

# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Tuesday, 29 March 1988, at 10 a.m.

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

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 452nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

In accordance with its programme of work, the Conference will now begin consideration of agenda items 6, entitled "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons", and 7, entitled "New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; Radiological weapons". However, in accordance 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 have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Hungary, Burma, Japan, Sweden and the German Democratic Republic.

I give the floor to my first speaker, the representative of Hungary, Ambassador Meiszter.

Mr. MEISZTER (Hungary): Speaking for the first time during your tenure of office, I find myself in the privileged position that I can congratulate you not only on your assumption of the presidency, but also on the fact that the lion's share of the work for this month has already been accomplished by you. I would like to express my delegation's appreciation for the balanced, business-like manner in which you have been guiding our proceedings and the efforts made in order to promote the work of the Conference, including its high-priority agenda items. I appreciate your fruitful efforts to advance the work of the Conference from a selfish point of view also, and I think this is understandable for everybody. May I also express our gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Harald Rose, for the professional performance of his tasks as President of the Conference during the month of February, in laying the groundwork for the efficient work of the CD for this session. I would like also to take this opportunity to extend a friendly welcome to our colleagues who have recently joined us, Ambassador Marchand of Canada, Ambassador Elaraby of Egypt, Ambassador Azikiwe of Nigeria and Ambassador Solesby of the United Kingdom. May I offer to them my own and my delegation's unreserved co-operation in discharging their responsible duties. I wish them success in their work and a pleasant stay in Geneva.

In the first part of my statement today I would like to deal with item 4 of our agenda, i.e. chemical weapons. My delegation notes with satisfaction that intensive negotiations have been going on and substantive progress has been achieved in different parts of the "rolling text" of the chemical weapons convention, mainly during the last two years. We noted with pleasure that during the first two months of the spring session of the CD the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee, Ambassador Sujka of Poland, embarked on the continuation of the work with ambition and expertise. While wishing him every success I would like to assure him and his assistants, Mr. Andrejcima of Czechoslovakia, Mr. Pablo Macedo of Mexico and Mr. Sadaaki Numata of Japan, that my delegation will spare no effort to help them in their responsible work.

Registering with satisfaction the substantive progress achieved, my delegation cannot help expressing its concern over the fact that the pace of negotiations has somewhat slowed down during the past few months. This fact is in contrast with the resolute political commitment for the early conclusion

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of the convention repeatedly expressed in this room. We welcome the determination of the high-level government representatives visiting the Conference on Disarmament this spring, and hope that the firm political commitment to move the negotiations forward to an early conclusion will have a positive impact on the everyday practical work.

We are aware that, despite the substantive results achieved so far, much remains to be done. My delegation, however, would like to hear in this context less emphasis on the amount of unresolved problems and difficulties and see more concrete proposals for and expeditiousness in their solution.

From this point of view we consider as positive the initiative taken by the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee to hold informal consultations on the final clauses of the Convention. A series of questions of different kinds in this area have been only partially explored so far and require a good deal of drafting effort. May I enumerate some of them which my delegation considers particularly important?

Firstly, the relationship between the convention and other international treaties, particularly the 1925 Geneva Protocol, with special emphasis on the reservations made to the latter.

Secondly, the entry into force of the convention and the question of how and by what means to ensure the widest possible adherence to it.

Thirdly, the question of whether there is a need for a simple or a differentiated amendment procedure taking into account the complicated structure of the convention.

We welcome, once again, the serious work which has been started in this field, and we hope that these questions - together with the still unresolved issue of "jurisdiction and control" - will continue to be discussed.

There seems to be a general understanding that openness, political good will and confidence are the prerequisites for successful completion of the work on a global and comprehensive chemical weapons ban. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Hungary, Péter Várkonyi, emphasized in his statement on 4 February that openness regarding data relevant to the CW convention served to contribute to the strengthening of confidence.

The Government of Hungary, guided by the firm conviction that openness would best serve confidence if transformed into concrete steps, decided to inform the Conference on production in Hungary of certain chemicals relevant to the convention, as well as the number of plants where such chemicals are produced. My delegation was pleased to hear that our contribution has been welcomed by other delegations. We also welcome the proposals recently submitted by the USSR on multilateral data exchange and other confidence-building measures, as contained in the statement made by Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Petrovsky on 18 February 1988 and in the memorandum he introduced then (CD/808).

At the same time we are aware of the fact that it would not be justifiable to expect each and every State to provide all data - especially

(Mr. Meiszter, Hungary)

concerning the production of chemicals for permitted purposes - in the course of a preliminary multilateral exchange. Though we consider such an exercise to be highly desirable, we think it feasible only on a strictly voluntary basis. This multilateral exchange of chemical-weapons-related data might be considered - in our view - as an aggregate of a series of unilaterally provided information.

However, while being flexible and accommodating with regard to difficulties that certain States might face in providing data concerning production for civilian purposes, we can hardly accept that such difficulties should exist with regard to declarations on the possession or non-possession of chemical weapons or chemical weapon production facilities. My delegation would express the sincere hope that the readiness of a hopefully increasing number of States to provide such information would create the constructive climate necessary to further deepen confidence among participants and contribute to the acceleration of work on a chemical weapons ban.

May I remind you that in his statement of 4 February, the Foreign Minister of Hungary, Péter Várkonyi, informed the CD that the following two key precursors of chemical weapons are produced for civilian use in Hungary: chemicals containing a P-methyl and/or P-ethyl bond, at one plant, and methyl and/or ethyl esters of phosphorous acid, at three plants.

Following that communication, I would like to supply additional information as to the amount of production of those chemicals in 1987:

Domestic production of compounds containing a P-methyl and/or P-ethyl bond was 1,067 tons. Of that amount, 142 tons were used for domestic consumption, while the remaining 925 tons were exported.

Production of methyl and/or ethyl esters of phosphorous acid amounted to 521 tons, of which 253 tons were used for domestic consumption and 297 tons were exported (the difference in aggregate is due to stocks left over from the previous year).

No chemicals listed in Schedule [3] are produced in Hungary at present. However, we are importing the following three compounds:

Phosphorous trichloride - the planned amount of imports for 1988 is 3,500 tons (originating from the USSR); trimethylphosphite - planned amount of import 600 tons; and dimethylphosphite - planned amount of import 1,200 tons.

The two latter compounds are being purchased from Western countries.

In the second part of my statement I would like to dwell on another subject, the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament. Although this question has no specific time allotted to it in the programme of work, it has been actively addressed by several delegates. The question is also under consideration in the Group of Seven, in the work of which I have the honour to participate together with some colleagues. The forthcoming SSOD-III will no doubt pay great attention to this problem.

(Mr. Meiszter, Hungary)

Perhaps those delegates who are dealing with this subject are doing so already with a view to the special session. So am I.

The performance of the CD can leave no one indifferent, since serious matters of national and international security are involved. Our Foreign Minister who recently addressed this body dwelt on it in some detail. Let me recall his reference to the effect that results achieved or not achieved in the CD reflect "the degree of understanding that can be reached" among States "in matters of security policy". In my understanding, whenever we deal with the issues of the improved and effective functioning of the Conference we should do so with a view to working out procedures which enable that "degree of understanding" to gain strength.

As we all know, the CD works on the basis of the consensus rule. That should be upheld whenever decisions concerning international security, the national security of States or issues of disarmament are involved, without recognizing the right of anyone to misuse that principle. I am in full agreement in this respect with the views repeatedly expressed that consensus should be a tool to seek agreement and not something to hide behind.

The issue comes up mainly in the context of setting up subsidiary bodies or working out mandates for them, often qualified as issues of procedure. Anyone in our profession may well be aware that any political issue can easily be translated into or expressed in terms of procedure. The history of diplomacy has recorded countless examples for that. Finding no solution for such cases does not mean that we are bogged down in matters of procedure, but simply that there are unresolved political issues in the background. The way out is by no means increased pressure or confrontation, but rather efforts in good faith to find a solution acceptable to all.

One may rightly question whether working out a mandate is an issue of procedure or not. I would hesitate to say it is. I am of the opinion that international bodies dealing with disarmament cannot evade facing and solving such issues. But I would like to say with the same positiveness that this should not be done as a substitute for substantive work. The way out is to devise procedures which help in solving such problems. The possibilities are there. Substantive consideration of all the items appearing on the agenda of the CD in the framework of subsidiary bodies would definitely be helpful. Specific tasks given to these subsidiary bodies should be tailored to the needs and existing possibilities, and they may be outlined in the corresponding work programmes.

This line of thinking leads me to the question of the efficiency and duration of the sessions - the latter being the quantitative, the former the qualitative side of the same coin. The Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, meeting in Prague, made several proposals to that effect which are known to all in this body. Therefore I will not repeat them, but rather offer a few considerations concerning them.

While recognizing the need for, and the existing possibility of, increasing the time allotted to the sessions of the CD, I make a clear distinction between intensifying the work of the CD or making it more efficient, and extending the duration of the sessions. The latter can easily

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be done without having any tangible impact on the efficiency of the work - something that should be avoided under any circumstances. What really counts is not only, nor mainly, the duration of the sessions, but rather what we are doing and how it is done. A good deal of reshaping of the structure of the work is unavoidable.

Let me refer in this context to our proposal that, in order to streamline our work and make it more efficient, it would be useful to have the general debate at the beginning of sessions concentrated into two or three weeks, after which substantive work would continue in the subsidiary bodies, where delegations, assisted by experts, could engage in really substantive negotiations. Such a way of proceeding would naturally require a good deal of co-ordinating activity, and would not exclude the holding of plenary meetings whenever required by progress in the work.

All this could be done while remaining well within the framework of the rules of procedure. Rule 20 of the rules of procedure provides that "the Conference shall convene in plenary meetings in accordance with a schedule to be agreed upon." It does not stipulate that the present structure of work is the only feasible way of proceeding. Perhaps it is one of the better alternatives, but not necessarily the best one.

The question of our agenda has also been raised in the exchange of views with the aim of improving on it. The "decatalogue" and the agenda of the CD were drawn up almost a decade ago. While the former in our view contains all the possible tasks the CD can be entrusted with, the agenda may need to be reshaped a bit in the light of the developments which have taken place in international relations. Items IV, V and VI deal with areas belonging to the domain of conventional weapons in one way or another. To put the question of conventional disarmament on the agenda of the CD would be a welcome step in our view. The concrete formulation of this task is, however, essential; it should be well tailored to the character of the CD. To give more attention to the development of new military technologies is well overdue. Such steps would be a plausible addition to the high-priority nuclear issues already on the agenda.

The question of membership of the CD and the participation of States in its work is an issue of great importance. It may look procedural, but it has deep political substance.

The Prague session of the Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Warsaw Treaty Organization expressed the opinion that the Conference on Disarmament "might become in the future a permanent universal organ of disarmament negotiations." In my view it is natural that such a state of affairs cannot and should not be brought about overnight. However, it is our position that steps taken in this area should be aimed in that direction.

Paragraph 120 of the Final Document of SSOD-I recognizes the "continuing requirement for a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of limited size". The size of the CD's membership was established on the understanding that it would be "reviewed at regular intervals". Ten years have passed since SSOD-I, but no such review has taken place.

(Mr. Meiszter, Hungary)

The advantages of a forum of limited size are obvious. However, what "limited size" means in concrete terms is not something definite. In negotiations among sovereign States the main consideration at all events should be to secure the consent of as many States as possible.

It is a commonplace to say that disarmament is the cause of all States and that it is the duty and vital interest of every State to contribute to it. The CD is handling questions which have a direct bearing on the national security of every State. In cases such as that of chemical weapons, obligations are being worked out for the destruction of military hardware and the acceptance of an intrusive verification system. Should all those States directly interested and affected have a say in working out the obligations they are supposed to assume? The answer is definitely yes.

We consider that the present practice does not guarantee the unimpeded participation of non-member States, and is unnecessarily complicated. In our view greater openness in the CD is required - which would not mean in any way that all the world's 160 or so States would like to participate immediately.

Another question is the interrelationship between broader participation and efficiency. Practical experience suggests that broader participation does not necessarily mean less efficiency. One may refer to the example of the different review conferences producing consensus final documents or negotiated agreements on confidence-building measures, as in the case of the BW expert group. The United Nations Conference on Prohibitions or Restrictions of Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects produced a convention, even if one of limited scope.

Turning to the present state of affairs regarding the question of membership, one may recall the common position of the CD that the only feasible way to proceed was the expansion of the membership. In 1983 a decision was taken to expand the membership by four States. That decision was taken half a decade ago. Recent years have seen dramatic changes in international relations. A new approach is gaining ground; more and more States are interested in the issues of disarmament negotiations. Requests for membership by now far exceed the suggested expansion by four. A major obstacle here is that even that limited decision has proved to be impossible to implement. It happened as a consequence of political considerations, but the fact itself remains. On our side we see no other solution than to provide for the full participation of all States willing and able to contribute to the work of the CD.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Hungary for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair, and I give the floor to the representative of Burma, Ambassador U Tin Tun.

U TIN TUN (Burma): Mr. President, it is a great pleasure for me and my delegation to see you presiding over the Conference on Disarmament for the month of March. May I express my sincere appreciation of the outstanding diplomatic skills and high professionalism which have been the hallmarks of your presidency during this month.

(U Tin Tun, Burma)

Our tribute also goes to your predecessor, Ambassador Harald Rose of the German Democratic Republic, for the commendable and effective manner in which he guided the work of the CD during the first month of the 1988 session of the CD.

My delegation joins others in extending, through the delegation of the United Kingdom, our heartfelt condolences and profound sympathies to the family of the late Ambassador Ian Cromartie of the United Kingdom. His personal qualities and dedication to the cause of disarmament will long be remembered by us all.

May I also take this opportunity to welcome in our midst Ambassador de Montigny Marchand of Canada, Ambassador Elaraby of Egypt, Ambassador Azikiwe of Nigeria, Ambassador Sujka of Poland, Ambassador Solesby of the United Kingdom and Ambassador Nasser of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I look forward to close co-operation with them all.

The year 1987 saw significant developments in the United States-Soviet bilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The signing of the INF Treaty by President Reagan of the United States and General Secretary Gorbachev of the Soviet Union on 8 December 1987 was an historic development. This is a step in the right direction, worthy of universal acclaim. We are encouraged by this development.

It is the first ever agreement on the elimination of an entire class of nuclear weapons, in contrast to the previous bilateral agreements, which merely fixed upper ceilings on strategic nuclear arms. It is a breakthrough in this sense.

The stark fact, however, remains that the magnitude of nuclear warheads to be eliminated under the INF Treaty accounts for only a small fraction of the nuclear arsenals of the two great Powers. The road to nuclear disarmament that lies ahead is still a long one.

It is clearly set out in paragraph 48 of the Final Document of SSOD-I that in the task of achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament, all the nuclear-weapon States, in particular those among them which possess the most important nuclear arsenals, bear a special responsibility.

In signing the INF Treaty, the two great Powers have taken initial steps to fulfil a measure of that special responsibility. We believe that the two great Powers should be prompt in taking further strides down that road.

We fervently hope that the momentum generated by the signing of the INF Treaty will be maintained and the current bilateral START negotiations on 50% reductions in the strategic nuclear weapons of the two great Powers will yield positive results very soon.

In about two months from now, the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-III) will take place in New York. This is an eminently important international forum, where we shall take stock of our accomplishments in the past, appreciate our present



(U Tin Tun, Burma

position and chart out our future programme of actions in the field of disarmament. All of us should do our utmost to make the third special session a success.

The area in which the CD is in the most advanced stage of negotiations is chemical weapons. The CD has covered a good deal of ground in its negotiations on a global ban on chemical weapons. A future convention on chemical weapons is now in sight. Yet it still eludes our grasp. Continuing efforts to finalize the draft chemical weapons convention have somewhat slowed down recently. Meanwhile, the interantional community is looking to us for the speedy accomplishment of our mission to successfully conclude our negotiation of a convention on chemical weapons at an early date. It is imperative that we redouble our efforts to accomplish this mission in the shortest possible time.

The Group of 21, through its subject co-ordinator Ambassador Ekéus of Sweden, made a statement on chemical weapons at the plenary meeting on 8 March 1988. This statement reflects the concern of members of the Group of 21, including my own delegation. My delegation shares the concern that half-measures and interim arrangements can only serve to delay the conclusion of a comprehensive ban on all chemical weapons. We endorse the view that all chemical weapons, not some, should be destroyed; that all chemical weapon production facilities, not some, should be destroyed, and that all, not some, production of chemical weapons should be prohibited. Towards this end, all member States of the CD should spare no effort to achieve at the earliest possible date a non-discriminatory, comprehensive, verifiable and effective convention banning all chemical weapons.

A welcome practice is crystallizing at the CD. I am referring to the practice of declaring possession or non-possession of chemical weapons by a growing number of CD member States. This is a constructive step, befitting member States of the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, actively engaged in the negotiation of a global ban on chemical weapons. We call upon other member States who have not done so to follow suit.

Burma does not possess, develop, produce, stockpile or use chemical weapons. Nor will she do so in future.

Burma's position on this question is clear and unequivocal. Burma has consistently expressed her opposition to the development, production, stockpiling and use of these horrible weapons of mass destruction in various international forums - be it this august body of the CD, or the United Nations General Assembly, or the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. My country has also supported all the General Assembly resolutions on chemical weapons. My country signed the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. We did so in the hope that this would soon lead to the conclusion of a convention banning the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. We are therefore among those who ardently wish to see the conclusion of a convention on chemical weapons as soon as possible. Burma has consistently supported and will continue to support all endeavours to achieve a global and total ban on chemical weapons at an early date.

(U Tin Tun, Burma)

My delegation was happy to witness early this month the re-establishment of the Ad hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. It is well that the Ad hoc Committee has now adopted its programme of work and started its substantive work in earnest.

The overwhelming importance of this question is recognized by us all. This question encompasses two basic aspects - the technical aspect and the political and legal aspect. In dealing with the technical aspect of the question, we will find the expertise of scientific experts useful. My delegation therefore supports the proposal for the establishment of an expert group to provide technical assistance to the Conference on Disarmament on agenda item 5.

The 1988 session of the CD has seen 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 at an early stage of the session. There is, however, little movement forward in the work of the Committee, as the positions of the four nuclear-weapon States remain unchanged. Nigeria's proposal tabled at the 1987 CD session forms a useful basis for discussions. It requires further and more thorough consideration.

The Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons has formed two working groups as it did last year, each working on one of the "twin tracks". My delegation takes a flexible position on the method of dealing with the two tracks of the question of radiological weapons. We hope that the Ad hoc Committee and its two working groups will be able to accomplish some constructive work during this year's CD session.

The Ad hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament is going through its heavy work schedule. We earnestly wish that it may finalize the draft text of the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament without much difficulty in time for submission to the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

This year's CD session has been able to re-establish five ad hoc committees on items 4 to 8 of its agenda. However, the Conference finds itself unable to establish ad hoc committees on important nuclear issues high on its agenda: items 1, 2 and 3. Bilateral negotiations between the two great Powers are being actively pursued on all three issues, namely, nuclear testing, nuclear arms reduction and prevention of nuclear war. It is regrettable that, in the meantime, the world's single negotiating forum in the field of disarmament is still stuck in an impasse over procedural issues and finds itself unable to engage in serious negotiations on those important agenda items. It is hardly necessary to reiterate the basic position of my delegation calling for the establishment of ad hoc committees with appropriate and adequate mandates on all three of these agenda items.

Our attempts from 1984 onwards to arrive at a consensus draft mandate for an ad hoc committee on agenda item 1, "Nuclear test ban", have not been fruitful up till now. The Conference should lose no time in resolving this procedural issue and establish an ad hoc committee on a nuclear test ban with an appropriate mandate.

(U Tin Tun, Burma)

With the signing of the INF Treaty by the United States and the Soviet Union, ice is now melting in the bilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament. No comparable advancement is taking place in the multilateral negotiating forum of the Conference on Disarmament. We should now take a fresh look at possible procedural arrangements for dealing with agenda item 2 in the light of the afore-mentioned significant development in the United States-Soviet bilateral negotiations.

Agenda item 3, "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters", is one of the foremost tasks on the agenda of the CD. In the view of my delegation, this agenda item of the highest importance has not yet received the attention it deserves. The Conference should find ways and means to deal with this agenda item effectively.

This year is the tenth since the birth of the Conference on Disarmament in its present format. The record of the activities of the Conference during the first decade of its existence is not very encouraging. While its predecessor bodies produced some concrete agreements on arms limitation and disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament has thus far no such concrete results to its credit. To be fair to the Conference, it has now come within sight of a convention on chemical weapons. But we still have to cover a last lap before we can reach the final goal. We must not forget that this last lap can prove to be very challenging and difficult. Let us rededicate ourselves to the cause of the multilateral disarmament negotiations and redouble our efforts in order to achieve more concrete and positive results in our negotiations here in the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Burma for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Japan, Ambassador Yamada.

Mr. YAMADA (Japan): This offers me a good opportunity to extend to you, Sir, my delegation's most sincere felicitations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference for this important month of March. My delegation has full confidence in your leadership and diplomatic skills, and for the last four weeks we have amply witnessed how marvellously you conduct our proceedings.

Now in my capacity as the monthly co-ordinator for the members of the Western Group, I would like to make a brief statement on their behalf.

As the distinguished Ambassador of Italy stated on behalf of the group of Western countries at the 439th Plenary on 11 February this year, it remains a matter of high priority to the Western Group that an effective, verifiable and comprehensive convention on a global ban on chemical weapons should be concluded as soon as possible.

Thus, the group of countries on whose behalf I am speaking today are appalled at the horrifying reports of the extensive use of chemical weapons in the Iraq-Iran war, resulting in tragic and heavy casualties, especially amongst the civilian population.

(Mr. Yamada, Japan)

The Group of Western Countries express their strong and unreserved condemnation of these actions. They strongly urge all parties to abide by the 1925 Geneva Protocol and other norms of international law.

This ends the statement of the Western Group. Again on behalf of my own delegation, I would like to say a few words of farewell to Ambassador Tarmidzi of Indonesia, who will be leaving us in less than a month. I have enjoyed the warmest friendship with Ambassador Tarmidzi during his rather short tenure of office here. I wish him every success in his important new post in New York, and I am looking forward to working closely with him again when I go to the meetings of the United Nations.

I had my statement all prepared to bid farewell to another colleague of ours who also represents a great country in Asia and was scheduled to leave us in three days, but I was happy to learn that the Government of India had rescinded the decision, and my delegation is delighted at the prospect of continuing to work together with Ambassador Teja, especially at SSOD-III in New York and during his presidency of the Conference during the month of July here.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of Japan for his statement, and also for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden, Ambassador Ekéus.

Mr. EKEUS (Sweden): The reports from Halabja bear witness to the large-scale use of chemical weapons against an unprotected civilian population.

Sweden condemns the use of chemical weapons, which constitutes a flagrant violation of international law.

Investigations by a team of United Nations experts of earlier incidents of use of chemical weapons have proven beyond doubt that Iraq has been repeatedly responsible for chemical warfare contrary to international law.

The Geneva Protocol of 1925 embodies the recognized rules of international law prohibiting chemical warfare. The attack on Halabja, a gross violation both of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and of customary international law, should be universally condemned.

Furthermore, the use of chemical weapons against Halabja has brought agony and death upon civilians, many of them children and women. The attack is thus a grave violation of general humanitarian rules as laid down in the laws of war.

The violation of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 constitutes a breach of the fundamental principle that States must honour their undertakings in treaties and other legally binding instruments to which they are parties.

The Conference on Disarmament must now react by intensifying its negotiations on a convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of all chemical weapons and on their destruction, with a view to the final elaboration of the convention at

(Mr. Ekéus, Sweden)

the earliest possible date. Delays in the negotiations can only put off the day when effective international measures can be taken to prevent the further use of chemical weapons and their proliferation.

The tragedy of Halabja must be a signal for the international community to make the existing ban on the use of chemical weapons fully effective by negotiating and bringing into force a complete and global convention banning all chemical weapons for ever.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Sweden for his statement, and I now give the floor to the representative of the German Democratic Republic, Ambassador Rose.

Mr. ROSE (German Democratic Republic): On behalf of a group of socialist countries I should like to state the following:

We resolutely support the strict observance of the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons which is set out in the Geneva Protocol of 1925. All actions contrary to the principles and objectives of the Protocol - no matter from which side they are instigated - are strongly condemned by us.

We are concerned that the use of chemical weapons in the Gulf conflict could lead to their proliferation, to weakening the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, and to undermining efforts for a complete prohibition of these weapons.

We support the appeal made to both sides involved by the United Nations Secretary-General to exercise maximum restraint and to support international efforts for a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

We consider it essential to speed up the elaboration of a convention on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons, and we are determined to undertake, together with the delegations participating in the negotiations, all efforts necessary towards achieving this goal.

These horrible, horrible weapons must be totally banished as speedily as possible.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the German Democratic Republic for his statement. I recognize the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Ambassador Nazarkin.

Mr. NAZARKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): The representative of the German Democratic Republic, Ambassador Rose, on behalf of a group of socialist countries, including the Soviet Union, has expressed our assessment of the news of the use of chemical weapons. Further to what has been said by the representative of the German Democratic Republic, Ambassador H. Rose, concerning the recent case of the use of chemical weapons, I should like to state the following:

In the Soviet Union, we are deeply alarmed at the news of the use of chemical weapons against the Islamic Republic of Iran on a massive scale involving a great many casualties among the civilian population. So far we

(Mr. Nazarkin, USSR)

have no objective international confirmation of this news. But if it corresponds with the facts, what is involved is a violation of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, an action which, in the view of the Soviet Union, deserves resolute condemnation. The Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, should be observed by all parties to it. Violations are inadmissible and cannot be justified by any considerations whatsoever. This also applies to the parties to the present conflict. The Soviet Union condemns and will continue to condemn any use of chemical weapons in violation of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, regardless of who may breach the Protocol, and in what circumstances.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for his statement. Is there any other speaker who wants to take the floor? I recognize the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. MASHHADI (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would just like to inform this august body that 30 of those injured by chemical weapons from Iraq in the city of Halabja will be arriving today in Geneva. Six of them will be treated here, and the rest will go to the Federal Republic of Germany, England, and also New York. The six civilians who will be treated here will be four children or youngsters, 8, 10, 12 and 13 years old, one man, 20 years old and one woman of 30. We would be glad if the Conference paid visits to these injured people.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement. Are there any other speakers who wish to take the floor? That is not the case.

Before I adjourn this plenary meeting, I should like to recall that, as announced last Thursday, I shall put before the Conference for adoption our next plenary meeting, on Thursday 31 March, the recommendation contained in paragraph 12 of the progress report on the twenty-fifth session of the Ad hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events. In that recommendation, it is suggested that the next session of the Ad hoc Group should be convened from 25 July to 5 August 1988 in Geneva.

I wish to inform members of the Conference that on Thursday, 31 March, we shall have the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati, addressing the Conference as first speaker. As is usual when we have a high-level visitor, I invite members to be present in this room at 9.55 a.m.

As I have no other business for today, I shall now adjourn this plenary meeting.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 31 March, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.