



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 4th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 48 TO 69 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): The first speaker is the representative of France, current president of the Conference on Disarmament, who will introduce the report of the Conference.

Mr. MOREL (France) (interpretation from French): I should like first of all, on behalf of my country and as the current President of the Conference on Disarmament, to congratulate you, Sir, most warmly on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. In selecting you, the Committee has placed at its helm a man of vast experience who, in his own country, in many diplomatic posts in Europe, Africa and Asia, and in the main forums of multilateral diplomacy, has always been valued for his outstanding dynamism. We are convinced that, thanks to your talents and your great vigour, the First Committee will succeed in fulfilling the role assigned to it on the eve of the important forthcoming third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. I would assure you that my country's delegation will give you its utmost co-operation, in keeping with the keen friendship that exists between France and Zaire.

I am speaking today in my capacity as Acting Chairman of the Conference on Disarmament to introduce the Conference's report on its 1987 session. The report is contained in document CD/787, which has been issued as a supplement to the Official Records of the General Assembly (A/42/27). I trust that the report will be of use to members of the First Committee during this session and that it will provide all delegations with whatever useful elements they may need.

The 1987 session of the Conference was held on the basis of an agenda and programmes of work covering both parts of the annual session, from February to

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April and from June to August. That agenda and those programmes of work are set forth in paragraphs 7 and 9 of the report. In the following paragraphs the report contains a summary of the deliberations concerning the participation of States not members of the Conference, the expansion of the membership of the Conference, proposals for the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, and measures relating to the financial situation of the United Nations.

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Section III of the report, which runs from paragraph 26 to the end, describes the substantive work of the Conference during its 1987 session. I would note that for each of the substantive agenda items the report summarizes the views and positions of various delegations, thus offering an overview of the essential elements of the debate and of the work of the Conference.

During its 1987 session, the Conference considered the first three items on its agenda, which concern nuclear weapons. In particular it considered ideas and proposals for the adoption of appropriate arrangements for dealing with those items.

With respect to item 2 of its agenda, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", the Conference decided that informal meetings should be held during its 1987 session on the substance of the item, and that the discussions at those informal meetings should be reflected in the annual report. At the time of the adoption of that decision, statements were made by the President of the Conference and by a delegation speaking on behalf of the group of Western countries.

The Conference was, however, unable to find an appropriate procedure for consideration of item 1, "Nuclear test ban", and item 3, "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters".

As indicated in the report, the Conference established subsidiary bodies in the form of ad hoc committees on the following items: "Chemical weapons"; "Prevention of an arms race in outer space"; "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons"; "Radiological weapons"; and "Comprehensive programme of disarmament".

I wish to stress the considerable progress made in the negotiations held at the Conference on a complete prohibition of chemical weapons. The informal consultations to begin in November and the session the Ad Hoc Committee is to hold in January 1988 will permit active work on the convention before the Conference

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resumes its work at next year's session. Appendices I and II to the Ad Hoc Committee's report, which come after paragraph 79 of the report of the Conference to the General Assembly, describe the current state of negotiations on a draft convention, as well as other results of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee.

The report of the Ad Hoc Committee established by the Conference on agenda item 5, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", is reproduced in paragraph 82 of the Conference's report to the General Assembly. Paragraph 52 of the Ad Hoc Committee's report states that there was general recognition of the importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space, and readiness to contribute to that common objective. It was recommended that the Conference should re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee with an adequate mandate at the beginning of the 1988 session, taking into account all relevant factors, including the work of the Ad Hoc Committee since its establishment in 1985.

The report of the Ad Hoc Committee on agenda item 6, "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons", is contained in paragraph 85 of the Conference's report. In paragraph 19 of its report, the Ad Hoc Committee recommended that ways and means should continue to be explored to overcome the difficulties encountered in its work in carrying out negotiations on that item. Accordingly, it was generally agreed that the Ad Hoc Committee should be re-established at the beginning of the 1988 session.

The report of the Ad Hoc Committee on radiological weapons is to be found in paragraph 88 of the report of the Conference on Disarmament. In paragraph 11 of its report the Ad Hoc Committee notes that the work conducted by the Ad Hoc Committee in 1987 made a further contribution to the clarification and better understanding of different approaches which continue to exist with regard to the

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important subjects under consideration. The Ad Hoc Committee recommended that the Conference on Disarmament should re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons at the beginning of its 1988 session and that the Ad Hoc Committee should draw upon the annexes to its report as a basis for its future work.

Finally, the Conference adopted the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the comprehensive programme of disarmament, which the Conference had submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-first session. By adopting that report, the Conference agreed to the recommendation contained therein that the Ad Hoc Committee should be re-established at the outset of its 1988 session, with a view to resolving outstanding issues and concluding negotiations on the programme in time for its submission to the General Assembly at its third special session devoted to disarmament.

As President of the Conference, I wish to add that the generally favourable political conditions in which the work of the Conference took place during the 1987 session permitted genuine progress and created a positive climate for consideration of a number of substantive issues, in particular that of the prohibition of chemical weapons. However, there was a general feeling at the Conference that there should be an increased effort to make progress on certain substantive issues which had been under negotiation for a long time. None the less the in-depth consideration of these outstanding issues was useful: open exchanges of views, a better understanding of the positions of all and the methodical exploration of various possibilities are indispensable to the successful functioning of the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating body in this area.

In this connection, I wish to place special emphasis on the progress made this year in clarifying the problem of verification in general. At the 1987 session, delegations frequently stressed the need for effective international verification

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systems to increase trust and ensure respect for disarmament agreements. This convergence of views on verification is of central importance for future efforts in this sphere, not only within the framework of the Conference but also with respect to other ongoing negotiations.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to the members of the Conference on Disarmament, the Chairmen of the ad hoc committees, and the Conference secretariat for their support and co-operation in the ever-difficult task of preparing the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly.

I can bear witness to the fact that the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament, which I have just introduced, is the outcome of considerable political work, although that work may not always have been successful. I hope it will provide the First Committee with useful elements for its own consideration of and decisions on draft resolutions. These in turn will influence the future work of the Conference. That is the nature of the dialogue and interchange that provide the pace for the international community's work in the sphere of disarmament: we bring from Geneva the result of a lengthy effort, and we hope it will lend new momentum to our work.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I should like at this stage to welcome participants in the United Nations programme of fellowships in disarmament who are present at today's meeting. I wish them every success in their work.

Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland): I take great pleasure, Sir, in associating the delegation of the Polish People's Republic with the congratulations and good wishes already expressed to you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee, an office which, as I recall from my own personal experience, is as prestigious as it is demanding. The Polish delegation is confident that your stewardship augurs well for our work because, among other things, you bring to your office the great moral authority and credibility of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, with its dedication to the cause of disarmament and peaceful co-operation among States, which Poland and other States parties to the Warsaw Treaty share. I wish to assure you that you will always have the unfailing good will and co-operation of my delegation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

My congratulations and good wishes go also to the other Committee officers.

Engaging in constructive co-operation for the sake of the survival of mankind is the least the international community can do, given the odds it faces in the nuclear and space age. Today, as ever, peace represents the supreme value. If it is to be successfully upheld and protected, as it must be, nations must co-operate to rid the globe of nuclear weapons.

It is for that reason that Poland welcomes the tentative Soviet-United States agreement to conclude a treaty on intermediate-range and shorter-range nuclear missiles. The President of the Council of State of the Polish People's Republic, Wojciech Jaruzelski, made that clear on 20 September 1987, when he said:

"The accords that have been reached open up a chance for a breakthrough in years of efforts aimed at the consolidation of the peace and security of nations. A historic disarmament agreement, tantamount to total liquidation of two ominous classes of nuclear weapons, has now come within our reach. The tentative agreement reached at Washington is the best proof that it is only

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through painstaking and honest negotiations that nations can have their security assured on new rational foundations."

The opportunities these accords open up and the positive international climate they have already generated should not, and must not, be ignored. Indeed, all members of the community of nations must take further resolute steps to promote progress in all fields of disarmament, both nuclear and conventional, with a view to curbing the arms race and preventing its spread into outer space, which would have grave consequences.

It was precisely those consequences that the Polish delegation wanted to establish beyond a reasonable doubt when, at the fortieth session of the General Assembly in 1985, Wojciech Jaruzelski put forward a proposal for a study on the various implications of the militarization of outer space, to be prepared by prominent experts of different nationalities, under the auspices of the Secretary-General. We look forward to studying the report when it is completed and circulated.

It will be recalled that the leaders of the seven States parties to the Warsaw Treaty addressed the basic questions of war and peace in no uncertain terms at the Berlin session of the Political Consultative Committee last May. To quote from the final communiqué of that session:

"In a nuclear war there can be no winners. For this reason, the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty reaffirmed their belief that the overriding task is to prevent war, to banish it permanently from civilization, to preserve peace on earth, to put an end to the arms race and to move towards concrete measures of disarmament, primarily in the nuclear field, with the aim of achieving complete and general disarmament." (A/42/313, p. 4)

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The communiqué also reiterated the defensive nature of the military doctrine of the Warsaw Treaty:

"based on the need to keep the balance of military forces at the lowest possible level as well as the desirability of reducing the military potentials to sufficient levels as required for defence". (p. 5)

That concept was examined in detail in a special document of the Berlin session entitled "On the Military Doctrine of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty".

As Secretary-General of the Political Consultative Committee of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty for the current term, I should like to recall an offer addressed to the States members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to hold consultations among authoritative experts, including military specialists, in Warsaw or Brussels in order to compare the military doctrines of the two alliances and to ensure that are based on defensive principles.

The same idea is contained in point 3 of President Jaruzelski's plan, which states that in order for the doctrines to be reciprocally assessed as being strictly defensive,

"a joint discussion and comparison of military concepts and doctrines and an analysis of their nature and development trends could prove helpful".

(A/42/413, annex)

The international community will be aware, of course, that these are not mere words and that to support them there is on the negotiating table a list of specific far-reaching initiatives and proposals of fundamental significance for disarmament. Formulated within the framework of the historic programme presented by Mikhail Gorbachev for ridding the world of nuclear and chemical weapons by the year 2000, the Soviet proposals have been hailed the world over. They have received strong support, and not only from the socialist and non-aligned

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countries. They address the entire gamut of nuclear weapons: intermediate-range and shorter-range United States and Soviet missiles in Europe; shorter-range missiles stationed elsewhere; tactical nuclear weapons in Europe; and, finally, strategic arms. There is also the "global double zero" concept, aimed at the total removal of two classes of nuclear weapons from the arsenals of the two Powers; realization of this concept now seems near. If agreed upon, these measures would constitute a major turning-point in efforts to avert nuclear tragedy and free mankind from its nuclear bondage.

Poland has always sought to make a positive contribution to disarmament and international security world wide, in close co-operation with its allies and with the non-aligned and neutral countries as well as with those Western countries, especially in Europe, which take a matter-of-fact, practical and realistic approach to international efforts in that regard. Indeed, we strongly believe that in this interdependent world the security of individual States, whether in Europe or elsewhere, must be seen as a function of wider security, both regional and global.

That sober assessment played an important role when, on 2 October 1957, 30 years ago, Adam Rapcki, then Polish Foreign Minister, submitted to the General Assembly his plan for a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe. While the West, regrettably, was not ready to entertain the practical implications of the plan, its underlying philosophy was well received far and wide, as was confirmed by the Treaty of Tlatelolco and by the idea of the denuclearization of Africa.

For Poland, this philosophy is still valid, and very much alive. Its basic soundness has been vindicated by the sustained appeal the concept of denuclearization has had in many parts of the world. Let me at this juncture congratulate the nations of the South Pacific Forum on the success of their dedicated efforts to conclude the Treaty of Rarotonga, establishing a South Pacific nuclear-free zone.

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The plan for decreasing armaments and increasing confidence in Central Europe which Wojciech Jaruzelski, President of the Council of State of the Polish People's Republic, presented on 8 May this year, is in that tradition of concern for, and dedication to, security in a part of Europe where North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Warsaw Treaty politico-military groupings come into direct, armed contact. A memorandum of the Polish Government setting forth the plan in detail has been transmitted to all interested States. Since it was dealt with at length in the general debate in the Assembly by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Marian Orzechowski, I should like now to comment briefly only on those of its salient points which are of broad, universal relevance.

The plan was conceived as a response to the basic and inalienable shared responsibility of all States - large, small and medium-sized - for the state of the world. It seeks to promote security through direct co-operation of the States concerned, those covered by the territorial scope of the plan: Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, the German Democratic Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Poland.

Poland has concluded that the quality of political, economic and cultural relations in Europe, developed in the wake of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and the process which it has set in motion, does not warrant the high level of military preparedness now obtaining. It should therefore be possible for the States of the European continent, especially in its central part, to ensure for themselves an undiminished and equal security at a considerably lower level of military potential.

Under the plan, that goal in Central Europe would be reached through a gradual withdrawal and/or reduction of specified, mutually agreed kinds and quantities of nuclear and conventional arms. Apart from the stipulations on arms reduction,

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the initiative also provides for appropriate, far-reaching confidence- and security-building measures as well as for a mechanism for the strict verification of compliance.

It is also noteworthy that the Polish plan provides for the possibility of negotiating and introducing parallel, stage-by-stage disarmament measures in the whole of Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals. In this context, we welcome and support the latest Soviet proposal relating to the reduction of the level of military activity in the northern part of Europe and the adjacent areas.

I should like now to turn to the provision in the plan for joint actions aimed at such an evolution of the respective military doctrines that they could reciprocally be assessed as strictly defensive. These doctrines would have to be based on the principle of military potential indispensable for effective defence only. Consequently, anything in excess of that minimum would have to be trimmed off through co-operation and negotiations. The agreed measures would have to respect the principles of the equality of rights and security of all parties, balance and reciprocity. The Polish initiative is now the subject of intensive bilateral consultations between the interested States.

The Polish plan, which has already come to be known as the Jaruzelski Plan, represents an eminently timely and practical building-block for the creation of a comprehensive system of international peace and security, which Poland and other States of the socialist community jointly submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-first session. It is our intention to pursue that initiative at this session. To that end, we shall co-operate closely with the non-aligned countries and with those Western countries which subscribe to the ultimate goal of the system - a world free of nuclear arms, a commitment to refrain from the use of force or threat of force, and broad, universal international co-operation based on

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the principles of equal rights and mutual benefits. We are ready to co-operate with all States to that end. Addressing military and political as well as economic and humanitarian spheres willing to encourage and promote co-operation in those spheres and also in regard to ecology, the proposed system aims - through a non-confrontational, pragmatic dialogue between all States, without distinction of size or status, whether military or economic - at creating material, political, legal, moral and psychological guarantees of peace and security for all.

The perception of security, like moral and psychological guarantees of peace, is rooted deep in the minds of men. It is almost a decade since, in 1978, the General Assembly, on the initiative of Poland, adopted the Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace. I hope that the current, third periodic review of the implementation of the Declaration will focus on the significant role which that document has played, especially within the context of observances of the International Year of Peace, in fostering positive attitudes in international relations. May I in this connection express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the attention he gave to the preparation of his reports on this subject.

We are convinced that in future the Declaration will continue to promote the shaping of peaceful attitudes of societies and that its standing in international life will be strengthened. Therefore, in our opinion, it is advisable to consider the need to upgrade the international status of the Declaration.

Poland has been actively involved in all multilateral disarmament negotiating forums: the Vienna talks on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Europe, the CSCE, in Stockholm, now meeting in Vienna and, for over a quarter of a century now, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. We attach major significance to all

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of them, if only because their positive feedback adds momentum to and stimulates the critically important bilateral dialogue on nuclear disarmament.

Poland has traditionally taken a very keen interest in accelerating the pace of work on the elimination of chemical weapons. Accordingly, we had hoped that, given the flexibility and accommodation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a draft accord would have been in hand by this forty-second session of the General Assembly. My country, which has never had chemical weapons and intends never to acquire them, hopes that the General Assembly will bring pressure to bear on those who are dragging their feet on a chemical arms ban, in order to allow the Conference on Disarmament to finalize its work. That accord is urgently needed.

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With regard to questions covered by the report of the Conference on Disarmament for 1987, which has just been introduced by the President of the Conference, I find it very disturbing that no significant movement has so far been recorded in Geneva on the all-important issues of the prevention of the militarization of outer space or the nuclear test ban. We should like to hope that the document containing the "Basic Provisions of a Treaty on the Complete and General Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Tests" (CD/756), which Poland has sponsored together with seven other socialist States parties to the Warsaw Treaty, will facilitate productive work in that regard in 1988.

In this connection, let me restate most emphatically the support which Poland has already expressed at Geneva for the constructive and imaginative proposals submitted by the Soviet Union to the Conference on Disarmament on 6 August. Specifically, we welcome the suggestion, within the context of a verification system in a chemical-weapons convention, of adopting the principle of mandatory challenge inspection.

It is with profound satisfaction that we have taken note of the Shevardnadze-Shultz agreement reached in Washington to begin, before 1 December 1987, full-scale, stage-by-stage negotiations on the limitation of the yield and frequency of nuclear-weapon tests, with a view to their total prohibition.

We are confident that the agreements reached and the announced nuclear-test-ban negotiations will add substantial momentum to the elaboration of appropriate draft accords at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

Let me finally stress that the confidence which Poland has placed in the Conference on Disarmament has never ebbed. We lend our full support, therefore, to the suggestions made at Geneva for enhancing both the status and the negotiating

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ability of the Conference on Disarmament. Poland, in concert with its allies, will spare no effort to make a meaningful contribution to the work of that forum - indeed, to all the disarmament forums we are engaged in.

My delegation may wish to speak at a later date on other, specific problems on the Committee's disarmament agenda.

Mr. ROCHE (Canada): The Canadian delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your election to head this important Committee. We recognize the very impressive credentials you bring to your post as well as the vital role that Africa plays in our deliberations. We shall give you our full support.

The Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Akashi, and the members of the secretariat may also be assured of Canada's full co-operation in advancing the international cause of disarmament.

We also congratulate the delegation of Costa Rica on the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to President Arias for his peace plan for Central America. That is certainly an inspiration to us all.

The meetings of the First Committee this year are being held at an auspicious moment. We are on the eve of a historic agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union that will eliminate an entire class of nuclear weapons and be the first accord that actually reduces the number of nuclear weapons in the world.

The signing of an intermediate-range nuclear forces agreement at a summit of the leaders of the United States of America and the Soviet Union will be an important advance in the new openness and willingness of both super Powers to reach balanced and verifiable arms control agreements. Although the agreement will eliminate only 3 per cent of the world's nuclear arsenal, its political significance is enormous, for it will also begin a process of building a better and more suitable East-West relationship. Building this relationship to enlarge

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understanding and lessen suspicion is a major task for Governments and peoples around the world.

There are additional reasons for an optimistic spirit to pervade the Committee, for in this year so far we have seen progress in the negotiations for a chemical weapons treaty; preparations for a new forum to negotiate conventional force reductions in Europe; the successful application of the Stockholm confidence-building agreement; an improvement in the risk-reduction operation of the United States and the Soviet Union; a move by the super-Powers towards negotiations on nuclear testing, with the ultimate objective of a complete cessation of tests; an international consensus on the Final Document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development that broadens the definition of security; and a dramatic increase in East-West exchanges and visits.

Though enormous problems and challenges remain, there is a new, cautious spirit of optimism in international relations. This is particularly noticeable here at the United Nations, where the despondency over the financial crisis has given way to an improved outlook that combines vision and pragmatism. In Canada's view, there are new possibilities for creative thinking to resolve the problems of conflict and deprivation that still afflict large areas of the world.

The International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development was an example of this creative thinking. In fact, the Conference was a landmark, because, for the first time, the 150 participating nations, through consensus, took a broad approach to security, emphasizing that it consists of "not only military, but also political, economic, social, humanitarian and human rights and ecological aspects." (A/CONF.130/21, para. 14)

Working constructively on all these elements of security, on the one hand creates

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conditions conducive to disarmament, and on the other provides the environment for the successful pursuit of development. This is a big programme and it confirms the over-arching fact of our time, that peace is a multi-agenda process involving economic and social development as well as arms control measures, the protection of human rights and an end to racial discrimination.

Continued action to keep this new momentum rolling will make it possible to see more clearly the first rays of dawn after a long night of impasse.

The East-West negotiating atmosphere has an inevitable impact on progress in other arms control forums. The positive momentum which has developed has already had important spin-offs at the multilateral level. For example, new developments in the area of conventional security in Europe offer hope of increased security and stability at lower levels of armaments on the European continent. Discussions initiated by the West earlier this year to examine a mandate for future conventional stability talks suggest that negotiations in this increasingly important area will be launched in the foreseeable future. Meanwhile, the provisions of the Stockholm agreement, which came into force on 1 January this year, have facilitated the observation of sizeable military exercises in Europe and resulted in two unprecedented on-site inspections.

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While we all eagerly await news of progress in the Geneva talks, we should not lose sight of the important contributions that can be made at the national level to promoting peace and disarmament.

What practical contribution can countries such as Canada make to arms control and disarmament? First, we urge compliance with existing treaties. To deviate from full compliance is to threaten the basic credibility and viability of arms control. Canada attaches particular importance to the maintenance and strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation régime. We also believe that the traditional or restrictive interpretation of the anti-ballistic missile Treaty should be maintained. A second contribution is through gaining support for confidence-building measures, such as openness, transparency and verification, for these constitute the building blocks of future arms control and disarmament agreements. Thirdly, support at the multilateral level strengthens bilateral or regional disarmament negotiations. Meaningful arms control agreements require a step-by-step process of negotiation based on, and in association with, confidence-building.

Canada remains firmly committed to playing an active role in the search for peace and disarmament. As the Committee knows, we have devoted considerable resources to the study of arms control verification. We are convinced that through our work on this issue we can make a practical and realistic contribution to the arms control and disarmament process. Adequate and effective measures of verification are the primary mechanism whereby compliance with arms control undertakings is demonstrated.

If it is to be effective, verification must be fundamentally a partnership, like the arms control process itself. It must actively involve all the parties in an agreement in a régime whose goal is mutual reassurance concerning continuing

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compliance. An effective verification régime is a powerful way of building confidence. Verification, then, is not a luxury or an unusual activity. Rather, it is a basic and normal process that reflects a legitimate concern about ongoing compliance with a commitment. The conduct of verification activities must come to be accepted as a necessary and normal part of the relations between parties to arms control agreements.

Canada was therefore pleased that the consensus report of the Verification Working Group at the Disarmament Commission this year agreed that

"verification is a critically important element in the negotiation and implementation of arms limitation and disarmament."

Moreover, the agreement on the illustrative list of principles of verification has advanced the international community's understanding of how to apply verification. For example, the agreement that adequate and effective verification requires the employment of different techniques, such as national technical means, international technical means and international procedures, including on-site inspections, has a direct bearing on the intermediate-range nuclear forces agreement and the continuing negotiation of a chemical weapons treaty. Verification provisions, of course, formed an essential element in the successful application of the Stockholm agreement.

Canada welcomes this evolution in the approach to verification, for which we have pressed for some time. We look forward to its continuing practical application to the arms control issues on the current international agenda, and will introduce a resolution calling for further work on verification at the next session of the Disarmament Commission.

Nuclear weapons, of course, are not the only weapons of mass destruction. There are also chemical weapons. The confirmed, repeated use of such weapons in

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the Iran-Iraq war cannot be too strongly deplored. The known existence and use of chemical weapons underline the importance of concluding as soon as possible a comprehensive ban on these abhorrent weapons. We should note that real progress has continued during the 1987 session of the Conference on Disarmament. A treaty banning chemical weapons will require the most complex set of verification measures ever included in a multilateral arms control agreement. It is therefore important that the negotiators proceed with special care and diligence, making as much speed as is consistent with thoroughness. The Canadian delegation, in close co-operation with our colleagues from Poland, will put forward a resolution relating to the chemical weapons negotiations, for which we shall again be seeking consensus support.

We shall also again introduce a resolution on the prohibition of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes, which we regard as an effective means of preventing the expansion and the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The realization of a negotiated and verifiable comprehensive test-ban treaty that would end all nuclear explosions by all countries in all environments for all time remains a fundamental Canadian disarmament objective. We expect again to co-sponsor such a resolution, which would inspire the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee with a mandate to examine the fundamental questions of scope, compliance and verification, as a step towards negotiating a treaty. Surely, now that the United States and the Soviet Union have decided to recommence negotiations on nuclear testing after a hiatus of eight years, the Conference on Disarmament ought to be able to move together on this critical issue. Meanwhile, we shall continue to support the Committee on Disarmament's Group of Scientific Experts in working towards a global seismic monitoring system, using

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Canadian expertise. We are pleased that Dr. Peter Basham of Canada has been selected as co-ordinator for a major global test as part of the development of an international seismic data exchange.

The attention of the international community has begun to focus on the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Canada remains of the view that the stakes for that session are enormous. Failure would not only deal a devastating blow to the continuation of a meaningful role for the United Nations in the field of disarmament, but could have negative repercussions for ongoing negotiations. On the other hand, success would serve to re-establish confidence in the arms control and disarmament process and would heighten the importance of United Nations efforts. The Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament, adopted by consensus, should remain intact and unchallenged. We should build upon this document, heeding the lessons learned since 1978. The goal of the third special session devoted to disarmament should be attainable, the international climate supportive, the preparations extensive.

Canada fully subscribes to the Secretary-General's view, expressed in his annual report, that the third special session devoted to disarmament provides a valuable opportunity to realize the potential of the United Nations. Moreover, as the Secretary-General noted, verification

"is an area in which the United Nations can make a significant contribution"

(A/42/1, p. 9)

and Canada expects that the session will advance the practical application of verification in disarmament agreements.

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Finally, I want to say a word about how this Committee works. I need not repeat Canada's commitment to an active and effective multilateral approach to arms control and disarmament. The United Nations is a unique forum as a global sounding-board for security concerns. We know it is true that the United Nations works better when the major Powers are themselves co-operating, and it is also true that the machinery here in our hands needs improvement. Last year we dealt with 72 draft resolutions; that number is excessive, especially when many texts compete with others and only 30 per cent are adopted by consensus. What do they mean to the average person? How can the public comprehend our work?

We feel that unless the First Committee can discipline itself and tighten the processes it runs the risk of losing credibility and having only a marginal role in arms-control and disarmament matters. Two thirds of our decisions are taken by straight majority vote, without regard for the views of a minority whose support may be essential for their implementation. That is why we put particular emphasis on the search for consensus and on greater efforts at early consultation among all groups.

Fortunately, a growing number of countries want to streamline the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and many excellent suggestions have been made throughout the course of the study of the United Nations Disarmament Commission on this question, led by the delegation of Cameroon. Previous chairmen of the First Committee have been especially active in rationalizing the Committee's work as the centre-piece of United Nations efforts in disarmament. At the first meeting of the Committee this year Ambassador Wachmann, last year's Chairman, reported the progress made by an informal committee of Friends of the Chair. There appears to be an emerging convergence of views on certain improvements. These are chiefly: to start the substantive work of the First Committee one week earlier to

(Mr. Roche, Canada)

give more time for consultations and negotiations on draft resolutions with a view to getting a higher percentage of consensus resolutions; to combine the general debate with specific statements to enable the Committee, from the outset, to give more attention to specific items; to advance the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions to give more time for consideration before voting; and to reduce the number of resolutions by combining proposals on the same issue in order to attempt to achieve consensus.

Canada supports those concrete proposals and encourages you, Mr. Chairman, to work with the Secretariat to put these reforms into action. We are prepared to start our work here one week earlier next year.

Earlier, I spoke of the reasons for hope as we contemplate the progress on the agenda for peace. In this Committee especially we know there are no rapid remedies in disarmament; but the long-term strategies and ongoing negotiations are, at last, making a dent in the arsenals of weapons. We must contribute to the momentum of this development. The time is ripe to improve our own processes and hence the quality of our work. That challenge should energize us anew.

Mr. MERKULOV (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other officers of the Committee on your election to your important posts. I sincerely wish you every success in your guidance of the proceedings of the First Committee in which we all repose great hope.

In today's interdependent world, the work of preserving human civilization and saving it from annihilation in a war in which nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction would be used is of particular urgency.

The adverse effects of armaments can be felt even today: they divert vast material and intellectual resources from the work of economic and social

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development, the elimination of hunger and poverty, the fight against old and horrible new diseases, and improvement of the ecology. All that was convincingly demonstrated at the recent International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

The Ukrainian delegation shares the alarm at the situation in the world today expressed in the course of the general debate at this session of the United Nations General Assembly. Our people are worried about how the international situation will develop: Is there going to be an increase in tension and confrontation or is there going to be a strengthening of peace, a solution of conflicts and the expansion of mutually advantageous co-operation?

In this regard, I should like to draw attention to an article by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mr. Mihail Gorbachev, "Reality and safeguards for a safe world", issued on the occasion of this session of the United Nations General Assembly. The article, which has been circulated as an official document of the United Nations (A/42/574), sets out the Soviet approaches to the shaping of a comprehensive system of international security. At the same time, it is an invitation to dialogue on problems which are of concern to all mankind.

The Ukrainian delegation believes that the United Nations is the Organization in which such dialogue can be fruitful and should culminate in concrete recommendations for a world organized on the basis of new political thinking. We express our readiness, along with other States, to seek paths of peace based on recognition by the peoples of the world of the community and interdependence of their fates, rather than on nuclear force, selfishness and hostility.

As we approach the building of the edifice of security, every floor of it must be constructed with the same care and attention. A key element here, in our view,

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is the problem of eliminating the material means of waging war. Owing to the long standstill in disarmament talks when there was an urgent need for bold, ground-breaking approaches to overcome inertia, the Soviet Union on 15 January 1986 put forward a concrete programme for the creation of a nuclear-free world and a stage-by-stage elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction by the end of this century. This was seen by some as a Utopian idea, but the passage of time has amply proved the validity of the Soviet initiative. On the basis of that programme it became possible to make a conceptual breakthrough in a whole range of problems of nuclear disarmament in the Soviet-American summit meeting at Reykjavik.

Today we note with satisfaction that the seeds sown in Reykjavik have begun to sprout encouragingly. The USSR and the United States of America have achieved agreement in principle on the question of eliminating two categories of nuclear weapons, medium-range and shorter-range missiles. For the first time in the history of nuclear weapons there is the prospect of the physical reduction of nuclear arsenals. This is a concrete disarmament measure and strikes a palpable blow at the doctrines of a limited use of nuclear weapons and the so-called controlled escalation of a nuclear conflict. With the conclusion of a treaty on those two categories of weapons a new page of wisdom and political vision has been written in the history of Europe, Asia and, indeed, the whole world.

The Ukraine's interest in strengthening the foundations of security on the European continent is quite understandable: our people, like so many others, have experienced firsthand the most grievous consequences of the devastating wars in Europe, in particular the Second World War. Therefore, the Ukrainian SSR welcomes this important step designed to strengthen peace on the continent and throughout the world.

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The agreement on medium- and shorter-range missiles has yet another dimension. It will provide an impetus to a 50 per cent cut in strategic offensive weapons, combined with strict compliance with the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems. That approach is entirely in line with the goal set in the joint Soviet-United States statements of 1985, namely, to prevent an arms race in space and to halt it on Earth, to limit and reduce nuclear weapons and to strengthen strategic stability. As we have seen, the significance of implementing the principle formulated at that time of a 50 per cent cut in the nuclear armaments of the United States and the USSR, far transcends the framework of bilateral Soviet-American relations. The international community is entitled to expect concrete accords on this subject as early as the first half of next year. As it has officially announced, the Soviet Union is prepared to take the most vigorous action in this regard.

We are firmly convinced that the cessation of nuclear tests is an area upon which the multilateral efforts of States should be focused. It is high time a solution was found to this question.

At the Geneva Conference on Disarmament the socialist countries submitted a joint document on the basic provisions of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapons tests. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR believes that that document provides a solid basis for opening substantive negotiations. It summarizes many years of experience in dealing with this item, both within the United Nations framework and in other forums, and it takes into account the new ideas advanced by many States, including those proposed in the statements by the leaders of six countries on four continents.

The draft treaty is a qualitatively new document that is permeated with the spirit of new political thinking. This is evidenced, first and foremost, by the

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way in which the question of control and verification is dealt with. The Ukrainian delegation shares the view that effective verification and control are absolute prerequisites of the effective implementation of true disarmament measures. In the light of this, the new document provides for large-scale verification measures. In particular, there is the matter of announcing the location of test sites, the participation of international inspectors in monitoring the non-conduct of nuclear-weapons tests, and the establishment, to those ends, of an international body of inspectors. The reality and feasibility of such forms of verification have been vividly proved by the joint experiment conducted by Soviet and United States scientists in Semipalatinsk.

At present all statements to the effect that effective control over the non-conduct of nuclear explosions is impossible are utterly groundless. Substantial headway has been made in recent years in improving national seismic means of verification. Thus, most of the experts who participated in the Moscow forum of scientists for ending nuclear tests held in July of last year, came to the conclusion that nuclear explosions with a yield of 20 to 30 tons could be reliably recorded at distances of up to 2,000 to 3,000 kilometres. A one-kiloton explosion has been recorded at a distance of 10,000 kilometres. This was confirmed by the seismic recording of a nuclear explosion in Nevada made in the territory of the Soviet Union and submitted to the participants at the meeting.

The current level of technical achievements, the many years of experience in negotiating and debating the problem of nuclear-weapons testing and the Soviet Union's 18-month unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosions on its territory have shown that the conclusion of a treaty is indeed feasible. In this connection the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR welcomes the agreement between the Soviet Union and

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the United States to open full-scale talks prior to 1 December 1987 on the limitation and, ultimately, the complete cessation of nuclear testing.

The task of building a safe world calls for the joint efforts of all States and for a revitalization not only of bilateral but also of multilateral mechanisms for producing and implementing disarmament measures. In this area, the United Nations and its bodies have an important role to play. We view the United Nations as the most democratic international forum for solving disarmament problems, including problems of nuclear disarmament, and for promoting the idea of a nuclear-free world. We are convinced that the time has come to involve the Security Council more actively in this process, in accordance with Article 26 of the United Nations Charter. The Ukrainian delegation supports the proposal to initiate a multilateral exchange of views among all nuclear Powers within the framework of the Security Council with a view to finding common ground in their approaches to possible ways and means of eliminating nuclear weapons. The Security Council has an important role to play in producing specific measures to rid the world of nuclear weapons and to give universal guarantees that they will not be reconstituted.

The Geneva Conference on Disarmament should make its own contribution to nuclear disarmament and to the internationalizing of the efforts to create a nuclear-free and non-violent world. In the past, that body has been effective in producing a number of major international agreements. At this time, it must intensify its efforts. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR calls upon the Conference to implement the numerous United Nations resolutions and to begin, at long last, relevant negotiations with a view to achieving agreement on practical steps to prevent nuclear war.

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First and foremost, there must be a renunciation by nuclear-weapon States of the use of nuclear weapons and the conclusion of an international convention to that effect, as well as a freeze, by all nuclear-weapon States, of their arsenals.

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR is convinced that renunciation by the nuclear Powers of war against each other and against third States, both nuclear and conventional, would be of great importance in terms of creating political and legal guarantees of security and confidence-building. The Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China have unilaterally undertaken to forgo the first use of nuclear weapons. The world community expects all other nuclear States to follow that example.

Confidence-building among States would also be served by the adoption of defensive military doctrines by all nuclear Powers and military alliances, something that the States signatories of the Warsaw Treaty have called for. We support the just demands for the establishment of nuclear-free zones in various parts of the world. A major contribution to the strengthening of global security would be the implementation of proposals for the establishment of a nuclear-free corridor in the centre of Europe and for nuclear-free zones in the north of Europe, in the Balkans, in the Korean Peninsula and in South-East Asia.

Further joint efforts are now required to strengthen in every possible way the régime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, especially in view of the growing nuclear ambitions of Israel, South Africa and some other countries. One of the challenges facing international relations today is close multilateral co-operation in the safe development of nuclear-power production. Further steps must be taken to enhance the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in these matters.

In giving priority to the problems involving nuclear weapons and space, we do not intend to belittle the importance of other issues the solution of which is

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vital for peace and security on this planet. In the present situation it is important to work for significant reductions in armed forces and conventional arms, new generations of which now have destructive effects very close to those of weapons of mass annihilation. This applies above all to Europe, where two world wars have broken out. There are circles that prefer merely to lament the problem of conventional armaments, whereas the socialist countries have on many occasions expressed their readiness to solve it at the negotiating table.

A real way of achieving substantial reductions in armed forces and conventional arms in Europe has been opened up by the Budapest initiative of the States signatories of the Warsaw Treaty. As we know, that initiative envisages reaching agreement on considerable reductions in armed forces and in nuclear, tactical and conventional arms, from the Atlantic to the Urals. Unfortunately, the countries members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have so far failed to provide an adequate answer to that appeal.

The international community looks forward to an early completion of talks concerning the drafting of an international convention on the banning of chemical means of waging war. For many years, representatives of some Western States have been attempting at sessions of the General Assembly to convince world public opinion of the alleged superiority of the USSR in the field of chemical weapons. We will leave such allegations to the conscience of those who have made them. Today, one fact would seem to be perfectly obvious: work on the convention is the touchstone that tests the validity of sincere readiness to do away with that problem once and for all.

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In that context, the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR regrets that, in view of the reluctance of some of the negotiators, the Special Committee on Chemical Weapons has missed an opportunity to hold an additional session to complete work on the convention. As is known, the Soviet Union has clearly demonstrated its readiness to achieve early and practical results in this respect by inviting experts from 45 countries to the military facility at Shikhan, where, for two days, they observed samples of Soviet chemical weapons and methods for their destruction.

The Conference is only one step away from completing the text of the convention. We must exert the greatest possible efforts to find mutually acceptable solutions to the outstanding issues, including the problem of binary chemical weapons. It is the duty of the General Assembly to contribute actively to the achievement of an agreement that would serve the vital interests of all mankind.

The Ukrainian delegation is of the opinion that, in view of the extent to which agreement has been reached between the negotiating States and other countries concerned, it would be possible for the First Committee to conclude its consideration of the question of chemical weapons by adopting a single resolution on the basis of consensus. Such a decision would be an important practical step towards the creation of a favourable atmosphere conducive to the early implementation of the mandate which the General Assembly has entrusted to the Conference on Disarmament.

Trust has invariably been one of the most important elements throughout the history of mankind and on its scale of values. In a nuclear age, when the very survival of the world is at stake, trust and mutual understanding should be an essential element of comprehensive security and should encourage concrete steps towards disarmament. In view of the integral link between trust and disarmament

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the one should not be contrasted with, or opposed to, the other; rather, we should act in accordance with the principle: the more trust, the more disarmament; the more disarmament, the more trust.

It is incumbent upon every State to do everything in its power to ensure that ideological and political differences, hostility and suspicion should give way to recognition of the common lot of the human species and the primacy of common human values. The United Nations holds broad possibilities of actively promoting democratic and humanitarian principles in the conduct of international relations. We are convinced that the role of the Organization as a guarantor of security will continue to increase.

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR is confident that the decisions taken this session of the General Assembly will give further impetus to bold and urgent action to preserve life on earth and change it for the better. It seems to us that this forty-second session and the forthcoming third special session of the General Assembly on disarmament could lay a good foundation for ensuring that the 1990s become a decade of building a nuclear-weapon-free, non-violent and democratic world.

Mr. BIERRING (Denmark): I have the honour and privilege of addressing the Committee on behalf of the twelve States members of the European Community. I should like first to extend our congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this important Committee and also to the other members of the bureau. We trust that under your leadership the First Committee will conduct its business efficiently and successfully and we can assure you of the full support of the Twelve.

The work of the First Committee, to which we attach considerable importance, cannot be regarded in isolation from international developments in general. This has always been so, but this year we are meeting in an international climate that

(Mr. Børring, Denmark)

should inspire and influence our work in an increasingly positive manner. A great deal has happened in East-West relations in recent months. The United States of America and the Soviet Union are at present engaged in an intense dialogue - as demonstrated by the outcome of the meeting held in Washington in September between the United States Secretary of State and the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union. Measures of arms control and disarmament are the main focus but the talks also cover a number of other major issues of interest to East and West, including human rights and regional conflicts. The Twelve hope that the summit meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev will lead to constructive progress and concrete results in the comprehensive relationship between the two Powers. In the view of the Twelve, it is important to maintain a broad scope for dialogue since we know from experience that tangible and durable progress in one area is difficult to achieve if the situation in other areas is not developing in a satisfactory manner. On the other hand, it is also obvious that positive results in one area strengthen mutual confidence and thus enhance the possibilities of progress in other areas.

The Twelve have closely followed recent developments in East-West relations and have noted a number of encouraging steps towards a more stable and constructive relationship. The crucial test, however, is the extent to which declarations and proposals brought forward during the negotiations will lead to concrete agreements. In the context of arms control, increased confidence and greater openness are fundamental requirements for real progress towards balanced and verifiable arms control and disarmament measures which will enhance security using the lowest possible number of forces.

The twelve members of the European Community, convinced that peace and security in Europe cannot be built by military means alone, attach particular

(Mr. Biering, Denmark)

importance to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process. They stress that tangible and lasting progress in all fields of the CSCE process, including full implementation of the provisions within the human dimension, is indispensable if relations between East and West are to develop in a climate of confidence, an important concomitant of agreements on disarmament and arms control.

Increased information and openness are directly related to the question of confidence and constitute elements common to arms control and disarmament negotiations. The Twelve have consistently supported a freer, more open flow of useful and objective information on military matters. The United Nations reporting system, whereby Member States in different geographical regions and with different budgeting and accounting systems can supply information about their military expenditures in a standardized form, is a valuable instrument that contributes to greater clarity in this area. The Twelve regret that there are still many States within the United Nations which have declined to participate in this useful exercise. For the Twelve, increased information on military matters is an important prerequisite for achieving agreements on the reduction of armed forces.

Adequate verification is an essential element of arms limitation and disarmament agreements. Verification measures differ according to the requirements of the agreement in question, but a general and fundamental criterion is to provide maximum incentive for strict compliance.

(Mr. Bierring, Denmark)

Adequate and effective verification provisions that act as a deterrent to circumvention of an agreement will offer a necessary assurance to the parties that the undertakings agreed upon are being strictly adhered to. Effective verification arrangements can thus contribute to a general strengthening of confidence among States in the field of arms control.

When considering the wide area of arms control and disarmament I must stress that for the Twelve all relevant elements of the military balance - nuclear, conventional and chemical forces - are of the utmost importance. Nuclear arms reduction remains one of the highest priorities and the United States of America and the Soviet Union have a crucial responsibility for achieving substantial and balanced reductions in the total level of nuclear arsenals. The Twelve therefore find it very encouraging that in September the two military super-Powers were able to reach agreement in principle to conclude a treaty on the global elimination of American and Soviet land-based intermediate-range nuclear missiles with a range of between 500 and 5,500 kilometres, thereby removing a whole class of nuclear weapons. This would indeed be a major achievement. The Twelve hope that this recent progress in the American-Soviet dialogue will give new impetus to the bilateral negotiations on other United States-Soviet nuclear missile and space systems. The Twelve attach great importance to reaching agreement on 50 per cent reductions in the strategic nuclear arsenals of the two super-Powers, in accordance with their earlier agreed objective.

While supporting and encouraging the two countries in their efforts to negotiate agreements on reductions of nuclear arms, the Twelve stress the importance of strict compliance by all parties with existing arms-control agreements, including the bilateral United States-Soviet Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972.

(Mr. Bierring, Denmark)

The question of a comprehensive test ban remains on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. The establishment of an ad hoc committee on this issue is still pending, since agreement on the question of the committee's mandate has not yet been reached. The Group of Seismic Experts is considering the various technical problems concerning verification, including the work on seismic data exchange, and the Twelve are looking forward to the Group's continuing its useful work.

The Twelve have taken note of the recent United States-Soviet agreement to initiate bilateral stage-by-stage negotiations on verification measures, which will make it possible to ratify the United States-USSR 1974 Threshold Test-Ban Treaty and the 1976 Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty, and on further intermediate limitations leading to the ultimate objective of the complete cessation of nuclear testing.

The First Committee's agenda contains, as in previous years, proposals concerning nuclear-weapon-free zones in certain parts of the world. The creation of such zones could contribute to stability in the areas concerned, to non-proliferation and to the disarmament process in general, provided that the States concerned are prepared to participate on the basis of agreements freely entered into and in keeping with internationally recognized principles.

The Twelve attach the utmost importance to an effective international non-proliferation régime. Efforts should be made to increase support of the non-proliferation régime within the international community.

The Twelve see an urgent need to achieve concrete results in the field of conventional arms limitation and disarmament. Conventional disarmament is an integral and essential part of the overall disarmament process for several reasons.

(Mr. Bierring, Denmark)

It is conventional weapons that, since the creation of the United Nations and before, have been the cause of many millions of lost lives and untold suffering in different parts of the world. Furthermore, expenditure on conventional armaments and forces accounts for the overwhelming part of all military budgets in the world, is a serious economic strain on a large number of countries, and is often an obstacle to social and economic development. The process of conventional disarmament is therefore essential for all States in the world and should be pursued on the global and regional levels. The aim of this process should be to seek effective and verifiable arms-control agreements, which should lead to increased security at the lowest possible level of forces.

For Europe, the need for conventional disarmament derives from the fact that our continent has the largest concentration of arms and forces in the world. It is very important to achieve a reduction in the levels of conventional forces together with the elimination of imbalances that threaten stability and security. There is also a need to build upon and expand the confidence- and security-building measures adopted at last year's Stockholm Conference, which made a major contribution to improving security and co-operation in Europe. The Twelve hope to see further progress in this field as a result of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). The Twelve underline their strong interest in the discussions in this connection on further steps to promote stability through the establishment in Europe of a stable and secure balance of conventional forces at a lower level.

The Twelve also support efforts in other parts of the world to increase confidence and security, thereby contributing to progress towards conventional disarmament agreements at a regional level.

(Mr. Bierring, Denmark)

The United Nations Disarmament Commission had a substantive consideration of the question of conventional disarmament at its 1987 session. The Twelve participated actively in the deliberations on this item in the working group chaired by a member of the Twelve. We look forward to the further consideration of this issue by the Commission at its next substantive session in 1988 on the basis of the report from the working group and hope that concrete results will then be achieved.

Negotiations on a multilateral convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction are a priority task for the Conference on Disarmament. The Twelve reaffirm their commitment to the total elimination of chemical weapons, and members of the Twelve have contributed substantially to the work of the Conference on Disarmament on this subject. Important progress has been made on certain parts of the text of a draft convention.

(Mr. Bierring, Denmark)

Solutions to some sensitive political and complicated technical problems are, however, still outstanding. One of the crucial elements is verification, where it is necessary to establish a stringent régime providing for on-site inspection on challenge when circumstances so require, and to secure adequate verification of non-production of chemical weapons in the chemical industry. The Twelve welcome the progress made in the Conference on Disarmament this year. We hope that further constructive steps will make it possible to move closer towards an early agreement on a comprehensive, world-wide and effectively verifiable treaty embracing the total destruction of existing stockpiles of chemical weapons within an agreed time-frame.

The urgent need for a global ban on chemical weapons has been demonstrated by the use of these weapons in the conflict between Iraq and Iran. The Twelve are deeply concerned at the unanimous conclusions reached by experts sent to the region by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, which were contained in the statement of the President of the Security Council, of 14 May 1987. The experts' report makes clear that the provisions of the 1925 Geneva Protocol have been violated repeatedly, despite pressing appeals from the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The use of these weapons against the civilian population represents an alarming escalation. As the Foreign Ministers stated in their declaration of 25 May, the Twelve strongly condemn these flagrant breaches and urgently appeal for an immediate end to the use of chemical weapons in the conflict involving these two countries.

Solving the problems relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space has for years been considered a matter of urgency by the Twelve. The bilateral talks in Geneva between the United States of America and the Soviet Union on this subject are being followed with close attention by the Twelve, and we hope that, in

(Mr. Bierring, Denmark)

accordance with their declared commitment to prevent an arms race in space, the parties will continue and intensify their search for agreements in this area. The Twelve also hope that the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space established by the Conference on Disarmament will be able to make progress in its considerations of the subject, including the examination of the multilateral aspects of the question. The work of the Committee must be carried out on a realistic basis and must complement the results of the bilateral talks in Geneva.

The role of the United Nations in regard to disarmament is an important subject, which has for some years been under consideration in this Committee as well as in the Disarmament Commission. The Twelve have maintained a keen and active interest in the question since we are convinced that, in accordance with the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter, the United Nations must play a central role in the quest for disarmament. The General Assembly and in particular the First Committee are useful forums, in which all States of the world, including those that are not members of the specific negotiating bodies, can participate in the deliberations of disarmament issues.

It is, however, important for us to make efforts to improve the efficiency of the work of this Committee. Because of the proliferation of resolutions the work-load of the Committee has increased and is now close to such a limit that serious and careful consideration of the many resolutions may no longer be possible. A continuation of this development could undermine the credibility of the Committee. In the view of the Twelve it is the extent of meaningful consensus that is important and not the number of resolutions submitted and voted upon. The budgetary problems of the United Nations further underline the need for organizing our work in a more efficient way.

(Mr. Bierring, Denmark)

The subject was considered by the Disarmament Commission at its session this year and a number of constructive proposals for improving the work of the organization of the work of this Committee were discussed, but no agreement was reached. We hope that at its session next year the Disarmament Commission will succeed in agreeing upon specific recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly. The role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament will also be an important subject at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

In this respect the continuing requirement of a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, as provided by the Conference on Disarmament, taking decisions on the basis of consensus, is evident. The resolution on the report of the Conference on Disarmament should likewise reflect the fundamental importance of consensus as the rule for decision-making in the Conference on Disarmament.

The decision by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/60 G to convene a third special session devoted to disarmament was welcomed by the Twelve, and they have participated actively in the work of the Preparatory Committee. In the view of the Twelve, the third special session should reaffirm and build upon the final document of the first special session devoted to Disarmament and at the same time be forward-looking; the discussions and considerations should be based on a realistic and practical agenda concentrated upon a number of carefully selected items. The overall objective should be to secure a final document that can be adopted by consensus. The Twelve will contribute in a positive and constructive manner to such a successful outcome of the special session.

The International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development was a significant event in the United Nations. The Twelve welcomed its adoption by consensus of a final document.

(Mr. Bierring, Denmark)

In our view one of the achievements of this Conference is the reaffirmation of the crucial importance of the question of security in any detailed analysis of the relationship between disarmament and development: security understood as a broader concept encompassing social, humanitarian, environmental, developmental and military aspects.

In the deliberations during the Conference, the Twelve dedicated themselves to the achievement of a result acceptable to all. The Final Document constitutes a delicate balance of different interests and viewpoints, and in this way reflects the deliberations of the Conference on the relationship between disarmament and development.

The twelve members of the European Community believe that the process of arms control and disarmament should apply in all fields and we attach the utmost importance to the ongoing negotiations at the bilateral, regional and multilateral level, which should result in balanced and verifiable agreements on reduced levels of armaments. Recent developments seem to have opened up new and hopeful prospects in arms control.

In view of this situation, let us all get a fresh outlook on the work of the First Committee. The Twelve consider it important that this Committee offer constructive and stimulating contributions to the new developments in the field of disarmament. As the influence of the Committee is increased when we succeed in reaching common ground on various disarmament issues, serious efforts should be made in order to expand the area of consensus. By doing this we can contribute to the enhancement of the role of the First Committee and the United Nations in the process of disarmament as envisaged in the Charter. The Twelve will work actively in order to achieve constructive results in the First Committee and we call upon other States to join us in these efforts.

Mr. TANASIE (Romania): Mr. Chairman, at the beginning of our work it was agreed that in their statements delegations would refrain from congratulating the officers of the Committee. However, I cannot let this opportunity pass without expressing my delegation's satisfaction and pleasure at seeing you, a representative of Zaire, a country with which Romania maintains cordial relations of friendship and co-operation, presiding over the deliberations of this Committee. We should therefore like to extend our heartfelt and warmest congratulations to you on your election. The unanimous support you command is in itself so eloquent that there is no need for further praise of your personal merits. We are convinced that your competence and dynamism will enable us to work in circumstances that appear to be ideal. We should also like to congratulate the other members of the bureau and to assure you all of our co-operation in the course of the Committee's work.

In my statement today I do not intend to dwell on all the disarmament issues on the Committee's agenda. My delegation will have that opportunity later on in our general debate. I do wish at this stage to focus the Committee's attention on a single subject which, in our opinion, is of crucial importance for the results of the work of the Committee this year and for the future disarmament process. I am referring to the elimination of intermediate and shorter-range nuclear missiles in Europe and in other parts of the world. In the last few years my delegation has constantly brought to the attention of the General Assembly the critical situation of armaments in Europe.

The nerve centre of the tension - the military competition, primarily nuclear, and the danger of the outbreak of a new world war - was, and still is, undoubtedly in Europe. It is there that the most massive concentration of weapons, nuclear and

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

conventional, continues to exist; it is there that the two military blocs which came into being, as everyone knows, during the cold-war period, stand face to face, giving rise to distrust and confrontation; and it is there in particular that the horizon has been seriously darkened by the deployment of new nuclear missiles, which has a dangerous destabilizing effect on the military balance.

The keen concern that the deployment of new nuclear missiles and the military situation in Europe in general have generated everywhere has been expressed by many Heads of State or Government, by political statesmen or parliamentarians, and by many prominent political figures, by mass media of every persuasion. They have asked for the cessation of the deployment of such missiles and for an acceptable solution in conformity with the security interests of all peoples, both in Europe and in other parts of the world. Romania has not failed to pronounce itself in favour of such a solution and has done its utmost to encourage and preserve, when the need arose, the pursuit of dialogue and negotiations.

The President of Romania, our national Parliament and other political and public organizations representing a broad spectrum of social life have persistently urged both negotiating parties - the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America - to reach an agreement as soon as possible on nuclear weapons in Europe, leading to the halting of the deployment of new nuclear missiles on the continent and to their total elimination as a step to a nuclear-free Europe, on the basis of a new balance of forces at a lower level of conventional armaments.

Romania has also called upon all European States and, first of all, the States of the two military blocs - the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty - to assume greater responsibility and to intensify their efforts to encourage the achievement of an agreement on the elimination of nuclear missiles in Europe and to bar the senseless race towards a nuclear catastrophe.

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

In the aftermath of the summit meeting at Reykjavik last year, which opened a potentially new and hopeful stage in the disarmament negotiations, Romania, again urge the Soviet Union and the United States to take advantage of their practically identical views on intermediate-range missiles in Europe and to conclude an agreement on this matter independently of other issues in their negotiations in Geneva.

Faithful to the firm position of Romania, its President Nicolae Ceausescu proposed that the General Assembly, at this session, launch an appeal to the Soviet Union and to the United States -- considering that their positions are very close -- to conclude without delay, this year, a treaty on the elimination of all medium- and shorter-range nuclear missiles from Europe and elsewhere. States having nuclear weapons on their territory were called upon to renounce such weapons and to refrain from raising any kind of obstacles to the achievement of the treaty. Furthermore, all countries in Europe and elsewhere in the world were urged to act resolutely to achieve such a treaty this year. It now seems that reason has prevailed.

In Washington last September, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union and the Secretary of State of the United States announced in a joint statement that their intensive negotiations on the question of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles had resulted in agreement in principle to conclude a treaty. They also stated that the Geneva delegations of both sides had been instructed to work intensively to resolve the remaining technical issues and promptly to complete a draft treaty text.

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

Like all countries and peoples of the world, Romania welcomed this announcement as a major development ushering in new prospects for better Soviet and American relations with regard to disarmament and a more stable and peaceful world.

Referring to this particularly good news, the President of my country recently expressed the ardent desire of the entire Romanian people to see:

"the treaty concluded as soon as possible, thereby representing a genuine starting-point toward new undertakings on behalf of the elimination of all nuclear weapons and of conventional disarmament, as well as on behalf of achieving a new era of co-operation built upon the democratic principles between all States of the world".

Indeed, we have reached a moment of historical significance. For the first time in history it appears possible to get an agreement on the elimination of two classes of nuclear weapons. Certainly, there will be many more nuclear weapons left than those which would be eliminated, but we must begin and this agreement is a start.

The historical significance of this new trend leads us to believe that the General Assembly, representing the international community as a whole, should take a definite stand and speak out in favour of the urgent conclusion of the treaty. Such a stand is all the more pertinent and indeed necessary since there are still some who express reluctance and indecisiveness. It is at least disquieting to note that while there has been a very broad response in favour of the agreement in principle between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America and the announcement concerning their further important intention, there are still some politicians in some countries who are in favour of the development of nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

What is essential now for us all, for those interested in safeguarding peace and the future of the present civilization, is not to lose this momentum, not to let this promising chance slip away.

We should do our best to bar a new escalation of the arms race, to prevent the danger of a nuclear conflagration and to ensure a steady course of action towards disarmament, trust among nations, peace and stability in the world.

That is the reason underlying my delegation's decision to propose to the Committee the adoption of a draft resolution, the main purpose of which is to encourage the process of negotiation and, as soon as possible, to turn the agreement in principle between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America into a full-fledged treaty.

The draft resolution (A/C.1/42/L.1), which is attached to the statement just distributed and which I have the pleasure of introducing, notes the joint statement released by the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in Washington last September; expresses satisfaction at the agreement in principle between the two countries to conclude a treaty on the elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles in Europe and all over the world, as well as at their agreement to intensify their efforts to achieve a 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive arms within the framework of the nuclear and space talks at Geneva.

After declaring its conviction that the elimination of the intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles would be of crucial importance for the betterment of the international political climate and would create condition conducive to future disarmament agreements, the General Assembly would appeal to the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and to the Government of the United States of America to spare no effort in concluding, at the earliest date, during 1987, the

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

treaty on the elimination of these weapons. The General Assembly would also call upon all European States as well as all interested States to do their utmost to assist the process of negotiation and its successful conclusion. It would call upon all States to undertake concrete measures to halt the arms race and to proceed to disarmament, and first of all to nuclear disarmament, and to contribute to the relaxation of international tension and the resumption of the policy of détente, to the strengthening of international co-operation and respect for the national independence of all peoples.

Given the urgency and the seriousness of the matter with which the draft resolution deals, we feel that it is entirely justifiable to ask for its consideration and adoption as a matter of priority at the earliest possible stage of the Committee's work.

As can easily be seen, the draft resolution borrows extensively from the joint statement released by the United States and the Soviet Union last September, and contains uncontroversial provisions which invite consensus.

In our opinion, the adoption of this proposal would prove to be the common denominator in our capacity for action at this crucial time; it would also demonstrate our determination as Member States to make it possible for the United Nations to prove equal to the tasks with which it has been entrusted in the maintenance of international peace and security.

It is gratifying to note that the general debate just concluded in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly emphasized the keen interest of the entire international community in the success of the current Soviet-American negotiations.

However important the role of the nuclear-weapon States - and they do have primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament - it is the United Nations that has

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been entrusted with the ultimate task of halting and reversing the arms race and achieving disarmament. In fulfilling its central role in the sphere of disarmament, the United Nations, and especially the General Assembly as the most democratic forum, should not wait for results to be registered in the disarmament process, but should encourage, stimulate, initiate and, when necessary, urge genuine negotiations and practical measures.

It is our conviction that in the present complex and difficult international situation, it is necessary more than ever before to act with the highest sense of responsibility and to do nothing that might compromise the chance that peace has been given. It is high time to show political wisdom and the genuine will to co-operate, to intensify constructive efforts and actions for the sake of the general cause of world peace and security.

We consider that the appeal by the General Assembly, which the Romanian delegation has the honour to propose on an issue of extreme importance and urgency - the elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range nuclear missiles - would constitute such a constructive action at the present time.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): Before adjourning this meeting I wish once again to remind members of the Committee who wish to take part in the general debate on all agenda items related to disarmament that the speaker's list will be closed this evening at 6 p.m. sharp. I urge delegations who have not yet inscribed their names to speak to do so before this afternoon's deadline.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.