

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.446
8 March 1988

ENGLISH

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 8 March 1988, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Paul Joachim von Stülpnagel (Federal Republic of Germany)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 446th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I should like to recall that today is International Women's Day. I hardly need to refer to the important role that women play in contemporary society, including, of course, in all efforts undertaken at the governmental and non-governmental levels to ensure peace and international security. Disarmament is an indispensable element in those efforts and it is only logical that the women taking part in the meeting entitled Women in Action for Disarmament, Justice and Peace are present here today and that they follow our deliberations. I should like to welcome them in our midst, and I am sure that the Conference appreciates the interest that they take in its work as shown by the statement that they are addressing to us and which, as I announced at our last plenary meeting, the Secretary-General of the Conference will now read out to you. I give the floor to Ambassador Komatina.

Mr. KOMATINA (Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): The following is the statement to the Conference on Disarmament by Women in Action for Disarmament, Justice and Peace: I quote:

"On this International Women's Day, women have gathered in Geneva to prepare for the United Nations third special session on disarmament, from which we expect to see a uniting of the efforts in favour of disarmament. In the lead-up to this session, we appeal to the members of the Conference on Disarmament for progress in your negotiations.

We regret the lack of complete achievements in multilateral negotiations since the first special session. We are heartened, however, by progress made in the Conference on Disarmament in the formulation of a convention banning chemical weapons. Women, as the keepers of civilian populations, have suffered and watched their children suffer at the hands of the users of chemical weapons. We urge the members of the Conference to exercise their political will and complete the chemical weapons convention by the end of the year.

Women have been at the forefront of nuclear disarmament campaigns globally. The contribution they have made must be recognized at all levels of the disarmament process. In Nairobi, in July 1985, women marked the end of the United Nations Decade for Women by showing their ability to transcend boundaries of wealth, geography and ideology. On behalf of their Governments and non-governmental organizations, they created and agreed on the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, including paragraph 250, which states:

'Safeguarding world peace and averting a nuclear catastrophe is one of the most important tasks today in which women have an essential role to play, especially by supporting actively the halting of the arms race followed by arms reduction and the

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

attainment of a general and complete disarmament under effective international control, and thus contributing to the improvement of their economic position. Irrespective of their socio-economic system, the States should try to avoid confrontation and to build friendly relations instead, which should also be supported by women'.

The agenda of the Conference on Disarmament includes as item 1 the question of a nuclear test ban. The continued testing of nuclear weapons upholds the arms race. Women call for a halt to testing. In this area, the Conference on Disarmament, the focus of multilateral negotiations, is of central importance. All States have an interest in the completion and verification of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. An end to nuclear-weapon tests is not only a pre-condition to curbing the arms race and to the elimination of nuclear weapons, but it is also an ecological necessity, as we are convinced that the testing poses a great danger to the health of human beings and the environment.

Women welcome the signing of the INF Treaty in Washington last December and the numerous proposals that have been made in recent years for the elimination of other categories of nuclear weapons and the creation of nuclear- and chemical-weapon-free zones in most parts of the globe. We are urging also that serious negotiations for the reduction of conventional weapons and forces be undertaken in the various fora, including the Conference on Disarmament. Many disarmament proposals have been generated by women at the grass-roots levels of non-governmental organizations and peace movements and the men with whom they work. The ability of these people to contribute to the negotiating process through non-governmental organizations should be kept in mind by the Conference on Disarmament. They seek better communication with the Conference on Disarmament and, we believe, the Conference on Disarmament also seeks better communication with them. We hope that more thought can be given to ways and means. As part of this dialogue, we appreciate the opportunity to deliver our message today. We propose that information links between the Conference on Disarmament and the non-governmental organizations be guaranteed through meetings and written communications.

As we prepare for the United Nations third special session on disarmament, we extend to you our support for the work of the CD. It is imperative for the survival of our planet that concrete and speedy steps are made by the Conference in this work".

Here ends the message.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference for having read out the statement addressed to us by the participants in the meeting Women in Action for Disarmament, Justice and Peace. May I also once again thank the participants in that meeting for transmitting to us their views on important matters of disarmament.

(The President)

In accordance with its programme of work, the Conference considers this week agenda item 3, entitled "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters". However, in conformity with rule 30 of the rules of procedure, any member wishing to do so may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

I should like to inform the members that I intend to convene today, after the list of speakers is exhausted, an informal meeting of the Conference to consider the question of the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee under item 5 on the agenda, the appointment of its chairman and, if agreement on the re-establishment of such a committee is confirmed, to deal with a request from non-members to participate in its work.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Argentina, the United Kingdom, Australia, the Netherlands, the German Democratic Republic, Sweden and Romania. I now give the floor to the first speaker on my list, the representative of Argentina, Ambassador Cámpora.

Mr. CAMPORA (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): First of all, I wish to extend greetings to the delegation of the non-governmental organization, Women in Action for Disarmament, Justice and Peace, whose visit on this International Women's Day we welcome with great enthusiasm. The proposals and initiatives that this organization generates in the area of disarmament will receive our full attention. We would like to thank them for coming today to this plenary meeting of the Conference.

Following my statement of 1 March concerning the United Kingdom military manoeuvres in the South Atlantic, several representatives have asked me for information as to which were the Latin American Governments that had expressed concern and asked the Government of the United Kingdom to refrain from the manoeuvres.

In order to respond to this request, the Argentine delegation has submitted document CD/811, which reproduces the Declaration signed by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela during the first session of the third ordinary meeting of the Permanent Mechanism of Political Consultation and Concertation, held on 25 February 1988 in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. It is also appropriate to point out that the Organization of American States, which comprises 31 American countries, adopted on 1 March in Washington, United States of America, with no votes against, a resolution which expresses deep concern at the heightening of tension in the South Atlantic as a consequence of the decision of the Government of the United Kingdom to carry out such military exercises and expresses the hope that that Government will reconsider its decision.

The multilateral negotiating of the convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons has reached a decisive stage. The United Nations General Assembly has come out in favour of the elimination of these weapons of mass destruction by adopting, without a vote, resolution 42/37 A. Moreover, the draft convention has reached an advanced stage of preparation and most of

(Mr. Cámpora, Argentina)

the outstanding political problems are in the process of being resolved. Nevertheless, there are at the same time contradictory signs which are troubling. In these paradoxical circumstances, in which the goal seems to be within our grasp and yet to be moving further away as we move forward, it is necessary to generate a convergence in time of political will in order to reach the conclusion of the convention as soon as possible. Otherwise, we run the risk that the debate will become endless, the diligence in negotiation will wane and the opportunity will be lost.

On account of the foregoing, I must point to the support given to the negotiations, by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Hans-Dietrich Genscher, and of Italy, Mr. Giulio Andreotti, who, in the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament of 4 February, urged us to make a final effort. Likewise, we appreciate the contribution of the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, in submitting to the Conference a memorandum on multilateral data exchange and a proposal that each State participating in the negotiations should designate one facility where a group of experts could test the procedures for systematic international monitoring of the non-production of chemical weapons in commercial industry. This second proposal is being studied by my Government. In this connection, I would like to say, by way of general comment, that we think it useful to try out, before the entry into force of the convention, the verification measures that are emerging.

The Argentine Republic, as a non-aligned country, is assuming the responsibility incumbent upon it in the negotiations by intensifying its dedication to the work of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. In his turn, the President of the nation, Dr. Raúl Alfonsín, has given special attention to this question by affirming in the Stockholm Declaration of 21 January 1988, along with the heads of State or Government of Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and Tanzania that "a convention for the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons should be urgently concluded" (document CD/807).

In our previous statement on this subject, on 6 August 1987, we maintained that:

"The chemical weapons convention as we have known it so far would be a non-discriminatory treaty, since all the parties would be on an equal footing once the process of destruction of chemical weapons and existing production facilities had been completed [From that point] there will be a single category of States with the same rights and obligations and an identical verification mechanism applicable for all States. ... Thus we have within reach the possibility of drawing up a treaty that would not be discriminatory from the political and military standpoints. It is also important that it should not be discriminatory from an economic and technological viewpoint".

Hence, the future convention should take specially into account the legitimate interests of States so that security is not diminished and the development and application of chemistry for peaceful purposes is not impeded.

(Mr. Cámpora, Argentina)

The future convention should enhance the security of States parties from the very moment it enters into force. In this connection, it is appropriate to recall that the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament stipulates in paragraph 29 that:

"The adoption of disarmament measures should take place in such an equitable and balanced manner as to ensure the right of each State to security and to ensure that no individual State or group of States may obtain advantages over others at any stage. At each stage the objective should be undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces".

We consider that this general principle is applicable to the case of chemical weapons and has been recognized in the annex to article 4 by the statement to the effect that: "The elaboration of the Order of Destruction shall build on the undiminished security for all States during the entire destruction stage". Nevertheless, we consider it appropriate to repeat this in the body of the convention and to extend it to the stage following the period of destruction of chemical weapons and production facilities.

With regard to the development and application of chemistry for peaceful purposes, the entry into force of the convention will create a framework for mutual confidence among States parties that we hope will help to increase international co-operation in this field. Because of their community of objectives, the States parties should accord each other in their mutual relations treatment corresponding to their status as "trustworthy partners". Thus the accession of a State to the convention should be recognized as "sufficient guarantee" to help to bring about the greatest possible exchange of chemicals, equipment and technologies for peaceful purposes.

We must avoid the experience with other international instruments of unilaterally or plurilaterally conditioning the commitment entered into multilaterally by establishing additional requirements for co-operation in peaceful uses. The fact that the guarantee of non-production of chemical weapons can be verified will make discriminatory any other condition it may be sought to add to the conditions accepted in the convention.

Consequently, the operation of the convention should not be an impediment to the development and application of chemistry for peaceful purposes. This question is of special interest to my country because the chemical industry is becoming an ever more powerful growth factor with regard both to the agricultural sector and to industry and is, therefore, a source of well-being for the Argentine people.

The provisions of the convention should not jeopardize the normal development of this activity, nor affect the right of every State to economic and technological development of the chemical industry in keeping with its interests, needs and priorities.

(Mr. Cámpora, Argentina)

In view of the foregoing, the Argentine delegation considers that the objectives of the convention are not confined to those set out in article I but also include both the undiminished security of the States parties and the development and application of chemistry for peaceful purposes.

In order to attain these objectives, it has been decided to create an international organization. The report of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons that covers the session from 12 to 29 January 1988 takes account of this decision in the new text for article VIII. Similarly, the powers and functions of the organs have been defined. This progress is the result of intense debate and also of the flexibility displayed by the Group of 21 in accepting the exchange of the notion of "delegated authority" for the idea that the organs' ranking will be determined by their powers and functions as and when the relations between the organs are established. For instance, the character of the General Conference that is the Organization's main or supreme body should be reflected by the powers appropriate to that highest rank.

The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America, better known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, is the sole multilateral agreement on disarmament concluded thus far to have established - as long ago as 1967 - a body to ensure compliance with its obligations. The Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America, known by the acronym OPANAL has a structure similar to that envisaged in article VIII of the "rolling text", comprising three main bodies, namely a General Conference, a Council and a Secretariat.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco was a forerunner of what are now known as challenge inspections in providing for "special inspections" to be carried out by the Council when requested, the reasons for the request being stated, by a State party which suspects that some activity prohibited by the Treaty has been carried out or is about to be carried out.

The experience derived from this Treaty shows the necessity of giving the future convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons a régime of confidentiality of information. The importance of this was underscored by the industrial experts in the meetings held on 6 and 7 July 1987 in Geneva as well as in the Pugwash seminar on chemical warfare that took place, again in Geneva, on 23 and 24 January 1988.

The Argentine delegation considers it particularly necessary to establish a régime of confidentiality of information that will ensure not only that industrial and trade secrets are preserved, but also that no leakage of information can give rise to the use of information for purposes that are prohibited under the convention. Likewise, the information to be collected should actually contribute to the needs of verification and special care must be taken not to demand supplementary information that, while having a certain usefulness, could reveal technological or commercial details.

The entry into force of the convention will not of itself eliminate the possibilities of the use or threat of use of chemical weapons or those of the development or production of such weapons. These possibilities will diminish

(Mr. Cámpora, Argentina)

as the number of States parties and the efficiency of the verification mechanisms increase. But it is possible that chemical-weapon States will not accede to the convention or that States that are not parties to the convention will develop or produce chemical weapons. Nor can the possibility that a State will violate the convention be ruled out.

On the other hand, every State has the right to provide for its own defence and its security cannot be based exclusively on universal accession to a treaty, which might only be attained in the long term; nor can it depend on the accession of all States with chemical-weapon capability, for even a country that is little developed economically and technologically could be in a position to manufacture chemical weapons.

In view of these considerations and of the objective of undiminished security for the States parties, the right of those States to protection against chemical weapons must be explicitly recognized in the future convention.

These are the bases for document CD/809, entitled "Assistance in relation to protection against chemical weapons", which the Argentine delegation is submitting today for the consideration of the Conference on Disarmament, with a view to helping in the drafting of article X of the draft convention. In that document we list those elements that, with others, would be included in assistance in relation to protection against chemical weapons and the criteria that would govern the provision of that assistance.

Our approach to this matter of assistance in relation to protection against chemical weapons is based on two criteria of application.

The first is a general criterion, according to which the convention should ensure for States parties permanent and deterrent coverage against chemical weapons through the granting of assistance both for the development and improvement of protective capacity and for cases of the use or threat of use of chemical weapons. Pursuant to this criterion, the future convention should recognize the right of every State to research, develop, produce, acquire, transfer and use means of protection against chemical weapons exclusively for defensive purposes. Likewise, all States parties to the convention would undertake to facilitate the widest possible exchange of equipment, material and scientific and technological information for the purposes of protection against chemical weapons, and would have the right to participate in that exchange.

In the context of this general approach, the Technical Secretariat would have an advisory and co-ordinating role. At the request of a State party, experts from the Technical Secretariat would be able to assess that State's needs or protection against chemical weapons and to provide advice about which means and measures for protection would be most appropriate and which States parties would be in a position to supply them.

(Mr. Cámpora, Argentina)

The second criterion refers to specific cases of the use or threat of use of chemical weapons. Pursuant to this criterion, there would be established in the convention multilateral machinery for the provision in such cases of assistance complementary to the protection that a State party had itself developed against chemical weapons or to the assistance that it might have received or could receive through other channels.

According to this specific criterion, the future convention should recognize the right of every State party to request assistance from the Executive Council - duly stating the grounds for the request - when it is attacked with chemical weapons or considers itself threatened by such weapons. The Executive Council would consider the request immediately and, if it deemed it valid, would instruct the Technical Secretariat to confirm the complaint, investigate the facts and make an inventory of the requirements by means of an on-site inspection, if necessary and possible.

After the Executive Council had received the report of the Technical Secretariat, it would decide whether the assistance was required and, if it was, would instruct the Technical Secretariat to seek the aid of those countries that were in a position to provide it, according to the needs identified. The Technical Secretariat would co-ordinate the assistance in such a way as to make it available as rapidly as possible and would also give advice on the treatment of the wounded and on the preventive and prophylactic measures necessary.

Viewed in this way, assistance in relation to protection against chemical weapons has a humanitarian character and refers to active and passive measures of protection against such weapons catering especially for the need to set up an adequate system for defending the civilian population. Consequently, assistance in relation to protection against chemical weapons does not imply the possibility of access to the instructions for use of chemical warfare agents or to the development or strengthening of means of attack. Military experts are not unaware of the fact that possession of an offensive chemical capability means mastering a whole body of operational theory and having specific military training and vectors and systems that are suitable for offensive action and the acquisition of, and ability to operate which cannot come about through assistance in relation to protection against chemical weapons.

In conclusion, the Argentine delegation would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Sujka, on having resumed his delicate functions, and to wish him every success in his endeavours, which his experience will facilitate. I also extend my congratulations to the chairmen of the Groups, Mr. Macedo of Mexico, Mr. Cima of Czechoslovakia and Mr. Numata of Japan. I wish to assure them all of the Argentine delegation's willingness to co-operate fully in order to move the work forward including by making our co-operation available for specific and expert tasks, with a view to placing before the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament as complete as possible a text of the draft convention.

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

Miss SOLESBY (United Kingdom): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I take the floor to issue a full statement, I would like to begin by saying how pleased I am to see you in the Chair, both because of the personal qualities you bring, and as the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, a country with which my own enjoys such very close relations. May I also again extend my congratulations to Ambassador Rose of the German Democratic Republic for the highly efficient manner in which he presided over the opening phase of this session.

I should like to take this opportunity, if I may, to thank once more all those who have paid such warm tribute to my predecessor, Ian Cromartie. I know that the sympathy and esteem shown have been much appreciated by Jenny Cromartie and the whole family.

May I also express appreciation for the kind welcome I have received as a newcomer, and the way I have been made to feel quickly at home here. I am particularly honoured to have been entrusted at such an early stage with the Chairmanship of the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons.

I would like to join in what you and the distinguished delegate of Argentina have said in welcoming the presence today of so many members of women's organizations concerned with disarmament. I have listened carefully to their message which has been read to us today. The role of non-governmental organizations in disarmament, as in many other fields, is very significant indeed. It is a real encouragement to delegates like myself to have such a clear sign of public support for the cause of disarmament. May I add that if any member of the women's organizations has any views or questions to put to me or my delegation after the Session, we would be delighted to meet with them.

Before I begin the main body of my statement, I would like to comment briefly on the opening remarks by the distinguished delegate of Argentina. The distinguished delegate has once again raised the question of the reinforcement exercise in the Falkland Islands. On the two previous occasions on which he raised this issue, I explained the position of my Government on the question. I emphasized the essentially defensive nature of this reinforcement exercise. I do not think it is necessary for me to repeat that again. But it does occur to me that perhaps distinguished delegates may be obtaining a rather misleading picture of the scope of this reinforcement exercise. In fact, the exercise will involve the movement of no more than one battalions group and a small number of aircraft, with less than a thousand men in all. It is also worth remembering that the plans for rapid reinforcement of the Falkland Islands have enabled us to halve the size of the resident garrison. This, then, is the modest scope of the issue which has been raised. Some of the stories about the scale of the exercise have been greatly exaggerated, so I am glad to have this opportunity to set the record straight.

(Miss Solesby, United Kingdom)

I have been fortunate enough to join the work of disarmament at a time of optimism - cautious optimism, the distinguished Ambassador of Japan has more accurately called it. We have seen one very real achievement, the INF Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union, and we have reason to look forward to a still greater attainment, a 50 per cent reduction in the nuclear strategic arsenals of those two countries. One might say the ice is melting - so far only on the lower slopes of the mountain, but spring is in the air.

We and our allies have a clear arms control agenda. This was reaffirmed at the meeting of the North Atlantic Council attended by heads of State and Government in Brussels on 2 and 3 March. The two communiqués issued by that Council, the Declaration of the Heads of State and Government and their Statement on Conventional Arms Control will, I understand, be circulated this morning by the distinguished Ambassador of Belgium, whose country is host to the Organization. These two documents constitute an authoritative statement at the highest level of the policies of the 16 Governments involved.

Our joint agenda includes, and here I would like to quote:

"A 50 per cent reduction in the strategic offensive nuclear weapons of the United States and the Soviet Union to be achieved during current Geneva negotiations;

The global elimination of chemical weapons;

The establishment of a stable and secure level of conventional forces, by the elimination of disparities, in the whole of Europe;

In conjunction with the establishment of a conventional balance and the global elimination of chemical weapons, tangible and verifiable reductions of American and Soviet land-based nuclear missile systems of shorter range, leading to equal ceilings".

That is the end of the quotation.

This is an ambitious agenda. It calls for much arduous labour. But we believe it is entirely realistic to try.

I would draw attention to the fact that our approach calls for negotiations between the two leading nuclear Powers, negotiations on a regional level and negotiations in this Conference on Disarmament. In other words, our agenda rests on the interdependence of bilateral, regional and multilateral disarmament negotiations, a theme to which I shall return later.

There are, of course, other important areas of discussion and negotiation, including within the Conference on Disarmament. But our priorities go to the heart of the security concerns of Britain and our allies. This is no coincidence. Disarmament and national security are two sides of the same coin. My Government's aim is to establish mutual security at lower levels of armaments. For us that means in particular addressing the impressive array of military might of the Warsaw Pact: the huge nuclear arsenal of the

(Miss Solesby, United Kingdom)

Soviet Union, the superiority of the Warsaw Pact in conventional and chemical weapons, and the deployment of Soviet forces hundreds of miles west of the Soviet frontier with formidable capabilities for rapid capture of territory.

This is a reality with which we have to live. The distinguished Vice-Minister of the Soviet Union has criticized the policy of deterrence. He has said it represents the antithesis of democracy and humanism. That is not how we see it. It is precisely in order to protect our democracy, to protect our rule of law and to protect our freedom that we are determined to maintain a credible and up-to-date deterrence, with a mix of nuclear and conventional forces, for as long as is necessary.

Western Europe has known the blessings of peace and freedom for 43 years. We in Britain are not about to put that in jeopardy. Nor are our allies, as we reaffirmed with them in Brussels last week.

But to the extent that our security can be maintained through arms control, that is the path we shall follow. In the words of my Secretary of State, Sir Geoffrey Howe, "Defence certainly, deterrence certainly, dialogue and a search for progress in arms control equally certainly". The INF Treaty has taught us that the pessimists are not always right. The NATO allies were at first thought by some to be over-ambitious in calling in 1981 for a zero solution, and then in 1987 for a double zero option. Certain Governments at first declined our invitation to sit down and negotiate. But firmness and perseverance have brought success, and can do so again in other areas of disarmament.

We and our allies have steadfastly supported the negotiations for a 50 per cent reduction in United States and Soviet strategic offensive weaponry. In 1986, the Alliance called for conventional stability talks covering the Atlantic to the Urals. For years we have been pressing for a global chemical weapons ban. My Government much welcomes the new Soviet readiness to join in serious negotiations in all these areas.

Another lesson to be drawn from the INF Treaty is the crucial importance of verification. Effective verification measures have long been advocated by the West. This was dismissed by some as an attempt to erect unnecessary barriers to disarmament. Of course it is nothing of the kind. Verification is the key to confidence. It offers the necessary reassurance that national security is not being put at risk. As my Prime Minister has indicated, verification is not the icing on the arms control cake but an essential ingredient of it. Happily, this is now widely recognized by the international community.

Acceptance of verification has been won in principle. But we are still all wrestling with the considerable practical problems involved. There are some success stories to guide us, the IAEA safeguards machinery for example. One thing is clear. Verification has to be sensitively tailored to the individual needs of each arms control agreement. It must also command the continuing support of the States parties to those agreements. We would be

(Miss Solesby, United Kingdom)

taking a step backwards, not forwards, were we to try to force verification into one big integrated system. This is not an area for the heavy hand of centralization.

The need for openness in military matters goes wider than verification. It extends also to the building of confidence. One example is the notification and observation of military activities, along the lines of the arrangements agreed at Stockholm in September 1986. The momentum generated by Stockholm must be maintained.

We also seek greater transparency on military spending, on military capabilities, on the deployment and disposition of forces. We in Britain publish our defence figures every year. They are under constant public scrutiny. Our annual Defence White Paper provides a detailed account of our defence effort, supplemented by a host of non-official publications. Many other countries do the same. We call on Warsaw Pact Governments to join us, and to lift the secrecy which still shrouds their military posture and military activities. For the exchange of comprehensive data about force levels is essential to the elaboration of any arms control agreement; so is a willingness to agree measures for resolving differences over such data.

I noted earlier that the agenda for arms control adopted by my own country and by our allies calls for efforts in the bilateral, regional and multilateral areas alike. Let me associate my delegation with those which have emphasized the need to view the disarmament process as an organic whole, where each area of negotiation should complement and reinforce the others. This must be right. We live in a closely interdependent world. Each country has its own special security concerns, and I have described those of the United Kingdom. But we are all to varying degrees vulnerable to security developments in other regions of the world. No one can ignore the global perspective.

There should not be competition between bilateral, regional or multilateral disarmament. Let each take the lead in whatever area is most suited to it at any particular time. There is always scope for creative interplay between them. There are no taboo subjects. The important thing, whatever the negotiating forum, is to achieve results that will contribute to the security of all peoples.

The most active current area of multilateral negotiations is chemical weapons. The British Government has long been committed to work for a global and comprehensive ban with effective verification. This remains a high priority for us, as was reaffirmed in the recent North Atlantic Council Summit Declaration. Britain gave up its chemical weapons over a quarter of a century ago. We are intent on producing a strong Convention which will remove these weapons from the entire world.

Impressive progress has been made, to which my delegation has fully contributed. We have submitted seven major papers to the negotiations, most recently those on challenge inspection and institutions.

(Miss Solesby, United Kingdom)

A large number of issues remain to be solved: the list is well known to those of us round this table. We want to reach the end of our endeavour as quickly as possible. But I do not understand those who suggest that all we need is a final sprint to the finishing line. Would they be content with a second-rate convention? We would certainly not. My Government wants a good convention. That requires a lot more work. And we think we should all be prepared to devote the necessary effort.

Above all, we have to work out together a tight verification system. We must be in a position to know whether States parties are playing fair. This is a highly complicated technical problem. We must face this squarely. We do not help matters by pretending that what is difficult is easy. Proposals for putting together a credible verification régime have been submitted by a number of countries, including my own. But we are still far from a solution. Much more careful thought and ingenuity is required.

My authorities attach particular importance to challenge inspection. I do hope that a consensus on it can be reached during the current session of the Conference.

Data exchange is by this stage in the negotiations a prime necessity. We have to know the size of the problem we are tackling if we are to produce a convention that works. And we have to build up the confidence and trust necessary to attract wide support for the convention. Let us establish a habit of openness. This applies to each and every one of us. Britain gave up its chemical-weapon capability in the 1950s, but we have a large civil chemical industry, and as long ago as 1984 we declared the number of facilities in the United Kingdom producing certain key chemical precursors for legitimate industrial purposes.

The main responsibility rests on those countries which possess chemical weapons, and especially on those with the largest stocks. The United States has already revealed detailed information on its toxic agents and its stockpiles. The Soviet Union made welcome steps in the same direction with a visit to the chemical weapons establishment at Shikhanv, and with the official admission to the possession of 50,000 tonnes of toxic agents. But this is only the beginning. Perhaps inevitably it raises as many questions as it answers. The toxic agents shown at Shikhanv dated from the 1940s and 1950s. Given the Soviet Union's great effort in the chemical weapons field, have they not perhaps produced other agents since then? The figure of 50,000 tonnes of total toxic agents is much lower than many estimates by Western experts. Can the Soviet Union give us more information which might perhaps help to reconcile this wide divergence?

The distinguished Vice-Minister of the Soviet Union has proposed a list of data which might be exchanged on a wide multilateral basis. We are studying the list with interest. A list may well have a useful function. But I must make this clear. What we look for above all is provision of further data by the country with overwhelmingly the largest chemical-weapon capability. That is the urgent need for our negotiating process. We hope that it will soon be met more fully.

(Miss Solesby, United Kingdom)

Outer space is an important subject on the agenda both of the bilateral and of the multilateral disarmament fora. We welcome the signs of increased common ground on the issue between the United States and the Soviet Union. For our part, we have consistently suggested that the way ahead in this area is a greater measure of predictability, so that neither side is caught by surprise by developments arising from the research in which both sides are equally involved. As Sir Geoffrey Howe has said, "Predictability brings security".

As far as the work of this Conference is concerned, in our view consideration of arms control in outer space in this forum is valuable and important. We warmly welcome the imminent re-establishment of the ad hoc committee on this item. We believe that the work of the Committee has deepened understanding of the complexity of the issues involved, and that further work of this nature remains to be undertaken within the existing mandate.

To turn now to another subject also under consideration in both the bilateral and multilateral fora, a nuclear test ban. No substantive work has been done on this in an ad hoc committee of the Conference for four years now. We all know that this did not need to have been the case but for some rather theological positions taken by a few countries. Happily, the Group of Scientific Experts continues to make steady progress on practical matters relating to seismological verification of nuclear explosions.

The inability of the Conference on Disarmament to agree a viable basis for work on nuclear testing is highlighted by progress in bilateral discussion of the subject between the United States and the Soviet Union. We very much welcome the advances made in the latter in recent months. We also endorse the basis of these negotiations, that restraints on nuclear testing should be approached in a step-by-step way. There are lessons here for our Conference.

Nor should nuclear issues be seen in isolation from other armaments. I referred earlier to our arms control agenda, which includes redressing conventional imbalances and establishing security and stability at lower levels of forces. This is a matter of particular importance to us in Europe. We are glad that this approach is now broadly shared by the Soviet Union. Mr. Shevardnadze, in a speech during the recent visit of Sir Geoffrey Howe to Moscow, said: "We would like to emphasize that the Soviet Union does not suggest eliminating nuclear arms in isolation from cuts in other weapons of destruction".

It is high time to put these words into action in the talks under way in Vienna. The North Atlantic Council Summit Statement on Conventional Arms Control states our aims, and I should again like to quote:

"The establishment of a secure and stable balance of conventional forces at lower levels;

(Miss Solesby, United Kingdom)

The elimination of disparities prejudicial to stability and security;

And, as a matter of high priority, the elimination of the capability for launching surprise attack and for initiating large-scale offensive action".

These issues are under negotiation in Vienna on a regional basis. But it is also time that this Conference paid more attention to global aspects of conventional arms control. After all, one form of weaponry which all members of this Conference have in common is conventional armaments. A number of members of this Conference, including from the Group of 21, are also major manufacturers of conventional weapons.

This brings me to the subject of the third special session. The United Kingdom has been playing an active part in preparations for the special session. The Conference is fortunate to have among its members the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan. With exceptional skill, he has brought the preparatory procedure in only two substantive meetings to adopt a broad and serviceable agenda, and to transmit a generally realistic and balanced basis of discussion to the special session. We do not share the pessimism heard in some quarters about the outcome of the last Preparatory Committee. And we welcome the prospect of further consultations of an informal nature to work towards ensuring the success of the session.

For it is a successful special session that we seek. The multilateral disarmament process would suffer great damage if we did not secure a successful outcome. And by success I mean a practical as well as a political success. There are lessons to be learnt from the failure of the last special session and more recently from the - to be frank - less than satisfactory outcome of the Disarmament and Development Conference.

In our view, what we all need to do at the forthcoming special session - and we sense that this view is widespread - is to consolidate the increasing common ground we have established in the multilateral process in recent years and to look ahead in a practical and realistic manner to what we can achieve in disarmament and arms control in the foreseeable future. If we can do that, the special session will indeed be a success.

The eighteenth century English literary figure, Dr. Johnson, once said - somewhat cynically - that a second marriage represented the triumph of hope over experience. What we need in the multilateral area - at the Conference on Disarmament, at the special session, in the First Committee, and in the Disarmament Commission - is to retain the hope, but also to learn from the experience.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for her statement and for her kind words to the Chair, and I give the floor to the representative of Australia, Ambassador Butler.

Mr. BUTLER (Australia): Mr. President, as this is the first occasion on which I have spoken since you assumed the presidency of this Conference, may I begin by offering you our heartiest congratulations on the office that you now hold. We feel great confidence in your guidance of this Conference and we are very conscious too of the deep interest of your country and your Government in disarmament as has been indicated recently by the presence here of the Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, and by the message you read to us from him on the opening day of your presidency. I also want to express our gratitude to Ambassador Rose, your predecessor, for the good work that he did in starting us off in our 1988 session.

Today is International Women's Day, and we are truly privileged to have with us in the public gallery women from all over the world. They have come to Geneva this week to mark International Women's Day and to take part in a conference entitled "Women in Action for Disarmament, Justice and Peace; mobilizing for the third special session on disarmament and beyond".

Women gathering together, voluntarily, to discuss and make representations on the issues of disarmament, justice and peace is hardly new. In fact, it represents the continuation of a tradition well established throughout this century.

It is appropriate that a major part of the organization of this week's conference of women, in Geneva, has been played by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. The League is one of the oldest of non-governmental organizations, having been formed by women in April 1915 in order to protest against the terrible war that was then raging, mainly in Europe and, to suggest ways to end that war and to prevent war in the future. That first meeting included women both from belligerent and from neutral countries and, while their meeting was greatly opposed, they succeeded in bringing more than 1,000 women together for the crucial cause of ending a war. Following that first meeting, they sent delegations to the heads of 13 States in Europe and to the United States, to present their views. They then established an International Women's Committee for Durable Peace, which, four years later, became the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

That first modern occasion of meetings by women against war and in favour of peace marked the beginning of a movement which has remained with us since and has grown in strength. I am proud to say that Australian women were involved from the beginning and remain so today.

The women of Australia have suffered greatly from war in this century, both directly in armed conflict and through the loss of members of their families. So the maintenance of peace remains one of the highest valued held by Australian women.

We delegates who sit on the floor of this Conference might be tempted to think that there is a fundamental division between what we do as representatives of Governments and what is done and sought by representatives

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of non-governmental organizations. A strong sense of such a division would contradict the reality of the way in which our Conference is structured and intended to function and the historical fact of the role that non-governmental organizations have played in shaping the policies of Governments, the consciousness of peoples, and the outcomes of conferences such as this.

When the current form of this Conference was established, in 1978, agreement was reached that it should open its plenary meetings to the public. This is what I meant in referring to the way in which this Conference is structured. It has been intended from the beginning that what we do in our plenary sessions should be seen by, not hidden from the public.

By referring to the history of the involvement of non-governmental organizations in policy formulation and work on disarmament, I had in mind that it is well established that public pressure contributed directly to an end to the First World War. The series of agreements reached in Geneva on chemical weapons, on the rules of war and on inhumane weapons, to mention only a few examples, were also shaped by public pressure.

The focus of the conference of women presently under way in Geneva is the third special session of the General Assembly and beyond. That is, the goals we will seek to establish at that session and perhaps for the period down to the end of this century.

The present form of this Conference on Disarmament was settled during consultations among States Members of the United Nations held in 1978 during the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In paragraph 120 of the Final Document of the first special session, when taking note of what had been agreed in regard to this Conference, the General Assembly stated its deep awareness of the "continuing requirement for a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum". The Assembly then went on to note some of the other main elements of the agreement that had been reached, including that the Conference would:

Conduct its work by consensus;

Adopt its own rules of procedure;

Adopt its own agenda, taking into account the recommendations made to it by the General Assembly and proposals presented by the members of this Conference.

These are clearly rational arrangements for an autonomous conference made up of the representatives of sovereign States. But the critical question is, how effectively have those arrangements operated? and it is a question which will surely be asked at the third special session, not only by representatives of member States, but also by those of non-governmental organizations.

Without wishing to over-simplify, there is a sense in which one can say that there are, conceivably, "good" disarmament agreements and "bad" disarmament agreements. The former are those in which States can have

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confidence and, in large measure because of that confidence, are agreements likely to do their job and endure. Conversely, the latter are those which, while they might purport to bring about some measures of arms control or disarmament, are not fair and balanced or are not sufficiently transparent or possibly are not able to be adequately verified and are, therefore, not likely to attract the confidence of States or endure. This is a rough distinction, but I have made it in order to illustrate an essential point.

Because none of us want "bad" agreements; because, hopefully, all of us want "good" agreements enabling disarmament to play its proper role in the maintenance of peace and security, only one rule can operate in the decision-making process in a conference on disarmament, and that is the rule of consensus. If this sounds dispiriting to those who have great ambitions in the field of disarmament or believe, perhaps even passionately, that disarmament is the key to the solution to many of the world's problems, I would underline that consensus itself must be defined and operated constructively.

The Australian view is that consensus entails an obligation: to seek to co-operate; to show flexibility; to forge common ground, where necessary, through compromise. This is living consensus, not the dead hand of consensus denied in order to protect narrowly-defined national positions. Living consensus seeks the common good.

Thus, consensus should not be seen as the equivalent of putting into the hands of every member State the power of veto. Our common commitment is to negotiate disarmament agreements. This brings with it the obligation to seek consensus, not to hide behind it.

Turning now to our agenda, for almost 10 years we have pursued the same annual agenda. Half of the items on the agenda have a nuclear focus, while the other half deal with other forms of weaponry, actual or potential.

This agenda was derived from the historic consensus reached at the first special session of the General Assembly. The significance of that consensus should not be reduced, and it is the hope of my delegation that the third special session will act accordingly.

But time has not stood still. Indeed, much has happened during the last 10 years, while, in some areas of disarmament, nothing has happened. For both of these reasons, we believe the third special session will want to review the agenda for multilateral work on disarmament for the period ahead.

In preparing for the special session we would also hope that members of this Conference will give serious thought to its future agenda. We might ask, for example, is it healthy for the Conference to retain on its agenda items on which either no work or only a very desultory discussion can take place?

Is the balance in the agenda between nuclear and non-nuclear subjects correct, given today's realities that:

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Some progress is being made in nuclear disarmament and has been made in related areas such as risk reduction;

Expenditure on conventional arms continues to be massive and threatening to security in both military and non-military terms;

There is a glaring absence from our agenda, and from multilateral consideration generally, of the question of international arms transfers in both their overt and covert forms?

The issues involved in considering re-shaping our multilateral disarmament agenda are certainly complex. But surely a time for review, such as that provided at the third special session, should also include us conducting a review of the fundamental question - have we got the right agenda for today and for the years ahead?

I turn now to our rules of procedure. While the Conference is established as "a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum", the rules of procedure it has established hold the possibility that the Conference might decide, at a given time, to conduct its work on a given subject in a non-negotiating way. I am referring to rule 23 of the rules of procedure, and I would like to read that rule. It states:

"Whenever the Conference deems it advisable for the effective performance of its functions, including when it appears that there is a basis to negotiate a draft treaty or other draft texts, the Conference may establish subsidiary bodies, such as ad hoc sub-committees, working groups, technical groups or groups of governmental experts, open to all Member States of the Conference unless the Conference decides otherwise. The Conference shall define the mandate for each of such subsidiary bodies and provide appropriate support for their work".

Clearly, this rule concedes that the Conference may work in working groups or technical groups or groups of experts, which is not, strictly speaking, work that constitutes negotiations.

The rubric under which this apparent deviation from its generic mandate to negotiate is established is the notion of what is referred to in rule 23, "the effective performance of its functions". Perhaps this deviation is legitimate. But it is well known that, in many instances, this rule has been used to justify a refusal to negotiation and that this has led to the Conference spending far too much of its time negotiating about the mandates referred to in the last sentence of rule 23, rather than negotiating on disarmament itself.

So, to borrow from Shakespeare's Hamlet, we have often seen a play within the play. Perhaps some might say that this is the nature of politics, but, returning to the theatrical allusion, Australia's position is that we have had *enough of the dress rehearsal*; we would prefer to see the play.

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We feel certain that the third special session of the General Assembly will want at least to discuss why the single negotiating body has often preferred to negotiate about mandates, rather than to negotiate about disarmament.

It may be interesting to our visitors today if I seek to illustrate quickly, by reference to parts of our current work, some of the points I have just made.

First of all, at this meeting we will re-establish an ad hoc committee - that is, our highest form of subsidiary body - on the agenda item dealing with prevention of an arms race in outer space. My Government welcomes that decision, because we believe that the prevention of an arms race in outer space is both one of the highest priorities facing the world community and a subject fit for multilateral negotiations. But at least the latter view is not shared by all member States of this Conference, so we have found a compromise, and the ad hoc committee will be established with a non-negotiating mandate. In general terms, I think we should be grateful to those who have shown the flexibility that has enabled this consensus to be reached. The alternative, that is no work by this Conference on the outer space question, would have been depressing, to say the least.

In contrast there is the position in which we have found ourselves for the last four years with regard to a subject widely recognized by the world community as one of extreme importance: the negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty banning all nuclear tests by all States, in all environments, for all time. With respect to this agenda item we have not been able to agree to establish an ad hoc committee, even though a mandate for that committee supported by Western States, including my own, speaks in terms of our working "with a view to the negotiation of a treaty on the subject".

Reasons given for blocking such a development have included the assertion that the Western draft mandate is not a negotiating mandate. In response to this, my delegation and a number of others have pointed out that, whether or not that assertion is correct, our mandate would enable the Conference to undertake the practical work on what everyone recognizes are the three central issues in the negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear test ban, those of scope, verification and compliance. The fact is that work on a nuclear test ban, under this mandate, would go further in substance than is allowed for in the merely exploratory mandate that has been agreed to for the outer space subject.

Where is the consistency in this? More directly, what is the serious reason for the evident inconsistency in our behaviour towards two truly important subjects? Why is flexibility available on one subject, but not on the other?

Having said this, it is only fair to point out that yesterday the work of our Group of Scientific Experts on seismological events resumed and that this work has real practical bearing on the verification of a future nuclear-test-ban treaty. In this context, may I call attention again to my

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own Government's proposal that this Conference establish, immediately, a global seismological monitoring network as a step towards the creation of the means of verifying a future comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

Another subject on the agenda of the Conference, one about which my delegation is concerned from the standpoint of the sensible exercise of flexibility, is that of radiological weapons. As all delegations know, we have divided this subject into two parts and it would appear that the first part - that relating to so-called traditional radiological weapons - is one on which there appears to be widespread willingness to negotiate an agreement. But with respect to the second part - prevention of attacks on nuclear facilities - the issues involved are not subject to the same measure of potential agreement.

Surely the sensible and constructive response to these circumstances would be to seek progress as fast and as well as we can in both areas, in their own integrity? But some are adopting the position that the one area must be made hostage to the other.

This surely retards progress. That in itself is hard to fathom, but it is even more incomprehensible when one considers that the reasons for drawing this linkage seem to have little basis in what may be called technical facts, but instead seem to rest largely on extraneous considerations.

Earlier on in this intervention I raised some questions about rule 23 of our rules of procedure, which speaks about "the effective performance" of the functions of the Conference and holds out the possibility of our making whatever arrangements are necessary especially "when it appears there is basis to negotiate a draft treaty or other draft texts". Surely the correct application of this rule to our present work on radiological weapons would militate against the kind of linkage that is being drawn between the two parts of this subject?

In the period since the second special session of the General Assembly we have witnessed a great and positive change. In the first two to three of those five years, deep concern was expressed, including in this Conference, that the process of disarmament negotiation between the two most militarily significant States was going badly and, indeed, then stopped. The point was often taken that this difficult situation - indeed some referred in dramatic terms to a "poisoned atmosphere" - was having a negative impact on the work of our Conference. Then the change came and negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union resumed. They then led to the very encouraging results we have now seen and are witnessing in the field of nuclear weapons. Many then voiced the hope that those developments would have a concomitant positive effect upon the work of our Conference.

Those sentiments in both cases - when times were hard and then when they improved - rested, I suggest, on the fundamental perception that we are interdependent and that, perhaps especially in the field of disarmament, whatever happens bilaterally and whatever happens multilaterally interact strongly.

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Extending this idea further, many of us have said that the need to develop complementarity between the bilateral and the multilateral negotiations is vital. Indeed, my delegation would argue that a review and possible redefinition of that complementarity will be possibly the fundamental issue to be addressed at the third special session.

What I said earlier about the need for a new agenda, for example, rests on the notion that this complementarity and the need to ensure its continuation in the future, is a critical issue.

There is one field of present activity which is proceeding strongly within our Conference, is being pursued bilaterally and is serving to illustrate in large measure the overall co-operation that can be forged when bilateral work and multilateral work move forward in a mutually supportive way. This is our negotiations on a universal chemical weapons convention. Those negotiations are vital and at present serve as a paradigm case for work on disarmament by the overall world community, both multilaterally and bilaterally.

We have already reached clear measures of agreement in those negotiations, although a good deal still remains to be done. One such measure of agreement is that chemical weapons must never be used. This agreement supplements that of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, but goes beyond it and states a prohibition of use, without qualification. Perhaps we should send a signal to the world community by proclaiming that prohibition now, by reporting to the third special session that we are agreed that chemical weapons must never be used and by seeking endorsement of that commitment by the Assembly, by the world community.

I referred earlier to the understanding recorded in paragraph 120 of the Final Document of the first special session. This included that membership of this Conference will be reviewed at regular intervals and that measures to facilitate the participation in the work of this Conference by interested non-member States should be made.

It is clear from what has been said recently - and most recently last Thursday, by the New Zealand Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control - that the issue of access to the work of this Conference will be considered at the third special session. It was always envisaged that this Conference would work best with a limited membership, but we cannot fail to have been impressed by the enormously constructive work that some non-member States have continued to contribute to this Conference or to note the view enunciated by, for example, the New Zealand Minister that States which are willing and able to make concrete contributions to our work should be enabled to do so. This is a machinery matter, but it is one on which the call may well be made to a new degree of inventiveness and flexibility.

Finally, the Conference has not been neglectful of the issue of the effectiveness of its functioning. As is well known, seven representatives at this Conference have been invited to study its improved and effective functioning and can be expected to submit a report to the Conference on those

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issues, prior to the Conference drawing up its special report to the third special session. Those seven individuals have been invited to take part in that group in their personal capacity and, as you know, I have the honour to be one of those seven.

It is my hope that the group will function truly in the way in which it was appointed. I think its prospects of putting interesting options to the Conference depend basically on its members' acting as individuals, rather than as representatives of Governments or groups. Certainly it should not be their role either to negotiate as representatives of group or to seek, in any way, to direct the Conference's consideration of, and decisions on whatever options they propose.

The Group of Seven now has an agenda which covers virtually the full range of major issues affecting the functioning of the Conference, including some of those I have touched on today, such as the operation of the rule of consensus, the establishment of subsidiary bodies and the question of membership of, and access to the Conference.

A major task we will face in the weeks ahead is to agree on the report by this Conference to the third special session of the General Assembly which will assist that session in establishing the path of multilateral work in disarmament for the period ahead, possibly down to the end of this century.

I hope that in this statement I have been able to make a contribution to our consideration of our report to the third special session, just as, I am certain, will the presence in Geneva this week of the Women in Action for Disarmament, Justice and Peace. My delegation offers all good wishes to those women on this International Women's Day, in the knowledge that they will be guided by the motto of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom: Pax et libertas.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Australia for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the next speaker on my list, the representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador van Schaik.

Mr. van SCHAIK (Netherlands): Sir, it is a pleasure for me to welcome you as President of the Conference for this month. Knowing your country's commitment to disarmament and your personal great interest in disarmament, we are happy that the presidency is in such good hands. I thank Ambassador Rose and the staff of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic for the constructive manner in which they conducted the affairs of the presidency last month. We welcome the representatives of Women in Action for Disarmament, Justice and Peace, and their statement as read by the Secretary-General of the Conference. The interest they express in our negotiations also demonstrated by their presence here is, in itself, a source of inspiration. It is, as has been said, important that we in the Conference remain in touch with the grass-roots from where new ideas flourish.

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I intend to speak in this intervention on chemical weapons. This is the core of the negotiations in the CD these days. The stakes at issue are high and the negotiations should not lose momentum.

Earlier I already expressed our warm thanks to Ambassador Ekéus and his staff for the work they undertook last year and in January. We congratulate his successor as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee, Ambassador Sujka, and we wish him and his staff, as well as the new item co-ordinators, the success that they deserve; in fact, the cause of the complete ban on chemical weapons deserves it.

We have listened with great attention to what others have said these past weeks and also today on chemical weapons. I mention only the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Genscher, and of Italy, Mr. Andreotti, who last month eloquently expressed their views on the urgency of the task of completing a ban on chemical weapons.

Let me first explain why my Government considers the matter to be urgent; why we, in fact, fully endorse the words of the resolution of last year's General Assembly, according to which the negotiations should be accelerated; why, indeed, we welcome the communiqué of the bilateral summit of the United States and the Soviet Union in Washington of 10 December last year, where the leaders of the two countries speak not only of their commitment to an effective international convention on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons but also of the need for intensified negotiations towards the conclusion of a convention.

Negotiations have been going on now for a very long time. In fact, it was nearly twenty years ago that countries decided for the first time to address the matter. I am aware that global negotiations tend to take a long time and that, perhaps, even this is not a record of longevity. But there still is a time span, which, if exceeded, could affect the credibility and effectiveness of the negotiations.

The day will come when we reach the point where time begins to work against us. There are three reasons in particular why my delegation thinks that these are the months and this the year in which a maximum effort should be deployed.

In the first place, the international community is witness to a horrifying trend towards the proliferation of chemical weapons to countries that up to now did not possess them. In his statement on 23 July last year, Ambassador Friedersdorf said that, according to United States estimates, the number of countries that are actual or potential possessors of chemical weapons is increasing. On that date, approximately 15 countries were believed to possess, or to be seeking to acquire chemical weapons. Perhaps the estimates are even higher to-day.

In the Gulf War, chemical weapons continue to be used. Repeatedly delegates of Iran have informed us here in this room of terrible chemical

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bombardments killing sometimes hundreds of people. According to some reports, so far 1,000 men have been killed by CW in the Gulf War, whereas 7,000 Iranian civilians have suffered severe health problems following CW attacks.

In the second place, we note a trend not only towards horizontal proliferation, but also towards what could be called vertical proliferation. After a period of comparative obscurity during the 1970s, chemical weapons are now receiving renewed attention. Galloping technical developments lead to an evergrowing potential to destroy and kill. The toxicity of modern chemical weapons exceeds that of those used in the First World War ten to one hundred fold. Those weapons are odourless, they cannot be sensed and their use is hard to detect. Whether released as liquid or gas, toxics make themselves felt in minutes and within an hour's time they kill.

In short, it will become increasingly difficult to put the genie back into the bottle. The situation may arise in which we will, so to speak, be shooting at a moving target. It will become more difficult to hit the target, as effective verification may become increasingly difficult. If, on the other hand, we soon succeed in concluding the convention, the convention itself, as well as the experience we gain with its implementation, would at least provide us with a more reassuring basis on which to consider and contain such new developments.

Finally, the third reason why we think the political climate seems favourable for intensifying our endeavours: the world is witness these days to major achievements in the field of disarmament to which reference has been made by previous speakers today. A Treaty on INF has been concluded by the United States and the Soviet Union and the two countries seek to conclude an agreement on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic arms. We, as others, greatly welcome these developments. They demonstrate that the two countries that possess also the largest chemical weapons arsenals have the political will to do business in disarmament. But in our view they also indicate that this is the moment when the countries represented here in the Conference should show that in disarmament a major multilateral effort can be crowned with success.

My words should not, of course, be interpreted as a plea for setting time-limits at this stage. An early deadline would only work to the advantage of those who believe that the present language of the rolling text is already sufficiently elaborate, and we are not one of them.

On the contrary, important, extremely complicated work lies ahead. In particular, we should elaborate and fine-tune a verification régime strengthening confidence that under all circumstances the convention will indeed be implemented. We must continue to work for a convention that is effectively verifiable and that, at the same time, will inspire confidence that unverified cheating is no realistic option.

We have been told that President Reagan's motto is "Trust and verify". We indeed believe that trust, confidence, should, in the end, cement us together under the convention. Let us not deceive ourselves by *fata morganas*

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of a 100 - per cent - verifiable convention. If such were our marching orders, we should never have started the course. Even under the most stringent inspection régime - and that is what we are heading for - there remains the risk of cheating, ill-disposed or otherwise.

In the end, security considerations have to be weighed up. The moment should come - not now, but neither, I hope, only in the course of the nineties - when, on the basis of as solid a verification régime as possible, we shall take the plunge. At some point, the security risk of a proliferation-prone situation without a global ban will outweigh the remaining risk, of non-compliance under a global ban. As the French say, le mieux est l'ennemi du bien.

Turning now to verification as the major issue, I shall in particular speak about two themes on which further work needs to be done. One concerns challenge inspection, the other the so-called question of "non-production".

On challenge inspection we made major progress last year. I think that, as Ambassador Solesby has said this morning, we have gone a long way towards accepting that, at the request of a country, a challenge inspection can be initiated and carried out, without permitting so-called filters to affect the mandatory nature of the inspection. In the Netherlands view, the inspection should in fact be carried out in accordance with the request, even in the exceptional case where the requested State, e.g. for particular security reasons, objects to the access of the inspection team to the site and cannot agree on alternative terms with the requesting State. Of course, the inspection team should abide by certain inspection rules to prevent unnecessary intrusiveness, given the need to protect sensitive military and commercial data. But this should not divert us from the obligation of a challenged State to demonstrate compliance by permitting access.

Another problem that still needs to be resolved concerns the role that the Executive Council could or should play in the so-called third stage, i.e. after the phase of initiation of the inspection and after the second phase of actual inspection on the spot has been completed. This, of course, is the decisive phase, in particular if the inspection team has found evidence of the existence of stocks or production of chemical weapons or the inspection team has not been able to collect evidence because the requested State has, contrary to the rules, not permitted access to the site.

The inspection team will then present its report to the Secretariat and, as we see it, the Secretariat should pass its findings on to the requesting State, as well as to the Executive Council.

In this context, I wish to refer to remarks made by those who think that the convention should contain provisions on the way in which a violation of the rules of the convention must be determined. The advantage of specifying that procedure is supposed to be that, on the basis of a decision, there would be no uncertainty about non-compliance. On the other hand, the disadvantage of any multilateral procedure, be it in the framework of the Executive Council

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or in the General Conference, would be that a legal question would be settled by a body in which political considerations that are not related to the matter of non-compliance might prevail.

It is for the latter reason that we think the inspection report itself could better make clear whether and to what extent evidence on compliance, as requested by the challenging State, has been given. It would be up to the challenging State to judge whether it was convinced by the evidence or lack of evidence on compliance presented by the report and to draw its conclusions from it. Then, the Executive Council may wish to discuss and assess the inspectors' report, and its findings in particular, and if required, act on the basis thereof.

In the intersessional period, intensive negotiations took place on what is perhaps one of the most, if not the most complicated subject of the convention: the monitoring and control of the chemical industry. Progress was slow, but not insignificant. A number of issues have been taken up which had hardly been addressed before. For instance, only recently a group of experts started the discussion on the definition of what is called "production capacity", in itself essential to determine the scope of the verification régime.

There appears to be consensus among delegations that under the future convention a verification régime to prevent misuse by the civil chemical industry must be effective and, at the same time, not unduly intrusive. In practice it proves to be extremely difficult to find a solution that strikes an acceptable balance between those two objectives. What is to be verified and how we can do it in the least intrusive manner are questions that trigger off discussions on details, for instance, on specific chemical substances most liable to pose a risk under a future convention; on the so-called "risk assessment" of the production of certain chemicals and on the specificity of data to be submitted to the Technical Secretariat. The outcome of such discussions will, of course, ultimately determine the frequency and intrusiveness of future inspections.

A workable definition of chemical weapons is, of course, essential for the solution of these problems. Toxicity - a dominant element in the existing unfortunately highly insufficient definition in article II - will certainly remain a central characteristic. Other elements, however such as the stability of chemical substances, their capacity to be weaponized and their volatility, are equally to be taken into account. This is also relevant to other provisions under the convention.

It seems, for example, of little use to establish a separate inspection régime on the chemical industry for production of chemical substances whose only risk to the convention appears to be caused by their toxicity: few of the hundreds of super-toxic lethal chemicals can, in practice, be used for chemical weapons purposes, quite apart from the fact that most of them are not produced at all, or only in very small quantities.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

Perhaps it is not so much the toxic substances that we are after, as the facilities producing them: if today a plant produces highly toxic chemicals that do not pose a risk to the convention, it can still be considered capable of producing militarily-relevant chemicals tomorrow. The rapid pace of technological developments justifies paying full attention to this issue in the coming months.

The objective of a balance between effectiveness and non-intrusiveness will partly be achieved by fixing suitable production thresholds. Those thresholds, below which verification is not required, would vary with the risk chemicals or groups of chemicals pose to the objectives of the convention: the higher the risk, the lower the threshold under which production need not be monitored. We welcome the excellent paper on this issue, recently introduced by the United States delegation (CD/802). In our opinion, this paper is a substantial contribution to our current discussion.

Progress in the past two years has made the international chemical industry increasingly aware of the implications of the future convention for the industries concerned. Pugwash and other informal meetings have proved to be useful for a free exchange of ideas and information, also including the chemical industry.

The meeting with experts from industry organized here in Geneva in July last year gave members an opportunity to explain in detail what our intentions are: elaboration of a rigorous verification régime to ensure compliance with the objectives of a future convention banning chemical weapons, at the same time protecting the legitimate interests of the chemical industry. At the meeting and afterwards, many useful observations and suggestions were made. We believe that similar meetings may prove to be useful in the future when more progress has been made, in particular on article VI, concerning verification of non-production.

I suggest that we place the problems of verification of non-production in a proper perspective. They are important, because their solution will provide us with a keystone for an effectively verifiable régime. They present a challenge to experts, who in the first instance should try to find a delicate balance between the objectives I mentioned. But let us also keep in mind that we mainly address the problem of verification of declared facilities. Whilst recognizing the importance of an effective régime for such declared production, the risks of hidden production and hidden stocks are graver, should a country not declare a facility. No verification régime, even the most intrusive one, could provide full assurance that a country, or a producer within that country, will not cheat. An interesting avenue to be explored further and which perhaps covers part of this problem is offered by the Federal Republic of Germany in the excellent working paper CD/791, in which a régime of ad hoc checks is suggested to fill the gap between routine and challenge inspection.

But sometimes we wonder whether we do not run the risk that the régime will, in one area, become so complex that the régime as a whole, as such, becomes less credible. Should we not beware of the risk of overburdening the

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

Organization with an extremely intricate verification régime with hundreds of seemingly bureaucratic details, while the real risk area of non-declared facilities is covered by a challenge régime only to be invoked in exceptional circumstances? In my delegation's opinion, the verification régime for non-production should not become a head too big for the body, but should be tailored to the genuine needs of effective verification.

The Washington communiqué of 10 December to which I just referred speaks of negotiations towards a truly global and verifiable convention. Not just global, but truly global. We agree that accession to the convention by as many countries as possible is of great importance. It would not be realistic to suppose that major chemical weapons countries will ratify, as long as many other countries with a similar actual or potential capacity will refrain from joining the convention. On the other hand, we trust there is no reason either for any country to wait with its ultimate decision to join till each and every country with a chemical-weapon potential has given its final accord. No country that is seriously pursuing the objective of a comprehensive ban can make its policies dependent on the reservations, yes, perhaps even the whims, of a hopefully small number of countries - if any - that still have to be convinced.

Here in the Conference, I am sure all members are in principle prepared to join the convention. It is therefore regrettable that so many countries have not yet clearly set out whether or not they possess chemical weapons, or, as the case may be, whether they have traced chemical weapons that are stockpiled on their territory. Various speakers have already called upon countries to follow the example of the United States, later followed by the Soviet Union, and reveal what up to now was kept a secret. A clear "Yes" or "No" would not only help us in the negotiations, but would also serve as a yardstick of genuine interest and involvement in the negotiations.

This should, in our view, be done irrespective of the interpretation to be given to the term "jurisdiction and control" under the convention: the notification of the existence of stocks should not prejudice the outcome of the discussion on countries' responsibilities under the convention.

Since internal procedures may in some cases delay an early declaration, we suggest that all countries which have no chemical weapons within their territory, and my country is one of them, just make a statement to that effect during this spring session. I don't wish to suggest that in this case silence gives consent. But it would bring us closer to realities.

The interest in broad participation in the convention should, in our view, also be reflected in the approach to certain specific subjects. I think, for example, of the problem of assistance in the case of actual use of chemical weapons or threat of use of chemical weapons against a State party, on which the Pakistan delegation has made proposals in the past, and on which Ambassador Cámpora of Argentina made some interesting remarks today.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

Attention should also be given to the aspect of stimulating co-operation between industries on matters of technology in the chemical industry. Such co-operation could be encouraged on a voluntary basis. Economic and technological co-operation in general is a matter on which appropriate language can be found, taking into account the well-known limited authority in this field of Governments in countries with market economies.

In short, we should have an open mind to the legitimate wishes of various countries. Let us warm the doorsteps of the convention. But such an open-door policy should, of course, never affect the core of the convention and the obligations to be undertaken. Neither should our interest in broad participation be construed as an argument for permitting proliferation in an initial phase once the convention has entered into force. We fully respect the security concerns of countries that consider themselves more vulnerable than countries that are major chemical-weapon holders. But we think that Ambassador Yamada of Japan was right when he said that the perceived risks should not be dealt with solely in a tit-for-tat or chemical weapons-for-chemical weapons approach.

I think we also have an interest in the participation in the negotiations of countries outside the CD that have important chemical industries or that, perhaps possess chemical weapons or have chemical weapons located on their territory. Those countries can - and some of them already do - participate as observers to the Conference, as well as to the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. In due time we may have to think about other formulas ensuring that the views of those countries are heard before the convention is finalized.

This brings me to the broader question of multilateral data exchange prior to the signing of the convention. For some time now, growing interest has been expressed by a number of delegations in the exchange of data by countries prior to the signing and entering into force of the convention. This would not only strengthen confidence, but it would also greatly facilitate the elaboration of details of the convention itself. Those data should, in our view, relate not only to chemical weapons proper, but also to relevant chemical industries.

It is clear that such early multilateral data exchange would also increase the sense of participation of Governments concerned. Vice-Minister Petrovsky of the Soviet Union, in his speech of 18 February, introduced a memorandum on the subject. We appreciate this contribution of the Soviet delegation, because it enables us to sharpen our thinking about what it actually is that we wish to achieve and what the limits are of such a pre-convention exercise.

In the same speech, Mr. Petrovsky also proposed that States participating in the negotiations agree each to designate, on a voluntary basis, one facility where an international group of experts could test the procedures being worked out in the negotiations for verification of non-production. Such so-called "trial inspections" to test the verification procedures under consideration would be in line with ideas advanced at the recent Pugwash seminar held in Geneva in January. The workshop organized by my

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

country in 1986 could serve as an example. Delegations may also recall an earlier Netherlands suggestion for a series of so-called "familiarization visits" to the chemical industry by inspectors once the convention is established. This would enable inspectors to acquaint themselves with the intricacies of particularly complex plants.

A limited exchange of data prior to the signing of the convention would undoubtedly strengthen confidence, certainly if some of those data could be verified in a way to be developed. But we wonder whether the system of data-exchange, such as has been proposed by the Soviet Union, is called for at this stage. We should reflect on the type of data on which we could usefully have an exchange of information. Ambassador Solesby has made some interesting remarks on this point this morning. We may also wish to consider holding a number of voluntary national test runs, in order to test procedures for verifying non-production. Wide participation of countries, together with industries concerned, in such tests would seem a good starting point for the further development of a basis for finalizing the verification provisions for non-production.

Finally, I wish to ask attention to a few seemingly innocent words recurring in texts that for years now have been presented to the Conference by the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. Those words, at the beginning of each report, say that the draft texts contained in the report do not bind any delegation.

In spite of all the work undertaken, we have not reached the stage yet at which at least we could say: "Those lines, those pages are texts on which we reached agreement". We know that the mandate of the Ad hoc Committee does not permit us to discuss final legal texts. But even so, it is noteworthy that no letter in the report has received our Governments' agreement in principle.

I wonder, whether it would not be wise at some moment to take stock and conclude that there may be hundreds of square brackets which still separate us from the finalization of our work, but that at least there are elements in the text - of course, without brackets - on which we do agree, pending the outcome of the negotiations on the other points? My delegation would welcome any suggestions on formulas that would more adequately reflect Governments' association with the achievements we have made at the end of any session.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his statement and for the kind words he expressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the next speaker on my list for today, the representative of the German Democratic Republic, Ambassador Rose.

Mr. ROSE (German Democratic Republic): Mr. President, first of all, let me congratulate you very warmly on the assumption of the presidency for the month of March. I am convinced that you will successfully guide this Conference, thanks to your great experience and diplomatic skill, which you have demonstrated on many previous occasions. You can always count on the constructive support of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

It gives me particular pleasure to see today in this conference hall representatives of the seminar "Woman in Action for Disarmament, Justice and Peace, Mobilizing for SSOD-III and Beyond". It has already become a well-established tradition for them to attend the Conference on Disarmament on the occasion of the meeting on International Women's Day, a day that has always been devoted to mankind's most significant goal, which is the elimination of war from people's lives. Their address sent to the Conference reveals a profound commitment to the cause of disarmament, and my delegation fully shares the conclusion that "it is imperative for the survival of our planet that concrete and speedy steps are made by the Conference".

One of the aspects stressed in that address is regional measures, and I should like to take this opportunity to inform the Conference that an International Meeting in Support of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones will be held in Berlin on 21 and 22 June this year. Important government officials and leaders of non-governmental organizations from all over the world will take part in it. A National Preparatory Committee has been set up under the patronage of Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic.

I would now like to deal with a number of specific aspects of the work on a convention on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons.

Just like many other countries, the German Democratic Republic believes that the real opportunity of eliminating, once and for all, chemical means of mass destruction from military arsenals of States should be resolutely used. What we are, in effect, talking about is another zero option of global dimensions. Our aim is that no chemical weapon stocks, modern or not, should be exempt from this ban, neither in Europe nor in any other part of the world. This is precisely the rationale behind our initiatives. My delegation, therefore, regards the completion of the convention to ban chemical weapons as a particularly pressing task facing the Conference. It is for the first time that this forum is concerned with such a comprehensive matter, representing a unique test to be passed by the multilateral disarmament process. This alone compels us to set our sights high when it comes to the achievement of progress in our work. Any delay in drawing up the convention could have far-reaching consequences. Those who caution against moving too quickly on that subject should remember that the banning of chemical weapons has been on the agenda of the Conference and its predecessor for some 20 years now. The start of the production of binary chemical weapons has been a grave, negative decision. Can it be interpreted as a mere coincidence that the negotiating pace has since significantly slowed down and that the risk of chemical weapons being spread further in a variety of ways is growing?

My delegation has, therefore, welcomed all the more vividly the statements we heard at this forum from high-ranking government officials from all regions. What they expressed was the resolve to do whatever is necessary to arrive at a successful conclusion of the ongoing negotiations. All delegations are called upon to translate into concrete results such political determination.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

I assure the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Sujka, of my delegation's fullest support in his difficult mission, and I am convinced that, under his guidance, decisive new results can be added to those already achieved under Ambassador Ekéus. Also, I wish the Group Chairmen: Mr. Andrej Sima, of Czechoslovakia; Mr. Pablo Macedo, of Mexico; and Mr. Sadaaki Numata, of Japan, every success in the performance of their important functions. What we now need most is to work single-mindedly, concentrate on the essential and make maximum use of each and every negotiating day.

In my view, the most important subjects to be addressed by us at this stage are unresolved problems in respect to the challenge procedure; determination of the size, composition and decision-making of the Executive Council; agreement on the order of destruction of chemical weapons, with due regard for the security interests of all States parties; and completion of the verification régime relating to article VI, dealing with the activities not prohibited by the convention, or with what is usually labelled as "non-production".

The proposals put forward by a number of delegations are being carefully studied by us. Thus, my country views the Soviet Memorandum of 19 February as a timely initiative aimed at fostering confidence and solving the practical issues associated with the implementation of the convention. The German Democratic Republic, for its part, will shortly respond to the questions posed in the Memorandum.

The Conference's intersessional work at the end of last year and at the beginning of 1988 was marked by, inter alia, efforts to shape the verification machinery. Important provisions, relating to the international organization on chemical disarmament to be set up, have been formulated. And I do hope a number of the divergencies in regard to the functions to be performed by the principal organs have now been removed.

There are, however, topics pertaining to the machinery that have not been addressed so far, such as the numerical size, composition, decision-making and procedures of the Executive Council. Here, too, the time is ripe to move forward from the stage of probing discussions. What we should seek to attain is a political agreement that can serve as a foundation of concrete arrangements.

For obvious reasons, the Executive Council issue is closely related to the important and political problems of challenge inspection, a subject where energetic efforts are required to bring about agreement, on the basis of what has already been accomplished.

If we succeed in getting the problems associated with the functions of the Executive Council closer to a solution, work on the challenge procedure would undoubtedly be facilitated. Our cause would be ill served if we tackled one issue only when the other is resolved. In fact, a parallel approach is needed.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

It is precisely because of this consideration that my delegation has set forth its views on the composition, size, decision-making and other procedural matters of the Executive Council in a working paper, which has been circulated as document CD/812. It was our understanding in preparing it that the Executive Council - an organ that would have to be in session almost permanently - will be crucial to the implementation of the convention. Decisions touching upon the security interests of States parties would have to be entrusted to that Council. A principal criterion by which the Council's activities must be gauged is its effectiveness. It requires a relatively small number of members. In our paper, 21 members are suggested. Such a size would enable the body to conduct short and goal-oriented deliberations and arrive at quick decisions.

As for its composition, political and geographical criteria, as well as the level of development of chemical industries, should be taken into account. The political aspect of composition is intimately related to the security interests of the future parties to the convention.

The recognition that the convention must not impair but enhance the security of States will secure broad adherence. For that reason, the composition should correspond to the political balance established at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. Yet, the geographical aspect plays an important role as well. The global character of the convention needs to be adequately taken into consideration.

One cannot overlook, though, that countries having developed chemical industries and also those with no chemical industry at all or only a weak chemical sector will be among the future States parties to the convention. Both groups might have certain priority interests that differ from each other. They will have to be taken into account for the sake of constructive co-operation. In my delegation's view, this end would best be served if the two groups were represented in a balanced manner in the Executive Council. In order to ensure that this organ can carry out its functions in the absence of consensus, provisions should be made for a majority decision. Given a balanced composition, a two-thirds majority should represent the common denominator on which to rely in the search for solutions. Such an approach would guarantee that no political group could pursue its interests without proper regard for those of others. The delegation of the German Democratic Republic believes in a close relationship between the Executive Council and all signatories to the convention. Relatively short terms of office of the members of the Council would conduce to achieving that aim. We would suggest a two-year term, without excluding the possibility of re-election.

Furthermore, conditions should be created which would enable the Executive Council to maintain, in its practical work, close co-operative relations with all signatories to the convention. Therefore, it appears essential that the Council should keep States parties informed about its activities and that they should have the right to bring issues to the attention of the Council and to participate in its work.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

It would be helpful if such general principles were contained in the convention so as to serve as a basis for future rules of procedure. In addition, they would ensure that generally recognized democratic guidelines are followed in the Executive Council's work as well.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the German Democratic Republic for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the President. I give the floor now to the representative of Sweden, Ambassador Ekéus.

Mr. EKEUS (Sweden) (speaking as Co-ordinator of the Group of 21 for chemical weapons): The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted on 22 December 1987 its resolution 42/37 A, on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons. The resolution was adopted without a vote. Thus, all Members of the United Nations have joined the consensus on resolution 42/37 A.

The members of the Group of 21 reiterate today their full commitment to this resolution.

The Group of 21 is thus committed to the negotiation by the Conference on Disarmament of a convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of all chemical weapons and on their destruction.

Thus, the Group does not agree with limited solutions, half measures or interim arrangements. Such steps would delay the conclusion of a comprehensive ban on all chemical weapons.

The position of the Group, as based upon General Assembly resolution 42/37 A, is that all chemical weapons, not some, should be destroyed; that all chemical weapons production facilities, not some, should be destroyed, and that all, not some, production or chemical weapons should be prohibited.

Furthermore, the Group of 21 considers that the Conference on Disarmament must intensify, during the present session, the negotiations on the convention and that it must reinforce further its efforts with a view to the final elaboration of the convention at the earliest possible date. Effective organization of the work of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons is essential for progress.

The Group of 21 underlines the urgency and the importance of time as stated in the General Assembly resolution. All participants in the negotiations must do their utmost to promote rapid progress. Proposals will be looked upon from the point of view of their intrinsic value, as well as whether they facilitate prompt resolutions of outstanding issues. Procrastination and delays damage the negotiations and endanger the successful outcome, thereby compromising the overriding aim of a multilaterally negotiated total ban.

(Mr. Ekéus, Sweden)

The Group of 21 welcomes bilateral contacts between States, especially between the two which have declared themselves possessors of chemical weapons, as long as those contacts are carried out with the view to promote the final elaboration of a multilateral convention at the earliest possible date. Half measures, geographically or otherwise limited arrangements, could be counter productive, seriously harm the negotiations on a truly global and comprehensive convention, give rise to increased security concerns and lead to proliferation of chemical weapons.

In keeping with General Assembly resolution 42/37 A, the negotiations on the convention should be treated by all delegations as a matter of high priority. The negotiating parties must bear this priority in mind and consider all issues in the perspective of the overriding security interest of banning all existing and future chemical weapons.

The Group of 21 will continue to work with resolve towards the early conclusion of a non-discriminatory, comprehensive, verifiable and effective convention banning all chemical weapons.

The Group of 21 strongly appeals to all delegations to honour their commitment of concluding the convention at the earliest possible date.

This concludes my statement on behalf of the Group of 21.

May I, on behalf of my own delegation, state that we listened with great attention to the important statement by the Women in Action for Disarmament, Justice and Peace. We will study that statement with care and interest and we welcome members of this group to the Conference today.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Sweden for his statement on behalf of the Group of 21 and I give the floor to the last speaker on my list for today, the representative of Romania, Ambassador Dolgu.

Mr. DOLGU (Romania) (translated from French): Mr. President, I would like to associate myself with previous speakers in extending to you our warmest congratulations on your election as President of the Conference on Disarmament. We are convinced that you will successfully do everything in your power to bring your intellectual qualities and diplomatic experience to bear for the benefit of the Conference so that the Conference makes progress commensurate with the demands of our peoples and countries. I would also like to express our appreciation and gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Rose of the German Democratic Republic, for the efficient way in which he performed his duties during the month of February.

Since I have the privilege, like preceding speakers this morning, of taking the floor on this special day, I would like to pay my own humble tribute to those who are always there to give and defend life, to bring up children and mourn and bury the dead, to those who, in the home and, in ever greater numbers, in economic, social and political life, constantly rebuff hatred and violence and promote the sacred values of understanding,

(Mr. Dolgu, Romania)

friendship, peace and survival, the survival not only of a species, but of that unique wonder, Man, and of the civilization that Man has managed to produce.

The world, our world, is at a crossroads where one road leads towards disarmament - first of all, nuclear disarmament - and the other towards the continuation, indeed the acceleration of the arms race.

Yes, the two major nuclear Powers have recognized that a nuclear war could not be won, that it must not be fought. Yes, an agreement on the elimination of two categories of nuclear weapons has been signed and the USSR and the United States are continuing their efforts in order to enshrine in a treaty their agreement in principle on a 50 per cent reduction in offensive strategic arsenals, while great progress has been made in the drafting of the universal convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. It is true also that bilateral Soviet-American negotiations are being held in the area of nuclear testing. All this is true and we welcome it.

Nevertheless, there are some counter-currents to be observed.

In Brussels, the NATO summit reaffirmed the role of nuclear weapons in the organization's military doctrine and there was insistence on the decision to update these weapons in accordance with the 1983 decision, even if the communiqué that was adopted is vague in that respect.

Nuclear-weapon tests continue without interruption, paving the way not only for new systems of such weapons, but also for a new, third generation of weapons differing both from conventional and from nuclear weapons.

With respect to chemical weapons, while we are witnessing new developments in certain countries' positions and new elements of horizontal and vertical proliferation, the prospects for the early conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of such weapons are fading. As regards star wars, preparations continue and nobody can be sure that such warfare will not come about. That is, admittedly, not going to happen tomorrow, but the effort is under way and it is not negligible.

So this is no time for euphoria. In the present international situation, which, despite a few bright spots, remains serious and complex, the fundamental problem is still the halting of the arms race and a determined transition to disarmament - first of all, nuclear disarmament. For, while there has been some progress in the solution of problems through negotiations, there has not yet been a radical change in attitudes or behaviour in international life. The new way of thinking and new approach in a search for solutions to world problems are still in their infancy and are making only difficult headway. Unless greater efforts are made, with the participation of all politicians, of forces of realism in every country and of all peoples, radical change in thinking and action to solve the great problems of the world will be impossible. It was in this spirit that the President of Romania, speaking on behalf of the Romanian people, recently came out once again

(Mr. Dolgu, Romania)

against the development and deployment of new nuclear weapons in Europe and in favour of the elimination of these weapons both from the European continent and from all other regions of the world.

Romania continues to attach very special importance to the halting of nuclear tests. We welcome the bilateral Soviet-American negotiations aimed at the stage-by-stage limitation, and having as their final objective the cessation and general prohibition of nuclear tests. We take this opportunity to reiterate a proposal made by Romania and, at the same time, to subscribe to the call contained in the Stockholm Declaration by six heads of State or Government for the immediate suspension of nuclear testing by all States until such time as, following the multinational negotiations in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, agreement can be reached on an international treaty on the comprehensive and complete prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

With respect to the role of this Conference in this connection, our position is clear. We are in favour of the establishment as soon as possible of an ad hoc committee with a negotiating mandate. As a good many speakers, and first and foremost the distinguished representatives of Mexico, Ambassador García Robles, and Australia, Ambassador Richard Butler, have already stressed, resolution 42/27 of the latest session of the United Nations General Assembly, which was adopted by the largest majority ever obtained on this issue, could provide an appropriate point of departure in this regard. Undoubtedly the efforts that have already been made along these lines - and here I would refer in particular to document CD/772 submitted by the delegation of Mexico jointly with other members of the Group of 21 - should be pursued.

As regards the Romanian delegation, its preference would be for a solution making it possible to move without delay to the negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. At the same time, we are prepared to subscribe to a consensus solution based on the document referred to in General Assembly resolution 42/27. The ad hoc committee to be set up would have two working groups to examine the content and purposes of a nuclear-test-ban treaty and the verification and implementation of the obligations entered into. In our opinion, the committee should examine in substantive discussions the proposals and suggestions put forward so far as well as those which may be submitted in the future. I would like to take this opportunity to recall in this connection document CD/756 submitted at the latest session of the Conference by delegations of socialist countries including Romania.

I would also like to remind the Conference that my country is prepared to participate with the means available to it in an international experiment in the exchange of level II seismic data and the establishment of an international network for the verification and implementation of the provisions of a nuclear-test-ban treaty.

(Mr. Dolgu, Romania)

The Romanian delegation wishes to press with the same determination for the institution of working structures and of negotiations in regard to all the other problems relating to nuclear disarmament on the agenda of the Conference.

We welcome the re-establishment of the Ad hoc Committee on Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-nuclear-weapon States against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons. Pending the total and final elimination of nuclear weapons, the negotiations and conclusions of a corresponding international document would be of special importance for those countries which do not possess nuclear weapons.

The programmes and action aimed at extending the arms race into space represent one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. The prevention of such a development is of vital interest to all the peoples of the world, and that places a special responsibility on the Conference on Disarmament. In the view of our delegation, the Conference should contribute in a number of areas, among which I would mention in particular:

Cessation of all action or programmes for the placing of arms in space or for the use of space for military purposes;

Elaboration of regulations and measures to ensure that space is used for exclusively peaceful purposes without any military competition;

Finally, the creation within the framework of the United Nations of a special body to be used both in monitoring the application of agreements on the non-militarization of space and in the peaceful use of space as the common heritage of mankind.

Our delegation has noted with interest various proposals which have been put forward to this end concerning, in particular, the banning of anti-satellite weapons, the creation of an international inspectorate responsible for verifying objects launched into space, and others.

We welcome the agreement that has emerged on the re-establishment of the Ad hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. Nevertheless, we are bound to note that this year again, and consequent upon the reservations of certain delegations, it has proved impossible to agree on an improved mandate for body. We hope that, these conditions notwithstanding, the Ad hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space will be able to make substantial progress.

In conclusion, I would like to return to the idea I touched on at the beginning of my statement. At this turning-point, where there are prospects both for disarmament and for the continuation of the arms race, with all the dangers that race entails, it is high time to redouble efforts both in this forum and in others to ensure that the supreme values of common sense, reason, confidence and peace at last prevail.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Romania for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the President.

That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other member wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

We have exhausted the time available to us this morning. Accordingly, we shall resume the plenary meeting this afternoon, at 3.00 p.m. May I note in that connection that the Ad hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space will meet immediately after the plenary meeting, in this conference room. After consultations with the Acting Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Negative Security Assurances, I wish also to inform you that the meeting of the Ad hoc Committee on Negative Security Assurances which was to have been held this morning will take place on Thursday, 10 March, immediately after the plenary meeting.

We will start at 3 o'clock with an informal meeting in order to deal with the organizational questions that I outlined earlier this morning: the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee under item 5, the appointment of its chairman, and, once we formalize those agreements, requests from non-members to participate in the work of that subsidiary body.

The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m. and resumed at 3.25 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: The 446th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed.

I propose now that we deal with the questions discussed at the informal meeting today, in order to formalize the agreements reached on that occasion.

I put before the Conference for decision working paper CD/WP.323, containing a "Draft mandate for an ad hoc committee under item 5 of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, entitled 'Prevention of an arms race in outer space'".

If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts it.

It was so decided.

I should now like to make the following statement:

"Pursuant to informal consultations with members from different Groups, and in connection with working paper CD/WP.323, which the Conference has just adopted, I wish to state that, as is known to all members of the Conference and as reflected in the 1987 Report of the Conference to the General Assembly of the United Nations (CD/787), consideration of proposals for measures aimed at the prevention of an arms race in outer space is covered by the mandate contained in working paper CD/WP.323."

I now give the floor to the Co-ordinator of the Group of 21.

Mr. de AZAMBUJA (Brazil) (speaking as the Co-ordinator of the Group of 21): The Conference on Disarmament has today established the Ad hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. The President of the Conference has made a statement relating to the mandate of the Ad hoc Committee. The Group of 21 would like to put on record its views with respect to the mandate.

The General Assembly adopted on 22 December 1987 resolution A 42/33 on the prevention of an arms race in outer space with an overwhelming majority and with one dissenting vote. The resolution requested the Conference, and I quote:

"to re-establish an ad hoc committee with an adequate mandate at the beginning of its 1988 session, with a view to undertaking negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects".

The States members of the Group of 21 are fully committed to the provisions of this resolution. They considered its adoption as an endorsement of a desire by virtually all States to improve the mandate of the Ad hoc Committee. They express their regret that it was not found possible to improve the mandate in accordance with the General Assembly resolution. Faced with a rigid stance taken by a certain delegation, the Group of 21 has nevertheless decided to demonstrate good will and to accept to work on the basis of the mandate referred to by the President. The Group underlines that, as stated by the President in connection with the adoption of the mandate, the mandate covers the consideration of proposals for measures aimed at the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The Group of 21 believes that the Committee should start working immediately in order to reach results, especially as the third special session on disarmament will convene in New York on 31 May 1988.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Co-ordinator of the Group of 21 for his statement on behalf of his Group. I call on the representative of Italy, Ambassador Pugliese, who will speak as Co-ordinator of the Western Group for item 5.

Mr. PUGLIESE (Italy) (speaking as the Co-ordinator of the Western Group for agenda item 5): Mr. President, I would like, on behalf of the Group of Western States, to thank you and your predecessor, Ambassador Rose, for the efforts that have been made and which have enabled the Conference to take a decision for the re-establishment of the Ad hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space.

Since the beginning of this session the Western Group has shown interest in prompt resumption of the work of this very important item on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. We therefore fully support the re-establishment of the Ad hoc Committee and we look forward to contributing actively, as in the past, to its work as we are convinced that there is still

(Mr. Pugliese, Italy)

a great deal to be accomplished within the framework of the mandate adopted. I should like to stress that it is, of course, the mandate - I repeat, the mandate - under which we shall be working, although we naturally accept the right of any delegation to express the views that it wishes in the course of our discussions.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Co-ordinator of the Western Group for agenda item 5 for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Mongolia, Mr. Erendo, who will speak as Co-ordinator of the Socialist Group for item 5.

Mr. ERENDO (Mongolia) (speaking as Co-ordinator of the Socialist Group for agenda item 5) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, permit me first of all sincerely to congratulate you, on behalf of the Mongolian delegation, on your assumption of the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament for the month of March. We wish you success in the performance of your important functions and assure you of our intention to give you every support in this.

Permit me also to express our gratitude to the distinguished representative of the German Democratic Republic, Ambassador Harald Rose, for his efficient guidance of the work of the Conference in February.

My delegation would now like to make, as Co-ordinator of the Group of Socialist States for agenda item 5, the following statement in connection with the decision just adopted on the re-establishment of the Ad hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space.

Of itself, the fact of the establishment of the Ad hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space cannot but evoke satisfaction. After all, prevention of the placing in space of arms of any kind is, together with the issues of curbing the arms race and of nuclear disarmament, of banning nuclear-weapon testing and of concluding a convention on the destruction of chemical weapons, the most topical problem of our time. Space has to be kept peaceful, it must be excluded from the sphere of military preparations and confrontation and transformed into an area of confidence, of active international co-operation to the benefit of all the world's States, irrespective of their degree of economic development. The single multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament, can and must play its role in the attainment of this noble goal.

At the same time, one cannot but be struck by the fact that for several years the Conference's Ad hoc Committee has been without a clear, unambiguous mandate for the conduct of businesslike negotiations and has been virtually at a standstill, wasting time on sterile debates concerning problems long-since examined and reviewed, including by itself.

It is no exaggeration to say that as long ago as at the 1986 session the Ad hoc Committee defined the problems connected with preventing the transfer

(Mr. Erendo, Mongolia)

of the arms race into space, surveyed and identified the prohibitions and restrictions deriving from the existing international agreements and exposed the gaps in the legal régime for outer space.

In that connection, and without getting into an unnecessary polemic, we would refer to the results of the vote on resolution 42/33 of the United Nations General Assembly: 154 States voted in favour of that resolution, and only 1 against. It was that position which once again hindered the efforts by the majority of members of the Conference to move on at last to negotiations aimed at concrete, practical work within the framework of the Conference.

At the same time, guided by a desire to begin the practical work of the Ad hoc Committee as soon as possible, the socialist countries have felt it possible to accept the mandate that has just been approved by the Conference.

We declare once again the long-overdue need to concentrate the main attention and efforts on the discussion of the existing decisions and the future proposals aimed at the development of concrete measures for preventing an arms race in outer space and to embark without delay on negotiations.

Review of the proposals and initiatives put forward by various delegations demonstrates that the Conference has accumulated a large number of valuable ideas capable of serving as a basis for substantive talks with a view to reaching an international agreement or agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. A number of proposals put forward by socialist and other countries relating to various aspects of the prevention of the deployment of weapons in space, including partial but extremely important measures leading to that end, await concrete and businesslike consideration by the Conference. We would particularly like to stress the proposal for a structured discussion of existing proposals and future initiatives.

Naturally, the position of the socialist countries on this question is flexible. We consider that our own approaches are not the only correct ones, and we are open to proposals from other delegations. We think that it is precisely this kind of approach that can promote substantive discussion of matters relating to the prevention of an arms race in space and a transition to the elaboration of multilateral agreements in this sphere.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Co-ordinator of the Socialist Group for agenda item 5 for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of China, Ambassador Fan.

Mr. FAN (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, at the outset please allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament for the month of March. The Federal Republic of Germany and China enjoy friendly relations in many fields. You have long-standing diplomatic experience and are familiar with the work of disarmament. I believe that under your skilful guidance the Conference on Disarmament will score further achievements. The Chinese delegation will co-operate actively with you.

(Mr. Fan, China)

I would also like to thank last month's President, Ambassador Rose of the German Democratic Republic, for his outstanding performance as the President of the Conference on Disarmament for February.

In 1987, the General Assembly, at its forty-second session, adopted resolution 42/33 on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, in which it made a specific request for the CD to set up an ad hoc committee on outer space. The General Assembly "further requests the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish an ad hoc committee with an adequate mandate at the beginning of its 1988 session, with a view to undertaking negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects".

However, the difference of opinions surrounding the mandate of the ad hoc committee on outer space prevented its early establishment. Ambassador Rose, our President of February, actively organized consultations on this issue. And, on that basis, Mr. President, you have made new efforts. Now all sides have finally come to an agreement and re-established the Ad hoc Committee today.

I would like to point out that in the course of consultations many delegations, especially the Group of 21, adopted a very flexible attitude on the procedural matters and thus played a positive role in facilitating its establishment. The Chinese delegation would like to express its appreciation in this regard. For its part, the Chinese delegation has all along attached great importance to item 5, namely "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". In order to get down to substantive work as early as possible, the Chinese delegation can also go along with the procedure adopted for setting up the Ad hoc Committee on outer space. We hope that, following its establishment, the Ad hoc Committee can achieve further progress in the task of preventing an arms race in outer space.

Before concluding, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Taylhardat on his assumption of the chairmanship of the Ad hoc Committee. I believe that, under his dynamic leadership, new progress will be made on this important item. I would also like to say that today is International Women's Day. The ladies who are participating in the Geneva Congress of Women in Action for Disarmament, Justice and Peace came to our Conference this morning. The Chinese delegation would like to express our welcome to them. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my welcome to them and my festive greetings and congratulations to them and the women delegates of all countries as well as the women staff of the secretariat and the women interpreters.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the President.

Does any other member wish to take the floor at this stage? That does not seem to be the case.

(The President)

May I now turn to the appointment of the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee. I understand that there is consensus on the candidate proposed by the Group of 21, Ambassador Adolfo Taylhardat of Venezuela. May I ask the Conference to formalize that decision?

It was so decided.

May I express, on behalf of the Conference, our congratulations to Ambassador Taylhardat for his appointment as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee. In wishing him every success in discharging his important functions in that capacity, I would like to recall that it was thanks to the diplomatic skill and untiring efforts of Ambassador Taylhardat, at that time President of the Conference, that the Ad hoc Committee under agenda item 5 was set up for the first time in the Conference.

I wish also to express our appreciation to Ambassador Rose of the German Democratic Republic for his role as President for the month of February in leading the consultations which made it possible today to re-establish the Ad hoc Committee. I would also add my thanks for those who have shown compromise in their attitude. I assume that Ambassador Taylhardat would like to take the floor.

Mr. TAYLHARDAT (Venezuela) (speaking as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space) (translated from Spanish): First of all, Mr. President, I should like to express my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you presiding over our work for the month of March. We know your outstanding personal and professional qualities and we are sure that, under your presidency, the Conference will be able to move its work forward appreciably. For our part, we offer you our co-operation and wish you every success.

I should also like to express our gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Rose, for the way in which he presided over the work of the Conference last month and for his efforts to obtain the re-establishment of the various ad hoc committees. I can particularly bear witness to the efforts he made to ensure that the ad hoc committee we are re-establishing this afternoon was re-established under your presidency. We, too, are pleased that it is under your presidency that the committee has been re-established.

I should also like to offer my thanks for the confidence that has been shown in me through my selection as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. My gratitude goes first to the Group of 21, which put me forward as its candidate for that important position, and extends to the other groups and China, which accepted and supported my candidacy.

I think that at this juncture there is no need to speak of the importance of the Ad hoc Committee, which is now entering its fourth year of operation. As you, Mr. President, have just said, it was when I was President of the Conference, in March 1985, that we were able for the first time to reach an agreement on the mandate for the Committee. Conscious of the growing

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

importance that the topic was acquiring even then and of the risk that the competition in armaments that now exists on the planet might be transferred into outer space, I spared no efforts then to find a consensus solution that would enable a start to be made on the substantive work on item 5 of our agenda. For that reason I am pleased today to have the opportunity to serve as Chairman of the Committee. That same fact, moreover, places me under an obligation to do all I can to stimulate the Committee's work.

In the three years that the Committee has been in operation, important progress has been made in the consideration of the item. That is undoubtedly due to the excellent work done by my predecessors, Ambassadors Alfarargi, of Egypt; Bayart, of Mongolia, and Pugliese, of Italy. For my part, I mean to do everything possible to follow the course already marked out by my illustrious predecessors and to try to advance as far as possible in our work.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Taylhardat for his statement and for his kind words to the Chair.

May I now turn to the requests received from non-members to participate in the work of the Ad hoc Committee just re-established. The Secretariat has circulated working papers CD/WP.324 to CD/WP.335, containing draft decisions on the requests from: Norway; Finland; New Zealand; Austria; Ireland; Portugal; Switzerland; Zimbabwe; Spain; Greece; Denmark, and Turkey. As no objections have been raised so far in connection with the draft decisions circulated by the Secretariat, I propose that we approve them all together, as on previous occasions. I see no objection.

It was so decided.

Before I adjourn this meeting, I should like to recall that the newly, re-established Ad hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space will hold its first meeting this afternoon immediately after this plenary, in this conference room, and that the meeting of the Ad hoc Committee on Negative Security Assurances scheduled for today will be held next Thursday, 10 March, immediately after the plenary meeting. As foreseen at the opening of the annual session, we may face the need to re-organize our timetable of meetings in the light of the increasing workload facing the Conference and its subsidiary bodies. In that connection, I shall meet with the Chairmen of the Ad hoc Committees soon, in order to ensure that we utilize to the maximum extent possible the resources available to us.

As there is no other business, I intend now to adjourn this plenary meeting.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 10 March, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.