreed upon informally. If these working papers are to become formal decisions of the Committee they have to be read into the record of this meeting, since they are not issued as formal documents of the Committee. Therefore, we would be prepared to go along with the compromise suggestion of the Netherlands representative that you or any other member of the Committee if necessary, whether baritone or soprano, should read out the four draft decisions, after which we would take a decision on them one by one, as proposed by the representative of the Netherlands. But we do have to read them into the record.

Mr. GARCÍA ROBLES (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, at first sight, it would seem that the delegate of Pakistan is right. However, if there is no wish to read out these working papers, another possibility would be to issue them as official documents of the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: There are two possible solutions. One is that I read out all four texts together, so that they are read formally into our records. Another would be to read the numbers of the four papers, after which the Committee would take a decision on each one separately.

Mr. HERDER (German Democratic Republic): Mr. Chairman, those are certainly two possibilities, but there is also a third which I would prefer, that is, the Committee could take up these draft decisions one by one, as suggested by a number of delegates and, immediately after these draft documents have been read out or numbered, it could take its decisions consecutively in accordance with your suggestion, which was supported by a number of delegates. I think this would be the best approach in order not to introduce confusion in our procedures.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): Mr. Chairman, I would support the proposal of the representative of the German Democratic Republic but, before you read out the numbers of the documents, I should like to draw attention to the fact that, in the last line of the Russian texts of working papers 8/Rev.1, 9/Rev.1 and 10/Rev.1, the word "any" has been omitted. I would request the interpreters and translators to bear this point in mind in the preparation of the final document.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall ask the Secretariat to take note of your request.

The Chair will now read out all the texts; I shall then explain the numbering of the texts and we shall adopt them. If there is no objection, I shall proceed in this manner.

First of all working paper 7/Rev.1:

"The Committee on Disarmament decides to establish, for the duration of its 1980 session, an ad hoc working group of the Committee to continue to negotiate with a view to reaching agreement on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

"The ad hoc working group will report to the Committee on the progress of its work at any appropriate time and in any case before the conclusion of its 1980 session".

(The Chairman)

Now I shall read working paper 8/Rev.1 which reads as follows:

"The Committee on Disarmament decides to establish an ad hoc working group of the Committee to initiate negotiations on the comprehensive programme of disarmament, envisaged in paragraph 109 of the Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, with a view to completing its elaboration before the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

"The ad hoc working group will report to the Committee on the progress of its work at any appropriate time and in any case before the conclusion of its 1980 session."

And now working paper 9/Rev.1., which reads as follows:

"The Committee on Disarmament decides to establish for the duration of its 1980 session an ad hoc working group of the Committee with a view to reaching agreement on a convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of radiological weapons.

"The ad hoc working group will report to the Committee on the progress of its work at any appropriate time and in any case before the conclusion of its 1980 session."

And working paper 10/Rev.1:

"In discharging its responsibility for the negotiation and elaboration, as a matter of high priority, of a multilateral convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction, and Committee on Disarmament decides to establish, for the duration of its 1980 session, an ad hoc working group of the Committee to define, through substantive examination, issues to be dealt with in the negotiations on such a convention, taking into account all existing proposals and future initiatives.

"The ad hoc working group will report to the Committee on the progress of its work at any appropriate time and in any case before the conclusion of its 1980 session."

Working papers 7/Rev.1 and 8/Rev.1 should also include the proposed statement of the Chairman. As agreed at our last informal meeting on Friday, after the adoption of the four texts I shall read the proposed statements of the Chairman on working papers 7/Rev.1 and 8/Rev.1.

(The Chairman)

The first text, namely CD/77, is equivalent to Working Paper 7/Rev.1. If there is no objection, I shall consider that this draft decision is adopted.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: Allow me then to read the proposed statement of the Chairman in connexion with this working paper:

"It is understood that, in accordance with rule 32 of the rules of procedure, representatives of non-member States shall have reserved seats in the conference room during the meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group."

Mr. ERDEMBILEG (Mongolia) (translated from Russian): I apologize for reverting once again to this question, Mr. Chairman, but as far as my delegation is concerned, it would be logical if such a statement by the Chairman were to be adopted by us after the discussion of the requests by non-member States of the Committee, inasmuch as such a statement applies specifically to those requests. As for the decision in question, it is quite clearly stated in rule 32 of the rules of procedure that representatives of non-member States shall have reserved seats in the conference room during plenary meetings and, if the Committee so decides, at other meetings, which is why I should like to refer to rule 32 of the rules of procedure. On that basis, my delegation considers that such a statement by the Chairman should be adopted after the discussion concerning the applications from non-member States to participate in the work of the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to note that the proposed statement of the Chair, in connexion with working papers 7/Rev.1 and 8/Rev.1 was agreed upon at the informal meeting of the Committee last Friday; it was agreed upon after consultations among all members. Therefore, if there are no objections, we shall proceed on the basis of the consensus reached last Friday.

We shall now turn to the second document, CD/78, equivalent to working paper 8/Rev.1. If there is no objection, I will consider that the draft decision is adopted.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: Similarly, allow me to read the proposed statement of the Chairman in connexion with this paper.

"It is understood that, in carrying out its task, the working group shall take into account, inter alia, the recommendations adopted by the Disarmament Commission, 11 documents compiled or tabulated by the Secretariat for the

(The Chairman)

working group established in 1978 by the CCD on the comprehensive programme of disarmament, as well as all the working papers and proposals on the comprehensive programme of disarmament which have been submitted to the Committee on Disarmament. It shall also take into account other proposals and documents that may be submitted to the Committee on Disarmament during the course of its work by members and non-members of the CD.

"In accordance with rule 32 of the rules of procedure, representatives of non-member States shall have reserved seats in the conference room during the meetings of the Ad Hoc Working Group."

I shall now turn to the third document, CD/79, equivalent to working paper 9/Rev.1. If there is no objection, I will consider that the draft decision is adopted.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: Let us now consider the fourth document, CD/80, equivalent to working paper 10/Rev.1. If there is no objection, I will consider that the draft decision is adopted.

Mr. ERDENBILEG (Mongolia) (translated from Russian): Excuse me, Mr. Chairman, but before you take a decision, my delegation would like to make the following statement, namely, that although it would not wish to go against the consensus on these decisions of the Committee, it wishes to reserve its right to revert to this question when the Committee discusses the requests of non-member States to participate in the work of the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Then I shall consider that document CD/80, equivalent to working paper 10/Rev.1, is adopted.

It was so decided.

Mr. FEIN (Netherlands): Now that the Committee on Disarmament has finally and formally decided to establish an Ad Hoc Working Group on chemical weapons, I should like to make a few suggestions to you about the manner in which the Working Group might proceed with its task.

(Mr. Fein, Netherlands)

The reasoning behind the proposals I wish to make is the following.

It is obvious that the Working Group on chemical weapons must proceed in an orderly, logical and responsible manner, working gradually, step-by-step, towards the final goal of a chemical weapons convention.

Somewhere along the line, and better sooner than later, the results of the bilateral talks between the United States and the Soviet Union will have to be fed into the Working Group's proceedings, because it would be useful for us to know what the two main chemical-weapon Powers have in mind, and it would be senseless to work at cross-purposes. Last year, those two countries made a valuable contribution by submitting a joint statement. On the other hand, it would also be useful for those two negotiating Powers to know as soon as possible what are the views and preoccupations of the other members of the Committee on Disarmament. The United States and the Soviet Union could then take those views into account in their bilateral talks. It is also conceivable that the views and suggestions of the other members of the CD could be helpful in solving certain difficulties in the bilateral talks. With this process of gradual "fusion" between bilateral and multilateral talks in mind, I wish to make the following proposals which are of a procedural and organizational nature.

The Working Group on chemical weapons might take the following six successive steps:

Step 1 Examine working paper CD/41 of 25 July 1979 (submitted by the Netherlands) containing questions relevant to a convention prohibiting chemical weapons and, on the basis thereof, as well as of any other relevant material available, draw up an official questionnaire of the CD on chemical weapons.

Step 2 As soon as this is accomplished, hopefully well before the end of the 1980 spring session, the Working Group should report this draft CD chemical weapons questionnaire to the plenary for adoption and appropriate action.

(Mr. Fein, Netherlands)

Step 3 The CD plenary should then take a formal decision bringing this CD chemical weapons questionnaire to the attention of member Governments, requesting them to submit their views on the questionnaire, preferably in a more or less uniform manner, to the Secretariat of the CD before a certain date, e.g. the beginning of the summer session of the CD.

Step 4 During the summer session the Working Group, with the aid of the Secretariat and of qualified experts from capitals, should examine the answers received and draw up a report composed of the following four sections:

- (a) The official CD chemical weapons questionnaire;
- (b) A systematic compilation of the answers received;
- (c) An analysis of or a commentary on those answers;
- (d) An objective, factual, narrative account of the discussions that took place in the Working Group. (Working paper CD/52 of 13 August 1979, containing an "Evaluation of the discussion in the Committee on Disarmament in 1979 with respect to prohibition of chemical weapons" (France, Italy and the Netherlands) could serve as a model).

Step 5 The report of the Working Group composed of the above-mentioned four documents together would form an outline or at least the beginning of an outline of the Convention, thus laying the basis for further work next year.

Step 6 In order to ensure that the work mentioned above under step 4 can be accomplished with maximum efficiency, it is desirable that a certain period of, say, two to three weeks during the summer session should be agreed upon well in advance, so that experts from capitals can be available during that designated period.

Mr. TAYLHARDAT (Venezuela) (translated from Spanish): My delegation wishes to state for the record of this meeting of the Committee that Venezuela would have liked the terms of reference of the working group on chemical weapons to be more specific and precise. It also would have liked the Working Group to be entrusted with the task of immediately undertaking substantive negotiations on the elaboration of a convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction, in accordance with the request made to the Committee on Disarmament in many General Assembly resolutions and, in particular, in a very recent one, namely, resolution 34/72. It was only in the interest of the consensus necessary for the establishment of the ad hoc working group that my delegation accepted the wording of the decision in the form in which it was adopted. We nevertheless trust that the Working Group will take duly into account the fact that the function of the Committee on Disarmament is mainly one of negotiation and that, accordingly, the negotiation of a convention on chemical weapons is a matter of high priority, as stressed in the first sentence of the decision adopted and in operative paragraph 2 of resolution 34/72.

Mr. GARCÍA ROBLES (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): My delegation, which struggled unsuccessfully for years to have the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament establish a standing subcommittee of the whole, considers that the decision which the Committee on Disarmament has just adopted for the establishment of four ad hoc working groups, which will be entrusted with the task of carrying forward the Committee's work on various agenda items, will go down in the history of the main multilateral disarmament negotiating body, both because of its intrinsic significance and because of the precedent it sets.

What has been agreed on today gives us every hope that, before the end of the first part of the current session, the Committee will be able to adopt a similar decision for the establishment of a fifth working group to deal with the item entitled "Nuclear test ban".

Although working groups are the most appropriate mechanism for ensuring the greatest effectiveness of the Committee's negotiations, it would be wishful thinking to imagine that they can work miracles. The decisive factor for making real progress on the road to disarmament will undoubtedly continue to be the so-called "political will" of States. Hence, we consider that, starting today, the members of the Committee and, in particular, those with the largest nuclear arsenals, will have

(Mr. García Robles, Mexico)

increased responsibilities, for special efforts will have to be made to prevent the hopes raised among all peoples by the establishment of the new subsidiary bodies from being dashed.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. Chairman, my delegation would also wish to express its gratification at the adoption of a decision by the Committee to establish four working groups for the concrete negotiation of agreements on priority and important disarmament matters. With regard to the Ad Hoc Working Group on Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-Nuclear-Weapon States Against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons, I would like to state the understanding of my delegation concerning the mandate that has been agreed upon.

Our interpretation, Mr. Chairman, is that the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group covers, on the one hand, efforts to conclude arrangements whereby the nuclear-weapon States would undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the non-nuclear-weapon States, as well as steps that need to be taken to clarify and to reinforce the provisions of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations regarding collective and individual self-defence against the use of nuclear weapons. It is our hope that the distinguished representative of Egypt, who chaired the Ad Hoc Working Group on this subject last year with distinction, will once again consent to preside over its negotiations, and that the Group can begin its work without delay. Indeed, we hope that the work of the Ad Hoc Group can commence as early as next week.

Regarding the Ad Hoc Working Group on chemical weapons, my delegation would like to state its complete accord with the views that have already been expressed by the distinguished Ambassador of Venezuela.

Mr. HERDER (German Democratic Republic): Mr. Chairman, my delegation subscribed, with satisfaction, to the consensus on the establishment of four working groups. The establishment of working groups will certainly contribute to the accomplishment of the tasks faced by the Committee, and we regard this achievement as a step in the right direction. However, at the same time we feel obliged to recall, in this connexion, the Committee's responsibility for nuclear disarmament. We have heard many statements and declarations made in this Committee on the priority of nuclear disarmament in our responsible work. Unfortunately, we have not yet been able to agree on the establishment of working groups on nuclear disarmament and on a comprehensive test ban.

(Mr. Herder, German Democratic Republic)

As you are well aware, the German Democratic Republic and all other socialist countries have made many efforts to promote nuclear disarmament and the cessation of nuclear weapons testing by the establishment of ad hoc working groups. I would therefore like to use this opportunity to declare that we will continue our efforts to achieve consensus on the establishment of ad hoc working groups on nuclear disarmament and on a comprehensive nuclear-weapon test ban.

Mr. de la GORCE (France) (translated from French): Mr. Chairman, a moment ago, we heard our colleague from Mexico, Ambassador García Robles, say that the decision we have taken to establish four working groups will go down in history. The French delegation very much hopes that the near future will prove that prediction to be true. We consider that we have just completed a very important stage in the still very short history of the Committee on Disarmament and that we are finally going to deal, with all the necessary seriousness, enthusiasm and conviction, with the substantive work that awaits us.

It is probably too early at this stage to present any very specific ideas on the organization of our work. I would nevertheless like to express my delegation's appreciation for the statement made at the beginning of this discussion by our distinguished colleague from the Netherlands. We are of the opinion that such specific suggestions concerning the work of our groups will provide us with a good deal of food for thought, which should, however, not go on too long so that we do not waste too much time on organizational matters. On the whole, we consider that the proposal by our colleague from the Netherlands provides an excellent basis for the work that awaits us. I shall confine myself today to two comments prompted by our concern that substantive examination of the issues should begin as soon as possible. First, we wonder whether, even before the official questionnaire referred to in the document distributed by the Netherlands delegation is prepared, our Governments or, more specifically, the appropriate specialized departments within our Governments, might not begin to consider their replies to the questionnaire on the basis of the excellent document distributed last year by the Netherlands delegation. Secondly, we wonder whether it would not be possible to envisage holding a working meeting, with the participation of experts, that would last a little longer than the meeting proposed in the document just submitted by the Netherlands. These are very important matters of substance and I repeat that, if I have deliberately gone into the details

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

of the proposals by the Netherlands delegation, it is in order to make it clear from the start that our concern is that the preparations for our work on the substance of the matters with which we are going to have to deal should be made in a specific and positive manner.

Mr. EL-SHAFEI (Egypt): Mr. Chairman, I wish to join previous speakers in expressing my delegation's satisfaction at the fact that the efforts made recently under your chairmanship and that of your predecessor, Ambassador McPhail, have resulted in the establishment of four ad hoc working groups for a number of priority items with which this Committee is dealing. We, in our delegation, certainly look forward to the establishment of an ad hoc working group on the question of a comprehensive test ban; indeed, we look forward to this possibility in the future, when the delegations of the three nuclear-weapon countries negotiating in the trilateral talks are in a position, hopefully before the end of the spring session, to submit to this Committee a progress report on the state of their negotiations. We are looking forward to the establishment of an ad hoc working group on a CTB which would certainly supplement the business-like attitude which is prevailing in the Committee.

Mr. LIDGARD (Sweden): Mr. Chairman, last year we set up a working group on a very difficult subject, and I think that there was general agreement that, under skilled chairmanship, the working group distinguishes itself as an efficient and workable instrument. However, I would like to associate myself with the statement of the distinguished representative of Mexico when he said that today was a historic day because of the important decisions we have taken. From our side we had set much hope in the establishment of working groups, and we sincerely hope that the Committee will now be able to prove its value as a negotiating organ on a broader level.

Last Friday I made a short statement to express our appreciation of the agreement then reached on the mandate for the working group on chemical weapons, and I also stated how we interpreted that mandate. I shall not burden you today with a repetition of that statement. Let me just say that our interpretation follows completely that presented by the distinguished representative of Venezuela.

Mr. CORDERO DI MONTEZEMOLO (Italy) (translated from French):

My delegation warmly welcomes the decision just taken by the Committee, as a result of in-depth consultations, to establish four working groups on chemical weapons, radiological weapons, negative guarantees and the comprehensive programme of disarmament.

It is our hope that, through fruitful and effective negotiations, these groups will be able to make a genuinely positive contribution to the progress of our work in these fields.

It is therefore important to proceed now with a certain amount of urgency to the appointment of the chairmen of the four working groups so that they may begin their work immediately.

With regard to the group on chemical weapons, whose establishment Italy had been proposing for a long time, I would like to say that my delegation has taken note with particular interest of the proposals just made by the distinguished representative of the Netherlands. The approach outlined by the Ambassador Fein is a realistic one which takes account of the need to proceed step by step and co-ordinate the Committee's work with the work being carried out by the parties to the bilateral negotiations, which have special responsibility in this area. Without going into the details of the various steps suggested, I would like to say that, on the whole, we find the procedure envisaged is likely to ensure that the work of the Group and of the Committee will be better co-ordinated and structured, enabling all countries to make known their positions on the various aspects of a future convention, in the form of replies to the questionnaire.

I would therefore like to express my delegation's support for the proposal by the representative of the Netherlands, with which we are pleased to associate ourselves.

Mr. DJOKIĆ (Yugoslavia): My delegation would also like to express its satisfaction with the adoption by the Committee of the decision to establish four working groups to negotiate on various priority problems of disarmament. We understand and interpret the decision that the Committee has just adopted as a sign of the readiness of all members of the Committee to enter into substantive negotiations and to contribute more directly to the accomplishment of the

(Mr. Djokić, Yugoslavia)

mandate which was entrusted to us by the international community. My delegation has an open mind concerning the programme of work of the four working groups. I am confident that we will strive to draw up a programme of work which will bring us, as soon as possible, to positive and concrete results and which will not be the product of further long discussions of a procedural character.

Mr. PFEIFFER (Federal Republic of Germany): I would like to join those who have expressed satisfaction with the establishment of the working groups after long discussions during previous weeks. I share the optimistic views of those who have said that the Committee did a perfect job by agreeing on the mandate for those groups. It is also a revelation that we have made a major step forward. We also hope that we are now in a solid position to start work in these the working groups and to finalize the preparatory work which is still necessary. We would like to organize the working groups in a business-like manner. The task of the working groups will be difficult and comprehensive, but I think that once their mandate is formulated, it will be possible for them to fulfil their obligations within a reasonable time.

With this in mind, Mr. Chairman, I would like to support, in particular, the proposal made by our Netherlands colleague with regard to the organization of the work of the Working Group on chemical weapons. This is an example which can be followed by the other working groups, thus providing clear guidelines for the organization of work in the months to come. I think that if good results are to be achieved in a reasonable time, it is essential to recognize the various steps that are necessary. In this context, I would therefore support what has been said by our Netherlands colleague, but I would also like to use it as an example for the organization of work of the other working groups.

The CHAIRMAN: As I announced at our informal meeting on Friday, I intend to conduct consultations on the question of the chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Working Groups and, in this connexion, the Chairman and the Secretary may be informed of the views and aspirations of members. When this question is resolved, arrangements will be made by the Secretariat for the meetings of the various

(The Chairman)

Ad Hoc Working Groups. The Committee can rest assured that, as regards the organization of work of each Ad Hoc Working Group, the Chair and the Secretariat will consult with the chairmen of the various groups, in order to provide ample notice of the meetings to be held by the Working Groups. We will also try to ensure that all delegations can cover those meetings.

As agreed by the Committee at our informal meeting on Friday, I intend to convene an informal meeting immediately after this plenary, to consider requests made by non-members to participate in the meetings of the Committee.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.