

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-THIRD PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Thursday, 11 August 1988, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Wisber Loeis (Indonesia)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 473rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

In accordance with its programme of work the Conference continues today with its consideration of agenda item 3, entitled "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters". In conformity with rule 30 of its rules of procedure, any member wishing to do so may raise any issue relevant to the work of the Conference.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Italy, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Nigeria. I now give the floor to my first speaker for today, the representative of Italy, Ambassador Pugliese.

Mr. PUGLIESE (Italy): Mr. President, speaking for the first time since the beginning of our summer session, I wish to associate myself with the warm congratulations and good wishes that have been extended to you by the previous speakers on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference for the month of August. We have the fullest confidence in your personal ability to guide our work, and I wish to assure you of the full co-operation of the Italian delegation during this month. I wish also to express my appreciation to your distinguished predecessors, Ambassador Teja of India and Ambassador Meiszter of Hungary.

May I also take this opportunity to welcome other colleagues who have recently joined us? - Ambassadors Kostov of Bulgaria, Ruoro of Kenya, de Rivero of Peru. To our colleagues who are leaving or have recently left Geneva and whose co-operation we highly appreciated, I wish all success in their new duties.

The summer session of the Conference on Disarmament resumed within an international political framework which continues to be characterized by sustained negotiating dynamics - both bilateral and multilateral - on disarmament issues. Two major events, in particular, were recorded in the field of arms control: the Moscow summit and the third United Nations special session devoted to disarmament.

The first event fully confirmed the positive trend of East-West relations. Indeed, the political significance of the fourth summit meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev marks - in our view - a further stabilization in the dialogue between the United States and the Soviet Union and a broader understanding between the two super-Powers on disarmament issues. Within the framework of these encouraging prospects, we think that the convergences reached in Moscow on limiting nuclear explosions and banning chemical weapons are particularly significant, and likely to have a positive impact on the progress of our work.

The Moscow agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union on joint verification experiments, and the will reiterated by the leaders of these two countries to reach a prompt conclusion on a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons, constitute a major contribution towards achieving further progress on such items in this forum.

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The third special session devoted to disarmament was held in New York in the context of the promising trend in relations between the two super-Powers. As Minister Andreotti stressed in his speech, the Italian Government expected the session to provide an opportunity for imparting new momentum to the pursuit of disarmament objectives, by preventing a stalemate in multilateral negotiations, which would be in contrast with the dynamism existing at the bilateral level. In order to impart momentum to multilateral negotiations, we think that it is necessary, in particular, to seek, with imagination and realism - as stated also by the United Nations Secretary-General in his opening speech at SSOD-III - the way to reconcile the diverse legitimate security concerns of all States.

Despite the fact that the draft of the final document was not accepted by consensus and approved, we believe that SSOD-III did not entirely fall short of the goals indicated by the United Nations Secretary-General. In our view, the third special session did offer an important opportunity for reflection; at least it contributed to a more precise identification of existing difficulties and of the technical and political options for solving them, within the context of a reiterated general commitment to dialogue and compromise - which failed to persist only during the last stage of our work.

If it is correct to draw this lesson from the special session, we none the less believe that there is a need to establish a useful pattern of cross-fertilization between bilateral and multilateral negotiations. A second element for consideration stemming from SSOD-III seems to us the confirmation that regional conflicts substantially hinder the achievement of more significant progress along the path towards disarmament. Without a lessening of the tensions generated by those conflicts, it is difficult to hope that the multilateral disarmament process might progress at a stable pace. We therefore deem it appropriate to consider solutions capable of preventing the use of force, since they are propitious to arms control, as well as disarmament.

On the issue of nuclear tests, SSOD-III recorded a certain convergence of views on the reaffirmation of the goal of their cessation, within the framework of an effective nuclear disarmament process. A common trend was also registered on the role that the Conference on Disarmament must play in this field, side by side with the role which the United States and the Soviet Union are already playing in their bilateral negotiations.

On the occasion of the Moscow summit between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev, it was possible to note some interesting progress in the United States-USSR negotiations on the reduction of their strategic nuclear arsenals. It is a good foundation for further progress in the nuclear disarmament field between the two super-Powers in a context of undiminished security. But what matters most is that in Moscow the United States and the Soviet Union concluded a detailed agreement on joint verification experiments. This is bound to pave the way - within the framework of agreed and effective verification measures - to the ratification of the threshold test-ban Treaty of 1974 and the peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty of 1976, and to subsequent negotiation on further limitations on tests, in yield and in

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number. We consider such a gradual and pragmatic approach to be most appropriate for the safeguarding of general security requirements, and therefore likely to allow step-by-step achievement of the goal of the cessation of all nuclear tests.

These developments lead us to hope for a genuine resumption by the Conference on Disarmament of its work on this issue. The starting-point should be discussion on substantive aspects of the future ban - such as its scope and the verification régime - in line with the proposals on the mandate and the working programme submitted by the Western Group. Only by starting from a pragmatic approach, based on the thorough examination of concrete issues, do we think it is possible to lay down the indispensable premises for future multilateral negotiations on matters with such broad strategic and security implications. We are convinced that the contribution which the Group of Scientific Experts can give to defining a general and effective verification régime will be of primary importance. Adequate verification measures, capable of ensuring respect for the relevant agreements by all parties, represent a central element of a step-by-step process towards the conclusion of a comprehensive ban on nuclear experiments.

On the occasion of his speech at SSOD-III, the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs recalled the deep-rooted conviction of the Italian Government that - within the context of general and complete disarmament - outer space must be exclusively devoted to peaceful uses. On that occasion, Minister Andreotti expressed, in particular, the hope that the Conference on Disarmament may achieve some progress in this field, despite the undeniable political, strategic and technological difficulties involved.

During the work of the special session we were able to note a convergence of views both on the fact that the Conference on Disarmament must intensify its efforts in this area, and on the responsibility that falls on all States in reaching the goal of the peaceful use of space. An important - if not altogether decisive - contribution to the progress of the debate in this forum might derive from the positive development of the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union, and we whole-heartedly hope that a common approach will be agreed upon in the bilateral talks at present under way in Geneva, also with respect to the offence-defence relationship.

Regarding the possibility that in this sector of disarmament too a rapprochement between the American and Soviet positions may soon occur, the new initiative in the field of space co-operation for civil purposes agreed upon at the recent Moscow summit seems to us to justify some optimism. While awaiting these desirable negotiating developments, it remains important for the Conference on Disarmament, through its subsidiary body, to pursue the work done so far. On the one hand, it should specify in greater detail the various aspects of the legal régime which applies to arms control in outer space, and, on the other, it should examine some of the activities at present being pursued in space.

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As regards the legal régime, we consider that in-depth consideration is still necessary to define some technological aspects unambiguously, and to reach a more precise understanding of the real scope and objectives of future rules in the field of arms control in outer space. In this context, however, we would like to underscore the major contribution to the strengthening of the existing legal régime which would derive from stricter compliance with the bilateral and multilateral agreements which form this régime, as well as broader adhesion to them. In addition to the legal topics, we believe that some progress should also be made in the field of verification and modalities for ensuring compliance with the agreements.

In conclusion, we wish to stress that - in line with a realistic approach and a renewed spirit of co-operation - our common reflection on outer space should not lose sight of the developments which are shaping up at the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union, while encouraging their positive conclusion.

Another item in the Conference on Disarmament's agenda upon which significant convergences emerged during the third special session on disarmament is that of a global ban on chemical weapons. Already last spring's session of the Conference on Disarmament seems to us to have made further advancement in analysing important matters yet unsolved, thus showing that we now have a concrete opportunity to eliminate once and for all the serious threat to peace and the well-being of mankind represented by this category of particularly hideous armaments.

Recent dramatic regional events indicate the extent of the risk of proliferation of chemical weapons. They further prove that such weapons not only constitute a potential threat, but are easily used with devastating effects on civilian populations as well. We therefore believe that the ongoing efforts must be intensified so as to impart greater momentum to the negotiating process. Only the conclusion of our effort in the shortest possible time required for the co-operative solution of the major negotiating difficulties can offer an adequate response to the preoccupations of so many governments and the anxious questions of the public.

It remains to define some aspects of the ban, mainly those requiring further political and legal work. I would mention, in the first instance, the order of destruction of chemical weapons, as well as the various issues involved in the aspects of jurisdiction and control of the future ban. Other aspects, such as verification of the destruction of arsenals and control of permitted industrial activities subject to the prohibition régime, are widely accepted as to their basic principles. However, a number of technical implications are also involved which still require adequate in-depth consideration and final definition.

In our view, this area allows of innovative and pragmatic solutions as well. Agreement on them will depend in large part upon the concrete and exhaustive nature of the premises on which they are founded. In particular, I refer to the need for a timely and adequate assessment of the impact which technological developments may have on those chemical compounds that are on

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the borderline between toxic chemicals and chemicals whose purpose is not prohibited; the proper definition of the characteristics of production facilities which can operate on the margin between legal production and activities banned under the convention; identification of the procedures, techniques and equipment (especially the most innovative ones) which can be used for verification and monitoring of industrial production; and modalities for the protection of industrial patents and any confidential information related to production when a plant is subject to inspection or controls.

The detailed identification of the numerous technical questions inherent in these problems can benefit from wider co-operation in their analysis amongst scientists and experts from all countries concerned. The need to extend such co-operation was recognized by the scientists gathered in a forum held in Rome last May by Centro Ettore Majorana, a well-known Italian scientific association devoted to the promotion of international academic relations.

Because of its short duration, this meeting did not aim at providing exclusive solutions to the numerous problems mentioned above. Its objective was that of singling out some methodological guidelines capable of improving the effectiveness of international co-operation on a number of crucial aspects inherent in the ban of chemical weapons. A report on this work is being published, and we intend to submit it in due course to the Conference. In the meantime, it might be useful to provide some indications of the conclusions reached by the international scientists who participated in the forum. They pointed to the priority need to accelerate the definition of verification and control procedures; the urgency of initiating wider co-operation amongst scientists and experts from all countries concerned with a view to solving the problems cited; within such a framework, the usefulness of concentrating research on the possible standardization of analytical methods, instruments and verification procedures; the advisability of envisaging measures for control of the future research and development of toxic chemical agents to prevent the development of new chemical weapons, as well as to study the formulation of an open list of chemical agents which may potentially pose risks to the stability and effectiveness of the ban being negotiated; and lastly, the usefulness of the contribution which may be rendered by systematically resorting to an experimental method for assessing the procedures under article VI of the present draft convention (in particular as regards the crucial list of key precursors) with the assistance of international experts.

We think that - in view of the authority and independence of the sources from which they derive, which also represent a wide spectrum of opinions - these indications merit close attention and deserve to be considered from a practical and concrete viewpoint. Italy is therefore investigating a possible national contribution in that direction. We invite the member States of the Conference to draw from the above indications an encouragement to continue with increased determination along the path towards the solution of the technical difficulties still preventing us from finalizing the draft treaty for a global ban on chemical weapons. This will really be possible if we agree to be guided by a genuinely co-operative spirit.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Italy for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Ambassador Nazarkin.

Mr. NAZARKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, it falls to you to occupy the Chair in a month which plays a special role in the history of the nuclear age. On 6 August 1945 Hiroshima was subjected to atomic bombardment, followed by Nagasaki on 9 August. Soviet people, together with mankind as a whole, mourn the losses suffered by the Japanese people as a result of the use of nuclear arms by the United States. The tragedy of these two Japanese cities confronted the whole world with the grim reality that mankind had entered the nuclear era. It is a monstrous paradox that the greatest achievement of science, the splitting of the atom's nucleus, was used to create weapons of mass destruction and became a threat to the very existence of mankind.

At the same time, the month of August marks events of a completely different nature that inspire hope and optimism. On 5 August 1963 the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water was concluded, while on 6 August 1985, the day of the 40th anniversary of the tragedy of Hiroshima, the Soviet Union declared its unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing, which it strictly observed for 18 months. And finally, the historic date of 1 August 1988. At noon Moscow time, on a test range to the north-west of the town of Saryozek, a cluster of four OTR-22 missiles, the first of 2,400 Soviet and United States nuclear missiles scheduled to be eliminated under the INF Treaty, was destroyed. It took humanity 33 years to get from the first use of nuclear weapons to the beginning of their destruction.

The following words are inscribed on the cenotaph in Hiroshima: "Rest in peace; the mistake shall never be repeated". An earnest in this direction is the INF Treaty, under which, according to calculations by experts, the total nuclear equivalent of 32,000 Hiroshimas will be removed from the nuclear arsenals of the USSR and the United States over a period of three years. This constitutes in all just 4 per cent of the nuclear weapon stockpiles of the two parties. But it is only a start. The conclusion of the INF Treaty is a concrete, tangible result of changes in our position on disarmament issues which have taken place in the past two to three years as part of a profound, comprehensive restructuring in our country. The changes in the foreign policy area result from the internal changes that are occurring in our lives. In other words, the major changes in our own home have called for new approaches to international affairs as well.

In response to the nuclear challenge that we and the entire socialist world faced, it was necessary to achieve strategic parity with the United States. And this was accomplished. But while concentrating vast resources and attention on the military aspect, we did not always make use of the political opportunities opened up by the fundamental changes in the world to assure State security, scale down tension and achieve mutual understanding between nations. As a result we allowed ourselves to be drawn into an arms race, which could not but affect the country's socio-economic development and its international situation. Meanwhile the arms race was approaching a

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critical point. If we had not overturned the logic of this course of events we could actually have found ourselves on the brink of military confrontation. This served as a starting-point for what we now call new political thinking.

As we analysed the contemporary world, we realized more clearly that international relations, without losing their class character, are increasingly taking the form of relations between nations. We noted the enhanced role of peoples, nations and emerging new national entities in world affairs. And this implies that there is no ignoring the diversity of interests in international affairs. From the standpoint of the present day, with its mounting nuclear menace, the heightening of other global problems and the progressive internationalization of all the processes in the world, which is ever more integrated and interdependent for all its contradictions, we have sought a deeper understanding of the interrelationship between classes and the interests of humanity as a whole. This led us to the conclusion that common human values have primacy in our age. In fact, the very survival of civilization has now become the principal universal problem.

In our assessment, certain favourable tendencies can be observed at present in international life. This is manifested in the nascent decline in confrontation, the growing contacts between the States of East and West, the creation of favourable prerequisites for curbing the arms race and settling regional conflicts. At the same time there has not yet been a radical change for the better. The situation in the world remains complicated and contradictory. Great numbers of nuclear arms remain, nuclear tests continue, new types of weapon are being produced and the danger that mankind, life itself on our planet, will be annihilated, has not been removed. That is why the fundamental issue of our time is the prevention of war, the cessation of the arms race and a decisive move to disarmament, first and foremost nuclear disarmament.

The nineteenth Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union approved the approach of the Soviet leadership to the problem of eliminating the danger of war through frank, constructive dialogue and disarmament, which opened the way to the conclusion of the INF Treaty and a shift to the practical plane in the negotiations on nuclear, chemical and conventional arms.

Turning to issues related to the activities of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to start with the situation at the negotiations on a chemical weapon ban. During the recession preceding the resumption of the negotiations, important events took place - most importantly, the Soviet-American summit meeting and the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament. The issues involved in banning chemical weapons occupied a prominent place at both the meeting of the top leaders of the USSR and the United States and the special session. The joint statement on the Soviet-American meeting in Moscow underlined the continuing urgency of concluding an effective convention on a comprehensive, effectively verifiable and truly global ban on chemical weapons encompassing all chemical-weapons-capable States.

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There is no doubt that the participants in the Conference take into account the considerable interest shown towards the negotiations on chemical weapons at the third special session. There was hardly a delegation there that did not address the issue of their prohibition. Thus the negotiations have resumed in very favourable political conditions. What is important now is to achieve results, to translate these conditions into the language of specific agreements on the issues which still remain unresolved. Among such unresolved issues I would mention first of all the problem of the non-production of chemical weapons in commercial industry. It is complicated if only because it is necessary to establish a régime that would be effective from the point of view of non-production of chemical weapons and at the same time would not impede the normal development of chemistry for peaceful purposes. One of the aspects of this problem is ensuring the confidentiality of the information on facilities which is to be submitted to the technical secretariat. We share the view expressed by the distinguished representative of Canada, Ambassador Marchand, that it is necessary to consider studying practical ways of protecting such information, naturally without prejudice to the effective implementation of the future convention. A positive contribution to the consideration of this issue was made by the meeting of chemical industry representatives which was held in July.

It is also extremely important that in solving the problem of non-production we have to deal with different forms of ownership, private and public. In other words, differences in the social systems of States are of direct relevance in this issue. Obviously, this element is bound up first and foremost with the complex nature of the search for a mutually acceptable solution regarding schedule [1] chemicals. As you know, we have proposed that all the permitted production of such chemicals should be concentrated at a single specialized small-scale facility for each party.

We proceed from the premise that the convention should not only ensure the destruction of today's chemical weapons, but should also prevent the emergence tomorrow of new and more dangerous types of such weapons, which would in addition be still more difficult to verify. The convention should contain guarantees against a re-emergence of this means of mass destruction. The Soviet delegation intends to continue its active participation in the search for a mutually acceptable solution to this problem.

A useful role in finalizing an agreement on the régimes for verification of non-production of chemical weapons can be played by the experiment at chemical plants proposed by the Soviet delegation. We note with satisfaction that interest in such an experiment is growing and that preparations for it are entering a practical phase. The order of destruction of chemical weapon stocks and production facilities remains unsettled. While developing the order of destruction it is important to observe with care the principle that the security of States should be undiminished. We consider that the next step should be the completion of work on incorporating organically in the appropriate parts of the "rolling text" the Soviet-American document on chemical weapon production facilities presented in April this year.

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Regrettably, we have not yet advanced on article X, concerning the provision of assistance to States parties to the convention in the area of protection against chemical weapons. This is an important problem associated with the security of parties to the convention, and deserves serious examination. As our position on the content of article X is flexible, we could support the development of provisions on collective measures by States parties to the convention to resist the use or threat of use of chemical weapons, including the establishment within the framework of the convention of multilateral machinery for mutual assistance among States parties in this area. In our opinion one of the ways to solve this problem could be the conclusion of special agreements between States parties and the technical secretariat specifying the forms, types and order of provision of assistance in conformity with decisions of the Executive Council.

The Soviet delegation is also prepared to agree to inclusion in the convention of provisions on co-operation among States parties to the convention in the area of defence against chemical weapons on the basis of voluntary bilateral and multilateral agreements. Furthermore, we believe that the reaching of agreement on banning military attacks against States parties' chemical weapon storages, destruction facilities and other facilities declared in and covered by the convention would contribute to strengthening the security of the States parties to the convention and to the effective operation of the Convention.

The Soviet delegation notes with satisfaction the progress made in developing the provisions of the convention concerning the designation of inspectors for challenge inspections, as well as examination of the reports presented by inspection groups carrying out such inspections. We hope that in the very near future this progress will make it possible to move on to consideration of the key problems in article IX which are still preventing its adoption. I have in mind first and foremost the need to include in the convention provisions that would ensure compulsory challenge inspection without the right of refusal at the request of any State party to the convention at any point and at any facility of another party. We also proceed from the understanding that challenge inspection procedures should be totally without prejudice to the principle of compulsory and effective verification.

To our mind it is time to come to grips with the issues connected with the composition of the Executive Council and other aspects of the establishment and activities of the bodies responsible for the implementation of the future convention, including financial issues. In particular, we consider that the idea of a possible division of the future organization's budget into two parts, administrative and operational expenses, is a useful one. The first part would cover expenses on personnel, current administrative activities, the holding of meetings of various bodies and the like. The second would cover practical activities to ensure systematic international verification of compliance with the convention. States' contributions for administrative expenses would be assessed on the basis of the United Nations funding rules and practices. A given State's contribution to cover operational expenses would be approximately equal to the level of expenses required for systematic international verification on the territory of that State party.

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Under the direct guidance of the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, the distinguished representative of Poland, Ambassador Sujka, work on the final clauses of the convention is moving forward. Thus, in our view, we can count on definite progress in the negotiations by the end of the summer session of the Conference on Disarmament. And yet the pace of the negotiations cannot be considered as satisfactory. The Soviet delegation believes that it is also important to put the inter-sessional period to maximum use for negotiating purposes. We consider that for this purpose we could use at least four weeks in November and December this year, after the completion of the First Committee's work in New York, and also practically the whole month of January 1989. If the preparations for the inter-sessional work are to be more purposeful, it is necessary to define in advance the issues to be concentrated on in the inter-sessional period.

Progress towards a convention banning chemical weapons at the negotiating table must, we feel, be complemented and supported by co-ordinated efforts on a broader international scale as well. One of the areas where such efforts could be made is that of measures to ensure confidence-building and openness. To promote the solution of this problem, the Soviet delegation introduced on 18 February 1988 a memorandum on multilateral data exchange in connection with the convention now being negotiated. It provoked considerable interest and wide reaction. Interesting counter-proposals have been put forward, in particular by the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany in document CD/828. We would be prepared to agree to modification of the volume and order of the multilateral data exchange we propose, taking into consideration other existing proposals, in particular within the framework of the scheme set out in the proposal I referred to from the Federal Republic of Germany, which provided for declarations of the presence of chemical weapons on national and foreign territories, the aggregate number of all facilities which are proposed to be covered by the future convention in that State, (CW production facilities, CW storage facilities, plants for production of schedule [1], [2] and [3], chemicals, etc.), and also the names of chemicals produced for CW purposes, types of munitions and chemical warfare agents, the names of schedule [2] and [3] chemicals produced in commercial industry, and plans and methods for CW destruction. However, it seems to us important as a matter of principle that the multilateral data exchange should include the declaration of volumes of CW stocks, which is particularly important both as a confidence-building measure and as a point of departure for negotiating a number of specific provisions of the convention, including those on the order of destruction of stockpiles.

The information provided within the framework of the multilateral data exchange must certainly be exact and truthful. In this respect we are in complete agreement with the point of view expressed by the distinguished representative of the United States, Ambassador Friedersdorf, in his statement of 28 July 1988. As regards the information recently presented by the United States on its CW production facilities, we are now examining the American document.

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Another important area of efforts outside the negotiations could be described as moral and political preparation for the convention's entry into force. We welcome the statement by the distinguished representative of Austria, made at the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament on 4 August 1988, that his Government "intends to take the necessary steps to be among the first group of States to sign the convention". It would be useful if other States also spelled out their position in this regard.

The proliferation of chemical weapons, which has already led to tragic results, has recently prompted greater and greater concern throughout the world. Concern on this subject has been expressed in particular in the statement by the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr. Hayden, which was distributed today. Many representatives at the Conference on Disarmament have expressed alarm and condemnation in connection with the proliferation and use of chemical weapons. The Soviet delegation agrees with them. We are deeply convinced that the only correct conclusion to be drawn is that it is necessary to speed up by every possible means the conclusion of a convention on a comprehensive and global ban on chemical weapons as the most reliable guarantee of their non-proliferation and non-use. We call all the participants in the negotiations to this task. We note with satisfaction that the same conclusion was reached today by the distinguished representative of Italy, Mr. Pugliese.

"Nuclear test ban" appears as the first item on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. This item was included in the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament in 1962, and was then transferred to the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. All in all this item has been on the agenda of the multilateral disarmament negotiating body for more than 25 years. However, we must note with deep regret that over a quarter of a century we have never managed to start negotiations on this agenda item, despite the fact that it is exactly what is required by the very status of the Conference. Why is it not possible to get work moving on a multilateral nuclear test ban? For a long time we were told that the major obstacle was the complexity of verification. Let us have a look at the state of affairs in this area.

The Group of Seismic Experts has been functioning under the auspices of the Conference since 1976, and recently completed its twenty-sixth regular session. The Group has been conducting useful work in the area of developing an international seismic data exchange system, including preparations for the experiment on level II data exchange. There is no doubt that such an exchange of seismic data can play an important role in the verification of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. However, we must not overlook other existing methods. On 7 July of this year the representative of Sweden, Maj Britt Theorin, very properly reminded us of this fact, referring to a constructive exchange of views at a conference held in Linköping, Sweden, in May this year. "At this Conference", said M. B. Theorin, "the necessity of adequate verification was stressed, and various methods, such as seismological monitoring, satellite verification and on-site inspection were discussed." In this connection, I would like to remind you of our proposal put forward last year for the establishment of a special group of scientific experts to prepare practical proposals for a system for verification of the non-conduct of

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nuclear tests, as well as the establishment of an international system of global radiation safety monitoring using space communication links. The group would consist of experts in the fields of geophysics, radiochemistry, close-range seismology, atmospheric radioactivity, and the like. We believe that the effectiveness of verification of a comprehensive nuclear test ban should not only be judged by the potential of each of these methods taken separately, but taken as a whole.

The 25th anniversary of the Moscow partial test-ban Treaty was recently celebrated. When it was being concluded, it proved impossible to agree on verification of an underground test ban. At that time the USSR, the United States and Great Britain were taking different approaches to the issue of verification. It was extremely difficult to find a common denominator, a balance of interests in this area. The Soviet Union now actively favours diversified verification, both national and international with on-site inspections. So verification is no longer an obstacle to a comprehensive test ban. The delegation of the USSR is seeking the establishment of a special auxiliary body that could conduct negotiations on the question of a nuclear test ban. At the same time we are taking into consideration the real difficulties encountered by the Conference on Disarmament in discussing this issue. Therefore we consider it necessary to reach a judicious compromise taking into account the existing proposals in this regard. I would like to lend support to the proposal made by the distinguished representative of Czechoslovakia, Mr. Vejvoda. (He initially made this proposal in an unofficial way in his capacity as President of the Conference in April 1987, and reaffirmed it in his statement in plenary on 21 July this year.) In our view this proposal takes into account the concerns of the different groups of States and opens up the possibility of a compromise solution on the establishment of a working body under agenda item 1.

We have been and remain advocates of a radical solution - an immediate and comprehensive nuclear test ban. But we do not take a maximalist approach - all or nothing. Taking into account the realities and the degree of preparedness of the other nuclear Powers, primarily the United States, we favour the gradual and stage-by-stage settlement of this important problem, through such intermediate solutions as limitations on the number and yield of nuclear tests. That is why we are holding bilateral negotiations on this issue with the United States of America. Once understandings have been reached on improved measures to verify the 1974 and 1976 treaties, there will be an opportunity to drastically lower the ceilings and the number of nuclear explosions per year. The sooner that happens, the better. In any case we shall not be found wanting. But this should not be an aim in itself. We consider it necessary to advance towards the conclusion of a treaty on a comprehensive and general nuclear weapon test ban at an accelerated pace. The Soviet Union, realizing the importance and urgency of this problem, is prepared to make use of any opportunity to attain that goal. We favour the holding of parallel multilateral and Soviet-American bilateral talks on nuclear testing. After all, bilateral negotiations can lead only to bilateral measures. Testing is also conducted by some other States. Besides, a multilateral nuclear test ban would constitute an effective means to counter the proliferation of nuclear arms, complementing the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty.

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We view with understanding the proposal by Mexico, Indonesia, Peru, Sri Lanka and Yugoslavia, and also Venezuela, for amending the 1963 partial nuclear test-ban Treaty. The Soviet Union has already stated that in principle it supports the idea of broadening the scope of the Moscow Treaty by incorporating into it a ban on underground tests. This approach of ours was also reflected during the last United Nations General Assembly session in our support for resolution 42/26 B on this issue.

Little more than a month is left till the end of the summer session of the Conference on Disarmament. What results will we carry to the United Nations General Assembly? What successes in developing disarmament measures shall we report to the world community? Soon we shall have to sum up the results on this account. In the time left till the end of the session, the Soviet delegation intends to do everything in its power to make the results of the current session as substantive as possible.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria, Ambassador Azikiwe.

Mr. AZIKIWE (Nigeria): Mr. President, as this is the first time I am taking the floor since your appointment as the representative of your country to the Conference on Disarmament, I should like first of all to join preceding speakers in welcoming you, on behalf of the Nigerian delegation, to the Conference on Disarmament. The Nigerian delegation is particularly pleased at seeing you, the distinguished representative of Indonesia, a country with which Nigeria enjoys the most cordial relations, presiding over the work of this Conference during the month of August. With your diplomatic skill and wealth of experience, we are confident that you will be able to guide the work of the Conference in the most effective manner. I would like to assure you of the full co-operation and support of my delegation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

May I also take this opportunity to express my delegation's gratitude for the effective manner in which your predecessor, Ambassador Teja of India, conducted the work of the Conference in the month of July? We regret that Ambassador Teja as well as other distinguished colleagues - Ambassadors Meizster of Hungary, Ahmad of Pakistan and Tin Tun of Burma - have been reassigned from the Conference on Disarmament by their Governments. We wish them greater success in their new assignments. The Nigeria delegation would also like to welcome Ambassadors Kostov of Bulgaria, Ruoro of Kenya and de Rivero of Peru, who have recently been appointed by their Governments to the Conference on Disarmament. We look forward to working with them.

Before examining the items on the agenda of this Conference, I should like to comment briefly on the recently concluded third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. As we can all testify, the session took place in a highly propitious international climate and at a most opportune period in the history of the disarmament process. Relations between the two major super-Powers, which had often remained sour and had constantly impeded progress in disarmament efforts, had improved tremendously, resulting

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in the successful conclusion of the historic INF Treaty between the major nuclear-weapon States, which put into motion the actual process of nuclear disarmament. Efforts are also being intensified for an agreement on a 50 per cent reduction in the strategic nuclear weapons of the super-Powers.

Nigeria, and I believe several other countries too, had hoped that the momentum generated by these significant developments preceding the third special session would be reflected in the proceedings of the session, thus ensuring its successful conclusion. It is therefore regrettable that the session failed to adopt a consensus document, which would have given much needed impetus to the multilateral disarmament process, thereby strengthening and complementing the achievements in the bilateral process. Much as we cannot disguise our disappointment over the inability of the session to adopt a concluding document, it would, however, be erroneous and misleading for anyone to conclude that the session was a failure. Indeed, it would be unrealistic to overlook the tremendous progress achieved during the special session simply because a few paragraphs out of the 67-paragraph draft document of the session presented by the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, Ambassador Ahmad of Pakistan, had not been agreed when time ran out.

The participation of very high-level dignitaries testifies to the importance which the international community attached to the session and to the multilateral disarmament process. The general debate also revealed that the international community was more concerned than ever before with the preservation of humanity and of civilization. Verification was given a prominent place during the session, and consensus emerged to request the Secretary-General to undertake, with the assistance of a group of qualified governmental experts, an in-depth study of the role of the United Nations in the field of verification. In his contribution to the general debate at SSOD-III, my Foreign Minister underlined the importance of verification in disarmament agreements. He expressed the view, however, that verification cannot replace the will of States to reach agreement, or to fulfil, in good faith, their undertakings in such agreements.

My delegation has always felt that the burden of monitoring compliance with the terms of any disarmament agreement will rest primarily with the parties. However, even in bilateral disarmament agreements that touch on nuclear weapons, the universal fear engendered by the existence and possible use of this category of weapon makes it essential to insist on a role for a multilateral verification mechanism under the United Nations. Provision for verification by challenge, which features in the INF Treaty, is likely to recur in many subsequent agreements. This is an appropriate area for the United Nations to play a role. Obviously, resort to challenge will not be had lightly by either party to the agreement. However, if this case does arise, the presence of a third party inspector drawn from the United Nations mechanism will be reassuring. This does not demand an expensive apparatus in the United Nations, particularly at this initial stage of nuclear disarmament. But it does require recognition by both super-Powers that the United Nations embodies international interests in nuclear disarmament.

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You will recall that during the session also, consensus emerged that the Conference on Disarmament, the multilateral negotiating body of the international community, remains an indispensable forum in the field of disarmament, and the Conference was urged to intensify its work on various substantive items on its agenda. The international community expects swift and positive results from this Conference. We should therefore rededicate ourselves to the noble objectives for which this Conference was created, and undertake to work in concert to meet the profound aspirations of mankind - the attainment of peace and security.

1 July and 8 August 1988 marked the 10th and the 25th anniversaries of the opening for signature of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and the signing of the partial test-ban Treaty, respectively. Nigeria is a party to both treaties, and indeed was the very first among the 40 members of the Conference on Disarmament to ratify the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Nigeria hoped that both treaties would help to create a safer world by discouraging further testing of nuclear weapons, thereby ending proliferation, whether vertical or horizontal. The two treaties imposed concrete obligations on their depositary Governments, which, inter alia, enjoin the two major nuclear-weapon States to "... seek to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time and to continue negotiations to this end".

Ever since the two treaties came into force, nuclear weapon testing, especially by the super-Powers, has continued unabated, resulting in the colossal accumulation of nuclear weapons and their perfection to an unprecedented degree of precision and lethality, thereby placing mankind on the brink of catastrophe.

Much as it has been said that no new nuclear-weapon States has emerged since the entry into force of the NPT, it would amount to cold comfort to imagine that all is well with the non-proliferation régime. The constant reports one hears about the nuclear weapon programme of South Africa can no longer be ignored. Nigeria is particularly concerned about the balance of security in the African region, where the unrestrained nuclear programme of the South African régime has continued unabated.

If further proliferation of nuclear weapons is to be prevented, then we should immediately commence urgent negotiations on a nuclear test ban. It is incontestable that a nuclear test ban will dismantle the machinery for prosecuting the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and the development of new systems, and will thus create the much needed confidence for progress in disarmament.

The Nigerian delegation is aware that bilateral negotiations are already under way between the two major nuclear-weapon States on the question of a nuclear test ban. The step-by-step approach adopted by them, which would permit testing at agreed yields and at defined intervals of time, unfortunately has the effect of licensing nuclear testing, and would not necessarily prevent the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. The question at issue is the global prohibition of nuclear testing. Since the

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subject concerns the vital security interests of all nations, it falls more appropriately within the purview of this Conference. There should therefore be no further delay in the establishment of a subsidiary body to commence effective negotiations on a nuclear test ban. My delegation believes that a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty must be accorded the utmost priority, as it will reinforce mutual trust not only between the super-Powers but in all regions.

Chemical weapons are weapons of mass destruction which are next to nuclear weapons in their lethality. The use of these dreadful weapons has been prohibited under the 1925 Geneva Protocol, and a convention has been under negotiation for the past two decades. Although much progress has been achieved in the elaboration of the convention in the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, and its conclusion is now in sight, the confirmed reports of the continued use of chemical weapons in warfare underlines in a most regrettable manner the urgent need for a faster pace of work to ensure the early conclusion of a convention on this item. We hope that the Ad hoc Committee will intensify its efforts to conclude outstanding work on the convention at the earliest possible time. The spirit of mutual concession and more mature compromise is required at this stage to overcome the outstanding differences.

I would now like to turn your attention and that of our colleagues to the question of radiological weapons. Nigeria attaches great importance to the question of the clandestine and hostile dumping of radioactive waste in the African region. Africa needs the support of the international community in maintaining its stand against the perils of materials it did not produce and is not technologically equipped to handle. My delegation notes with satisfaction that during SSOD-III consensus was reached on the danger of radiation arising from clandestine dumping of nuclear wastes.

As we are all aware, the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons has been working on a convention that will not only prohibit the development, production, stockpiling and use of radiological weapons, but, more importantly, will prohibit all methods of conducting radiological warfare. I say "more importantly" here purely because radiological weapons as such do not yet exist, whereas two known methods of conducting radiological warfare have been identified. One such method involves attacks against nuclear facilities. The prohibition of attacks against such facilities is currently being negotiated in the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons under Contact Group B.

The lethal effect of radiation that will result from the hostile dumping of radioactive wastes makes the hostile dumping of such wastes or their use in armed conflicts an effective means of conducting radiological warfare. The dumping of radioactive wastes for hostile purposes is a matter of serious concern to Nigeria, and we believe many other countries share this concern. We therefore consider it essential for this issue to be addressed in a clear and unambiguous manner in the radiological weapons convention being considered by Contact Group A. Nigeria believes that it should be essential for each

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State party to the treaty to undertake never, under any circumstances, to dump radioactive wastes for hostile purposes or in an armed conflict in the territory of another State.

The issue of outer space can no longer be swept under the carpet or be shrouded in rhetoric. We can no longer deny the fact that the legal régime governing the activities of States in outer space is grossly inadequate to the task of preventing an arms race there. The legal régime has been overtaken by rapid developments in science and technology which were not foreseen when the treaties were drawn up. Although the military activities currently taking place in space do not as yet involve the use of weapons, it would be timely at this stage to adopt necessary measures to prevent the extension of the arms race to outer space. Such a race would be extremely expensive and highly destabilizing. Outer space is the common heritage of mankind and must be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, for the benefit of mankind. The last frontier of mankind should never be permitted to become an arena for the arms race. We hope that the Ad hoc Committee on Outer Space will soon be given the appropriate mandate to give serious consideration to this matter.

The Nigerian delegation is pleased to note that active work is currently going on in the Ad hoc Committee on negative security assurances to break the impasse which has been affecting the item for the past decade. As you are no doubt aware, the Nigerian delegation submitted a proposal during the 1987 session (CD/768) categorizing non-nuclear-weapon States according to the diversity of their security situations, and proposing undertakings to be assumed by the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States. The proposal took into consideration the various conditions imposed by the nuclear-weapon States in their various unilateral declarations, and was aimed at breaking the stalemate on the question. During the spring session this year, the Nigerian delegation once more put forward an alternative option to the effect that nuclear-weapon States should set aside their various unilateral declarations to facilitate effective negotiations on, and the adoption of, a convention on the basis of a common formula. Under this option the nuclear-weapon States would have the right to make reservations while ratifying the convention. It is our hope that the international community will eventually develop effective measures to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

In ending this statement, let me re-emphasize that, coming from a country traditionally dedicated to the cause of international peace, we shall continue to exert our best endeavours to ensure constructive participation in the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Nigeria for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. That concludes my list of speakers for today. The representative of India has asked for the floor. I give him the floor.

Mr. SOOD (India): Mr. President, permit me to take this opportunity to extend to you the felicitations of my delegation on your accession to the presidency of the Conference for the month of August. We are indeed happy to see the distinguished representative of Indonesia, a country with which India enjoys close bilateral ties of friendship and co-operation, preside over our deliberations. I would like to assure you of my delegation's full co-operation in the discharge of your responsibilities. May I also take this opportunity to thank delegations for their kind words addressed to Ambassador Teja, which have been duly conveyed to him?

The distinguished representative of Pakistan has thought it proper to raise, in this essentially multilateral forum, matters that are strictly of a bilateral character between India and Pakistan. These are matters that concern Indo-Pakistan relations, which have a history that is unique by virtue of specific factors attending the partition of the subcontinent. These are also matters that are deeper and far wider in scope than just the nuclear programmes undertaken by the two countries.

As far as I am aware, India and Pakistan have been engaged for some years in the difficult task of establishing a sound, lasting and all-round basis for improvements in their bilateral relations. The task is not made any easier by choosing, as the representative of Pakistan has done, this forum for airing its views on matters that are currently receiving bilateral attention. I do not propose to follow the example of the distinguished representative of Pakistan. I shall therefore confine myself to exercising my right of reply and in doing so, as briefly as possible, limit myself to explaining the essentials of India's policy.

First, every Prime Minister of India since our independence has stated on the floor of our Parliament that India's nuclear activities are intended solely for peaceful purposes. This policy is fully understood by most Governments. Experts are aware that India's nuclear energy programme is not a recent development but an integral element of India's development strategy. The programme for nuclear energy development up to the year 2000 has been debated in our Parliament. Further, it is administered by a civilian ministry. These aspects give our nuclear energy development programme an open character, in sharp distinction to that of Pakistan.

Secondly, it does not seem a valid reason for India to try to allay the self-inspired doubts of Pakistan by accepting its proposals to join a nuclear-weapon-free zone, or sign the NPT, or agree to full-scope safeguards, or accept mutual inspections, or a regional nuclear test ban. India's principled opposition to the NPT has been consistent, and is based on the tenets of non-discrimination and equal treatment. India's stand with respect to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is consistent with the provisions of the Final Document adopted by consensus in 1978 at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Our positions on these and other related aspects have already been made known in other forums, and I do not intend to repeat them here.

(Mr. Sood, India)

However, it would be a grave mistake to imagine that the improvement of Indo-Pakistan relations is dependent on the nuclear question alone. There are many other questions that have a bearing on our bilateral relations. Regionalizing or multilateralizing such questions will certainly not improve bilateral relations, which, on the contrary, may become more complicated.

My delegation would like to revert to this matter at a subsequent date, if necessary.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of India for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. Does any other member wish to take the floor at this stage? I see none.

The secretariat has circulated today an informal paper containing the list of meetings to be held by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies during next week. As usual, this timetable is merely indicative and subject to change, if need be. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts the timetable.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: As I mentioned at our plenary meeting on Tuesday of this week, we shall now hold, immediately after I adjourn this plenary meeting, an informal meeting devoted to the consideration of all aspects of the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, including the two reports which were submitted by the Group of Seven (CD/WP.286 and CD/WP.341), as well as the future consideration of this subject by the Conference.

The Co-ordinator of the Western Group has suggested that the next informal meeting on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, scheduled for Tuesday 16 August, should be held instead on Thursday 18 August. As we all know, our schedule of meetings is only indicative and subject to change as appropriate. May I take it that the Conference agrees to reschedule the next informal meeting on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament as suggested above?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday 16 August, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.