

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 2 February 1988, at 10 a.m.

President:

Mr. Harald Rose

(German Democratic
Republic)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 1988 session and the 436th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

It is with deep regret that we have learnt, during the inter-sessional period, of the loss of our former colleague and good friend, Ambassador Ian Cromartie, who did so much to advance the work of the Conference. He served his country with distinction, being, as he was, an outstanding diplomat. His special personality made him respected and earned him our esteem and admiration as he harmonized so well professional ability with personal integrity. He served as President of the Conference, as well as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. I hardly need to recall how effectively he discharged these difficult tasks. In particular, progress towards a convention banning chemical weapons achieved special impetus during his guidance of the work of the Ad hoc Committee. On behalf of the Conference and on behalf of my delegation, I wish to extend heartfelt condolences to the delegation of the United Kingdom and to his family.

I invite you all to join me in a minute of silence as a tribute to the memory of our good friend Ian Cromartie.

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I thank you. I now give the floor to the representative of Venezuela, Ambassador Taylhardat.

Mr. TAYLHARDAT (Venezuela) (translated from Spanish): In my capacity as co-ordinator of the Group of 21 I wish to express our profound sadness at the passing away of our distinguished and eminent colleague, Ambassador Ian Cromartie, who for several years was the representative of the United Kingdom on the Conference on Disarmament. His death has left a deep void in our midst and is an irreparable loss for the Conference. Personally it was my privilege to have Ambassador Cromartie as a colleague on two occasions: first of all in Vienna, and later here in Geneva on the Conference on Disarmament. This means that I am doubly sincere when expressing these feelings.

Ambassador Cromartie always treated the Group of 21 with respect and deference, and offered the representatives of the countries in the Group his friendship with unaffected courtesy. His statements in our debates were at all times characterized by eloquence and a wealth of substance. His contributions to our work were always constructive and rich in new ideas. His term as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons was decisive in the impetus given to the negotiations on this subject since last year, and therefore his name and memory will remain in the annals of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Group of 21 wishes, through me, to convey to the distinguished delegation of the United Kingdom its sincere solidarity and deep sadness. To the wife and children of Ian Cromartie, with whom we share the pain of this irreparable loss, we wish to extend our heartfelt condolences at the premature death of this distinguished and eminent colleague.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Venezuela for his statement. I give the floor now to the representative of Hungary, Ambassador Meiszter.

Mr. MEISZTER (Hungary): The 1988 session of the Conference on Disarmament marks its start with the sorrowful event of paying tribute to the memory of our respected colleague Ambassador Ian Cromartie, the previous head of the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Conference on Disarmament. I recall with meditation the concluding part of the 1987 session of the CD, when, learning of the departure of Ambassador Cromartie, we were bidding farewell to him and wishing him a quick recovery from his illness.

The sad news of his sudden demise struck all of us who had the privilege of knowing him and working with him. As a representative of his country in the CD and as a diplomat of personal integrity as well as a colleague and friend, Ambassador Cromartie has left a memorable impression on us. As a diplomat taking part in the everyday activities of the Conference on Disarmament, and as the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons in 1986, Ambassador Cromartie proved by deeds that honestly serving the interests of his country and Government was fully compatible with showing understanding of the positions of others and readiness for constructive co-operation in order to reach solutions to complicated issues characteristic of any international negotiation, especially on the sensitive issues of disarmament. Acting in this very spirit, Ambassador Cromartie has left not only inspiring memories for us but also a constructive contribution to the activities of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons and the Conference on Disarmament as a whole.

The delegations of the group of socialist countries offer their sympathy and condolences at the sad demise of Ambassador Cromartie to the delegation of the United Kingdom, and through it to its Government as well as to the bereaved family.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Hungary for his statement, and I pass the floor to the representative of Italy, Ambassador Pugliese.

Mr. PUGLIESE (Italy): I have the honour to make the following statement on behalf of the Western Group of States in the Conference on Disarmament.

Last fall, when we were in New York, we received the sad news of the untimely death of Ambassador Ian Cromartie, who had for several years represented the United Kingdom at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

All of us who knew him and had worked together with him greatly appreciated his talents. We were therefore profoundly shocked and dismayed by this sudden loss: the loss of a true friend, a man of sharp intellect and great personal charm, and an ambassador of great skill who set a continuing example of the highest traditions of British diplomacy.

(Mr. Pugliese, Italy)

Ambassador Cromartie was deeply committed to the cause of disarmament, and his contributions to our work have been of particular relevance. As Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons he showed us how to achieve results by facilitating valuable progress in a delicate and difficult set of negotiations.

The Western members of this Conference mourn the loss of our valued colleague and friend. We will miss him. We also know that the Government of the United Kingdom has lost a skilled official and devoted public servant, and we ask the leader of the United Kingdom delegation to the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Solesby, to convey to the authorities and to Jenny Cromartie and their children our renewed expressions of sympathy for their great loss.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Italy for his statement, and I give the floor to the representative of China, Ambassador Fan.

Mr. FAN (China) (translated from Chinese): On behalf of the Chinese delegation, I wish to express our deep condolences on the untimely death of Ambassador Cromartie, the late representative of the United Kingdom. Ambassador Cromartie participated in international disarmament negotiations for many years. With his diligence and erudition he not only loyally represented his own country, but also won the friendship and respect of all of us. It should be pointed out in particular that when he presided over the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons in 1986 he displayed outstanding diplomatic skill and pushed forward the negotiations on the convention.

With his untimely death we lost a well-respected colleague and friend. We shall always remember him.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep condolences to the United Kingdom delegation and through it to the United Kingdom Government, as well as to Mrs. Cromartie and other members of the family of the deceased.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for his statement, and I give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Solesby.

Miss SOLESBY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): May I thank you and all the delegates here for the act of tribute to Dr. Ian Cromartie, and especially for the expressions of respect and affection by yourself, Mr. President, and by the distinguished representatives of Venezuela, Hungary, Italy and China.

You have spoken eloquently of Ian Cromartie's fine human qualities. He has been described as a Christian gentleman, and so he was in the fullest sense. Ian was deeply committed to the cause of disarmament, and in

(Miss Solesby, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

particular to the search for a global ban on chemical weapons. He had much hoped to see the negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament, to which he had contributed so much, crowned by the successful conclusion of a convention. This was not merely an official duty but also a very personal commitment.

I shall indeed pass to my authorities and to his family your expressions of condolence. I know that Jenny Cromartie and the children - Selina, Alan and David - have greatly appreciated the messages and flowers from Ian's colleagues in the Conference on Disarmament. And they were much comforted by the large number of friends and colleagues who attended the memorial service in Geneva in thanksgiving for Ian's life. I am sure that Jenny Cromartie and the whole family will similarly appreciate the tribute you have paid to Ian this morning.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Solesby for her statement. We shall now continue with the proceedings of this plenary meeting.

I should like, on behalf of the Conference, to extend our appreciation to Ambassador Pierre Morel of France for the effective and professional manner in which he guided the Conference during the month of August and the recess between the two annual sessions. Ambassador Morel displayed his well-known diplomatic skill and personal capability, presiding over the Conference in the best traditions of the diplomatic service of his country.

I should like to bid farewell to Ambassador Kamyab of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who left us during the inter-sessional period. May I also take the opportunity to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the Conference to the new representatives of Canada, Ambassador de Montigny Marchand, Egypt, Ambassador Elaraby, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Nasser, Nigeria, Ambassador Azikiwe, Poland, Ambassador Sujka and the United Kingdom, Ambassador Solesby. I am sure that the Conference can count on them for their valuable support in discharging its important responsibilities.

Allow me now to make an opening statement as President of the Conference for the month of February.

The Conference is starting its activities this year in a world where remarkable political changes have taken place. Although the arms race has not been halted and the threat of a nuclear catastrophe continues to weigh heavily upon the peoples, outstanding events have shown in the last few months that real possibilities for a reversal of the situation do exist. A historic chance has, indeed, emerged for reorienting international relations firmly and irreversibly towards greater security and lasting peace. In order to take advantage of that chance, many avenues must be explored. Clearly, reducing and eliminating means of warfare, in particular weapons of mass destruction, will remain crucial in any case. This is what has been confirmed, in my view, also by the Washington summit.

(The President)

The Treaty on the elimination of medium- and shorter-range nuclear missiles, signed by General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan, constitutes the long-awaited first step towards the total liquidation of nuclear arsenals. That aspect, and the novel and far-reaching verification provisions, are mentioned most prominently whenever people speak of the historic significance of the Treaty. Yet I believe that the political, confidence-building and psychological dimensions deserve to be stressed as well in that context. In fact, it has been proven now that the so-called intrinsic logic of the arms race and its inherent dynamism can be overcome by common sense.

The Treaty reflects a distinct improvement in Soviet-United States relations and in the international situation as a whole, while at the same time having a positive effect of its own on that relationship. The accord is stimulating activities in all fields and at all levels of disarmament negotiations, and can in many ways serve as an example when it comes to finding solutions to other issues. The confidence-building effect is evident, since word and deed have been brought into harmony with each other and provision has been made for verifiable compliance with the obligations mutually undertaken.

If it was possible in the case of the INF Treaty to settle the most complex political and technical issues in a relatively short period of time, why should it not be conceivable then - given the necessary will - to do likewise in other areas of political activity and disarmament, and this not only in matters concerning the relationship between those two countries?

There is a growing awareness of the need for a common security concept requiring genuine joint action. In view of the challenges of the nuclear and space age, political interests are increasingly being weighed in a matter-of-fact fashion and less from the viewpoint of ideological confrontation. Although that trend will presumably continue to run up against obstacles, it must eventually carry the day so that nuclear brinkmanship can be replaced by stable peace.

Apart from hailing the Treaty as a success, people all over the world expect it to be speedily ratified and not to be undermined by an arms build-up in other fields; they would like to see it as a strong impetus to the whole disarmament process.

The next objectives to be reached are defined both in resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-second session and in the joint Soviet-American statement issued at the Washington summit. Those objectives are, inter alia, a 50 per cent cut in the strategic offensive weapons of the Soviet Union and the United States, and observance of the ABM Treaty as signed in 1972; the complete elimination and prohibition of all chemical weapons; the cessation of nuclear weapon tests; effective measures for preventing an arms race in outer space; and disarmament and confidence-building measures under the CSCE process.

(The President)

In the light of the new situation - and also with regard to SSOD-III - multilateral disarmament steps have become even more urgent. In this connection, the question of the actual role of the Conference on Disarmament is frequently asked. This highlights the need to translate into reality the often quoted principle that bilateral and multilateral efforts should be conducted as parallel affairs complementing each other.

International security through disarmament is a global issue. It touches upon the interests of all peoples and countries and presupposes their active involvement. The Declaration adopted only a few days ago at the Stockholm conference of the signatories to the Six-nation Initiative must be viewed as a convincing example in this context.

In the case of the INF agreement, there were quite a few countries which worked hard for its coming into being. Some of them, including my own, contributed in a very direct way by undertaking specific international obligations related to the implementation of the Treaty. In fact, broad commitment is needed, particularly when there are problems which, by their very nature, cannot successfully be tackled bilaterally.

Developments are objectively pressing for further democratization of the disarmament process and for more effective work by our Conference. Consequently, we all must redouble our search for understanding and accommodation. I take it that all nuclear-weapon States will perceive it as part of their special responsibility to stand ready to join constructively in multilateral efforts aimed at arms limitation and disarmament and to pull their weight for practical results.

The more favourable conditions which have emerged are an encouragement to the Conference on Disarmament to produce, at last, the concrete results expected of it. What I have in mind, first of all, are the negotiations on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons. The Committee, under the able guidance of Ambassador Ekéus, has made remarkable progress. It should be possible now, in a comparatively short span of time, to cast the agreement that already exists on fundamental issues into additional Convention text and to work out further details.

Speeding up the drafting process would be in conformity with the impressive consensus reflected in the relevant resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-second session. That particular resolution calls for an intensification of our work "with a view to the final elaboration of a convention at the earliest possible date".

In view of the progress achieved in the negotiations between the USSR and the United States on the reduction of nuclear arms, the Conference has every reason to intensify its work on the whole complex of nuclear arms limitation and disarmament.

(The President)

A fresh start should be made to allow headway at the Conference with regard to the comprehensive prohibition of nuclear weapon tests. At the same time, it will be necessary to do everything to make sure the experiment on the exchange of level II data can be conducted successfully.

The discussion we have had so far in the Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space has been helpful in identifying common ground for seeking agreement on the formulation of concrete measures. The Committee should be re-established as soon as possible.

It is especially in connection with the preparations for SSOD-III that I should like to draw your attention to the elaboration of the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament and the special report of the Conference, as well as the need to enhance the effectiveness of this forum, inter alia through organizational measures.

Let us together see to it that the Conference very swiftly proceeds to substantive work so that noticeable progress can already be reported to SSOD-III.

That concludes my opening statement.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar, has addressed a message to the Conference. I should like now to give the floor to his Personal Representative and the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Miljan Komatina, who will read out the message.

Mr. KOMATINA (Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): I quote the message of the Secretary-General to the session of the Conference on Disarmament.

"Your Conference is meeting this year in a political environment more propitious for its efforts than the one which existed only a short time ago. There has been a noticeable improvement in the general tone of relations among States. On many international political issues which appeared intractable, there is evidence of a growing convergence of views and interests. As far as disarmament is concerned, this qualitative change in attitudes is reflected in the recognition that more arms do not mean greater security. It has been a basic principle of the whole case for disarmament that security can be sought and assured at progressively lower levels of armaments with appropriate collateral measures. This has now begun to appear as a perfectly practical proposition.

"Without doubt, the most significant step forward last year has been the agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States on the elimination of intermediate and shorter-range nuclear missiles. As the first negotiated measure entailing an actual reduction in nuclear arms in the 43 years of the nuclear age, this agreement is of historic importance in itself. Credit for this major constructive development is due, of course, to the vision and statesmanship displayed by the two

(Mr. Komatina, Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

signatories. However, the outcome was also influenced by the sustained interest of the international community, clearly expressed through the pronouncements of the United Nations. I earnestly hope that the current negotiations on the reduction of strategic arms will soon yield the results expected by world public opinion and open possibilities of co-operation by all nuclear-weapon States.

"The right course for the future can be charted only on the basis of a careful evaluation of the change in the international scene and of the promise of continuance and amplification in it. The priority is to consolidate and promote, as far as possible, the convergence of views that is beginning to take place. Where the possibility of agreement exists, it needs to be encouraged and concretized. Where confidence and trust begin to grow, they need to be nurtured.

"The forthcoming special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, third in the series, will provide a valuable occasion to lend further focus to the nascent change through a forward practical move. Disarmament has many multilateral dimensions and is inseparably part of the wider problems of peace, security and development. There is, therefore, a strong and continuing need for a multilateral approach to this goal, and the Assembly provides the means for all to participate in sustained dialogue and negotiation, in a spirit of pragmatism, in order to realize the possibilities of multilateral action through actual measures towards disarmament.

"It is in this context that the role of the Conference on Disarmament needs to be strengthened. Its agenda embraces all the major problems, and it carries a unique responsibility in the area of multilateral disarmament. It has also provided the forum for exchanging views and exploring possibilities for negotiation on critical issues, even when the disarmament dialogue lay in a state of suspension elsewhere. It has, therefore, already proved its usefulness but, with the change which I mentioned earlier, it is provided with a fresh stimulus and opportunity.

"The prospects of a ban on chemical weapons are far more promising now than before. The international community certainly expects that everything will be done to accelerate progress on this important measure in order to achieve a convention at the earliest date.

"The desirability of early agreement on a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty has been viewed in the United Nations as having cardinal importance. There have been indications of movement towards this commonly shared objective. The need for a multilateral approach to this question, leading to a treaty which would command general support, remains obvious.

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"The prevention of an arms race in outer space also remains an issue of great concern to the international community. I would urge that all the avenues open to you be explored to deal with the problem in all its aspects.

"I should like to stress once more the importance of concluding negotiations in the Conference on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament so that the results may be submitted to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

"I offer you my full support and best wishes for success in your efforts during the year that lies ahead. In view of the rethinking on primary issues of global concern now coming to the surface, it may well prove to be a formative year."

This concludes the message of the Secretary-General to the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his statement. May I request him to transmit to Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar our appreciation for his message, as well as for the interest he shows in the work of this Conference.

I should like to note that the Secretary-General has addressed a letter to us transmitting the resolutions and a decision on disarmament adopted by the forty-second session of the General Assembly. That communication from the Secretary-General has been circulated today as document CD/793.

I understand that His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia is arriving at the Palais des Nations at this moment, and I therefore suggest a brief recess so that I can receive the Minister and invite him to join us here.

The meeting was suspended at 10.50 a.m. and resumed at 10.55 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: The 436th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed.

On behalf of the Conference, it is my privilege to extend a very warm welcome to his Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia, Mr. Bohuslav Chnoupek, who will be addressing us. The Minister for Foreign Affairs is visiting the Conference for the third time, an indication of the interest with which he follows our work on vital questions relating to disarmament. I gladly take this opportunity to stress the fraternal ties which exist between my country and his, and which encompass close co-operation in the quest for disarmament. Clear evidence is provided by our joint initiatives for the conclusion and implementation of the INF agreement, as well as for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free and chemical-weapon-free zones in Central Europe. I wish Minister Chnoupek a successful visit to Geneva, and I am sure that members will listen to his statement with particular interest.

(The President)

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Mexico, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America. The Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons will also introduce today the report of that Committee, which will be circulated as document CD/795.

I now give the floor to the first speaker of the 1988 session, the representative of Mexico, Ambassador García Robles.

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): After a recess of almost half a year, the sole multilateral forum for disarmament is resuming its work today to commence its tenth session - for we should bear in mind that it was during the first special session devoted to disarmament that the United Nations General Assembly established this Conference on Disarmament in 1978.

There is no doubt that where disarmament is concerned, there is a close relationship between the bilateral and multilateral levels. Consequently I think there are grounds for hoping that 1988 will be a year of fruitful work similar to that which led to the treaty signed in December 1987 between the United States and the Soviet Union.

In conveying our congratulations to you my delegation would like to express its satisfaction that it has fallen to you to guide our work at this time which seems to hold such promise for positive results to a person such as you who have always demonstrated a very serious approach to the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

My delegation wishes to be fully associated with the well-deserved tribute that has been paid today to the memory of Ambassador Ian Cromartie, who for several years ably represented his country in this multilateral negotiating forum. Likewise, we wish to be associated with the words of welcome - or farewell - that have been expressed here to those of our colleagues who are going to swell the ranks of the Conference or who are leaving to perform new functions in the foreign services of their countries. We wish, in particular, to give a warm welcome to the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia, Mr. Bohuslav Chnoupek, who is to address the Conference this morning. And, finally, we wish to convey our congratulations to your predecessor, the distinguished representative of France, Mr. Pierre Morel, as well as to the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ambassador Miljan Komatina, and to the Deputy Secretary-General, Ambassador Vicente Berasategui.

Today we are commencing the 1988 session of the Conference on Disarmament which, as usual, follows the annual meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, in this case its forty-second session. The 63 drafts adopted at that time by this organ that fully represents the international community include 23 that concern the various aspects of nuclear disarmament, which, as the Rapporteur of the First Committee indicated in his report, "fully demonstrates the importance of the problems posed by nuclear weapons".

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

The first part of my statement will focus on an examination of what I consider to be the most important resolution of those adopted by the Assembly on the basis of those drafts. This is resolution 42/26 A, entitled "Cessation of all nuclear test explosions", a topic which, as is well known, takes pride of place on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. In the second part of my statement, I shall consider the Stockholm Declaration that was adopted in the Swedish capital on 21 January by the six leaders - including the President of Mexico - who almost four years ago drew up the first of the declarations through which they have been advocating peace and disarmament.

The resolution that I have just referred to, 42/26 A, was adopted on 30 November last year with an impressive majority of 137 votes in favour, 2 more than the similar draft received in 1986 at the forty-first session of the Assembly. It begins by recalling that the complete cessation of nuclear weapon tests, which has been examined for more than 30 years and on which the General Assembly has adopted more than 50 resolutions, is "a basic objective of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament, to the attainment of which it has repeatedly assigned the highest priority", and then goes on to emphasize that on eight different occasions it has condemned such tests in the strongest terms and that, since 1974, it has stated its conviction that the continuance of nuclear weapon testing "will intensify the arms race, thus increasing the danger of nuclear war".

After reviewing, in the subsequent preambular paragraphs, a series of relevant facts, including various declarations and undertakings by the nuclear-weapon States that are the depositaries of the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty, the Assembly begins the operative part of its resolution by reiterating "once again its grave concern that nuclear weapon testing continues unabated, against the wishes of the overwhelming majority of Member States", after which three similar paragraphs are followed by the fifth and the sixth, which contain the heart of the resolution.

In the first of these two paragraphs the Assembly appealed to all States members of the Conference on Disarmament, in particular to the three depositary Powers of the partial test-ban Treaty and the non-proliferation Treaty, to "promote the establishment by the Conference at the beginning of its 1988 session of an ad hoc committee with the objective of carrying out the multilateral negotiation of a treaty on the complete cessation of nuclear test explosions".

In the second of the two paragraphs to which I have referred, that is to say the sixth, the Assembly recommends that the ad hoc committee whose establishment has been requested should comprise two working groups dealing respectively with the following interrelated questions: Working Group 1 - the contents and scope of the Treaty, and Working Group 2 - compliance and verification. It is thus made quite clear that none of the aspects of this subject is to be overlooked.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

The delegation of Mexico is particularly well placed to comply with the Assembly's request in this resolution. It should be recalled that in July of last year we submitted to the Assembly, along with the delegations of Indonesia, Kenya, Peru, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Venezuela and Yugoslavia, a draft mandate that was distributed as document CD/772, the three main paragraphs of which are couched in the following terms:

"The Conference on Disarmament decides to establish an Ad hoc Committee on item 1 of its agenda with the objective of carrying out the multilateral negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty.

"The Ad hoc Committee will set up two working groups which will deal, respectively, with the following interrelated questions:

"(a) Working Group I - Content and scope of the treaty;

"(b) Working Group II - Compliance and verification.

"Pursuant to its mandate, the Ad hoc Committee will take into account all existing proposals and future initiatives. In addition, it will draw on the knowledge and experience that have been accumulated over the years in the consideration of a comprehensive test ban in the successive multilateral negotiating bodies and the trilateral negotiations. The Ad hoc Committee will also take into account the work of the Ad hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events."

This draft mandate, which is still fully valid because the idea of withdrawing it has never arisen, faithfully reflects what the Assembly has called for in the resolution to which I have just referred.

By adopting it, the Conference can establish an ad hoc committee "with the objective of carrying out the multilateral negotiations of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty". "With the objective" is a formula that, as I said in the statement I made to the Assembly's First Committee in October of last year, can be interpreted in a wide variety of ways. For my delegation this is an immediate goal, but for other delegations, for instance the delegation of the United States, which has expressed its position on several occasions, it is a long-term objective. Consequently, if the draft mandate were adopted, the delegation of Mexico could make a statement placing its interpretation on record. The United States delegation, or any other delegation, could also indicate its interpretation, and in that way the draft mandate could be adopted by consensus without any of the delegations of member States of the Conference having to abandon its position.

The second part of this statement, to which I now come, will be devoted, as I have already said, to giving an idea of the content of the Declaration which was adopted in Stockholm on 21 January this year by the Presidents of Argentina, Raúl Alfonsín, and Mexico, Miguel de la Madrid, the Prime Ministers of Greece, Andreas Papandreu, India, Rajiv Gandhi, and Sweden, Ingvar Carlsson, as well as the former President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

This is the third time that these statesmen have met, as the first meeting took place in January 1985 in the Indian capital, and the second was held in August 1986 in Ixtapa in Mexico.

The Declaration begins with a brief description of the situation created by the discovery of nuclear weapons and the urgent need to find a means of eliminating them soon, and in this regard states the following:

"During the last few decades, a handful of nations have acquired the capability of destroying not only one another but all others as well. Their war machines could terminate civilization and all life on Earth.

"No nation has the right to use such instruments of war. And what thus is morally wrong should also be explicitly prohibited by international law through a binding international agreement.

"All States have the responsibility to uphold the rule of law in international relations. Respect for its basic principles is a fundamental prerequisite for creating a just and stable world order and for making disarmament possible.

"These principles are being trampled upon at this very moment. International disputes are more and more dealt with through resort to force. The dangerous delusion that might is right is, particularly in the nuclear age, one of the most threatening features of our world.

"Crucial decisions to prevent the ultimate catastrophe lie with those who possess nuclear weapons. It is their responsibility to live up to the objective of eliminating all of them.

"But the rest of us, the non-nuclear-weapon States, have a legitimate interest in the abolition of these awesome weapons. We demand it. We owe it not only to ourselves, but also to future generations. The fate of weapon systems which can spread death and destruction regardless of national borders must not be left in the hands of only a few States."

The Declaration then goes on to refer both to the Treaty by means of which the United States and the Soviet Union have agreed to eliminate intermediate-range nuclear missiles, and to the principle of later agreement on a 50 per cent reduction in the strategic arsenals of the two super-Powers. The provisions on this subject are couched in the following terms:

"When the Six-nation Initiative was launched, more than three years ago, prospects for disarmament looked grim. Virtually all negotiations were at a standstill. Since then, we have welcomed the resumption of the dialogue between the Soviet Union and the United States. The signing in Washington on 8 December of the INF Treaty can be seen as a historic first step. It shows that given political will, all obstacles can be removed, including verification, which ostensibly has been the principal

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

obstacle for so long. Indeed, the Treaty's provisions on verification provide useful guidelines for future agreements. But much more remains to be done. The arms race has not even been halted, let alone reversed. New nuclear weapons are still being constructed and tested. The INF Treaty will not reduce the total number of nuclear weapons by more than a few per cent. The Treaty is, however, significant evidence that a reversal is possible. No time must now be lost before more far-reaching nuclear disarmament agreements are achieved.

"...

"The strategic nuclear weapons pose a mortal threat all over the world. They form the core of the present overkill capacity. It is our firm conviction that they must be totally abolished before we witness a catastrophe which might occur even by mistake.

"The agreed principle of 50 per cent reductions in the strategic arsenals of each super-Power must be honoured. We urge that a treaty on such reductions be signed by the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union in the first half of 1988. Such a treaty would constitute a decisive step towards the ultimate elimination of all nuclear weapons."

The provisions dealing with a comprehensive nuclear test ban deserve to be placed among the most categorical and convincing declarations ever made on this subject, since these provisions state:

"Agreements to reduce existing nuclear arsenals must be backed up by decisive measures to check the unbridled development of new generations of ever more dreadful and sophisticated new weapons. The single most effective measure would be to end all nuclear weapon tests, by all States. Such a step would be of crucial importance not only for achieving this objective, but also for preventing the spread of nuclear weapons to countries which have so far refrained from acquiring them.

"The United States and the Soviet Union have started bilateral negotiations on gradually establishing lower limits on nuclear tests. Any agreement that leaves room for continued testing would not be acceptable. We stress once again that a comprehensive test ban is already long overdue. Pending that, we reiterate our call for an immediate suspension of all nuclear testing, by all States.

"An effective test ban must be universally observed. This requires multilateral negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament. We, as representatives of non-nuclear-weapon States, are ready to contribute in working towards the speedy adoption of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

"Our offer to assist in the monitoring of any halt in nuclear testing still stands. In this connection, our group of experts will shortly convene in Sweden a conference with wide international participation to take stock of global efforts so far undertaken to develop the most efficient test ban verification measures."

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

The six eminent signatories of the Declaration, noting the importance of adequate verification for disarmament, declared their intention of submitting to the United Nations General Assembly a joint proposal on the subject:

"Verification of compliance with disarmament agreements is an issue of concern to all nations. We all want to be certain that agreements to destroy weapons, or to refrain from their development, are strictly complied with. We therefore see a strong need for international verification in the field of disarmament.

"To that end, we recognize the need for the establishment of an integrated multilateral verification system within the United Nations, as an integral part of a strengthened multilateral framework required to ensure peace and security during the process of disarmament as well as in a nuclear-weapon-free world. Our six nations will jointly propose, at the United Nations special session on disarmament this year, that the United Nations promote the establishment of such a system."

The question of the relationship between disarmament and development also earned mention in the Declaration, whose authors expressed their views on the matter in the text of the document:

"It is impossible to consider any questions relating to disarmament without being appalled by the waste of human and material resources now being devoted to weapons of death and mass destruction.

"The current instability in the world economy has deeply affected the poorest and most indebted countries. The arms race, particularly between the super-Powers, greatly contributes to the worsening of the situation. The first ever United Nations Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development took place in New York last year. It reached an understanding on the complex relationship between disarmament, development and security, and brought non-military threats to security to the forefront of international concern.

"The world's resources are finite. We have to choose. The sufficient manufacture of ploughshares calls for a reduction in the manufacture of swords."

The six authors of the Stockholm Declaration, whose contents I have been commenting upon, put forward the following conclusion in the final paragraphs:

"As we have always maintained, the issue of nuclear disarmament is of concern to all nations. We have been greatly encouraged by the support which we have received from other non-nuclear-weapon States, from parliaments and non-governmental organizations, from peace movements and individuals throughout the world. We look forward to their continued support.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

"Mutual confidence and disarmament should replace mistrust and over-armament as a prevailing pattern of international relations. Recent developments give rise to hope. It is now of utmost importance that the opportunity be seized to halt and decisively reverse the arms race. Creating a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world calls for even greater imagination, energy and determination.

"The nuclear threat remains real. Our world order is still built on the edge of the nuclear abyss. As we move into the last decade of the twentieth century, the goal must remain not only to avert the holocaust, but ultimately to eliminate all nuclear weapons.

"Each and every one can and must play a part in safeguarding our survival, strengthening our security and creating the conditions for a life in dignity.

"We urge the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligation to pursue the process of nuclear disarmament.

"We, on our part, pledge to do all we can to make that process irreversible."

The Stockholm Declaration contains a paragraph that seemed to me to be the most appropriate with which to close my statement, since it highlights the concern of its authors about the future of the United Nations organ dealing with disarmament. The paragraph in question reads as follows:

"The Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, should be strengthened and made a more effective instrument for achieving nuclear disarmament and for the elimination of all other weapons of mass destruction. A convention for the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons should be urgently concluded. It would also provide an example for future efforts in the multilateral field."

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia, Mr. Bohuslav Chnoupek.

Mr. CHNOUPEK (Czechoslovakia) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, allow me first of all to express my gratification at the fact that the Conference on Disarmament is opening its deliberations this year under the experienced leadership of the representative of a brotherly country, the German Democratic Republic. I thank you and your colleagues for your friendly welcome.

At this initial stage of the work of the Conference, it is in our view of major importance to tune our forthcoming negotiations to the most businesslike note, and thus set our course towards increasing their effectiveness.

(Mr. Chnoupek, Czechoslovakia)

Therefore I intend in my present statement to elaborate on the initiatives aimed at enhancing the productivity of the Conference formulated at the Prague session of the Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty at the end of last October. In so doing I also wish to confirm the exceptional significance that we have consistently attached to this world forum for disarmament negotiations, and to share with you our views on the principal tasks of the current session.

Our spring session is taking place in a period of historic importance. After the signing of the Treaty on intermediate-range missiles, we are entering a new phase. The first steps are beginning to be taken towards realization of the concept of a nuclear-weapon-free world put forward at this very time two years ago by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, M. Gorbachev. The shift from security arrangements based on military hardware to a comprehensive system of international security on an equal basis for all, with regard being paid to the need for balance between different interests, is becoming a reality.

From this standpoint of principle we view the conclusion of the Washington treaty as a joint victory, a unique triumph of reason and responsibility. It reflects a balance of interests among all the parties. It strengthens universal security. The preparation of the Treaty has provided valuable experience which is applicable to the entire disarmament process.

We are thus opening our deliberations in a new situation. Let us make good use of it. In the words of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Milos Jakes, "mankind should now stop arming and start disarming in all categories of weapons, shift from confrontation to the development of long-term and stable relations in the economic, scientific and cultural fields, and pursue extensive co-operation on the basis of equality and mutual benefit".

The prospects for the year ahead will be dictated by the determination with which we take our next steps - the vigour with which we pursue the process which has begun.

Above all by the conclusion, at the summit meeting planned to take place this year in Moscow, of a Soviet/United States treaty on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive weapons together with observance of the ABM Treaty for an agreed period of time.

By the rapid elaboration of a convention on chemical weapons within the framework of this Conference.

By the successful conclusion of the Vienna meeting and the reaching of agreement on a mandate for talks on reducing the level of confrontation in terms of conventional armaments and armed forces in Europe.

(Mr. Chnoupek, Czechoslovakia)

In order to promote these goals, we must jointly strive at the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly this year to build a solid foundation for the advancement of world-wide disarmament endeavours. We must provide for a transition to the subsequent stages through the adoption of concrete programmes in key areas. At the same time we must upgrade the international disarmament machinery.

In this connection I should like to lay particular stress on the fact that our present session, our spring session, constitutes the key to success at the third special session. Hence qualitatively new efforts are needed here, at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, to negotiate specific treaties. It is they which, in a concrete way, can ensure the continuity of the disarmament process.

All of us certainly realize that nowadays it is no longer possible to negotiate with long breaks or to turn attention away from matters of substance with scholastic theorizing. Drawing on our long-term experience, we are convinced that this Conference, thanks to its unique mandate establishing it as the international community's principal negotiating body in the sphere of disarmament, is more competent than any other organ for bridging the existing gap between words and deeds. The opportunity is being offered to set in motion the multilateral mechanism, together with bilateral mechanism, on a mutually complementary basis, and to enhance their efficiency substantially.

These highly topical problems stood at the centre of attention at the session of the Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty held in Prague, Czechoslovakia last October. At that session we adopted a self-contained document entitled "Towards increasing the effectiveness of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva". We were guided by the desire to give new, fresh impetus to the activities of this Conference. In respect of both the content and the form of its work, we proposed that the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly this year should give all-round consideration to all aspects of the work of this Conference. And that ways and means of improving the results of its deliberations should be mapped out through joint efforts in a spirit of constructive and non-confrontational dialogue.

Our attitude was based on the opinion that the effectiveness of the Conference could be substantially enhanced through its step-by-step transformation into a standing universal organ for disarmament negotiations. An organ in session practically all year round. An organ enabling all interested States to participate in the negotiations. An organ whose activities would be integrally linked with the work of other disarmament forums in the United Nations system, as well as with the bilateral talks.

This conclusion was the fruit of serious discussions. Of course, progress - as we have always maintained and continue to maintain - requires first and foremost political will on the part of States. Readiness to rise above narrow selfish interests and to replace the military guarantees of security which harbour ever greater risks by political ones.

(Mr. Chnoupek, Czechoslovakia)

However, it is no less important that the international mechanisms in this field should enable every member of the international community to discharge his concrete share of responsibility for the fate of the world in full measure and with initiative, and to influence the process of disarmament constructively. Particularly at a negotiating forum such as this Conference.

At the root of the matter is that the organizational side of international disarmament efforts should also be in full harmony with the principal characteristic of our time, namely the integrated nature and all-round interdependence of the present-day world. Our discussions are also guided by the need to strengthen the principle of democracy in international relations which derives from the United Nations Charter itself. No one must be excluded. No one must be left out of the negotiating process.

Since the Geneva forum came into being in 1962, interest in active participation in its work has been constantly growing. We welcome the development in recent years of a procedure allowing non-member States to take part in its deliberations.

It is these natural tendencies which prompted our idea of universalizing the activities of the Conference. It enhances the essence of the work of the Conference as a negotiating body. So that it will play an ever more important role. So that it will again produce significant concrete results.

The Prague session of the Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs also put forward further practical measures aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Conference. We are of the opinion that they might be put into practice in the near future. Some of them even at the present session.

First of all we propose to give the Conference a tighter work schedule, whereby it would remain in session throughout the year. With at most two or three essential breaks. The time gained could be used for substantial work on the texts of the treaty instruments under consideration. This would be facilitated if agreement were reached that the subsidiary bodies of the Conference would - in accordance with its overall mandate - not operate on a year-by-year basis but continue until their work was completed. As things stand now, a considerable portion of the strictly limited time is, as we well know, wasted on protracted discussions about the mandates of the individual working bodies. It should be added that, contrary to the wishes of the overwhelming majority of member countries those discussions are not always productive.

We also consider it worth while to work even more actively to involve qualified specialists and entire scientific centres in various countries in studying problems, and to apply more widely the well-tried practice of setting up expert groups. We also propose that the possibility of participation by world-renowned scientists and prominent public figures should be considered. For that purpose, the Conference could set up an auxiliary body - an advisory board. Its task would be to study the issues under consideration by the Conference, work out authoritative recommendations for dealing with them and point out in good time the long-term factors which are of importance to the process of disarmament and the strengthening of security.

(Mr. Chnoupek, Czechoslovakia)

Thirdly, in our view, it would be very useful to hold sessions of the Conference in times of critical importance at the foreign minister level. Such sessions might give the necessary impetus for decisive steps towards achieving breakthroughs in the talks and overcoming difficulties regarding matters of principle which might arise.

Fourthly, we are proposing a flexible operational mechanism which would build upon the established practice. It might be incorporated without any major problems into the existing Conference structure and procedures. Its adoption would lead to the modernization of the organizational aspects of the Conference, and bring it closer to present needs.

It would be desirable for the Conference to find a way of considering these and other possible suggestions constructively and reflect the results in its report to the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The Conference's agenda for this year includes issues of major importance to all mankind. As we emphasized at the Prague session, we consider the most urgent issue to be the completion of the drafting of a convention on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons, progress towards a complete nuclear weapon test ban and prevention of an arms race in outer space. Encouraging steps have been taken in these directions. First and foremost through the Washington summit meeting. Through the Six-nation Initiative, which was substantially elaborated upon in the Stockholm Declaration of January this year. And also through the urgency of the calls addressed to the Geneva Conference by the entire international community, as embodied in the relevant resolutions of the forty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly. I should now like to dwell briefly on these crucial issues.

The Conference has come within reach of concluding work on a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons and the elimination of stockpiles of such weapons, including the industrial base for their production. It could be finalized within a very short time - as early as the first phase of the current session. Given, of course, political will and concentrated negotiating efforts focused entirely on completing work on the 10 per cent or so of the text that has yet to be agreed.

However, I wish to say frankly that we have been seriously worried by developments running in just the opposite direction. In particular, the decision to begin production of binary weapons and the intention of deploying them in Europe, as well as arguments attempting to justify an alleged necessity for chemical rearmament. We see in them a dangerous trend towards destabilization of the political and military situation.

It is of the utmost importance that the negotiating process should be expedited rather than slowed down. Already there is agreement in principle on the scope of the future Convention, which must cover binary weapons too. All the essential elements of the Convention are already at hand.

(Mr. Chnoupek, Czechoslovakia)

Then let us take an absolutely unequivocal decision: to entrust the committee on the prohibition of chemical weapons with the task of finalizing the Convention this year. This would be fully in keeping with the unanimous recommendation made by the forty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly. An essential confirmation of the interest of the member States of the Conference in achieving a complete and effective ban on the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons, and their destruction.

Secondly, to reach final agreement without delay on an effective mechanism of challenge inspections without the right of refusal; agreement in principle has already been reached concerning the need to incorporate such a mechanism in the Convention.

Thirdly, to build on the encouraging results of last year's negotiations in order to reach final agreement on the overall organization of the implementation of the Convention. Primarily with regard to the activities of its Executive Council.

Fourthly, to complete the development of an economically and financially feasible scheme of routine inspection of chemical industry. To take into account in this regard the requirements connected with the economic and technological development of States parties to the Convention, whatever their socio-economic systems. We are now seriously considering concrete steps to facilitate a solution to those problems.

We most insistently urge the earliest possible final settlement of all the pending issues relating to the Convention. For our part we are determined to do truly everything in our power to that end. As we clearly confirmed in the joint declaration of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty in Moscow last March. This also includes a readiness for reasonable compromises. As well as the openness that was demonstrated so strikingly by the presentation of Soviet chemical armaments at Shikhany in the autumn of last year.

I wish to mention in this context the proposal made by Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic for the establishment of a chemical-weapon-free zone in Central Europe. And in particular to emphasize that we do not regard this as a deflection from efforts to ban these weapons worldwide. Never have we placed global and regional approaches to arms limitation in opposition to one another. On the contrary - our attitude is based on their dialectical unity.

Moreover, this also relates to our similar proposal for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free corridor. The same applies to concrete measures to reduce the level of military confrontation and strengthen confidence, including removal of the most dangerous types of offensive weapons by the States along the line of contact between the two military political alliances in Europe. We advocated the adoption of these measures at the Prague session.

(Mr. Chnoupek, Czechoslovakia)

We believe - we are convinced - that the establishment of the proposed chemical-weapon-free zone would be a universal beneficial step of indisputable political importance. Both at present, when it might make a contribution to a global solution, and after the conclusion of the Convention, when it might become the prologue to its implementation in our region.

It is our opinion that while pursuing the priority task of elaborating a convention on chemical weapons, the Conference should focus in a much more purposeful fashion on the entire set of problems of nuclear disarmament. This is where the Conference should demonstrate most clearly its ability to be the centre of, and the generator of, the practical internationalization of disarmament negotiations, with the participation of all nuclear States and the whole international community. Thus playing a decisive role in the process of building a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world, as a fundamental pre-condition for the survival and development of civilization.

We consider that in this year's negotiations, important tasks lie ahead in the field of the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests. We are ready to work flexibly and constructively towards the solution of problems relating to the establishment and the mandate of the relevant working body of the Conference. The time is truly ripe for starting substantive consideration of the future treaty, whose basic provisions are on the table. Progress in such talks would be facilitated by the setting up of a special group of scientific experts to prepare without delay practical proposals for a system of verification of the non-conduct of nuclear tests. We believe that the drafting of such an overall agreement within the framework of the Conference, and the full-scale Soviet/United States talks that have opened in accordance with the understanding reached in Washington, will be mutually complementary and lead to the same objective.

The next priority area of the negotiating effort which I wish to mention is that concerning the beginning of practical and effective work on matters relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. An issue of crucial importance to the maintenance of strategic stability in a context of nuclear disarmament.

We believe that a generally sound foundation has been laid for the Conference to proceed from general considerations to talks on concrete measures. Specifically, on prohibiting anti-satellite weapons and ensuring the immunity of artificial Earth satellites. The proposal for the establishment of an international inspectorate to examine objects to be launched into outer space also remains highly topical. We would like to believe that, given the practically unanimous demand for stepping up deliberations, it will be possible to expand the mandate of the Conference committee on this issue this year.

Finally, I should like to highlight our enduring support for the draft Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament. And to express dissatisfaction at the fact that consideration of the Programme by the Conference has not yet produced the results that are called for. Let us recall that the objective of

(Mr. Chnoupek, Czechoslovakia)

general and complete disarmament under strict international control was the principal motive underlying the establishment of a multilateral disarmament forum, of which the present Conference is the direct successor. We call for the negotiations to be stepped up vigorously on the entire range of work in all the important areas. In so doing we bear in mind the relevant resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, which express the will of the overwhelming majority of States in the world.

I also wish to take this opportunity to underline our firm determination to strive for an expansion of the practical process of disarmament in another field, that of conventional armaments and armed forces. Primarily in Europe. We have therefore been working to this end at the Vienna meeting and in the consultations among 23 States on the mandate for the future pan-European talks.

In this connection, I wish to recall the extremely important proposals for the opening of talks on the elimination of existing asymmetries on both sides, as well as on the comparison of military doctrines with a view to ensuring that they are exclusively defensive in nature.

Before concluding, I should like to express my conviction that this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament will produce positive results which will significantly enhance the material basis for a broad process of disarmament, the principal route to ensuring security and releasing resources for development. May I wish you all every success in your forthcoming negotiations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia for his statement, which I consider very important for the work of the Conference, and I thank him also for the kind words he addressed to the Chair and to my country. I now give the floor to the next speaker on my list, the representative of Sweden, Ambassador Theorin. I am happy to see her again with us today.

Mrs. THEORIN (Sweden): Allow me first of all to welcome you most warmly to the presidency of the Conference. Aware of the many difficult tasks lying ahead for the President for the month of February, we are confident that you will guide the Conference in making a good start of its important 1988 session. I would also like to express our gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Morel of France, for his good work as President of the Conference during the month of August, and I would like to direct a heartfelt welcome to Ambassador Tessa Solesby of the United Kingdom, Ambassador de Montigny Marchand of Canada, Ambassador Elaraby of Egypt, Ambassador Nasserí of Iran, Ambassador Azikiwe of Nigeria and Ambassador Sujka of Poland, and assure them of the full co-operation of the Swedish delegation. We are honoured by the presence today in the Conference of the Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia, Mr. Bohuslav Chnoupek, and have listened with interest to your speech. May I express my deep regret to the delegation of the United Kingdom on the death of Ambassador Ian Cromartie, and ask Ambassador Solesby to convey our condolences to Jenny Cromartie and all the other members of Ian Cromartie's family.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

It is possible that 8 December 1987 will become a date to remember in international relations.

When President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev signed the INF Treaty in Washington, the two leading nuclear Powers committed themselves for the first time to reducing their nuclear arsenals substantially. They agreed to scrap an entire class of missiles.

For four decades, the United States and the Soviet Union have tried to promote their security and global influence by building up ever larger and more sophisticated nuclear arsenals. The nuclear arms race has played a major role, perhaps the main role, in their relationship. Security through insecurity - the threat of mass annihilation - has been and remains the characteristic of the nuclear age.

The Washington summit did not eliminate basic and long-standing political tensions between the super-Powers. But it showed that this need not prevent co-operation and agreements in the interests of both of them.

Both the Soviet Union and the United States now appear to see the advantages of major reductions in their nuclear arsenals. Of greatest importance is of course President Reagan's and General Secretary Gorbachev's common pledge to make intense efforts to achieve a 50 per cent reduction in their strategic nuclear weapons.

If this pledge is carried out, it would constitute a major change of direction. If agreement on such reductions in strategic nuclear arsenals could be reached, it would mean that the United States and the Soviet Union had abandoned the policy of searching for security through an escalating build-up of nuclear arms.

Agreements to eliminate or reduce some categories of nuclear weapons must not of course be allowed to serve as pretexts for offsetting increases in other categories. Little would be gained, for instance, if sea- and air-launched cruise missiles were to be substituted for eliminated ground-launched missiles. The effects would be negative, inter alia, for security in the strategically important North European area.

The international community expects the Soviet Union and the United States to conclude an agreement on strategic arms reductions this year. It expects them to agree to a comprehensive nuclear test ban and take action to prevent an arms race in space. It urges them not to stop at an agreement on a 50 per cent reduction of strategic nuclear weapons, but to let it be followed by further measures towards the ultimate elimination of all nuclear weapons.

It does so because of the realities of the world of today:

The nuclear arsenals of the two super-Powers, already sufficient to destroy all life on Earth many times over, increased in 1987 at the rate of 16 units per week;

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

More wars were being fought in 1987 than in any previous year on record; four fifths of the casualties in those wars were civilian;

The world's annual military budget equals the income of 2.6 billion people in the 44 poorest nations.

These are but three facts given in the latest edition of the annual publication World Military and Social Expenditures. It paints a dark picture - a picture of a continuing arms race, of war and military squandering and of unmet basic human needs.

We must continue to keep this picture in mind in a time of improved international climate such as the one we have lately experienced. It is a picture which must inspire States and let the steps which have been taken so far be followed by others in what will be a long journey in front of us.

The continuing build-up and refinement of nuclear arsenals remains the most serious threat not only to international security, but also to the very survival of human civilization.

The nuclear threat directly concerns all men, women and children on this planet. The future of nuclear arms cannot be left in the hands of two or five States. The non-nuclear nations must also have a say.

This conviction prompted the Six-nation Initiative, launched three and a half years ago. A third summit meeting of the six participating heads of State and government was held in Stockholm between 20 and 22 January this year. On this occasion the six pledged to pursue their efforts to voice aspirations for a world liberated from the fear of annihilation through nuclear war.

In the declaration issued at Stockholm, which will be circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament, visions were set out. But the six participants did not stop at visions. They expressed their views on practical steps that can and should be taken today: measures to give further momentum to the positive developments of 1987, and to make disarmament a strong and permanent feature of international relations.

The six reiterated their call for a halt to all nuclear testing, as the single most effective means of checking the qualitative arms race. The INF Treaty was welcomed as an important first step on the road to nuclear disarmament. They emphasized that agreement to reduce the strategic arsenals of the Soviet Union and the United States must be reached during the first half of 1988. Agreements to abolish tactical nuclear weapons should also be rapidly concluded.

The important role of the Conference on Disarmament was underlined by the six, as well as the urgency of concluding a convention banning all chemical weapons.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

The six heads of State and government declared their intention to be personally present at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. They agreed that at SSOD-III the countries of the Six-nation Initiative should propose that the United Nations promote the establishment of an integrated multilateral verification system.

The special session will take place at a crucial point in time. The INF Treaty, a possible forthcoming agreement on strategic and space weapons and continued discussions on a number of other issues are salient features of the bilateral process of disarmament.

The agreement at the Stockholm Conference in 1986 on confidence- and security-building measures in Europe, and progress in negotiations on a convention on chemical weapons, illustrate a dynamic multilateral process. The breakthrough made on important aspects of the verification issue gives hope for new opportunities to conclude disarmament agreements.

At the same time, one cannot ignore the risk that multilateral disarmament diplomacy might lag behind. The bilateral thaw has improved the multilateral climate. But there are no signs that it has made the major nuclear Powers any more eager to opt for multilateral rather than bilateral solutions to disarmament issues.

Therefore, it is imperative that the special session should manage to stake out the future course of multilateral disarmament efforts.

The session must be forward-looking. It must invigorate the multilateral disarmament process. It must take into account the growing recognition that in the long run, States can achieve security only through co-operation and common efforts.

Nuclear weapons issues, conventional armaments, international transfers of conventional weapons as well as problems concerning verification are topics to be discussed. Naval disarmament and confidence-building measures deserve increased attention. Additional efforts must be made to prevent an arms race in outer space and to finally conclude the chemical weapons convention.

The third special session will, 10 years after the first special session, provide an opportunity to reconfirm the validity of the Final Document of the first session, a corner-stone in international disarmament affairs. Equally important will be to try to identify specific guidelines for future work, taking into account the realities of the world of today.

Verification must be an integral component of any agreement on disarmament and confidence-building.

Verification of compliance is of direct concern to all countries. Consequently, it cannot be left only to the nations most advanced in military technology.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

There are obvious advantages in international verification arrangements with universal participation. Hence, IAEA has been assigned the task of verifying compliance with provisions of the non-proliferation Treaty. And in the work on the chemical weapons convention, progress has been made towards the establishment of a full-fledged international organization to handle data exchange, fact-finding, inspections and other matters provided for in the forthcoming convention.

Verification in all its aspects is an item on the agenda of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Sweden appreciates the progress made there during last year's session. The third special session offers an opportunity to discuss, inter alia, how international verification can best be organized. In this context, as one example, the potential of international satellite verification, which has already been subject to various studies, should be further explored. The possibilities of the United Nations playing a stronger role in the field of verification should be fully assessed.

At the Stockholm meeting, a joint report on monitored nuclear testing during 1987 was issued, based on information compiled by experts from the countries of the Initiative. The report notes that all five nuclear Powers carried out nuclear tests: the Soviet Union was recorded as conducting 23 nuclear explosions, the United States 14, France 8, China and the United Kingdom 1 each.

The high level of testing, not only by the Soviet Union and the United States but also by France, gives rise to particular concern. The continued testing programmes convey a sinister message to the world: the message that nuclear weapons are continuously being designed, refined and modernized, the message that the nuclear threat is not only maintained, but is being projected far into the future. How does this accord with solemn proclamations on the impossibility of winning a nuclear war and the inadmissibility of waging one? How does this accord with a proclaimed goal of working for the eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons?

These testing programmes are deplorable. They demonstrate the urgency of the demands of the international community, as expressed for instance by the General Assembly, for a comprehensive nuclear test ban. If the goal is to halt the nuclear arms race and the uninhibited creation of new nuclear weapons, then few questions, if any, are more important than a halt to nuclear testing.

Last year the United States and the Soviet Union entered into bilateral negotiations on nuclear testing. The Swedish Government has welcomed this development, while stressing that a bilateral agreement leaving room for continued testing would not be acceptable either to Sweden or to the international community.

Bilateral negotiations that aim only at organizing continued testing do not meet the demands and expectations of virtually all States outside the nuclear club. Our goal is not that the nuclear Powers should be able to verify each other's nuclear tests, but that the international community should be able to verify that nuclear tests are no longer performed.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

Intermediate agreements to limit testing will serve a useful purpose only if they constitute steps towards the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty at an early and specified date. The disappointing record of partial solutions in the past warrants scepticism about settling for anything less than a complete end to nuclear testing.

The multilateral work for a comprehensive test ban belongs here in the Conference on Disarmament. It must not be replaced by protracted bilateral negotiations on continued, though perhaps somewhat limited and bilaterally monitored, nuclear testing. The inability of the CD to begin substantive work on a test ban can only lead to the bilateralization of this priority item, thus undermining confidence in multilateral disarmament diplomacy.

The Conference on Disarmament should in a concrete manner, and without any further delay, tackle all aspects of the test ban issue. There is practical work to be done in preparing a comprehensive test-ban treaty. All member States have a responsibility before the world community to contribute effectively to the furthering of that goal.

Further procrastination may harm not only the cause of a comprehensive test ban but confidence in the CD as an effective multilateral disarmament body. It is high time to set aside disagreements on procedural details. It is high time for the Conference to get down to work.

Sweden has a clear position on what should ideally be the content of a mandate of an ad hoc committee. We are in favour of immediate negotiations to draw up the text of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Nevertheless, in order to allow for the urgently needed multilateral consideration to start, my delegation is ready to go along with any mandate that is acceptable to the other delegations. With similar flexibility from all, there is no reason why an ad hoc committee on a nuclear test ban should not be able to commence its work this very month.

Over the years, major efforts have been made by the members of this Conference to negotiate a multilateral convention on the complete and effective prohibition of chemical weapons.

The early and successful conclusion of these negotiations is now crucially important. Chemical weapons are being developed, produced and used. Failure to reach an agreement soon on a total ban on these frightful weapons would greatly increase the risk of further proliferation, horizontal as well as vertical, with grave consequences for the international community.

Complete and effective international prohibition would, on the other hand, improve the security of nations. Furthermore, such a convention would amount to a breakthrough in multilateral disarmament diplomacy. It would eradicate a whole class of weapons of mass destruction. It would break new ground in the field of international verification. And it would clearly establish the Conference on Disarmament as a capable and viable multilateral negotiating forum for security and disarmament matters.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

My delegation is pleased to note that last year a number of important and constructive steps were taken and agreements reached in the negotiations on a chemical weapons convention. Most problems of political importance have now been solved. Measures were also taken to support and enhance confidence in those negotiations.

Admittedly, intricate technical problems remain. With the draft Convention before us, its conclusion is, however, no longer a distant goal but a close possibility. I urge all negotiating parties to make full use of the extraordinary opportunity we have to conclude a major disarmament agreement at this session.

When speaking in this forum, I have consistently stressed how important it is that States should demonstrate their commitment to the common goal of the Convention by desisting from the production of chemical weapons. Considering the advanced stage of the negotiations I wish, once again, to call upon all parties to refrain from any action that may complicate our negotiations.

Some issues related to the negotiations on the convention have been dealt with in direct contacts between the two major military Powers. I trust that these bilateral talks will prove useful in helping to solve some remaining problems.

It is clear that only a multilateral and comprehensive agreement can safeguard the interests of all States and provide for effective and viable prohibition. Obligations to be assumed and advantages to be gained must be valid for all.

The need for universality has also been the guiding principle in Sweden's consistent cautioning against resorting to partial measures in this field.

In their Washington statement the leaders of the United States and Soviet Union reaffirmed the need to intensify negotiations on a convention. This commitment must be honoured by active promotion of the negotiations in the Conference.

The need for results is urgent. The specific political conditions for chemical disarmament are as good as they are likely ever to be. Now is the opportunity. It must be seized, speedily and with determination.

Last year's General Assembly once again requested the Conference on Disarmament to consider, as a matter of priority, the question of preventing an arms race in outer space and to re-establish an ad hoc committee for that purpose.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

The discussions in particular on the legal aspects of the weaponization of space which have taken place in the Ad hoc Committee during the last few years have been useful. They have made it clear that there is a need for additional legal measures in order to prevent an arms race in space effectively. It is an important task for the Conference on Disarmament to contribute to the development of international law in this regard.

Many general ideas have been put forward concerning outer space issues. However, to achieve progress one must go from generalities to specifics. It is regrettable that some delegations have shown so little interest in discussing concrete proposals.

To carry out its work the Ad hoc Committee will require information about relevant space activities. All States which have space programmes should therefore provide the Conference with information about their activities in this field. The major space Powers have a special responsibility to do so, and should take the lead.

My Government has on several occasions stated the need for the global prohibition of anti-satellite weapons. Such a ban would directly benefit the increasing number of States launching civilian satellites, and contribute to international security.

The de facto moratorium on testing of anti-satellite weapons should facilitate further progress in this field. As a first step, the CD could consider the possibility of organizing a meeting of experts of limited duration to address, for example, definitions and verification techniques relevant to anti-satellite weapons.

Work to elaborate a draft treaty prohibiting radiological weapons did not advance last year.

The importance my country attaches to prohibition of the release of radioactive material through attacks on nuclear facilities is well known. Such a prohibition is, in our view, an indispensable part of a radiological weapons treaty. Thus I note with regret that so little was achieved in the Ad hoc Committee in 1987.

The Conference on Disarmament is the appropriate forum in which to agree on a universal prohibition of attacks on nuclear facilities, based on a mass destruction criterion. My delegation calls for revitalized and realistic discussion with a view to reaching early agreement on this vital issue.

On all agenda items related to nuclear weapons the Conference on Disarmament has experienced a standstill. Apart from the work on seismic test ban verification, the CD has at best provided an opportunity for illuminating discussions. Useful as this may be, it cannot in the long term remain the proper role of this, the single multilateral disarmament forum.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

I am obliged, once again, to draw the attention of the Conference to the question of the extension of its membership. As stated many times by the Swedish delegation, the Conference must without further delay admit those countries which have long demonstrated their interest and their ability to make substantive contributions to its work.

At the end of the spring part of this session we will have to adopt our report to the third special session. Our achievements and our shortcomings will be scrutinized by the entire United Nations membership.

This spring we have perhaps a unique opportunity to prove the relevance of the Conference on Disarmament and to demonstrate the potential of multilateral disarmament negotiations. We can do so by achieving concrete results on the items on our agenda. Our achievements can give direction not only to the special session but to multilateral disarmament efforts in years to come.

Two steps would be particularly significant: agreement by the Conference on the outstanding elements of the chemical weapons convention, and a start by the Conference on practical work on all aspects of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

These would be small steps for us, but could be one giant leap for the cause of disarmament.

In the last interview he gave, a few hours before his tragic death, the late Prime Minister of Sweden, Mr. Olof Palme, expressed both hope and optimism. "The mistrust wavers like the mist an early morning in spring."

8 December 1987 showed that his hope and optimism were well founded. With our common efforts, we can make sure that all the mist will soon disappear.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Sweden for her statement and for her kind words addressed to the Chair. I should like now to give the floor to the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Ekéus of Sweden, who will introduce the report of that Committee contained in document CD/795.

Mr. EKEUS (Sweden): Allow me to associate myself with the words of welcome expressed to yourself by Ambassador Theorin, and the thanks to your predecessor, as well as with the words of welcome to our new colleagues.

I regret to be starting my intervention by expressing my condolences to the delegation of the United Kingdom on the death of my predecessor as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee, Ambassador Ian Cromartie. I had the opportunity in early October to visit Ian Cromartie in his apartment in London. During our long conversation Ian Cromartie demonstrated his grasp and insight in the negotiations and his strong belief in our efforts to conclude a complete ban on all chemical weapons.

(Mr. Ekeus, Sweden)

On 27 August I had the honour to introduce to the Conference the report of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons on work done during the regular 1987 session (CD/782). Following the submission of that report, the Conference decided that work on the chemical weapons convention should be resumed under my chairmanship, as follows:

"Firstly, in preparation for the resumed session, private consultations should be undertaken in Geneva by the Chairman during the period 23-27 November 1987 with delegations present;

"Secondly, for that purpose, open-ended consultations of the Ad hoc Committee should be held between 30 November and 16 December 1987 ... ;

"Thirdly, the Ad hoc Committee should hold a session of limited duration during the period 12-29 January 1988."

Today, in my capacity as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, I wish to present the Committee's report to the Conference on Disarmament on work done during the inter-sessional period, as contained in document CD/795, which has just been circulated to delegates. The report was adopted in its entirety by the Committee on 29 January, and thus has been agreed to by all the members of the Ad hoc Committee.

Although the time period set aside for inter-sessional work by the Committee was fairly short, the work proceeded in an intense and concentrated manner, generating substantive and constructive results. These have been registered in the report by an updated version of the draft Convention, the so-called "rolling text" contained in appendix I to the report. Appendix II contains papers reflecting the results of work, which though not yet ready for inclusion in the "rolling text" of the draft Convention, are made available as a basis for further work. This part too has been updated in the light of work done during the inter-sessional period. Furthermore, the report includes an appendix III, reproducing some papers of a technical nature with the aim of facilitating further work on the issue of toxicity determination.

Thus, the report I am introducing now clearly reflects the results of the negotiations so far and the advanced stage in which we now find the draft Convention.

During the inter-sessional period time was devoted to the issue of verification of the destruction of chemical weapons. Agreements reached enabled us to include a whole new section on this question in the annex to article IV, prompting a reorganization of the entire annex. Furthermore, I was able to continue consultations on another major issue contained in that annex, namely the question of the actual order of destruction of chemical weapons. Some further useful steps were taken, with the consequential updating of the relevant part of appendix II. More work is needed on this politically, militarily and technically intricate question before we can

(Mr. Ekeus, Sweden)

register consensus and include the new text in the draft Convention. I have, however, good reason to believe that this will prove possible before too long. This being done, all the major political questions pertaining to existing chemical weapons will be in place.

Continuing negotiations during the inter-sessional period also covered the various issues pertaining to future non-production of chemical weapons, i.e. in particular, article VI and its annexes. The politically, as well as technically, painstaking search for solutions and compromises continued in good spirit. Further progress was registered, resulting in a revision of considerable parts of the annexes relating to article VI of the draft Convention. Furthermore, in appendix II you will find what I believe to be a useful report on how to define "production capacity", which is the result of consultations between technical experts.

The outstanding issues in the area of future non-production of chemical weapons require that delegations devote more time and effort to the questions involved, while keeping in mind the need for a balance between security concerns and other national and international interests. With most of the directly military elements of the Convention in place, the so-called industrial questions now require particular attention.

The same goes for article VIII, dealing with the international organization to be established for the implementation of the Convention. After having been put on the back burner for some time, this issue re-emerged in focus during the inter-sessional period, with detailed work being done on the powers, functions and interrelationship of the various organs of the international organization. The state of affairs has been registered in a new text of article VIII which is included in the "rolling text". More work is needed on the various aspects involved, but judging from past weeks, it now appears that delegations have developed a much clearer perception of what kind of organization they wish to create. This augurs well for the remaining tasks. In this context I also wish to mention that work continued at the expert level on the elaboration of various models for agreements to be entered into with the international organization, concerning activities at specific facilities. Two new such models have been included in appendix II for further consideration by delegations.

Under article IX work continued on the major outstanding question, challenge inspection. Following the major political advances made during the summer, the consultations during the inter-sessional period were aimed at transforming this progress into concrete practical solutions and translating agreements reached into treaty language. Although well under way, this process requires some further compromises before it can be completed, in particular as regards the procedures to be followed after the completion of an on-site inspection on challenge. The present state of affairs, as I see it, is reflected in appendix II.

(Mr. Ekeus, Sweden)

During the inter-sessional period work was initiated on two more articles which had not previously been the subject of negotiations. I am referring to article X, on Assistance, and article XI on Economic and Technological Development. The possible contents of these two important articles were intensively discussed and various approaches were suggested. Appendix II of the report contains material that I believe will be useful in the continued search for common ground in these two areas.

The sum total of the work during the resumed session, as well as previous sessions of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, is embodied in the report I am submitting today. It is a document which the Conference can take pride in. The draft Convention contained therein is no small achievement by this multilateral negotiating body. It speaks for itself and states clearly that the full and complete process of negotiations in which we are involved has reached an advanced stage. We have good reason to approach what remains with confidence and optimism.

In this context I wish to thank all delegations for the efforts they have put into the negotiations, and for the spirit of co-operation in which they have worked. A special tribute is due to the three item co-ordinators, Mr. Philippe Nieuwenhuys of Belgium, Mr. Pablo Macedo of Mexico and Dr. Walter Krutzsch of the German Democratic Republic. With unfailing energy and patience they have conducted the work in their respective areas, bringing us tangible and important results.

I would like to express special gratitude to the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, for his commendable work for the Committee during the inter-sessional period and indeed during my whole tenure as Chairman. His work has been characterized by a combination of the highest professional skill and good political judgement.

My thanks go also to Ms. Darby and other members of the secretariat for their indispensable and effective support.

The world community expects us to conclude this work urgently and responsibly. During the last session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, the international community adopted for the first time one single consensus resolution (resolution 42/37 A) on the issue of our negotiations on the complete and effective prohibition of chemical weapons.

In the resolution the General Assembly expresses its conviction

"of the necessity that all efforts be exerted for the continuation and successful conclusion of negotiations on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of all chemical weapons and on their destruction".

(Mr. Ekeus, Sweden)

Furthermore it

"takes note with satisfaction of the work of the Conference on Disarmament during its 1987 session regarding the prohibition of chemical weapons and in particular appreciates the progress in the work of its Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons on that question and the tangible results recorded in its report", and

"expresses again none the less its regret and concern that notwithstanding the progress made in 1987, a convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of all chemical weapons and on their destruction has not yet been elaborated."

Finally, the General Assembly

"urges again the Conference on Disarmament, as a matter of high priority, to intensify, during its 1988 session the negotiations on such a convention and to reinforce further its efforts by, inter alia, increasing the time during the year that it devotes to such negotiations, taking into account all existing proposals and future initiatives, with a view to the final elaboration of a convention at the earliest possible date, and to re-establish its Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons for this purpose with the mandate to be agreed upon by the Conference at the beginning of its 1988 session".

I took the liberty of quoting at length because I think this resolution is an expression of a shared sense of urgency created by concern that the risks of chemical warfare are increasing. The international community expects us to live up to the responsibility assumed and to bring the negotiations conscientiously to a successful conclusion without delay.

The consensus resolution is also an expression of universal support for the draft Convention embodied in the "rolling text" and for our remaining work. The complete and effective prohibition of all chemical weapons is clearly a matter for all States. The truly multilateral character of the future Convention is at the same time the very prerequisite for the prohibition to become comprehensive, complete and effective. The report which I am submitting to the Conference today, on behalf of the entire Committee, goes a long way in achieving just that.

In handing over the task of carrying the work further to the incoming Chairman of the Committee, I wish to pledge to him my full support and that of my delegation.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons for his statement introducing the report of the Ad hoc Committee. On behalf of the Conference, I should like to extend to Ambassador Ekéus our deep appreciation for the outstanding manner in which he conducted the work of the Committee during the 1987 session and the inter-sessional period. He can be justly proud of his efforts, which were decisive in promoting the advancement of work towards the banning of chemical weapons.

As agreed during the informal consultations last week, I intend at the plenary meeting to be held on Tuesday 9 February, to put before the Conference for adoption the report of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons and a draft decision re-establishing it and appointing its Chairman.

We have exhausted the time available to us this morning and we still have other business to deal with. May I suggest, therefore, that we suspend the plenary meeting now and resume it this afternoon at 3.30 p.m? I see no objections, so the plenary meeting is suspended.

The meeting was suspended at 12.55 p.m. and resumed at 3.30 p.m

The PRESIDENT: The 436th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed. I would now like to give the floor to the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Ambassador Nazarkin.

Mr. NAZARKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): Comrade President, let me first of all congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to convey to you our best wishes for success in this important post. I assure you that the delegation of the Soviet Union will support you fully in performing your onerous duties. I should also like to express appreciation to your predecessor in this post, Ambassador Morel of France, for the considerable work he accomplished as the President of the Conference on Disarmament.

Our delegation would also like to point out that we listened to the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Comrade Bohuslav Chnoupek, with great attention and interest. His statement reflects the great importance that the socialist community attaches to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. As you know, our common position in this regard was set forth in a special statement adopted in the Czechoslovak capital in October last year by the Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty, entitled "Towards increasing the effectiveness of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva" (CD/794 of 27 January 1988).

The Soviet delegation wishes to express its condolences to the delegation of the United Kingdom on the untimely death of Ian Cromartie who successfully represented the United Kingdom at the Conference on Disarmament for a number of years.

(Mr. Nazarkin, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

We wish those colleagues of ours who have left Geneva success in their new posts, and we welcome our new colleagues, Ambassador Marchand of Canada, Ambassador Elaraby of Egypt, Ambassador Nasser of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Azikiwe of Nigeria, Ambassador Sujka of the Polish People's Republic and Ambassador Solesby of the United Kingdom.

The Soviet delegation intends to put forward our detailed ideas regarding the current session of the Conference at one of our forthcoming meetings. Today we have asked for the floor in order to introduce two documents which we have submitted to the Conference on Disarmament, CD/789 and CD/790. They both deal with an issue that occupies an extremely important place in the work of the Conference, the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons.

We consider finalizing the chemical weapons convention as an urgent task for the Conference on Disarmament. The Soviet Union is in favour of stepping up the negotiations to the maximum. At the same time, success in moving towards a convention also depends to a great extent on what is being done outside these negotiations, and above all on creating an atmosphere of trust and openness in the field of chemical weapons.

Today the Soviet delegation is introducing as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament a working paper entitled "Information on the presentation at the Shikhany military facility of standard chemical munitions and of technology for the destruction of chemical weapons at a mobile unit", which took place on 3 and 4 October last year. The document contains the information which was provided to those who participated in the visit to Shikhany. This document gives a fairly complete picture of our system of chemical weapons and contains information on all the toxic substances and standard chemical munitions that we have.

The other document (CD/790) is the text of a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, published on 26 December last year in connection with the initiation of the production by the United States of a new generation of chemical weapons - binary weapons. I would like to draw your attention to the important fact that in this statement the Soviet Union, acting in a spirit of good will, was the first of the States which possess chemical weapons to declare the size of its chemical weapons stocks, which do not exceed 50,000 tons of CW agents.

We expect that the United States will also declare the size of its chemical weapons stocks in the near future.

In trying to justify the initiation of binary weapon production before world public opinion, United States representatives usually refer to the alleged chemical threat from the Soviet Union. In so doing, they have cited absolutely fantastic "data" on chemical weapons stocks in the USSR, which allegedly enjoys superiority over the United States in this field several times over. We believe that publishing data on the real size of our chemical weapons stocks has revealed how unfounded such "arguments" are.

(Mr. Nazarkin, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

Making public the size of our chemical weapons stockpile is also a step towards further confidence-building. I would like to emphasize that we have taken this step in spite of the fact that the United States binary programme is quite incompatible with the emerging process of confidence building in the chemical weapons field. Yet we are not slamming the door in response to the beginning of the practical implementation of the programme, and we shall continue to strive for the earliest possible agreement on the complete prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons.

Our attitude is based on the fact that progress achieved recently at the negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons has brought this objective so much closer that there can be no going back.

Convincing proof of the fairness of this assessment is the report of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, introduced today by its Chairman, the Ambassador of Sweden, Mr. Ekéus. In this connection, I should like to point out the great personal contribution Ambassador Ekéus has made to the process of widening areas of agreement on the future Convention. The "rolling text" in its present form represents an excellent basis for the very rapid conclusion of work on the Convention. The Soviet delegation considers that it is essential for the work of the ad hoc committee on the prohibition of chemical weapons to resume as soon as possible to avoid any waste of time or loss of momentum in the negotiations, in order to perform an important task: to prepare as rapidly as possible a convention which would completely prohibit one of the types of weapon of mass destruction - chemical weapons.

Finally, in conclusion, I should like to inform you of the fact that the Soviet delegation, in parallel with the delegation of the United States, intends to submit as documents of the Conference on Disarmament the text of the joint Soviet-United States statement adopted at the summit meeting in Washington as well as the texts of the Treaty on intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles and various documents related to that Treaty.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for his statement and his kind words addressed to the Chair, and I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Friedersdorf.

Mr. FRIEDERSDORF (United States of America): Mr. President, as the Conference on Disarmament begins its 1988 session, our delegation congratulates you on your assumption of the presidency for the month of February. We are confident that you will be able successfully to build on your many years of experience in the Conference to get our work off to a quick and smooth start.

We also offer our congratulations to Ambassador Morel of France for his outstanding work in completing the 1987 session of the Conference, and in overseeing the affairs of the Conference during the inter-sessional period.

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States of America)

A number of new representatives have joined the Conference, including Ambassador de Montigny Marchand of Canada, Ambassador Elaraby of Egypt, Ambassador Azikiwe of Nigeria, Ambassador Sujka of Poland and Ambassador Solesby of the United Kingdom. Our delegation is ready to work with you, as it is with all other delegations, on the important tasks facing us.

Our delegation also extends a welcome to Foreign Minister Chnoupek of Czechoslovakia and Ambassador Theorin of Sweden. We have listened with interest to their statements today.

And last, our delegation would also add its expressions of sorrow and condolences to those others we have heard today over the death of Ambassador Ian Cromartie of the United Kingdom. He served his country, and this Conference, well.

The President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, has conveyed a message to the Conference on Disarmament as it begins its 1988 session. I am pleased to read this message:

"The Conference on Disarmament plays an important role in international endeavours to create a more stable and peaceful world. You resume your work in a year that holds promise for realizing concrete steps toward this universal objective.

"I am pleased to be able to report to you that we are making discernible progress on all aspects of my Administration's comprehensive agenda: reductions in nuclear arms; peaceful settlement of regional conflicts; development of confidence-building measures; and advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

"The signing of the INF Treaty was an historic event. For the first time, the United States and the Soviet Union will begin reducing nuclear arms. We hope that this beginning will be followed by reaching agreement on all our proposals for a 50 per cent reduction in United States and Soviet strategic nuclear arsenals. In the field of nuclear testing, the United States and the USSR have begun full-scale, step-by-step negotiations, with agreement on the needed verification improvements to existing treaties as the first step. Both sides have also agreed that progress toward banning nuclear tests must be part of an effective disarmament process. In Vienna, we are working out the terms of reference for negotiations on conventional stability in Europe. In addition, we are continuing the process, which was successfully initiated in Stockholm, in the area of confidence-building measures.

"The Conference on Disarmament has an impressive agenda. Of special importance is your effort on a convention banning chemical weapons. Progress has been made in narrowing differences of principle; you now face the arduous task of working out the details and finding solutions on

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States of America)

issues which affect vital security interests of all our countries. General Secretary Gorbachev and I have reaffirmed our commitment to negotiations in the CD which would result in a truly effective, verifiable and global ban on these terrible weapons.

"Under the capable leadership of Ambassador Max Friedersdorf, the United States delegation will continue to work with you in resolving this and other difficult issues which engage this forum. I wish you Godspeed."

In the period since our last plenary session on 28 August, there has been an unusual amount of activity in the field of arms control and disarmament, including some important achievements. This activity was, of course, dominated by the meeting in Washington in December between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev of the Soviet Union, and the successful conclusion by our two countries of an historic treaty banning an entire class of nuclear weapons.

The signature of this agreement at the summit meeting was the culmination of many years of hard, painstaking work on the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, work that took place largely here in Geneva by the delegations to the nuclear and space talks and their predecessor bodies, but also involved an intensive series of ministerial-level meetings this past fall.

The intermediate nuclear forces Treaty was not by any means the sole item on the agenda of the summit meeting. The entire range of arms control issues facing the United States and the Soviet Union was addressed, including issues of particular importance and interest to this Conference.

At the conclusion of their summit meeting, the two leaders issued a joint statement recording the results of their wide-ranging discussions, not only on arms control issues but also on the other matters with which the two countries are concerned.

Because of the considerable material contained in the joint statement of interest to delegations here, as Ambassador Nazarkin remarked, the United States delegation, in parallel with the delegation of the Soviet Union, is submitting the text of the joint statement as an official document of this Conference.

Likewise our delegation realizes that the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles is also of considerable interest to the other members of the Conference, dealing, as it does, with the subject-matter of item 2 of our agenda. Accordingly, our delegation, also in parallel with the delegation of the Soviet Union, is submitting the text of the Treaty, together with its Protocol on elimination procedures, its Protocol on inspections and annex on privileges and immunities, and its Memorandum of Understanding regarding the establishment of the data base for this Treaty, as an official document of this Conference.

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States of America)

The INF Treaty stands as an achievement of the first order in the effort to reduce, and ultimately to eliminate, nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth. For the first time, the United States and the Soviet Union have agreed not simply to regulate - not simply to place a cap on - part of their nuclear arsenals, but to eliminate an entire class of nuclear weapons - those land-based ballistic and cruise missiles having a range between 500 and 5,500 kilometres. All these missiles, and their launchers, will be destroyed within three years of the entry into force of the agreement.

Moreover, the INF agreement contains a package of verification measures of unprecedented scope and magnitude. In the words of Secretary of State Schultz, "this agreement has the most stringent and comprehensive scheme of verification in the history of arms control". The two sides have agreed to exchange voluminous data concerning their INF missile forces, much of which is contained in the Memorandum of Understanding to the Treaty. The two sides have agreed to a complex set of mandatory on-site verification procedures - some that would take place on short notice, and some involving the use of specific instrumentation such as radiation detection devices - to ensure that the terms of the agreement are being complied with.

These far-reaching verification measures were not negotiated for their own sake. Quite the contrary. They were negotiated because they are considered necessary. The objective of the INF Treaty is to strengthen international security, not to weaken it. An agreement banning INF systems that was unverifiable in principle, or did not contain explicit verification provisions, would have worked directly counter to this objective.

As I noted, the INF negotiations were not easy. They took a long time. They required hard work. And they could not have been possible without the close and detailed process of consultations among our allies. Those consultations provided the United States INF delegation with the consistency and firmness of view in the Western approach to the negotiations that was indispensable to ensure success.

In the United States view, the INF Treaty will strengthen the security of the United States and its allies, and it will enhance international stability. It is a realistic agreement. It is a verifiable agreement. It is in the interest of both sides, and it makes a vital contribution to global stability and world peace.

The signing of the INF Treaty was clearly the high point of the December summit meeting in Washington. The INF Treaty will, we hope, provide strong impetus to the negotiations on the other two sets of issues that are included in the nuclear and space talks. In fact, progress was made at the summit on these issues as well.

At the summit, the two sides carried forward their discussions on a treaty that would reduce the strategic arms of the two sides by 50 per cent. The United States delegation returned to Geneva and resumed its work on

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States of America)

14 January determined to move these negotiations forward to a successful conclusion at the earliest possible date, preferably for signature of the treaty at the next United States-Soviet summit meeting scheduled for the first half of 1988.

At the summit, the two sides instructed their negotiators to build on agreements, initially reached at Reykjavik and subsequently developed, concerning a strategic arms reduction treaty. These include a ceiling of 6,000 nuclear warheads on 1,600 delivery systems for each side, with a sublimit of 4,900 warheads on ballistic missiles and a sublimit of 1,540 warheads on so-called heavy missiles; a ballistic missile counting rule; and verification guidelines.

The United States particularly seeks, as President Reagan has noted, "To reduce the most destabilizing nuclear arms - fast-flying ballistic missiles, especially heavy intercontinental ballistic missiles with multiple warheads.". The United States believes that a strategic arms reduction treaty can be concluded this year, if our negotiating partners are prepared to work seriously to resolve such remaining issues as detailed arrangements for effective verification, sea-launched cruise missiles, and mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles.

In the companion talks dealing with defence and space issues, the United States is also seriously pursuing agreement. On 22 January our negotiators tabled a draft treaty designed to ensure strategic stability and predictability. The United States' objective is to ensure such predictability in a way that strengthens deterrence and thus reduces the risk of nuclear war. The new treaty would call for observing for a specified period of time the Treaty on anti-ballistic missiles, as signed in 1972, while both sides conduct their research, development and testing as required, which are permitted by the 1972 Treaty. After this period, and unless otherwise agreed, both countries would be free to choose their own course of action.

An important feature of this draft treaty is its provision for "predictability measures", or confidence-building measures, such as the exchange of programmatic data on the defence programmes that each side conducts, visits to each other's laboratories, and observation of each other's tests. Such measures would assure that before either side would actually deploy advanced defences, full consultations would be carried out. In the United States view, these consultations should begin now.

The United States views this draft treaty as implementing the instructions from President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev, in the joint statement of 10 December, in which they instructed their negotiators to "discuss ways to ensure predictability in the development of the United States-Soviet strategic relationship under conditions of strategic stability, and to reduce the risk of nuclear war".

Consistent with the objective of strategic stability, the United States would reject any attempt to link reductions in strategic offensive weapons to crippling restraints on strategic defensive systems that are being pursued in the Strategic Defence Initiative.

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States of America)

I have discussed in some detail important developments related to the nuclear and space talks, in particular as they were addressed at the summit. These matters are of interest to all of us here in this Conference.

The summit joint statement also addressed other arms control issues, such as the prompt implementation of the agreement to establish nuclear risk reduction centres, signed in September 1987, nuclear non-proliferation, and conventional forces.

On the issue of nuclear testing, the joint statement welcomed the beginning of full-scale, step-by-step negotiations between the two sides, pursuant to the 17 September 1987 statement by Secretary of State Schultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze. The Ministers agreed to begin by working out effective measures making possible the ratification of the 1974 threshold test-ban Treaty and the 1976 peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty. To this end, the sides have agreed to design and conduct joint verification experiments at each other's test sites.

As a part of this process, a United States delegation has recently visited the Soviet nuclear test site near Semipalatinsk, and a Soviet delegation has just completed a visit to the United States test site in Nevada. During that visit, United States experts described a technique measuring the yield of underground nuclear explosions, known as CORTEX, which we believe to provide the most accurate means of verifying yields.

The United States looks forward to the resumption of the negotiations on nuclear testing here in Geneva in the near future.

The joint statement also addressed the issue of the chemical weapons negotiations, an issue that is a direct concern and responsibility of this Conference. This issue, important in its own right, assumes added importance in view of the imminence of the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Preparatory Committee for which is even now meeting in New York. As we all recognize, later on in the first part of our 1988 session, the Conference will prepare a report for that special session.

Of all the items on our agenda, clearly the item of most importance for that report, and for our work in the coming weeks and months, is chemical weapons.

Our deliberations this week should be opening on a note of bright promise, enthusiasm and hope, reflecting the energy and dedication of the delegates for achieving progress this session. Instead, a pall of negativism and discouragement exists, in our opinion, which does not bode exceptionally well for prospects here. This atmosphere has been created, most sadly and tragically, by a series of events, agitated by the Soviet Union.

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States of America)

On 18 July 1985, shortly after the United States Congress funded the United States' chemical weapons modernization programme, the Soviet Union issued a press release designed to "kill" production of binary chemical weapons (CD/615). Using distortions, the statement accused the United States of stalling on chemical weapons negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. The United States at that time was forced to use this Conference's valuable time to set the record straight. Subsequently, of course, the unprecedented progress enjoyed in our negotiations, and the role the United States has played in achieving that progress, has further discredited the 1985 Soviet assertions.

During the ensuing months, it became necessary on more than one occasion to take the floor to call upon the Soviet Union and others to moderate their rhetoric and stop misrepresenting the facts and the intentions of other delegations. We have repeatedly pointed out that this counter-productive approach not only wastes valuable negotiating time, but also sours the negotiating atmosphere. We have made clear that we will set the record straight whenever United States policies are misrepresented, but that the Conference on Disarmament would be better served if such misrepresentations were never made.

We thought that perhaps we had put our point across, because everyone seemed to take a relatively constructive approach to negotiations during 1987, enabling us to make unprecedented progress toward a chemical weapons convention.

We were disappointed, therefore, to see that the Soviet Union has once again launched a propaganda campaign against United States CW modernization. Typical of this effort is yet another Soviet Foreign Ministry statement, released by TASS on 26 December 1987, which has been circulated as CD/790.

Predictably, once again we are here to set the record straight, point out what a time-consuming, counter-productive exercise these exchanges are, and suggest that all delegations concentrate on the task at hand. Let us examine some of these Soviet allegations.

In the latest Soviet statement, the United States' CW modernization programme is described as a step toward a new twist in the chemical arms race. Chemical arms race? With whom has the Soviet Union been racing? Not with the United States, which did not produce a single chemical weapon for 18 years. Nor is there any other chemical weapon threat which would warrant accumulation of the large chemical weapons stockpile the Soviet Union has acquired.

The TASS article states that the United States modernization initiative was unprovoked. As we have pointed out many times, modernization was necessary because the adequacy of the United States' chemical deterrent capability had become a matter of grave concern. During the long period after the United States ceased production of chemical weapons, existing stocks deteriorated. Less than a third of the United States' chemical weapons stockpile is now usable, and most of that small portion has only limited military value.

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States of America)

The Soviet Union, in the mean time, was amassing a formidable chemical warfare capability. The Soviet Union has by far the largest CW stockpile in the world. Further, the Soviet Union has an even greater edge in the number of military personnel, chemical units, decontamination units and training facilities. This Soviet chemical warfare capability is far greater than would be required for solely defensive purposes. It is this threat that prompted the United States to take action.

Throughout the unilateral Soviet build-up, the Soviet Union reacted to inquiries about its possession of chemical weapons either with silence or with denial. On 29 May 1986, the Soviet Union denied that it possessed chemical weapons, then, a few months later, announced it had ceased production of chemical weapons. The Soviet official who publicly proclaimed that the Soviet Union possessed no chemical weapon stocks subsequently had the contradictory assignment of displaying for the delegates of this Conference 19 different types of Soviet chemical weapons at Shikhany. And now we are told that the Soviet Union has as much as 50,000 tons of these chemical weapons they denied possessing only 19 months earlier. The decision to modernize the United States' chemical weapons stockpile was made long before these recent revelations, and that decision was predicated on the CW threat as the United States assessed it. These Soviet revelations buttress the wisdom of that decision, and contribute to our resolve to continue the rehabilitation of our ability to retaliate against a CW attack.

We know the Soviet Union has a decided advantage over the United States in chemical warfare capability, and even if the most optimistic forecasts for completing a chemical weapons convention are borne out, the Soviet Union would continue to enjoy that advantage, in all probability, for the remainder of this century. The United States also shares the concern of others regarding chemical weapons proliferation. We are unwilling to face a growing CW threat with a diminishing retaliatory capability.

The Soviet Union also knows that the binary programme does not mark the expansion of the United States' chemical weapons stockpile. By the very terms of the legislation authorizing the binary programme, and as certified by the President, every binary chemical weapon produced must be offset by the destruction of a serviceable unitary artillery shell from the existing arsenal. The number of munitions destroyed pursuant to this destruction plan, which, I repeat, is mandated by law, will be several times the number of binary munitions to be produced. Ultimately, all unitary munitions will be destroyed. This destruction plan is ready now to be implemented.

It is also significant that the United States has been completely candid about this modernization programme, and no one who has read the ample public reports and followed the legislative process of this programme could seriously believe that the United States intends to maintain anything more than a small, safe, modernized CW retaliatory capability.

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States of America)

We believe the binary programme increases the likelihood of a chemical weapons convention. Modernization of the United States deterrent diminishes the value of the Soviet chemical weapons arsenal by making its use less attractive, which, in turn, makes it more likely that the Soviet Union will be willing to give it up. This small United States retaliatory capability provides leverage at the negotiating table. Anyone who questions this should remember that it was only after the Congress funded the binary programme that the Soviet Union began to permit these negotiations to move forward.

Which brings us to another distortion by the Soviet Union: the assertion that the United States is impeding the chemical weapons negotiations, while the Soviet Union is doing all that it can to complete the convention. Negotiators who have participated in these talks over the years know better. Those who have not followed CW negotiations closely need only compare the United States draft convention (CD/500) with the "rolling text", and read our various papers, to see that it is the United States that has made significant contributions to the present text. On the other hand, a review of the Ad hoc Committee's annual reports reveals that the Soviet Union did not produce a single CD document directly contributing to treaty text during the almost four years that have passed since CD/500 was introduced. Indeed, the Soviet Union, individually, has produced only three CW documents at all. One, of course, is the recently submitted information on the Shikhany visit found in CD/789. This is a welcome confidence-building measure, to be sure, but it does not suggest a single word of "rolling text". The other two Soviet documents are the two propagandistic attacks on binaries. That is the extent of Soviet CW documents tabled since the United States presented CD/500 almost four years ago.

Paradoxically, the major contribution of the Soviet Union to the chemical weapons negotiations is that they recently quit saying no to some of the substantive proposals of others. This is a welcome development, and we encourage it. It is more productive than assaults on the integrity and intentions of other delegations.

Such simplistic and inflammatory arguments as we find in CD/790 will neither curtail United States chemical weapons modernization nor lead us closer to our goal of a chemical-weapon-free world. The crux of the matter is that there is no inconsistency in seeking the ultimate elimination of all chemical weapons while, in the interim, insisting upon the preservation of national security. That is what the United States is doing.

Our delegation acknowledges the pace of negotiations has slowed during the past few months. When the Soviet Union accepted the United States proposal for mandatory challenge inspection, many delegations perceived, for the first time, that a chemical weapons convention was indeed possible. In this light, States that formerly played a less active role in the negotiations are now enunciating national positions and expressing reservations and concerns. We do not have more unresolved issues, we are simply discovering what some of the divergencies are. The natural consequence is more discord and less agreed text. But this is a phase of the negotiations that has always been inevitable, and the fact that we have reached that point when we are candidly debating the hard issues is, to our delegation, a sign of progress.

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States of America)

It is understandable that some become frustrated and impatient for more tangible results. But, as our delegation has cautioned before, and as recent sessions confirm, we have many serious issues yet to be resolved - issues such as whether challenge inspection should involve a right of refusal; how to verify the accuracy of declarations; how to monitor the chemical industry so as to ensure non-production; what to do about old stocks; which chemicals need to go on the various lists; the organizational structure and the mechanics for administering a convention; allocation of costs; economic development and technical assistance; the protection of confidential information; security during the destruction phase; prior multilateral data exchange; and what production will be permitted where. No single State, or even group of States, is blocking progress on any of these issues. The fact is that we cannot expect consensus on these issues until national views are formulated and enunciated, and until differences are resolved through serious debate. This will take considerable time, as anyone determined about these negotiations knows. For this reason, it is not only unrealistic but unproductive to speculate that a convention can be completed before the third special session or by some specified, artificial deadline. Experience shows that such reckless assertions merely engender disappointment and an illusion of failure when the optimistic speculation proves to be wrong.

It is this same consideration that militates against any change in the mandate of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons at this time. A review of the unresolved issues confronting the Committee must lead to the conclusion that we have not reached the stage of final drafting, yet the suggested changes to the mandate would create a different impression. It is better to avoid creating unreasonable expectations. The present mandate in no manner inhibits, obstructs or impedes the work of the Ad hoc Committee, and it can easily be changed when change is appropriate.

The United States delegation will continue to be active in all our deliberations because we remain committed to negotiation of a verifiable, comprehensive and effective international convention on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons encompassing all chemical-weapons-capable States.

Until we can achieve that goal, however, the United States will maintain a small, modernized CW retaliatory capability as a necessary deterrent against the threat of chemical attack.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador van Schaik.

Mr. van SCHAIK (Netherlands): Let me first of all congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency for this month. Your personal commitment to our common cause and your experience and abilities as an ambassador and representative of your country are known to us all. We look forward with

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

confidence to the guidance you will give us. I also wish to thank your predecessor Ambassador Pierre Morel for the judicious and balanced way in which he chaired the Conference in the difficult month of August and guided us in the somewhat less difficult months since the end of the summer session.

We appreciate that the Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Chnoupek, has returned to the Conference this morning, and we listened with interest to his statement.

I wish to join others who have paid respect to the late Ambassador Ian Cromatie. As a predecessor of the current Chairman of the Chemical Weapons Committee, Rolf Ekéus, Ian Cromatie had a major influence on the negotiations. His personal qualities - his dedication to the work, his feeling for fair play, his good humour - have been adequately described by others, and I can only echo Ambassador Solesby's words concerning how much we would have liked him to witness the successful outcome of the negotiations.

I welcome colleagues who have recently joined the Conference. We look forward to close co-operation with them.

The reason I have taken the floor at this moment is that I wish to thank Ambassador Ekéus and the Swedish delegation for the excellent way in which, in a crucial period, the work on CW has been conducted and stimulated.

We are extremely grateful to Ambassador Ekéus and his staff for the work they have undertaken, for leading us to the point where we now stand. We often praise one another here in this room, and that makes it more difficult to differentiate in our laudatory comments. But I think we all agree that what Rolf Ekéus and his staff have done has been exemplary. We also wish to thank Mr. Nieuwenhuys, Mr. Macedo and Mr. Krutzsch for the good, solid and important work they have done as item co-ordinators in their respective areas.

This morning Ambassador Ekéus has given an interesting overview and evaluation of the situation. It is now up to us members of the Conference to use the building-blocks that have been prepared to continue on the road leading to our common goal, a comprehensive and effectively verifiable ban.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. That concludes my list of speakers for today. I have just received a request from the delegation of the Soviet Union. I give the floor to the representative of the Soviet Union, Ambassador Nazarkin.

Mr. NAZARKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from the Russian): I would not like to begin with polemics on the first day of the work of the session of the Conference on Disarmament this year, and I shall try not to do so. I am obliged to take the floor because the statement by the Ambassador of the United States, Ambassador M. Friedersdorf, contained several inaccuracies, to put it mildly.

(Mr. Nazarkin, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

He asserted that the Soviet Union until recently denied that it possessed any chemical weapons. That is an incorrect assertion. Until last year official Soviet representatives neither asserted nor denied that we have chemical weapons. This is not a new formula. The United States, for example, uses this formula with regard to the presence of nuclear weapons on its ships. This is the first inaccuracy which the Ambassador of the United States permitted himself.

The Ambassador of the United States also stated that the Soviet Union has the largest stockpile of chemical weapons in the world. We have declared the size of our stockpile. Certainly, if the United States representative really wished to compare Soviet and United States stockpile, it would be logical to cite data on the size of the United States stockpile. As long as that has not been done, we consider statements that the Soviet Union has the largest stockpile to be unfounded.

I intentionally did not raise the question of the mandate of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons at this meeting because this issue remains the subject of consultations between delegations. But as the representative of the United States has raised the issue, I will also briefly set out our approach to the future mandate of the Ad hoc Committee.

The United States insists on keeping last year's mandate, which contains a restrictive condition - it does not allow for the Ad hoc Committee to complete its work on the Convention. Quite frankly we fail to understand why it is necessary to keep this restrictive provision in the mandate, bearing in mind the progress that has been made in the negotiations.

The United States said merely that in the course of this session, if the need arises, the Conference could amend the mandate of the Ad hoc Committee by removing the restrictive provision. But the point is - why waste time on procedural discussions in the course of the session if this issue can be settled now? Naturally, in deleting this restrictive provision the participants in the negotiations are in no way obligated to embark immediately on the final drafting of the text. When the need arises in the course of the session, the Ad hoc Committee will be free to get down to drafting the text of the draft Convention. In any event there is a need to delete a provision whose sole function is to hinder the completion of work on the Convention this year. The Soviet delegation considers that it would be desirable to delete this restrictive provision from the mandate at the present stage, so as not to waste time on reviewing the mandate.

My last point concerns the initiation of binary weapon production in the United States. At a time when real prospects have emerged for the conclusion of the Convention this step by the United States is in our view nothing other than an attempt to torpedo the process of chemical disarmament, a manifestation of lack of respect for the efforts of States participating in the multilateral negotiations on the prohibition of this type of weapon of mass destruction, and for the repeated calls of the General Assembly of the United Nations to step up these negotiations. This was the assessment given by the Foreign Ministry of the USSR in its statement of 26 December 1987.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for his statement. May I ask whether any other member wishes to take the floor at this stage? Obviously that is not the case.

You will recall that during our informal consultations we considered a number of organizational questions relating to the opening of the annual session. I intend now to suspend the plenary meeting and convene an informal meeting immediately afterwards to consider the provisional agenda and programme of work of the Conference, the re-establishment of subsidiary bodies and requests for the participation of States not members of the Conference. If I do not see any objection, the plenary meeting is suspended.

The plenary meeting was suspended at 4.30 p.m. and resumed at 4.40 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: The 436th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed.

As a result of our exchange of views at the informal meeting on a number of organizational questions, I intend now to formalize the agreements reached at the informal meeting.

I put before the Conference for decision working paper CD/WP.293, containing the draft provisional agenda for the 1988 session and programme of work of the Conference. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts this draft.

It was so decided. 1/

The PRESIDENT: We shall now turn to working paper CD/WP.294, containing a draft decision on the re-establishment of the Ad hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament. If there are no objections, I shall consider that the Conference adopts the draft.

It was so decided. 2/

The PRESIDENT: I understand that Ambassador Alfonso García Robles of Mexico has kindly agreed to serve as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee. We shall then proceed to appoint him in that capacity.

It was so decided.

1/ The agenda for the 1988 session and the programme of work of the Conference were later issued as CD/796.

2/ The decision was later issued as CD/803.

The PRESIDENT: I wish to extend to Ambassador García Robles our congratulations on his appointment as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee, and I wish him success in his important task.

I now turn to working paper CD/WP.295, entitled "Draft decision on the re-establishment of the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons". If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts the draft decision.

It was so decided. 3/

The PRESIDENT: The next document before us is working paper CD/WP.296, containing a draft decision on the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts the draft decision.

It was so decided. 4/

The PRESIDENT: I now put before the Conference for decision a number of requests from States non-members to participate in our work (CD/WP.297 to 306). The following non-members have addressed requests to us on this matter: Norway, Finland, New Zealand, Austria, Ireland, Malaysia, Portugal, Switzerland, Zimbabwe and Spain.

Since no objections were raised when the communications from these non-members were circulated, and consensus emerged at the informal meeting, I suggest that we adopt all these draft decisions together. If there is no objection, then I shall proceed accordingly. I take it that the Conference adopts the draft decisions?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The next question refers to the composition of the Group of Seven on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Fan. In that connection, I wish to announce for the record that Ambassador Robert van Schaik of the Netherlands will replace Ambassador Beesley of Canada as a member of the Group. I should also like to note that there is a general feeling that the Group of Seven should resume its work as soon as possible, keeping in mind that the Conference is expected to report on this matter to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

I should now like to give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ambassador Komatina, to make a statement in connection with the services available to the Conference.

3/ The decision was later issued as CD/804.

4/ The decision was later issued as CD/801.

Mr. KOMATINA (Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): I have asked for the floor to inform the Conference about the services that will be allocated to it during 1988.

At the outset, I should like to note that the manner in which the Conference utilized its resources during the 1987 session was very useful in facilitating the work of Conference Services. Of course, not all the resources available to the Conference were fully utilized during last year, but the Conference was able to stay within the resources available to it, even at the peak periods of the annual session. In doing so, we facilitated considerably the task of the technical services in scheduling meetings, as well as in providing documentation.

We shall now be facing also the preparations for the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and that will require additional efforts during the first part of the session. However, we are confident that with the response we received from the Conference in 1987, it will be possible to face an increasing workload within the limits imposed on us by the financial emergency facing the United Nations.

In this connection, I should like to inform you that the need for reduction and reprogramming of a number of activities financed by the United Nations budget continues. Accordingly, as was the case during the 1987 session, the Conference needs to consider how to implement the target reduction of 30 per cent in services allocated to it. In order that the work of the Conference should be the least impaired, while bringing about the required rate of saving, we should continue to concentrate on reducing the number of weekly meetings, rather than imposing a 30 per cent reduction in the duration of the annual session. Those savings would mean, in practice, the allocation to the Conference of 10 meetings per week with full servicing and 15 meetings per week with full services during the sessions of the Group of Seismic Experts. In other words, the Conference will be able to hold two daily meetings with full servicing throughout the 1988 session, plus one additional daily meeting when the Group of Seismic Experts is in session.

Furthermore, if the Conference establishes a larger number of committees than in 1987, arrangements should be made to hold their meetings consecutively with other committees or working groups. This practice was in force in the past, and prevented the wastage of resources should the time allocated for each meeting not be fully utilized. Since we shall have to consider during the first part of the 1988 session the special report of the Conference to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, arrangements for consecutive meetings might help us to deal with an increasing workload at times when the plenary and also the subsidiary bodies would be discussing the contents of that special report.

Consecutive meetings may be held if we maintain high standards of punctuality for the opening of plenaries as well as committee meetings. Last year the Conference was able to improve substantially the actual time for the opening of plenary meetings. I understand, Mr. President, that during your

(Mr. Komatina, Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

consultations you have noted your intention to start all plenary and informal meetings of the Conference not later than five minutes after the scheduled time of commencement. We hope that this practice may be extended to all other meetings of the Conference.

As in previous years, the limitation imposed on meetings with full services does not apply to the substantive secretariat, who will always be available to provide support for informal consultations.

As was the case for the 1987 session, it will not be possible to hold meetings with full servicing in the evenings or during weekends.

May I also recall the measures accepted by the Conference at the informal meeting held on 22 April 1986 concerning documentation. In order to implement those measures effectively and to maintain savings in the costs of documentation, we hope that documents will be presented in good time, since there is no overtime for the technical staff of Conference Services and therefore it will not be possible to meet last-minute deadlines. We have also noticed that members, in responding to previous appeals concerning the amount of documentation, have taken the initiative of circulating on their own, informally, documentation which may assist in our work or provide information on their own views on specific subjects. This approach has led to savings in documentation which have been welcomed. Another aspect of documentation which is important for the work of the technical services is the length of documentation being processed. You will recall that the agreement reached on 22 April 1986 also covered some limitations in that respect. While we understand that those limits cannot be strictly applied, it will be useful to keep this aspect in mind in order to ensure that the size of certain documents does not nullify the reductions obtained by other measures.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for his statement. During my consultations, I noted that the Conference agreed to the arrangements described by Ambassador Komatina. We shall therefore proceed accordingly.

Before we adjourn, I should like to draw your attention to the fact that four Ministers for Foreign Affairs will be addressing the Conference at our next plenary meeting. The Ministers will be arriving early before the opening of the plenary meeting. I should therefore like to ask delegations to be present in this conference room not later than 9.50 a.m. on Thursday next, 4 February, in order that heads of delegations may proceed immediately to the Salon Tchèque to greet the Ministers. I should like to emphasize the need for punctuality, as we shall start the plenary meeting immediately afterwards, to enable the Ministers to deliver their statements in the morning.

I have no other business to consider today, and I will therefore adjourn the plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 4 February, at 10 a.m. precisely.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.