

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 1 September 1988, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Ali-Akbar Velayati, (Islamic Republic of Iran)

later: Mr. Ali Shams Ardakani (Islamic Republic of Iran)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 479th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

As the Islamic Republic of Iran assumes the presidency for the month of September and the inter-sessional period until the opening of the 1989 session, I have decided to open personally the first plenary meeting of this month. My country has always recognized the importance of the work carried out by the Conference on Disarmament and, for this reason, I am here today in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Chair of the Conference.

In my capacity as presiding officer, I should first like to extend a warm welcome, on behalf of the Conference, to Her Excellency the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mrs. Helga Hernes, and to His Excellency the Under-Secretary-General for Multilateral and Special Political Affairs of Brazil, Mr. Bernardo Pericás, who will be addressing the Conference today.

On behalf of the Conference, I also wish to extend our thanks to Ambassador Wisber Loeis of Indonesia for the very efficient manner in which he conducted the work of this body during the month of August. He has displayed his well-known diplomatic competence in dealing with a number of questions before the Conference.

In accordance with existing practice, I would like now to deliver an opening statement in my capacity as representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is presiding over the work of the Conference on Disarmament at a momentous time when significant developments in the international arena are being shaped. The Council Chamber in which the Conference normally meets is now being utilized for talks on the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 598 with the objective of bringing about a just, permanent and durable peace for Iran and Iraq and for the whole region. This is a symbolic manifestation of links existing between international peace and security on the one hand and disarmament on the other.

On this occasion, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seyed Ali Khamenei, in a message to the Conference, has expressed his wish for the success of our work in making important decisions for the sake of humanity; decisions which can guarantee international peace and security and prevent the rampant arms race. The message concludes by saying "I hope that members of this august body will be able to take steps towards the realization of the lofty goals of the Conference for a safer world by adopting collective measures for genuine disarmament".

The halting of the arms race and the implementation of disarmament measures have meaning only when they are contemplated within the framework of guaranteeing the security of States collectively. One of the most basic problems underlying the arms race has been the ineffective implementation and use of the system of collective security envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations. In the absence of an effective guarantee for the security of nations, they continue to seek security through military build-up and the self-perpetuating quagmire of the arms race. It has been proved that pursuing

(The President)

such a path has not been able to guarantee authentic security for a single nation or group of countries. The arms race today has become a vicious circle, dissipating the world's economic resources and recognizing no limit for itself. Although the grim future of the arms race is known to all, nevertheless, owing to the absence of any reliable international system or organization capable of checking aggression effectively, this race has become the Hobson's choice of every individual nation. The military build-up and soaring expenditure are not directly linked with the economic might of nations. Rather, the risk of aggression in one region on the one hand, and aggressive policies pursued by others on the other, have been the most instrumental factors in this trend.

The peoples of the world must be assured that if their security is threatened, the international community will come to their assistance. One of the most essential and effective methods of giving such an assurance is full respect for the binding rules of international law or jus cogens manifested in the Charter of the United Nations and crystallized in internationally recognized norms of law such as conventions. It is unfortunate that these rules have been violated in this decade in such a way that the hopes of peoples have almost been dashed. One of the very basic duties towards the cause of disarmament is to restore the hopes of nations in these international rules and regulations through confidence-building measures.

It is sad to see that the Geneva Protocol of 1925 has been violated with impunity so intensely and indiscriminately. It is a very dangerous trend that weapons of mass destruction such as chemical weapons are gradually being treated as normal, and that international reaction to reports of their repeated use, substantiated by various United Nations investigating teams, has been rather acquiescent. If the use of such weapons becomes a routine and effective way of pursuing military objectives, then curbing it will be almost impossible in the future. It is an urgent task of this Conference, as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, to put the final touches to the instrument being negotiated on a comprehensive, total and globally verifiable convention banning the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. Achievements so far have been noteworthy, and the international community is keenly awaiting the early conclusion of this convention. In this respect, the reports of the investigating teams, and particularly Security Council resolutions 612 and 620, will facilitate our work in finalizing the convention.

The outcome of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was disheartening. There was a unique opportunity for the world community to articulate and adopt a multilateral programme of disarmament. Had there not been a lack of political will on the part of a handful of countries, consensus would have been achieved. We have to bear in mind that multilateral and bilateral parleys on disarmament are complementary and mutually supportive. Without one the other will be ineffective at best.

As we are all potential victims of a nuclear catastrophe, the Conference should give life to discussions and negotiations on the first three items of the agenda, dealing with nuclear issues. The nuclear arms race is a moral and spiritual tragedy. For over 40 years, various attempts have been made to justify it with different rationales. This is an effort to explain the

(The President)

inexplicable, defend the indefensible and justify the insane. The existence of nuclear weapons, let alone the threat to use them, is morally unacceptable under any circumstances. There can be no zone or region on Earth that is free from the threat of nuclear annihilation so long as these instruments of genocide are allowed to be developed, perfected and deployed. The INF agreement between the two super-Powers is a move in the right direction, provided that it is followed with concrete and tangible measures to cut nuclear arsenals drastically while at the same time not seeking to redress the balance in other areas. There are now no serious verification obstacles to a comprehensive nuclear test ban. It is a step which is not only technically feasible and politically feasible; it is also long overdue.

Outer space is the common heritage of mankind, and we support efforts to limit the potential for conflict in space, the exploration and exploitation of which is now being pursued by an increasing number of nations. It is essential that we reach agreements that will effectively prevent the weaponization of space and ensure the continuation of an "open skies" régime. The existing legal régime is not sufficient, and the Conference on Disarmament should speed up its efforts to consolidate, reinforce and complete it. Activities in the exploration and use of outer space should be carried out in accordance with international law including the Charter of the United Nations. The ultimate goal of the Conference on Disarmament should be the complete prohibition of the development, testing, production and deployment of space weapons. Until that is achieved, a most urgent partial measure could be a ban on anti-satellite weapons.

The Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons should continue its work on two issues under consideration. It is in the interest of all States to ban attacks on nuclear facilities, since they would lead to mass destruction with grave consequences. The ban on the hostile and clandestine dumping of nuclear waste should also receive due attention in the Committee.

The Conference on Disarmament is entrusted with the weighty responsibility of helping to save future generations from the scourge of war. This is a matter of great significance for all of us, and therefore issues before this Conference must be dealt with conviction and devotion to this cause. I pray to the Almighty to bless you all with success in discharging this valuable duty.

That concludes my opening statement. As Ambassador Nasser, our Permanent Representative in Geneva, is, as you are aware, fully engaged in the current negotiations with the Secretary-General on resolution 598, my senior adviser in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Ambassador Ali Shams Ardakani, will preside over the work of the Conference during this month of September. I now invite Ambassador Ardakani to take this seat as President of the Conference on Disarmament for September.

Mr. Ardakani (Islamic Republic of Iran) took the Chair.

The PRESIDENT: The Conference continues today, in accordance with its programme of work, consideration of agenda item 8, "Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament". In conformity with rule 30 of its rules of procedure, however,

(The President)

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 Norway and Brazil, the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons and the representative of Argentina. I give the floor to the first speaker for today, the representative of Norway, Her Excellency Mrs. Helga Hernes, the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Norway.

Ms. HERNES (Norway): I would like to begin by congratulating you as the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on your assumption today of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament for the month of September. I am pleased that you are assuming this high office at a time when developments in your part of the world are progressing in a favourable manner. I listened with great attention to the important statement given by your Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Ali-Akbar Velayati.

This session of the Conference on Disarmament is taking place in the wake of the third special session devoted to disarmament. My country remains convinced that the process of multilateral disarmament has to be pursued as an integral part of the disarmament process as a whole. In this context, we should not overlook the fact that the special session did bring about constructive discussion and even the narrowing down of different views. Looking back at the third special session, I believe that its outcome confirms the role played by the Conference on Disarmament in promoting the multilateral disarmament process at a time when progress is being achieved in the bilateral negotiations.

When the Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Thorvald Stoltenberg, addressed this forum on 15 March, he presented the publication "Contributions by Norway to the Conference on Disarmament 1982-1987" (document CD/813 of 7 March 1988). Today, I have the honour to introduce two new documents which represent an additional Norwegian contribution to this important forum. They relate to various areas of the chemical weapons convention and a comprehensive nuclear test ban.

A comprehensive, global and effective ban on chemical weapons is a priority issue in the Conference on Disarmament. This important objective is now within reach. It is necessary to sustain the current momentum in the negotiations with a view to concluding the chemical weapons convention at the earliest possible date. No effort should be spared to eliminate this category of weapons of mass destruction. I should like to pay tribute to the Chairman of the Committee on Chemical Weapons in 1988, Ambassador Sujka of Poland. He also ably guided this subsidiary body six years ago, at which time he initiated work on a number of important areas of the convention. Significant progress has been made since then. Nevertheless, we have to recognize that there are still a number of sensitive political issues and complicated technical problems to be resolved.

The convention involves verifying the elimination of stockpiles and production facilities over a 10-year period, as well as monitoring the chemical industry on a permanent basis. Never before has a multilateral treaty of such broad scope, which provides for such comprehensive verification systems, been concluded. The chemical weapons convention will therefore have an important bearing on future multilateral disarmament agreements.

(Ms. Hernes, Norway)

Non-production is one of the major outstanding issues. The discussions during the meeting of industrial experts in July have, however, clarified certain aspects of this question. Moreover, the Soviet proposal for trial inspections of chemical industry facilities, which is being followed up in the Committee on Chemical Weapons, may facilitate a further convergence of views.

So far, only the United States and the Soviet Union have declared that they possess chemical weapons. The other countries which have stocks of such weapons should follow suit. As the two countries possessing the world's largest stocks of chemical weapons, the United States and the Soviet Union have, however, a special responsibility for implementing a ban on chemical weapons. I am therefore pleased to note that President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev reaffirmed at their meeting in Moscow the importance of efforts to address, as a matter of continuing urgency, the unique challenges of a chemical weapons ban and to achieve an effective convention.

The multilateral negotiating process has already been facilitated by the bilateral talks, most recently in the area of destruction of production facilities for chemical weapons. In this context, I also welcome the declaration made by the United States on 28 July concerning the location of its five chemical weapons production facilities.

All participating States in the Conference on Disarmament should make vigorous efforts towards the conclusion of a global, comprehensive and effectively verifiable convention. At this stage in the negotiations there is in fact a need for a multilateral exchange of data relevant to the convention.

I can assure you that Norway, which has no chemical weapons, will continue its active role in the work towards a convention banning these insidious weapons. My country strongly condemns any use of chemical weapons in violation of the Geneva Protocol of 1925. Recent reports on the use of chemical weapons underline the necessity of ridding the world of these abhorrent weapons once and for all.

In 1981 Norway initiated a research programme on verification of the chemical weapons convention. The programme, which is being carried out by the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, is concerned in particular with verification of the alleged use of chemical weapons. The objective of the Norwegian research programme is twofold. First of all, the task has been to develop concrete, practical procedures for verifying the alleged use of chemical weapons which can be applied on a year-round basis and which will cover all the phases of such an investigation. Secondly, field exercises and analytical work have aimed at providing a sound and realistic data base, which will facilitate implementation of the convention once it is in force.

Whereas our previous research has been concentrated on verification of the alleged use of chemical weapons in winter conditions, the exercises in 1987-1988 were undertaken in summer conditions. The main conclusions from this research are contained in document CD/861, which I take pleasure in introducing at this meeting.

(Ms. Hernes, Norway)

As stated in document CD/861, it is of interest in the context of the chemical weapons convention that the nerve agents sarin, soman, tabun and VX, as well as the blister agent mustard gas, can be verified in samples from water, grass, sand or soil after two weeks' exposure to summer conditions. The results have also proved that the procedures developed for winter conditions can be directly applied in summer conditions. The tests have further confirmed the validity of the proposed procedures for verification of the alleged use of chemical weapons, which Canada and Norway presented in document CD/766 of 2 July 1987, and to which the existing "rolling text" refers. Finally, the conclusions point to the necessity of improving the technical aspects of analytical methods in the light of rapid technical and scientific developments.

We believe that work of this nature is useful in connection with the ongoing discussions in the Committee on Chemical Weapons on the conduct of challenge inspections and relevant guidelines on the international inspectorate. In addition, several elements of the elaborated procedures can be used in the verification of other parts of the convention, such as destruction of stocks, etc. Therefore, I am pleased to inform you that the Norwegian research programme will continue with a view to contributing to an effective convention.

A nuclear test ban is one of the most important items on the agenda of this Conference. A test ban must prohibit both nuclear weapon tests and peaceful nuclear explosions, as the latter inevitably provide information of military relevance. My Government welcomes the first joint United States-Soviet verification experiment, which was conducted at the United States test site in Nevada on 17 August. We hope that this experiment and the one which is to take place in two weeks' time at the Soviet test site near Semipalatinsk will pave the way for early ratification of the two threshold treaties of 1974 and 1976.

A global seismological network should constitute the essential part of the verification system for a comprehensive nuclear test ban. This underlines the significance of the work being done by the Ad hoc Group of Scientific Experts on the large-scale global experiment in the exchange and processing of seismic data, and on the concepts of a modern international seismic data exchange system. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the agreement between the United States and Norway on seismic array research. This research co-operation has produced results with a far-reaching impact in the field of seismological verification of a comprehensive nuclear test ban. This began with the establishment of the large-aperture Norwegian Seismic Array (NORSAR) in 1968-1970. Another important step was the opening in 1985 of the advanced, small-aperture NORESS array in southern Norway, and a companion array, ARCESS, deployed in the Arctic region in Finnmark, northern Norway, in 1987.

Today I have the honour to present to this Conference document CD/862 on the establishment of a global seismic network incorporating small-aperture arrays. The document describes the initial findings from the ARCESS array, and addresses the importance of experience with NORESS and ARCESS in the work currently being conducted by the Group of Scientific Experts.

(Ms. Hernes, Norway)

In 1986 Norway proposed that the global seismological network should, as far as practicable, incorporate small-aperture seismic arrays, using the NORESS concept as a basis for standardization (document CD/714 of 14 July 1986). The initial findings from the new ARCESS array reinforce the arguments used as a basis for that proposal.

Norway will continue to attach importance to research efforts aimed at further exploiting the potential of seismic arrays in a future global network. The overall goal of this research will be to contribute to designing and testing a global system. When set up, it will be in the unique position of being capable of providing data for rapid and reliable detection, location and identification of seismic events all over the world. Such a system would be of crucial value in instilling confidence among all States that a comprehensive test-ban treaty is adhered to.

In my statement at the third special session devoted to disarmament, I had the honour to confirm the commitment of the Norwegian Government to making the three seismic installations in Norway - NORSAR, NORESS and ARCESS - available as stations in a global seismological network. These stations, which are among the most modern in the world, provide excellent seismic coverage for a large part of the northern hemisphere as well as parts of the southern hemisphere.

A comprehensive nuclear test ban would contribute to the promotion of both vertical and horizontal non-proliferation efforts. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In our view, the Treaty remains the most important multilateral arms control agreement concluded so far. The Treaty has made a significant contribution to international stability and security. My country attaches fundamental importance to the fourth review conference, which will take place in 1990.

Before concluding I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to express my appreciation, through you, Mr. President, to the delegation of the Soviet Union for also inviting a representative of Norway to the demonstration of the elimination of three SS-20 missiles at the Kapustin Yar test range on 28 August. This demonstration was a manifestation of the significance of the INF Treaty, and my Government is highly appreciative to the two Powers who brought this Treaty about.

I have confined myself to addressing two of the items on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. Norway, which is the endorsed candidate of the western Group for membership of the Conference, takes part in the work of all the subsidiary bodies of the Conference on Disarmament. I can assure you that we shall continue our active participation in the important efforts of this Conference to promote the multilateral disarmament process.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Norway for her statement and for the kind words she addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil, His Excellency the Under-Secretary-General for Multilateral and Special Political Affairs, Mr. Bernardo Pericás.

Mr. PERICAS (Brazil): Mr. President, please accept the best wishes of the delegation of Brazil for the success of your work, and the assurance of our fullest co-operation. We listened with great interest to the statement made by the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran. On behalf of the Brazilian delegation, I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Loeis of Indonesia for the excellent work he accomplished as President of the Conference for the month of August.

The Brazilian Government attaches high priority to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, and firmly believes that the negotiating mandate given to it by the United Nations should be fully explored. The preservation and strengthening of this forum is essential to the international community, especially for the vast majority of sovereign States which, regardless of their military power, cannot renounce the right to have a voice on an equitable and democratic basis on questions related to their own survival.

Brazil is very conscious and proud of the contributions it has made by words and deeds to the cause of peace and disarmament. The record of this Conference and of its predecessor bodies shows that - together with other members of the neutral and non-aligned group - we have always been at the forefront of efforts to reduce the threat of war and international tensions, by presenting creative and realistic proposals, some of which eventually found expression in major international treaties, such as the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the partial test-ban Treaty.

As the Conference on Disarmament enters the last month of formal plenary meetings in its 1988 session, Brazil feels this is an appropriate occasion to take stock of the situation in the field of disarmament and international security. 1988 has been a very significant year in international relations. Its main feature up to now appears to be the advances that have been made towards the solution of some of the major regional crises in the world.

The progress made regarding the question of Afghanistan, the negotiations between Iran and Iraq - which are taking place in this same building - and the quadripartite talks under way on the situation in southern Africa, including the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), are bright examples of the possibilities for peaceful solution of conflicts and a demonstration that there is no real substitute for peace and justice. Although the successes attained in the area of regional conflicts have spurred new manifestations of faith in the virtues of multilateralism, although the international community was quickly asked to give its endorsement and support to the agreements that have so far been reached, this renewal of trust in the United Nations has not extended to other fundamental areas of activity of the Organization.

Last June the third special session of the General Assembly on disarmament took place. Preceded as it was by a significant agreement between the two super-Powers on intermediate nuclear forces, the third SSOD could have benefited from the improved climate to make real progress on the road to disarmament. The international community has, of course, ample reason not to be happy with the lack of consensus at the end of the third SSOD, but it has no grounds either to be severely discouraged or, even less, to feel defeated.

(Mr. Pericás, Brazil)

The same resistance and obstruction that have so far prevented the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted in 1978 would not evaporate even if a new consensual concluding document to complement it had been adopted. The important process of change that is under way on the international scene induced us, perhaps, to a certain degree of over-expectancy, as some of us were persuaded that if multilateralism cannot work when the super-Powers disagree, the converse would automatically be true. Unhappily, the logic of political thinking has once more surprised us. Starting from the same facts - the progress in the dialogue between the super-Powers and in their bilateral negotiations - others came to different conclusions; namely that bilateralism was the correct approach to most items on the disarmament agenda and that multilateralism could only operate, under strict control, in some very precise areas - such as chemical weapons - or on the so-called "horizontal themes" - such as confidence-building measures or verification.

Instead of believing that we are entering an era of renewed bilateralism or selective multilateralism, we would prefer to think that this process of change, if persistent and consistent enough, will gradually bear further results and will at last reinforce true multilateralism, not least in disarmament negotiations. We must recognize, at any rate, that the third SSOD was convened at a moment when trends were still not totally clear, when encouraging signs were still mixed with old fears, when new perceptions interacted with well-established reactions, be it at the bilateral, regional or global level, and these complex and ambiguous mixtures and linkages compounded our difficulties. The "quasi-consensus" of New York was in a way a by-product of this uncertain season the world is living through.

Brazil feels it did its part. As an expression of my country's very deep and serious commitment to disarmament, President Sarney took it upon himself to convey Brazil's message personally to the Assembly. He put forward some principles which we regard as fundamental in guiding multilateral deliberations on disarmament: no State should demand from any other disarmament measures that it itself is not prepared to take; concerns regarding the security of one State are just as valid, just as important and just as relevant as those of any other State; industrial and technological development do not free any country from the obligation to observe and respect disarmament measures which have been internationally agreed upon; the non-militarization of outer space constitutes an essential pre-condition for the adoption of significant measures for regional disarmament; and the geographical proliferation of nuclear weapons compromises the policy adopted by many States in renouncing the nuclear weapon option.

Much of what happened during the third SSOD will only take its final historic shape in the months and years to come, even if history keeps colouring the past with the shades of time. Many ideas were presented at the third SSOD for the first time, and need to ripen and to be fully understood by all participants. Some old ideas were presented there for the last time, we hope, since they met once more with widespread rejection. Both of these trends will become clearer in the near future.

As a reaffirmation of its permanent dedication to peace and justice in international relations, and also as a demonstration of its disposition to

(Mr. Pericás, Brazil)

continue to work unceasingly for the construction of a better and safer world for all, Brazil promoted the First Meeting of States of the Zone of Peace and Co-operation of the South Atlantic, held in Rio de Janeiro from 25 to 29 July and attended by high-level representatives of 21 South Atlantic States. The main objective of the meeting, regarded by all participants as fully achieved, was to permit a fruitful and constructive discussion among South Atlantic States on means of promoting co-operation among them for peace and development.

Approved by consensus and already distributed as an official document of the forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly, the final document of the meeting requests the States of other regions, in particular the militarily significant States, to scrupulously respect the region of the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and co-operation and to demonstrate their willingness to adopt concrete measures to ensure the reduction and eventual elimination of their military presence therein, the non-introduction of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and the non-extension into the region of rivalries and conflicts that are foreign to it. The participants also shared the view that the adoption of measures in the field of nuclear disarmament and arms limitation should not lead to or be followed by the redeployment of nuclear weapons to other geographical areas. As was stated by Minister Abreu Sodré,

"This initiative is a milestone in the history of international relations. It symbolizes our countries' determination to assume in a mature manner their increasingly relevant role in the international arena. Together with other significant undertakings in different areas of the southern hemisphere, it clearly reveals the resolve of developing countries to accept their share of responsibility for preserving peace and reducing tensions in their regions and for stimulating mutually beneficial co-operation."

We hold the firm conviction that the success of the Rio meeting will give further impetus to the efforts exerted by South Atlantic States to develop their relations in an atmosphere of peace and freedom, to their mutual benefit and that of the international community as a whole.

Before concluding, I wish to announce formally before the Conference on Disarmament that on 18 August 1988 the National Constitutional Assembly of Brazil adopted and included in the final draft of the new Brazilian constitution a clause laying down that "all nuclear activities on the national territory shall be permitted exclusively for peaceful purposes and with the approval of the National Congress". This sovereign decision of the representatives of the Brazilian people elected to write the new constitution of the country raises to the highest possible level the legal expression of the policy consistently followed by Brazil against all forms of proliferation of nuclear weapons. I am convinced that the significance of this decision will be fully understood by all countries represented here.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement, and also for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons, Her Excellency Ambassador Solesby of the United Kingdom, who will introduce the report of the Ad hoc Committee contained in document CD/864.

Miss SOLESBY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, may I begin by saying that I am very glad to be among the first to congratulate you on your accession to the presidency? Speaking for the moment as the delegate of the United Kingdom, may I extend a welcome to you on your assumption to this high office and assure you of the full co-operation of my delegation in the weeks ahead? And may I also thank Ambassador Loeis of Indonesia for his leadership during the month of August?

As you said, I am taking the floor today in order to introduce the annual report of the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons, which I have had the honour to chair this year. The Ad hoc Committee was able to adopt its report in CD/864 at the end of last week. I am grateful to the delegations participating in the work of the Committee, whose co-operative approach allows me to introduce the report today.

I hope that distinguished delegates can agree that the report of the Ad hoc Committee presents a succinct but clear account of our work. That was, at any rate, our aim. It includes, of course, the reports from the two contact groups, that on the prohibition of radiological weapons in the traditional sense and that on the prohibition of attacks against nuclear facilities. To these reports are attached the co-ordinators' records, reflecting consideration of the issues dealt with. I myself feel that these records give a clear picture of the state of our work, with no attempt to veil the differences of view within the Conference. The Ad hoc Committee recommends that we should draw on these contact group reports as a basis for future work. They are not binding on delegations, who retain complete flexibility for their future action. I am sure that the report will provide valuable help to the Ad hoc Committee as it continues its task of reaching agreement on the substance of its work.

The contact group reports show that the Ad hoc Committee did make progress during this year. In the spring session the contact groups concentrated their attention on verification and compliance as well as on other main elements, and were able to fill gaps which had existed in previous reports. In the summer session the contact groups conducted a review of the texts, and new proposals were made helping to further clarify and elaborate the positions held by delegations. However, I have to say that considerable differences on substance remain which have shown no sign of being resolved.

As the report shows, the Ad hoc Committee this year as last year considered its two subjects in separate contact groups. The Committee did not attempt to discuss whether this approach might be retained next year, and in the past views have differed on its merits. However my own experience this year makes me concur whole-heartedly with Ambassador Meizster of Hungary, who when he presented last year's report, said that the procedure of separate contact groups had been a step in the right direction.

It is evident to all who have participated in the work of the Ad hoc Committee that the contact groups have shouldered the main burden. The report says that the two co-ordinators, Mr. Wayarabi of Indonesia and Mr. Györffy of Hungary, have assisted the Chair. This is a very measured way of putting it, as befits a printed report. In fact they have both devoted

(Miss Solesby, United Kingdom)

considerable time, effort and ingenuity to their not always straightforward tasks. I have found it a great pleasure to work with both of them, and I am delighted to put on record my sincere thanks to them for their excellent work. My thanks go also to the group co-ordinators and of course to the secretariat for their co-operation and assistance. I have pleasure in presenting the report to you, Mr. President, and to the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons for introducing the report of that Committee. I wish to congratulate Ambassador Solesby for the successful completion of work in the subsidiary body over which she presided. I should like to note that this is the first Ad hoc Committee which has adopted a report when time is of the essence in order to conclude the annual session as scheduled. I intend to put the report of the Ad hoc Committee before the Conference for adoption at the end of our next plenary meeting.

I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina, Ambassador Cámpora.

Mr. CAMPORA (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): As you begin your term as President, Ambassador Ardakani, in your capacity as representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in this final stage of the 1988 session of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to convey to you our wishes for every success in this delicate task and also, on behalf of the Argentine delegation, state our readiness to co-operate with you. We listened with great interest to the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iran, His Excellency Dr. Ali-Akbar Velayati, and also the statement by Her Excellency the Norwegian State Secretary, Ambassador Helga Hernes, both of which we will study very carefully.

With the 1988 session of the Conference on Disarmament close to its conclusion, we have the impression that favourable conditions now prevail in the international scene which are not properly reflected in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. We cannot ignore the fact that conditions are emerging which are conducive to the beginning of a period of international détente. A period of a marked slowing in the pace of the arms race, which with various ups and downs has placed its sombre mark on the years since the Second World War. The new relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, together with the solutions gradually being reached in regional conflicts through the abandonment of military confrontation in favour of a political solution, are significant features of international life that ought to stimulate disarmament negotiations in the multilateral framework.

However, they are not doing so, and our deliberations seem to be falling back into a pattern that ignores this new and positive international atmosphere. We are still unable to find a way to overcome political inhibitions and remove procedural deadlocks that are blocking the work of the Conference. In particular we believe that a basic unjustified lack of trust remains with regard to the constructive negotiating task that can be accomplished in this Conference on some of the items on its agenda. We also believe that other items could be included which in our view are ripe for

(Mr. Cámpora, Argentina)

tackling in multilateral talks within the Conference on Disarmament. The delegation of Argentina hopes that the next session of the United Nations General Assembly will offer a favourable opportunity to take up in an appropriate way the potentialities in the disarmament process opened up by the new international situation.

In the first place we would like to voice our agreement with those who have argued that the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on verification of nuclear testing will by then have cleared an important hurdle with the completion of the joint experiments. We have to say that we share the widespread concern throughout the world about these negotiations, which are moving forward slowly, step by step. We must recall that the heads of State or government who promoted the Six-Nation Initiative for Peace and Disarmament called for an international agreement that will put an end to nuclear testing once and for all when they stated in their Stockholm Declaration on 21 January 1988 that "any agreement that leaves room for continued testing would not be acceptable". Accordingly, we hope that the joint experiments will enable both parties to ratify promptly the threshold test-ban Treaty of 1974 and the peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty of 1976, so that decisive progress can be made towards the final and verifiable cessation of nuclear weapon explosions. Once this step has been completed, we think that the next session of the United Nations General Assembly could be in a position to adopt by consensus a single resolution on the prohibition of nuclear weapon tests which would serve as a basis for the elaboration of a negotiating mandate for an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament. The effects of the progress made at the bilateral level must make themselves felt at the multilateral level, so that the United Nations organs can move forward in the negotiation of a universal ban on nuclear weapon tests, beginning with the setting up of an appropriate global system of verification which will subsequently guarantee effective compliance with the treaty. In this regard we feel that any bilateral progress made in harmonizing the various verification arrangements to be adopted should contribute to the important work that the Group of Scientific Experts of the Conference on Disarmament has been carrying out for a number of years under the chairmanship of Dr. Dahlman of Sweden.

We note with satisfaction that the start-up activities for the large-scale experiment on the exchange of seismic data are about to begin under the co-ordination of Dr. Basham of Canada. On this point we would like to say that as far as the actual functioning of the future seismic network is concerned, we share the view expressed by several delegations, and reiterated by the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany in the plenary meeting on 18 August, in favour of the adoption of the "open station" concept for States participating in the network, thus ensuring free, dynamic and unrestricted access to the information available. Argentina, in its exchanges of seismic data at the regional level, follows this approach informally with co-operating institutions in South America. The adoption of the "open station" approach is, we think, the most logical option, given the co-operative nature of this multilateral exercise.

We would also like to express our appreciation to the Governments of Canada and Japan on their announcement of seminars and technical workshops for the exchange of experience in seismic data collection and analysis, to be held

(Mr. Cámpora, Argentina)

in spring and autumn 1989 respectively. This type of technical meeting, similar to those that Sweden organized on behalf of the Six-Nation Initiative for Peace and Disarmament last May in Linköping, furnishes clear proof that we enjoy the scientific support needed to achieve progress towards the cessation of nuclear weapon tests. There remains the political decision to do so.

We understand the intentions of the countries that have proposed the amendment of the partial nuclear test-ban Treaty of 1963 to make up for the lack of movement in the Conference on Disarmament towards initiating a negotiating process aimed at ending nuclear weapon tests. If the Conference on Disarmament is unable to negotiate a treaty for that purpose, it is understandable that some countries should propose the amendment of the 1963 Treaty. But at the same time, if there are countries that feel that the amendment process is not the most appropriate way to deal with the matter, they should not place obstacles in the way of responsible work in the multilateral negotiating forum of the Conference on Disarmament.

We also think that the adoption of a consensus resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space is not far off. It is fairly likely that the General Assembly will draft a resolution that will gather the unanimous support of delegations. This, too, would give a considerable boost to the work of the Conference next year. In this respect we feel entitled to demand that efforts should be made to facilitate at least the multilateral consideration of, and progress with, those proposals that are before the Ad hoc Committee and are in keeping with the existing multilateral legal régime on outer space, as well as with the provisions of the 1972 ABM Treaty, on which the bilateral negotiations seem to be moving forward significantly, according to information available. We also think that the General Assembly will be in a position to adopt a consensus resolution on conventional disarmament and this might perhaps serve as a sound basis for our Conference on Disarmament to tackle this topic with a view to negotiating specific agreements on it.

If the topics already mentioned, particularly the ending of nuclear weapon tests and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, benefited from a convergence of political will, the Conference on Disarmament, which is currently working effectively on the drafting of a convention to prohibit chemical weapons, would then be engaged in a series of substantive negotiations on important topics on the disarmament agenda, and would thus bring the content of its work into line with the international situation, which has quite clearly improved. Otherwise, I am very much afraid that it will be difficult for us as responsible delegates here to deny the charge of not having found concrete formulas for disarmament agreements that reflect this favourable international atmosphere, created through the efforts both of the great Powers and of many States that have decided to seek a political solution to their regional conflicts. Disarmament should be, then, an inescapable consequence of this international climate if we intend to take full advantage of it.

On the subject of the cessation of the nuclear arms race, we think that the implementation of the provisions of the INF Treaty, as well as the encouraging news emerging from the current negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic

(Mr. Cámpora, Argentina)

weapons, will also form a framework for a new approach to this topic in the General Assembly and thus for movement towards the drafting of texts that bring closer together the various positions on the controversial resolutions on cessation of the nuclear arms race and the prevention of nuclear war.

In general terms, we imagine therefore that the forthcoming session of the General Assembly will reflect, in the deliberations of the First Committee, the existence of an international climate that is marked by détente. That will prepare the ground for statements reflecting a growing convergence of views on the various topics making up the programme relating to disarmament issues. The spirit that emerges from the statement we are making today is the same as that which will inspire the Argentine delegation's approach to disarmament matters at the ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement to be held in Cyprus next week, so as to make progress in the field of multilateral disarmament while upholding the role of the United Nations.

Before concluding I would like to place on record the Argentine delegation's satisfaction at the statement made by Ambassador Bernado Pericás, the Under-Secretary-General in the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, introducing the final document of the first meeting held by the countries that are parties to the initiative intended to turn the South Atlantic into a zone of peace and co-operation. We venture to recommend that this final document should be looked at very closely by the delegations that make up the Conference on Disarmament, since it is of great significance in the cause of peace and international co-operation in the South Atlantic.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Argentina for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. That concludes my list of speakers. Does any member wish to take the floor at this stage? I see none.

The secretariat has circulated, at my request, a timetable of meetings to be held by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies during next week. As usual, this timetable is merely indicative and is subject to change, if necessary. You will notice that informal open-ended consultations on agenda items 1, 2 and 7 are scheduled for Monday 5 September at 10 a.m. to start consideration of draft substantive paragraphs under those agenda items. Provision is also made for an informal meeting on Tuesday 6 September immediately after the plenary meeting, to start the first reading of the technical parts of the annual report to the General Assembly of the United Nations. As announced by my predecessor at our last plenary meeting, the relevant working papers - CD/WP.348 for the technical parts of the report, as well as CD/WP.349, CD/WP.350 and CD/WP.351 for the draft substantive paragraphs - have already been circulated in English and other languages in delegations' pigeon-holes. It is expected that all languages will be available today. As is the practice of the Conference, we indicate only the opening meeting for the informal open-ended consultations on draft substantive paragraphs. Additional meetings, if necessary, will be decided upon as the work proceeds in those consultations. The secretariat also informs me that the draft substantive paragraphs on agenda item 3, as well as on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, will be circulated early next week. I should also like to recall that Thursday 8 September and Friday 9 September are official holidays in the United Nations Office at Geneva, and

(The President)

therefore no meetings will be held on those two days. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference agrees to the timetable.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I am requested to announce that informal consultations within the Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space will be held on Friday, 2 September at 10 a.m. in room A.206, for discussion of the draft report of that Committee. The Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Negative Security Assurances has asked me to inform you that a meeting of the Ad hoc Committee will take place immediately following the adjournment of this meeting in this same room.

Since there is no other business for today, I now intend to adjourn this meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday 6 September at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.