

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 15 September 1988, at 10 a.m.

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

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 482nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. At the outset, I wish on behalf of the Conference to extend a warm welcome in our midst to the new representative of India, Ambassador Sharma, and in doing so I would like to assure him of the co-operation of my delegation and wish him success in the important task ahead of him.

In conformity with its programme of work, the Conference continues its consideration of the reports of the ad hoc subsidiary bodies as well as of the annual report to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

I have on my list of speakers for today the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, the representatives of Czechoslovakia and the United States of America, the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, as well as the representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany, Pakistan and Australia.

I now give the floor to the first speaker, the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons which has been circulated today under the symbol CD/874.

Mr. SUJKA (Poland): Before introducing to the Conference the report of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, which I have had the honour to chair during this session, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on the effective way you are performing your duties as President of the Conference in the usually difficult last month of the session. In seeing you, representative of Iran, in the Chair of the President, I cannot but use this opportunity to express my delegation's sincere hope that the talks on stopping the armed conflict in the Persian Gulf, which have started at Geneva, will soon bring the favourable solution awaited by the whole world.

I have the pleasure today to present to the Conference the report of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons as contained in document CD/874. This report was adopted in its entirety by the Ad hoc Committee at its 21st meeting on 12 September. During this year's session the Committee has worked again on the basis of the same mandate which was given to the Committee for the first time in 1984. This mandate is indicated in paragraph 1 of the report.

As agreed at the beginning of the session, the Committee dealt with all the articles of the draft convention, as indicated in its preliminary structure. The work was carried on in three working groups chaired by Mr. Cima of Czechoslovakia, Mr. Macedo of Mexico and Mr. Numata of Japan. In addition I held a number of open-ended consultations on articles XII to XVI of the draft convention.

Under the auspices of the Ad hoc Committee, and at my request, Ambassador Rolf Ekéus of Sweden held informal, open-ended consultations to prepare the ground for multilateral trial inspections in the chemical industry. The results of these consultations are included in working paper CD/CW/WP.213. I wish to express to Ambassador Ekéus my deep gratitude for his efforts and efficiency in performing these duties.

(Mr. Sujka, Poland)

In July, a meeting of chemical industry experts from many countries was held. Let me again turn to the Swedish delegation and thank Dr. Santesson, who put a lot of effort into chairing this useful meeting.

If we turn to the report we can see that, in general, it maintains the structure and follows the pattern of previous sessions. It consists of several parts on which I would like to comment briefly.

In the so-called technical part I would like to draw your attention to the conclusions and recommendations, especially the recommendations on inter-sessional work to be held in two phases before the beginning of the 1989 session. The session of limited duration in January is to be preceded by open-ended consultations. Both are needed more than ever as we are at a decisive and very specific stage of the negotiations. The inter-sessional work corresponds well with the often reiterated wish of public opinion for the early conclusion of a global, comprehensive draft convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

As I have already touched upon the inter-sessional work, let me take this opportunity to inform the delegations that as a result of my consultations, I propose that during the open-ended consultations in November, December and during the resumed session in January we should concentrate our efforts on the following main issues: confidentiality with regard to verification of non-production of chemical weapons in the chemical industry; undiminished security during the destruction period; guidelines on the international inspectorate; and article X on assistance.

Turning to the report, may I draw your attention to appendix I, which represents the updated version of the "rolling text" of the draft convention, thus reflecting the present stage of elaboration of the provisions of the draft convention. That is why it can be considered as a fundamental part of the report. As you will see, progress has been made in many important areas. Changes of various kinds, from very substantive improvements to rather editorial corrections, have been introduced in a majority of the articles and annexes. I assume that these changes are well known to the delegations and that there is no need to go into detailed identification and evaluation of them.

Let me, however, point out some of the achievements which I would place among the most important during this session. In article II the term "chemical weapons production facility" has been largely agreed upon. Article V, and especially the annex to this article, have been further developed and rectified. A new part of the guidelines on the international inspectorate concerning general rules governing inspections under article IX has been developed and agreed upon. I wish to stress, however, that despite hard and intensive work by all of us during the whole session, the results achieved, though important, are not - at least in my view - fully satisfactory.

Appendix II represents negotiating material at a less advanced stage. It contains papers reflecting the results of work undertaken so far on issues under the convention. Its content illustrates its transitional character.

(Mr. Sujka, Poland)

New material has been added; other material has been further developed or moved into appendix I. I have, however, a feeling that in some areas we could have achieved more.

It is therefore necessary to look at appendix I and appendix II as two parts of one entity. Only using this approach can the work of the Committee be seen in the proper perspective. Each delegation will, on its own, and in the light of its own expectations, analyse and evaluate the progress achieved. For my part, I will only say that we have worked hard, with devotion, in a good business-like atmosphere, and credit for that goes to all delegations, item co-ordinators and individual delegates who did not spare their time and good will to help us move forward.

I warmly thank my collaborators Mr. Cima, Mr. Macedo and Mr. Numata, whose strenuous efforts have been crucial to what we have achieved in the "rolling text". I am convinced that we will continue our excellent co-operation during the inter-sessional consultations and the resumed session next January. My special thanks go to the Secretary of our Ad hoc Committee, Mr. Bensmail, and his assistant Ms. Darby, for their constant devotion and tireless hard work. I wish also to express my gratitude to the interpreters and all the technical staff who have helped the work of the Ad hoc Committee to proceed smoothly and effectively.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons for introducing the report of the Ad hoc Committee contained in document CD/874, and I also thank him for the kind words addressed to me and pray to the Almighty that his wishes for peace in our region will be answered soon. I also wish to congratulate Ambassador Sujka for the successful completion of the work of that subsidiary body. I shall invite the Conference to take action on document CD/874 at our last plenary meeting. I now give the floor to the representative of Czechoslovakia, Ambassador Vejvoda.

Mr. VEJVODA (Czechoslovakia): First of all, Mr. President, allow me as head of the Czechoslovak delegation to welcome you to the Chair of the Conference. You have already proven your ability to guide us successfully with wisdom and diplomatic skill through the difficult concluding period of our Conference. Allow me also to take this opportunity to welcome the newcomers to our Conference - Ambassador Varga from Hungary, with whom, as a representative of a country with which we maintain brotherly, close relations, my delegation will certainly work as closely as with his predecessor, Ambassador Meiszter. I also wish the best in our midst to Ambassador Thant of Burma and Ambassador Sharma of India. My delegation is looking forward to having close relations with both of them also.

Mr. President, allow me now to read the statement by the Group of Socialist Countries on the results of the 1988 CD session.

The session of the Conference on Disarmament this year coincided with an important event among the multilateral efforts aimed at disarmament - the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The delegations of socialist countries expected that the two events would influence each other in a positive way. Firstly, that the Conference on Disarmament would intensify its work during the spring session

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

and present to SSOD-III if not finalized agreements, then at least substantially advanced work on its individual items with an appropriate, both flexible and efficient, organizational framework. Secondly, that SSOD-III would duly assess results achieved by the CD as well as at other disarmament forums, confirm the General Assembly's conclusions of 1978 and 1982 and provide a new impetus for further multilateral negotiations on disarmament.

Unfortunately, the CD failed to accomplish the first step of this mutually interdependent action. Our report to SSOD-III, summarizing the CD's work and results for the period between 1982 and April 1988, was far from encouraging. While some important results were reported to SSOD-III, in the first place the conclusion of the Soviet-American INF Treaty, the report from our Conference, apart from registering further progress on the elaboration of the chemical weapons convention and a substantial increase in openness and transparency in work on it, otherwise had little to offer. Undoubtedly, that contributed to the fact that SSOD-III was not in a position either to elaborate specific recommendations for further multilateral negotiations on disarmament or to increase the effectiveness of the negotiating machinery. The socialist countries consider that the course of SSOD-III and the proposals advanced there confirm the important role that multilateral negotiations on disarmament should play.

It is not encouraging to realize that during this year our Conference has yet again failed to achieve specific results which are long overdue. What is even more disquieting is the fact that another year has passed without the CD taking substantive action on priority items of nuclear disarmament. This also applies to the nuclear test ban, in spite of the fact that a number of positive developments have taken place with regard to this important issue. The socialist States continue to regard the early elaboration of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests as among the most urgent and significant measures for halting the nuclear arms race and preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. All avenues should be pursued to achieve progress on that priority issue.

While expressing their support for the ongoing full-scale stage-by-stage negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States, members of the Group have reaffirmed their strong interest in the parallel work within the Conference on Disarmament aimed at early achievement of an NTB. In that connection, they considered the draft mandate of the Group of 21 (CD/829) as a good basis for starting practical work on the item. At the same time, the Group of Socialist Countries lent their support to the draft proposal made initially on an informal basis by the President of the CD in April 1987 and formally tabled as Czechoslovak working paper CD/863. The Group of Socialist Countries views with understanding the proposal by Mexico, Indonesia, Peru, Sri Lanka, Yugoslavia and Venezuela for amending the 1963 partial nuclear test-ban Treaty. They have already stated that in principle they support the idea of broadening the scope of the Moscow Treaty by incorporating into it a ban on underground tests. This approach was also reflected during the last United Nations General Assembly session in their support for resolution 42/26 B on this issue.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

Positive developments have taken place in the field of nuclear disarmament. The Soviet-American INF Treaty represents a first real measure of nuclear disarmament, providing for the destruction of two whole categories of nuclear weapons. Delegates to the CD had a unique opportunity to witness the destruction of the first Soviet medium-range missiles in the area of Volgograd. This was a demonstration of high political importance. The socialist countries consider that the time is ripe for our Conference to contribute to efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament in its multilateral dimension. This will become even more imperative when, as they hope, agreement is reached between the Soviet Union and the United States on the substantial reduction of their strategic nuclear weapons. The delegations of socialist countries welcomed the action plan for a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world presented by India.

The Group of Socialist Countries regrets that meagre progress has been achieved in the elaboration of measures to prevent an arms race in outer space. The Ad hoc Committee on this item, which has been working since 1985, is not in a position to move forward in working out measures to prevent an arms race in outer space, which should be used only for peaceful purposes, since it has been functioning for four years on the basis of the same mandate, which does not provide for negotiations. The delegations of socialist countries made an effort to render work within the framework of the existing mandate and programme of work as fruitful and intensive as possible. The best way to achieve this goal was to focus attention on the discussion of proposals made by various delegations. Thus the main result of this year's session was the concentration of discussion on item 3 of the programme of work. This debate was useful, and made it possible to demonstrate the positive potential of the proposals introduced as well as a positive stock of initiatives accumulated by the Ad hoc Committee. The discussion further confirmed the need for the substance of submitted proposals to be examined by experts and subjected to in-depth and thorough analysis, taking into account their complex scientific and technological character. It confirmed once again the timeliness of the Swedish proposal for the establishment of a group of governmental experts. The Group of Socialist States is in favour of giving the Ad hoc Committee a full-fledged negotiating mandate next year and enabling it to fulfil its primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

The socialist countries deeply regret that once again the Conference was not in a position to commence practical work on item 3 of its agenda - Prevention of nuclear war. Socialist countries, while open to any procedural arrangement, supported the draft mandate proposed by the Group of 21, for it was goal-oriented and flexible enough to allow the consideration of both the prevention of nuclear war and all related matters. Six annual sessions of deadlock on item 3 are irrefutable proof that no procedural arrangement can be a substitute for the political will lacking in some delegations to start practical work aimed at lessening and finally completely removing the threat of nuclear war.

The prohibition of chemical weapons continued to be the only CD item where real negotiations on an international convention were under way. Some positive results were achieved this year. The Ad hoc Committee has reached

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

agreement on the definition of CW production facilities, and the relevant text has been included in the main body of the future convention. The socialist countries welcome this development as a substantive contribution to the important process of identifying and completely destroying CW production facilities. They also welcome the fact that article XI, on which practical work was initiated only at the end of last year's session, has been substantially developed. In the view of the socialist countries, economic and technological development and co-operation in the field of peaceful chemistry should have its due place in a convention prohibiting CW, taking chemical industry under control and thus objectively imposing certain restrictions on those involved in it. They regret that the present text of article XI could not be included in appendix I of the "rolling text".

More clarity has been achieved with regard to the functions of and interrelationship between the organs to be set up under the future convention, including the enumeration of the specific functions of the technical secretariat. Active consultations on the composition, procedure and decision-making of the executive council have revealed possibilities for convergence of views in some areas. With regard to on-site inspection on challenge, possible building-blocks for the process after the submission of the report have been discussed and are now reflected in appendix II. Further development of article X as well as practical work undertaken on the final clauses also represent positive results of this year's session. Another positive element in the negotiations was furnished by first steps in the process of multilateral data exchange, to which socialist States made their contribution both by presenting relevant data and by putting forward ideas on the scope of the exchange. This process should be continued and further developed. Future negotiations can also be assisted by the carrying out and appropriate evaluation of the multilateral experiment involving trial inspections of chemical industry facilities, as suggested at the beginning of this session by the Soviet Union. The Group of Socialist Countries expresses its hope that the experiment is going to be carried out as expeditiously as possible, at both national and international levels, so that it will influence our work positively at an early stage of the next CD session. It would be helpful if the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons were asked at the beginning of next year's session to start the final drafting of the chemical weapons convention.

Non-production of chemical weapons has emerged as one of the most important unsettled areas. The socialist countries consider that a strict verification régime is required in order to ensure that chemical weapons are not developed and produced in the future under the guise of peaceful chemical activities. Appropriate forms of monitoring and verification should be applied to various kinds of such activities, depending on the risks to the convention. It would be potentially harmful to the convention if verification were applied only to some areas, while some other fields of activity were left without any monitoring and verification. The Group of Socialist Countries hopes that the verification of non-production of chemical weapons will be treated in all its dimensions. There is also a need for a more goal-oriented approach to work on article II, on-site challenge inspection and some other important questions.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

What is needed now is a much more acute sense of urgency in the upcoming inter-sessional work and at next year's session of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. We must not forget that while we are "successfully" developing the "rolling text" of the chemical weapons convention, new chemical weapons are being produced and stockpiled and chemical weapons are being used on an unprecedented scale. The overall sophistication of chemical weapons will make it more and more difficult to trace them in the wide network of chemical industry facilities; their further proliferation is contrary to the basic objectives of the convention we are negotiating. In this connection the Group of Socialist Countries considers the continued production, modernization or acquisition of chemical weapons after the chemical weapons convention enters into force to be unacceptable, since that could lead to further proliferation of chemical weapons and would thus be contrary to the objectives of the convention. The security of the States parties can be ensured immediately after its entry into force through the implementation of a number of measures which would freeze chemical weapon stocks at current levels and would lead to their gradual, balanced and complete destruction.

The delegations of socialist countries welcome the modest substantive progress reached on the prohibition of radiological weapons in relation to both subject-matters. However, they consider that given the nature of the problem under consideration, more substantial results were warranted. The Group continues to be interested in more efficient, more goal-oriented work on the issue, and supports the recommendation of the Ad hoc Committee that it should draw upon the annexes to its 1988 report as a basis for its future work.

The delegations of socialist States note a growing new interest in developing legally binding assurances to strengthen the security of non-nuclear-weapon States. Fresh approaches are urgently needed to overcome the difficulties encountered in the Ad hoc Committee on item 6. The proposals submitted to this Committee offer a way out of the present deadlock. The delegations of the socialist countries favour continuation of the search for a "common approach", in particular a "common formula", on the substance of the security assurances, and are ready to be fully co-operative in the search for an agreement.

The Group of Socialist Countries is definitely prepared to continue work on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament, leading to general and complete disarmament. In the first place, this programme should do away with nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. The Group regrets that this objective is not shared by all delegations in the Ad hoc Committee, which makes it impossible to finalize the draft CPD and submit it to the United Nations General Assembly. The Group expresses its hope that the CD will continue the effort to improve its effectiveness. The relevant proposals of the socialist countries were submitted in the Prague Declaration of the ministers for foreign affairs of the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

The Group of Socialist Countries expresses the hope that the forty-third United Nations General Assembly session will properly assess the work of the CD in 1988. It should, in the first place, call for further impetus to be given to its consideration of individual items and further progress in its work. Such a course of action would undoubtedly reinforce the image of the CD as a unique multilateral negotiating body on disarmament.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

In conclusion, I would like to express the thanks of my Group to the Secretary-General of our Conference, Ambassador Komatina, his deputy, Ambassador Berasategui, and all their staff as well as the Secretariat staff providing us with all the services.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Czechoslovakia for his statement as well as for the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Friedersdorf.

Mr. FRIEDERSDORF (United States of America): Before I begin my prepared statement, please allow me to extend a warm welcome to the new representative of India, Ambassador Sharma. Our delegation looks forward to working with him in future months.

At the close of the summer part of the 1988 session of the Conference on Disarmament, our delegation believes it important to single out for special attention what is clearly the most active and urgent item on our agenda. Accordingly, I would like to provide my delegation's assessment of this summer's work on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

Overall, the results of the negotiations this summer present a mixed picture. Ironically, this does not stem from the lack of a common purpose. The members of the Conference share a common objective - a complete, effectively verifiable and truly global ban on chemical weapons. The Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee, Ambassador Sujka, and the chairmen of the three working groups, Mr. Numata, Mr. Macedo and Mr. Cima, have worked in a serious and dedicated way to bring such a convention into being. We appreciate their commitment and their hard work. Furthermore, we are pleased that, despite some differences, the Ad hoc Committee was finally able to find compromises that allowed it to reach agreement on its report. In particular, the Committee has recommended that a new procedure be established that should end the repeated disputes over listing of documents in its reports, reduce unnecessary duplication, and promote the principle of fiscal responsibility. The United States delegation will continue to seek ways to make economies in the work of the Committee, while not harming the substantive negotiations. I might add that this effort, in line with the overall need to economise, should extend across the board to other areas of the Conference's work.

However, the fact remains that the tempo of progress has slowed down when it should be maintained at a pace reflecting the continuing urgency of our work. An example is the work on the so-called "final clauses", where there has even been backward movement. I would like to offer this morning some constructive suggestions for moving ahead. These suggestions can be grouped into three categories: first, greater participation and openness; second, a focus on the hard problems; and third, an effort to find creative approaches. I would like to outline our own ideas on each of these categories.

With regard to greater participation, the United States is encouraged by the fact that the importance of achieving a truly global ban is increasingly recognized. For example, the delegations of the German Democratic Republic and Egypt have made constructive suggestions for consulting countries who are not currently represented in the negotiations. We welcome these ideas.

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States of America)

Attracting the attention of non-member States is very important. But it should not be forgotten that active participation by members of the Conference is even more important. If a truly global convention is to be achieved, negotiators must hear and take into account the views of a wide variety of States. Toward this end, there needs to be more vigorous discussion at all levels. We would encourage other delegations, particularly those neutral and non-aligned delegations who have not done so recently, to present their views both in the plenary sessions and in the negotiating working groups. Active participation in the negotiations is seen as an important expression of commitment.

Another important form of commitment is support for the 1925 Geneva Protocol. That agreement provides the foundation for negotiation of a complete ban on chemical weapons. All of us must do everything possible to prevent further erosion of the norm it contains. For States that are parties to the Geneva Protocol that means taking action to stop the continuing violations that have been found. In this connection, I wish to inform the Conference that the United States is gravely concerned over the reports of Iraqi use of chemical weapons against its Kurdish population. We have stressed this concern, and the potential impact on United States-Iraqi relations, to the Government of Iraq at a very high level. The United States has been consulting with United Nations officials, Security Council members, and others on the need for an impartial investigation by a team of experts.

States that are not party to the Protocol should accede to it - as suggested by the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, Sir Geoffrey Howe, during the third special session of the United Nations devoted to disarmament. Regrettably, as noted by Ambassador Solesby in her plenary statement on 16 August, some members of the Conference have still to become parties to the Protocol.

Greater openness is also a form of commitment. We welcome the data that have been presented this summer with the aim of facilitating the negotiations. I am referring particularly to the data provided in the statement by Ambassador Loeis of Indonesia on 17 July, and in the working papers from the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic. The United States delegation also presented new data to the Conference. None the less, much more information is needed, particularly from socialist and neutral/non-aligned delegations. For example, nearly one fourth of the members of the Conference have apparently not yet even indicated whether or not they possess chemical weapons. A number of countries with known significant chemical industries have not yet indicated whether they have industrial facilities subject to the convention's monitoring provisions. We urge countries that have not yet provided these kinds of general information to do so in the near future.

It is probably human nature to want to avoid difficult and sensitive issues. But avoiding the hard issues in the negotiations will only prolong efforts to complete the draft convention. Instead, the Conference needs to identify the real obstacles to an agreement and to deal with them. To stimulate this process, I would like to highlight three issues that the United States delegation believes are central to the success of the negotiations.

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States of America)

One of the most difficult and sensitive issues is certainly the problem of ensuring undiminished security during the transition period, that is, during the 10-year period in which chemical weapons and their production facilities are being destroyed. As a country that has maintained a deterrent chemical weapons capability as an important aspect of its overall security, the United States considers it essential that, as this capability is phased out, our security, and that of our allies, remain undiminished. We certainly share the concerns expressed by others on this subject. We believe that it is high time to deal directly with these matters, in order to determine the nature and extent of the problem and to exchange views on how the issue may be resolved to the satisfaction of all. We welcome the plan to discuss these concerns, which could affect several articles of the convention, in the inter-sessional discussions.

Another issue that the Committee needs to come to grips with is how to deal with the possible development of new agents. This issue has been raised recently by the delegations of the Soviet Union, Italy, the United Kingdom and Czechoslovakia. We share the view that the provisions of the draft convention need to be scrutinized carefully to make sure that they deal as effectively as possible with the potential threat from new agents. Let us look at the real issue, though, not at a shadow of it. Our impression is that the concern expressed by some delegations about laboratory synthesis of small quantities of schedule [1] chemicals is really a concern about development of new agents. The Ad hoc Committee has had months of fruitless debate over proposals for declaration of such laboratories. We share the concerns expressed by the Swedish delegation on 13 September about these proposals. So far the Committee has not tackled the underlying problem, the new agent issue, which has been allowed to block progress on other issues related to schedule [1]. Our delegation believes that those issues should be settled promptly and that the Committee should then focus on the new agent issue separately.

The third key issue I want to raise today is what approach to take to challenge inspection. Intensive consultations held by Ambassador Ekéus during the 1987 session demonstrated clearly that, although there is broad support for a mandatory régime, serious reservations still exist on the part of some delegations. Recognizing that a continued head-on approach would not be productive and that other aspects of the challenge inspection régime have an important role in shaping views of delegations, the Chairman of Working Group C, Mr. Numata, perceptively has focused work this year in these other areas. Under his patient and skilful leadership the discussions have been very productive, and have led to important additions to the "rolling text". We believe that this successful work will facilitate resolution of the central issue of the mandatory nature of challenge inspections when the discussions focus on it again. In this connection, I would also like to express appreciation for the recent working paper on challenge inspection procedures by the German Democratic Republic. This very useful paper is the latest in a series of significant contributions from the German Democratic Republic, and I might add, on a personal note, that our delegation regrets very sincerely the departure of Ambassador Harald Rose of the German Democratic Republic and his important contributions to the Conference will be long remembered.

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States of America)

Clearly, the issues I have mentioned are not the only difficult ones remaining. Ambassador Ekéus listed other issues in his important statement on Tuesday. Other delegations may want to highlight other issues as well. We urge them to do so in order that everyone may have a clear picture of where the real problems lie. A convention will only be achieved with a better sense of priorities and the scope of the work remaining.

I want to emphasize the need for creative approaches to the unique challenges posed by a chemical weapons ban. This year a number of imaginative ideas have been put forward, for example, suggestions for promoting a truly global convention; for building confidence during the negotiations; for creating a badly needed data base; for testing inspection procedures; and for increasing the effectiveness of the régime for monitoring the chemical industry. Open-ended consultations on trial inspections, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Ekéus, have produced a valuable compilation of suggestions. In each case the authors of these ideas have each made an important contribution. They have given us new, potentially fruitful approaches to the complex and difficult problems that must be resolved.

In addition, Norway has presented further results of its very useful studies on investigation of alleged use of chemical weapons. Finland has also presented additional findings of its uniquely thorough research. We consider these research efforts on verification methods to be important contributions to the progress of the negotiations. These contributions enrich the negotiations and provide the intellectual capital needed to construct a sound agreement. In short, they are part of our common effort to move forward together toward the achievement of a convention that truly meets the security needs of the world community.

Many more new ideas are needed - and from more delegations. Those who wish to see further progress in the negotiations have an obligation to contribute the new ideas that will make this progress a reality. We hope that when the negotiations resume, such additional proposals will be forthcoming and that further progress will be the result.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement. I now give the floor to the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, Ambassador Taylhardat, for the introduction of the report of the Ad hoc Committee appearing in document CD/870.

Mr. TAYLHARDAT (Venezuela) (translated from Spanish): Thank you Mr. President. Since I am taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, I would like as representative of Venezuela to express our pleasure at seeing you guiding our work during this month of September. Our two countries are not only linked by solid ties of friendship, but also have a long tradition of reciprocal co-operation in the organization whose main aim is to ensure the protection of the resource that is the principal natural asset of our countries, where you have personally played a very active role. We offer you our co-operation and wish you success in your delicate task. My delegation adds its voice to those of other delegations in the hope that the

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

current negotiations will lead to a final solution of the conflict in the Gulf. I would also like to take this opportunity to extend a welcome to our new colleagues, Ambassador Varga of Hungary, Ambassador Aung Thant of Burma and also Ambassador Sharma of India, to whom we offer our broadest collaboration and wish them success in their new functions. I would also like to say to Ambassador Harald Rose, or to say to him through his colleague, that we sincerely regret that he will be leaving Geneva for good. He has offered us his agreeable company and his always balanced and constructive participation in the Conference. We are sure that the new functions to be assigned to him by his Government will furnish us with an opportunity to meet him from time to time so that we can continue to benefit from his always invaluable collaboration and his warm friendship.

I now have the honour to present to the Conference on Disarmament the report of the Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, which I have been privileged to chair during the current year. The report of the Committee appears, as you indicated, in document CD/870 and consists of four chapters - the introduction, a description of the organization of work, an account of the substantive work done during the 1988 session and the conclusions. Although a clear idea of the activities carried out may be obtained from the report itself, I would like in addition to offer the Conference a few thoughts on the work done.

First I would like to express well-deserved appreciation to my three distinguished predecessors as chairmen of the Committee, Ambassadors Alfarargi of Egypt, Bayart of Mongolia and Pugliese of Italy, who in their respective terms as chairman laid the foundations which underpinned the work accomplished by the Committee in 1988. Each of them in turn gave a new and vigorous stimulus to the work, and that made my task even more challenging.

I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that this year agenda item 5 of the Conference had some very special characteristics, because two dominant trends vied for influence in the handling of this item in multinational forums. On the one hand the vast majority of countries want specific measures to be adopted that will forestall the spread of the arms race to outer space. On the other hand this issue is a particularly sensitive and delicate one for some countries, prompting them to adopt a very cautious position which leads them to prevent the Conference from playing a significant role in this area, by subordinating action at the multilateral level to the development of efforts being carried out bilaterally. Nevertheless, I think that the report I am presenting to the Conference today will make it possible to see that this year the topic has been the subject of growing attention. More delegations spoke, both in the plenary of the Conference and in the Committee, to express their opinions and to make specific proposals. That in my opinion is a reflection of the increasing priority that the topic has been enjoying within the overall disarmament agenda. My main concern as Chairman of the Committee was to try to ensure that, on the basis of the work accomplished in previous years, the discussion this year would be organized in such a way that we could take a step forward in the efforts of the international community to prevent an arms race in outer space.

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

When we started our work I said that to do this we would have to work in the most effective and practical way possible, and at the time I echoed an expression that had recently been used by Ambassador Morel of France when he stressed that it was necessary to tackle the question of preventing an arms race in outer space "in a specific, concrete and realistic manner". I think that this approach to the Committee's work produced a favourable impact, since this year, although some people are still reluctant to recognize it, there has been a qualitative change in the consideration of the topic. This change can be clearly seen in chapter III of the report, which shows that in 1988 we went into much greater detail in the substantive consideration of the questions covered by the programme of work. This led to better awareness of the delicate political and technical implications of the topic. At the same time, the important differences between the fundamental positions of the main participants in this complex of problems were brought out. Rather than being a step backwards, in my opinion this marks a step forward because until we have a clear idea of what it is that separates us from each other, it will be impossible to try to resolve the differences and close the gap between the extremes.

Another aspect that chapter III of the report brings out clearly is that during the current year, most of the discussions have revolved around the various proposals that have been presented during the debates on the topic. This made the work action-oriented, and also highlighted the fact that although all the members of the Committee recognize that the three topics covered by the programme of work are of equal importance, and that discussion cannot be considered to have been completed on any of them individually, at the same time there is an important segment of the Committee that does not wish the work programme to turn into a kind of strait-jacket that would prevent any progress in the work of the Committee. The discussion on the proposals was helped considerably by an informal paper that I took the liberty of preparing, putting forward a compilation of the proposals presented by the various delegations during the four years in which the Committee has been in existence. In brief, the fact that we concentrated attention on the item of the programme of work relating to existing proposals and future initiatives served to bring out further what has been called the "organic link" between the three points covered by the programme of work. At the same time, it showed that if we want to make progress, we have to focus on identifying specific measures that the international community can take to prevent an arms race in outer space.

I must confess that throughout my term as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee, I have often felt as if I was driving a four-wheel-drive vehicle with one of the wheels jammed - sometimes it was even going in the wrong direction - with the result that the vehicle moved only with difficulty. That is why, as far as conclusions are concerned, the Committee has simply reproduced in the report that is now before the Conference the same conclusions as those that appeared in the special report submitted to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Since this is the part of the report that brings together the ideas and concepts on which it was possible to achieve consensus, we were unable to go beyond what you read here. The decision to reproduce the conclusions of the special

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

report was the result of a compromise which shows the spirit of flexibility of the member States of the Conference and their desire to ensure continuity into the future of the work of the Ad hoc Committee. To conclude my presentation of the report of the Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, I would like to commend it to the Conference for approval and at the same time express my sincere hope that next year the work of the Committee will be given the stimulus demanded by the importance of the topic so that its results faithfully reflect the profound concern of the international community over the growing danger that outer space will become another arena for the arms race.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the representatives of Egypt, Mongolia and Italy, the item co-ordinators for the various groups, and also the representative of China, for their invaluable support for the work of the Committee and their ever appropriate and relevant words of guidance which helped me considerably in my task. I would like to address special words of thanks to Miss Aida Levin, the Secretary of the Committee, for her invaluable co-operation at all times and her tireless work for the Committee. I would like to extend my thanks to all the other members of the Secretariat staff who directly or indirectly made our work possible and helped to provide all the services needed so that the meetings of the Committee ran smoothly and without interference. A well-deserved word of thanks, too, to the interpreters, and our great admiration and profound respect for the professional skill and devotion with which they did their job.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Taylhardat, the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, for his statement introducing the report of that subsidiary body contained in document CD/870, as well as for the kind words expressed to me and to my country. I extend to the Ambassador congratulations on the completion of the work of the Ad hoc Committee. We shall also adopt the report at our last plenary meeting. I now give the floor to the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, Ambassador von Stülpnagel.

Mr. von STULPNAGEL (Federal Republic of Germany): With your permission, Mr. President, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new colleague, the Ambassador of India, Mr. Sharma, and wish him success in our work. I would also like to extend a friendly farewell to Ambassador Rose, my neighbour, who has made many valuable contributions to the work of the Conference, and wish him well in his new functions.

Today I want to take the floor only briefly to fulfil a promise I made to the Conference on 18 August 1988, the day after the first joint verification experiment test explosion conducted on the Nevada test site in the United States of America.

One month ago, when the nuclear explosion of the first experiment was detonated, the seismic recordings of the Gräfenberg array in the Federal Republic of Germany were presented to the CD. The purpose was to demonstrate the advantages of "open" seismic stations that provide immediate and unhindered access to seismic wave-form data. As elements within a global seismic monitoring system, open stations are considered to facilitate the procedures for wave-form data exchange among national data centres and international data centres.

(Mr. von Stülpnagel, Federal Republic of Germany)

Now, on the occasion of the second experiment, which took place yesterday at 0400 hours UT (universal time) on the USSR test site at Semipalatinsk in Eastern Kazakhstan, the capability of the "open station" concept has been demonstrated again. This time, however, the plots of seismograms which are being distributed to you together with the text of my statement show the recordings of two "open" stations. The first one is, as for the previous experiment, from the seismic stations of the Gräfenberg array. At a distance of 4,000 km from Semipalatinsk, the seismic signals arrived in the Federal Republic nearly eight minutes after the explosion. The seismograms of the second plot show the signals as recorded at the CTB (Charters Towers) three-component station located in Queensland, Australia. Owing to the distance of 10,000 km from Semipalatinsk, the signals arrived at this site five minutes later at 0413:07 hours UT. Right after the expected time, the open Australian system was accessed via the high-speed communication lines of the international packet switched data network in order to initiate transmission of the recorded wave-forms to the Federal Republic of Germany's national data centre. From there we received the plots of the seismograms in Geneva by telefax yesterday morning.

Although this experiment on wave-form data exchange was conducted on a bilateral basis, other stations of this type could easily have been included because the "open station" concept does not require either special arrangements for the organization of the data transfer or sophisticated technical procedures. In any case, this small-scale test again proves the efficiency of this concept and documents the advantages of free and unhindered data access.

As far as the explosion of the second experiment is concerned, the magnitude of this event turned out to be $m_b=6.0$ at both stations. The seismic data from the Australian station confirm this result. Assuming the explosion was conducted in wet hard rock, the Gräfenberg magnitude corresponds to a yield of just below 150 kT of TNT. This assumption certainly corresponds to the geological conditions of the USSR test site in Eastern Kazakhstan much better than those of the United States test area in Nevada. Therefore, the degree of confidence of this result should be higher than that for the explosion of the first experiment, which was estimated to be only 75 kT. If both explosions had the same yield, the strength of the United States nuclear test is underestimated as long as the unique geological conditions of this area are not taken into account. The uncertainties in yield estimation by seismological means are expected to become smaller if data on the experiments as well as on previous nuclear tests are made publicly available as indicated by the United States and the USSR.

Likewise we continue to hope that the Conference will soon find itself in a position to commence practical work on the issue of a future NTB in a properly mandated subsidiary body. As the results of the experiment have demonstrated, some problems remain to be solved in the context of the effective verification of a globally enforced test ban - problems that, using the expertise of the members of the Group of Scientific Experts, could well be tackled in this Conference. The bilateral United States-Soviet talks on questions related to nuclear testing and the joint verification experiment

(Mr. von Stülpnagel, Federal Republic of Germany)

have, after a long period of virtual standstill, significantly altered the political landscape. The members of this Conference should react to this development by displaying the necessary flexibility to render possible constructive parallelism between bilateral and multilateral efforts in the field of disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany for his statement. I am now giving the floor to the representative of Pakistan, Mr. Ezdi.

Mr. ASIF EZDI (Pakistan): Mr President, as I am speaking for the first time this month, I would like to begin by congratulating you warmly on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference for September. As two brotherly Islamic neighbouring countries, Pakistan and Iran enjoy the closest of relations and have a long tradition of co-operation with each other in international forums. My delegation would like to assure you of our full support in the fulfilment of your important responsibilities this month and during the inter-sessional period. You have already amply demonstrated your skilfulness in guiding our work, and we are confident that under your stewardship this year's session of the Conference will be brought to a conclusion smoothly and efficiently. May I also express the appreciation of my delegation to your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Loeis of Indonesia, for the capable manner in which he handled the work of the Conference last month?

I should like to take this opportunity to welcome Ambassador Varga of Hungary, Ambassador Aung Thant of Burma and Ambassador Sharma of India, who have joined the Conference since my delegation last took the floor. We look forward to working in co-operation with them in the accomplishment of the many difficult tasks with which we are faced in the Conference. May I also extend the best wishes of our delegation to Ambassador Rose of the German Democratic Republic in his new assignment, and express our appreciation for the valuable contribution he made to our work?

In his address on the opening day of the Conference this month, the Foreign Minister of your country, His Excellency Mr. Ali-Akbar Velayati, reminded us of the urgency of concluding a convention prohibiting the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. It is this subject that I propose to take up in my statement today.

The importance of a comprehensive, effective, verifiable and equitable ban on chemical weapons is more evident today than it has ever been before. Independent investigations by the United Nations have made repeated findings of the almost routine use of these weapons in the Iran-Iraq war. Among the victims have been not only military personnel but also innocent civilians. The world-wide outrage and distress at this flagrant violation of the Geneva Protocol was not, however, sufficient to deter the use of these abhorrent weapons. On the contrary, their use was intensified and became more frequent in later months. We view these developments with grave concern. The Iran-Iraq war has demonstrated the military utility of chemical weapons. These weapons have helped the users in winning successes on the battlefield. The prohibition on the use of chemical weapons seems to have been weakened. These are lessons which will have to be borne in mind in our task of drafting an effective chemical weapons convention.

(Mr. Asif Ezdi, Pakistan)

At the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, there was general recognition of the importance of the early achievement of a convention banning chemical weapons and of pursuing this matter as one of continuing urgency. We would like to place on record our appreciation for the dynamism and skill with which the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Sujka of Poland, and the three group chairmen, Mr. Cima of Czechoslovakia, Mr. Macedo of Mexico and Mr. Numata of Japan, have guided our work. However, despite their resourcefulness and hard work, the results achieved this summer have fallen short of expectations. It seems that our negotiations are losing momentum.

We are mindful of the difficult problems which still remain, some of which are essentially of a technical nature, while others are political in character. In tackling these issues, and as we work through the details of the draft convention, we should never lose sight of our goal - a convention which ensures that no significant violation goes undetected and which guarantees undiminished security to all States parties. Only such a convention would be viable and capable of attracting wide adherence.

Our discussions in Working Group A on monitoring non-production in the chemical industry have not been encouraging. The texts of article VI and its annex which were handed down to us at the beginning of the session have not been developed to any significant extent. On some of the issues, we have seen a restatement of old positions rather than a serious effort to find solutions. We do not underestimate the complexity of the task of elaborating an effective verification régime for a vast industry producing all kinds of chemicals for a variety of purposes and posing different levels of risk to the convention. We also acknowledge that no undue impediments should be placed in the way of legitimate industrial activities. However, the paramount consideration should be to evolve mechanisms which create confidence in the observance of the convention and, where such be the case, bring non-compliance to light. If we have to err, we should err on the side of greater, not less, intrusiveness.

Although no concrete progress was registered under article VI, considerable useful work was done nevertheless. Our dialogue with representatives of the chemical industry this summer was a useful experience. The concept of ad hoc checks was given a further airing, and the problem of confidentiality of information was taken up in a focused manner for the first time. Both these questions address legitimate concerns and will need further detailed study. As my delegation stated earlier this year, the problem of clandestine production in facilities not subject to routine inspections is a real one. In trying to solve it, we should be careful not to give the technical secretariat any powers which could compromise its non-political character. We understand the importance which industry attaches to the protection of sensitive information vis-à-vis commercial competitors. These concerns should not, however, be allowed to override the need for effective verification. Considerations of commercial advantage, we feel, should here yield to those of national security.

(Mr. Asif Ezdi, Pakistan)

We welcome the readiness shown by several countries producing chemicals relevant to the convention to conduct experiments at the national level to test verification procedures under the convention and to pool their experience for evaluation in the Ad hoc Committee. This exercise should be followed by multilateral trial experiments at an early date. We have no doubt that the results of these experiments would be helpful in developing and refining inspection procedures. In this context, I should like to express appreciation for the valuable work done by Ambassador Ekéus of Sweden as Chairman of the open-ended consultations on trial inspections.

My delegation as well as most of the other members of the Group of 21 attach special importance to article XI, concerning economic and technological development. This subject was discussed intensively in Group A, and a text which is very largely free of brackets was evolved. My delegation had expected that, like other texts which have received in-depth consideration and on which a wide measure of agreement has been achieved, the language negotiated on article XI would be placed in appendix I. Regrettably, some delegations have seen fit to oppose its inclusion in the "rolling text" on grounds which we find totally unconvincing.

The agreement reached in Working Group B on a definition of production facilities, on the principle that all such facilities would be destroyed and on the consequent changes in articles II and V of the "rolling text" is one of the major achievements of this year's session. The question of the order of destruction of chemical weapon stocks and production facilities remains a major problem area. As we have said in the past, any concerns about security in the destruction period should be addressed by appropriate adjustments in the order of destruction. The maintenance of secret stocks or continued production during this period would however be in conflict with the basic purposes of the convention.

The importance of article X for a viable convention which ensures undiminished security for all participants can hardly be over-emphasized. It would be unrealistic to imagine that the chemical weapons threat would vanish with the signature or entry into force of the convention. Before becoming a party to it, each State would have to satisfy itself that by doing so it did not become more vulnerable to a chemical weapons attack by a potential adversary. These weapons have in the past been used against those who did not possess the ability to retaliate in kind and to protect themselves against these weapons. With a ban on the production and possession of chemical weapons, the importance of possessing a protective capacity would become even more important for parties to the convention. A sizeable number of countries possess this capability, but a larger number do not. It is, therefore, of vital importance that the convention should contain effective and reliable provisions on assistance in protective measures. It is only in this perspective that this question can realistically be addressed. The issues are not academic or theoretical in character, as one delegation suggested at our last meeting. They have a direct bearing on the national security of many countries and cannot be lightly dismissed.

(Mr. Asif Ezdi, Pakistan)

My delegation made some proposals this summer in Group B to make article X truly meaningful, including a proposal that States parties should conclude agreements with the Organization, on the basis of a model agreement, on the provision of assistance in protective measures. Certain delegations, however, would prefer to keep the provisions of article X nebulous and ill-defined. Such an approach is not likely to enhance the credibility or viability of the convention or to attract wide adherence to it. I should like here to express our appreciation for the statement made by Ambassador Nazarkin of the Soviet Union on 11 August 1988, in which he expressed support for provisions on collective measures by States parties under article X and for special agreements between States parties and the technical secretariat on this subject.

In Working Group C tangible progress was made in two specific areas connected with challenge inspection, i.e. the procedure after the submission of the report and guidelines for the conduct of challenge inspections. Many of the key problems in article IX remain, however. These should be resolved on the basis of a multilateral approach which recognizes the interest of each State party in the clarification of doubts which have given rise to a challenge inspection. For this purpose, the executive council should be given the power to resolve contentious issues.

Discussions on the final clauses of the convention under the guidance of the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee have served to clarify different aspects of the issues involved. We hope this will be a first step towards a solution of the problems. In our view, the convention should contain explicit provisions to preclude any reservations. Furthermore, any reservations made under the Geneva Protocol with regard to the prohibition of use would clearly be inconsistent with article I, and would therefore stand annulled for States parties to the convention.

We would like to express appreciation to those delegations which have provided information to the Conference on their chemical weapons stockpiles and production facilities, as well as on other chemicals of relevance to the convention produced by them. This information will enhance mutual confidence and facilitate the task of developing effective procedures for verification.

Ambassador Elaraby of Egypt in his statement last week drew our attention to an important issue which has so far not been considered fully in our deliberations. I refer to the question of measures to be taken by States parties collectively against another country, whether a party to the convention or not, which uses chemical weapons or otherwise poses a chemical weapons threat to a State party. As recent instances of the use of chemical weapons have shown, a reprimand or condemnation by the international community is not an effective deterrent against their use. It is essential in addition that the international community should have a mechanism at its disposal to make the recalcitrant State desist from its acts, or at least to raise the costs for that State of pursuing such a course. The present "rolling text" already envisages the establishment of a multilateral institutional structure for the implementation of the convention. The question of which one or more

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of its organs should be entrusted with responsibility for initiating measures to be taken against the offending State should now be taken up. While this organizational question falls essentially under article VIII, we also recognize that it has a bearing on other parts of the convention. It might therefore be worth while to deal with this issue in a separate article and to take it up during the inter-sessional period along with other subjects mentioned by the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee a short while ago.

The importance of the universality of the chemical weapons convention has been emphasized by several delegations. We agree with this view. Universality can best be achieved if the provisions of the convention are such that each State finds that its security interests are better served by being a party to it than by staying out. In this context, we would like to underline that effective provisions on assistance and on action to be taken in cases of violation can serve as significant incentives for acceding to the Convention.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement as well as for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country, for the recognition of the speech of my Minister before this august body, as well as for the kind words he rendered to my predecessor, Ambassador Loeis. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia, Ambassador Butler.

Mr. BUTLER (Australia): Before making my statement today, I would like to invite the attention of the Conference to document CD/872 which I have asked to be circulated today. This provides the text of a statement made on 9 September by the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator Gareth Evans, on the reported use of chemical weapons against Kurdish tribes in northern Iraq.

This plenary meeting of the Conference brings to an end, five years of service by me as leader of the Australian delegation to the Conference on Disarmament. Under these circumstances I thought it might be appropriate and, hopefully useful, if I made a few personal observations. I emphasize the word observations. I pretend to offer nothing more.

When I took up my duties at the Conference in February 1984 I did so as the first Australian Ambassador for disarmament. The decision by the Australian Government in 1983, to allocate resources dedicated solely to the task of disarmament was a direct reflection of at least two very specific Australian concerns. First, our steadfast belief in the multilateral institutions that had been established following the terrible events of the Second World War. Australia played a leading role at the San Francisco Conference on the Charter of the the United Nations, and was an original Member of that Organization. We Australians were convinced then of the need for a world community shaped by a new set of values and rules, at the heart of which was the determination - and I quote the Charter - to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". We hold the same view today. Indeed, if anything that view has strengthened as the community of nations has grown, following the great movement of decolonization, which brought with it the reality of the interdependence of our modern world.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

Second, the depth of belief that existed in Australia five years ago, and remains today, that the maintenance of international peace and security demands the negotiation of concrete, practical and enduring measures of arms control and disarmament. I took my place at this conference table strengthened in the knowledge of those distinctly Australian points of view, but not a little awed by the knowledge that, throughout this century, the various forms of the Conference on Disarmament that have worked in Geneva had been attended by persons of great stature who had always faced tasks of both immense complexity and importance.

My personal experience of the work that has taken place during the last five years, that is, for half of the life of the modern Conference on Disarmament, has done nothing to alter my view of the importance of and the necessity for the work that we conduct in this body. Yet, like all of us who work here my experience has been a mixed one. There have been moments when depression or frustration over the difficulty of our work and the slowness of progress has seemed to predominate. On other occasions the light at the end of the tunnel has more than flickered. Perhaps such a mixed experience is inevitable because work on disarmament can be described as a good example of philosophy in action. On a philosophical level we all face questions about the nature of human life and human relationships.

For example, we are compelled to ask, is it inevitable that there will be conflict between people? In the sense that there will be differing points of view the answer is probably, "yes". But must it be inevitable that those who differ with each other will then take up arms and wage war? Surely not. There is the related question - does the possession of arms make violent conflict inevitable? Or is it the perception of differences which leads people and States to take up arms? I cannot pretend to have any oracular answers to such questions. But I will make one simple assertion relevant to them and to our time.

The period in which we live has become the most heavily armed age of all time. This is true in absolute terms, that is, in terms of the proportion of resources devoted to arms, but also in relative terms, that is, defined by the degree of the technological sophistication and destructive power of modern weapon systems. I believe this assertion is fact and that it provides a single imperative. We need disarmament and arms control more urgently, more thoroughly, than ever before in recorded history. This fact imposes an irreducible significance upon the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

It is because I hold this view of the importance of our work that I propose now, to offer some constructive criticism of the way in which we conduct our work. I do this as a friend of the Conference and I do it with optimism. Because we are charged with such a vital task distractions of an ideological, indeed of an almost theological character, have no place in our Conference. Too much of our time is wasted in what are merely linguistic disputes about whose doctrinaire orthodoxy on disarmament is the superior or holiest one.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

The work of the Conference would be greatly improved if its focus were to be shifted from such disputes and turned, sharply, upon practical proposals related to the real world of: expenditure on arms; the elimination of weapons of mass destruction; the elimination of chemical weapons; the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

I think there is too much diplomatic nicety in the conduct of the work of this Conference. A disproportionate amount of time is spent on our congratulating each other on taking up offices to which either our Governments have appointed us, in the normal course of events, or when through the mere sequence of the alphabet we have taken up jobs simply because it has become our turn to do so. The rules of procedure of the General Assembly of the United Nations, in rule 110, seek to prevent the waste of time that is involved in formal speeches of congratulation. We should follow the same rule in our Conference, as I have done today. If we do not do this we will run the risk of appearing to the public as a nice club rather than a work place.

Too often in my experience at this Conference, we have spent time arguing about mandates for the establishment of ad hoc committees - committees which should form the boiler room of our serious work on disarmament. This shadow play, this substitution of form for substance is not only stupefying, but I earnestly submit, is probably in contravention of our rules of procedure, rules which we adopted and wrote ourselves. The relevant rule of procedure - rule 23 - recognizes that our consideration of and our work on the various subjects on our agenda may take a variety of forms. A distinction is drawn, in rule 23, between subjects on which there may be "a basis to negotiate a draft treaty or other draft texts" and other subjects on which the most appropriate way for us to conduct our work may be in working groups, or technical groups, or groups of governmental experts.

Now, this brings me back to the concept of theology and I must recall that in Christian theology there was once an argument, 500 or 600 years ago, about how many angels could fit on the head of a pin. The argument was never resolved, but thankfully seems to have been consigned to the dustbin of history. We should do the same with regard to arguments about mandates and thus reject any further preference for a diplomatic minuet as against the harder and more crucial work of bringing about arms control and disarmament.

At the end of each of our annual sessions we produce a report to the General Assembly of the United Nations on what we have done during the year. In that report we seek to give an account of our stewardship of the crucial tasks with which we have been entrusted. The report writing sessions are conducted in private. I suggest that we should be grateful for at least this fact, because I do not believe that the people who send us here, ultimately the people of all of our countries, could believe their eyes if they were to see what happens in those private meetings.

The Lemming-like rush to apportion blame for lack of progress is as blind as those poor creatures. The point surely is not who was at fault but what the problems were and how we may be able to solve them, next time around.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

During my time at this Conference there has been a sea change in what is usually called East/West relations. That change has brought significant progress in disarmament and, beyond disarmament, in the potential or actual resolution of serious conflict in a number of regions of the world. I congratulate those in both East and West who have forged this change and I have the temerity to ask them for more.

We are on the right track. Progress should and must continue. But it is of central importance to recognize that the Conference on Disarmament is a universal body. It represents the whole community of nations and is thus also a body within which so-called North/South relations are worked out, as well as those of the East and the West. I am deeply concerned that North/South development in our field of disarmament is now lagging behind that of East/West development. What is required is a new and major effort on both the armaments and the arms control and disarmament issues which so beset a number of the countries of this world which are not a part of the East or the West. The absence from our agenda of such issues, particularly, conventional arms issues, is wrong and needs correction urgently.

Having said this I would want to be clear that I do not deny the global character of the threat posed by nuclear weapons. In this sense it is right that the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament includes major nuclear weapons issues. But it is puzzling, to say the very least, that a number of member States of this Conference who are not nuclear-weapon States and who speak most stridently against those weapons, and against nuclear testing, refuse consensus on our starting practical work on these issues. This seems to represent a preference for ideological protest as against practical progress, and when in some cases there is added to this stance a justifiable concern about the domestic nuclear programmes of such countries, it appears that ideology runs the risk of being identified as hypocrisy.

On the other hand if I were asked to identify what I thought was the major problem we presently face in this Conference, I would say that it is the problem of the potential conflict between what is being done bilaterally between the two major military States, and what is happening or sometimes not happening in this Conference. It is a matter of supreme irony that three years ago the most popular reason advanced for lack of progress in this Conference was that the bilateral relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union was not going well. It was said, how could it be expected of us - a mere 38 countries - that we could do well if those other two were in a stand-off. Interesting arithmetic.

Well those two are now not doing badly so according to the logic employed previously, we should also be doing rather better. But this logic has not proven to be the case. So what can we make of the logic? One answer would say that what has been revealed was that the earlier claim that we could not move unless the two great Powers moved was false. I am not sure that this was or is true. Another answer could be that the prior logic had simply been deployed as an argument to mask other agendas.

One could analyse this phenomenon at greater length, but I suspect fruitlessly. Surely the central reality should be that those of us who are not so-called super-Powers should insist upon co-operation and interdependence

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

in actions on disarmament. We should insist not only on bilateral progress between those who hold the overwhelming quantity of weapons but that such progress should lead them to a more co-operative attitude towards our multilateral efforts and lead us to seize the opportunity provided by their bilateral efforts to ensure that the world community moves ahead, together, towards the measures or arms control and disarmament that are essential.

I think we should all recognize that progress in arms control and disarmament will necessarily be tortuous and, that it is a linear process. Quantum leaps are rarely available and indeed, if not measured, could even cause anxiety. Because I believe that we are dealing with such a process I reject any suggestion that this Conference has failed. I mention this suggestion merely because it is heard frequently. I wish to give it no currency. As the chemical weapons negotiations indicate we are involved in a process which is broadly characterized by progress.

The narrow view of the work of this Conference during the last 10 years is necessarily a critical one. It states simply - that the task of the Conference is to produce agreements, it has produced none, therefore it has failed. To say this is like taking a snapshot of a long journey and then saying that the one photograph is the whole picture of the whole journey. I prefer the broader view which recognizes that we were involved in a linear process and attempts to show the whole picture, a picture of a continuing process.

I have attempted to suggest ways in which the whole picture can be improved. Any such journey relies to a good extent upon those who take part in it. In this context, we do face an issue about the membership of our Conference. It is not an easy one but the one main comment I would make is that it is clear that there are a number of States working as observers at this Conference who are making truly substantial contributions to our work on disarmament, even though they are not members. We must find a way to allow these States to sit at the table. In principle, while I do not believe that the Conference would work well with a greatly expanded membership, it also must surely be the case that we should facilitate our being joined by any State which is willing and able to make a real contribution to our work.

I do not believe in change for its own sake but I certainly reject a static view of life or history. I firmly believe in the saying that - those who refuse to learn from history will be condemned to repeat it. Our Conference is vital. If by some means it were to disappear tomorrow individuals would earn the title of "statesman" through proposals to reinvent it, instantly. Our Conference needs to change and grow. I have tried to suggest today some ways in which this might occur.

In conclusion, I do believe fervently that we are involved in this Conference in a great endeavour. Perhaps we should be guided in this endeavour by one of the conclusions drawn by Jacob Bronowski, who, writing in his remarkable book The Ascent of Man, said:

"All knowledge, all information between human beings can only be exchanged within a play of tolerance. And that is true whether the exchange is in science, or in literature, or in religion or in politics".

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

I want to thank my colleagues at this Conference for the friendship they have shown to me and to my wife. I am deeply grateful to the Secretariat for its work and dedication. I wish you all well in the future, and above all, that your work will prosper.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Australia for his statement. As Ambassador Butler will be leaving us and the Conference, I would like to reiterate here that his outstanding contribution to the work of the Conference, and his conviction and valuable commitment towards a safer world, will be with us and with all those who render their services in this field. Ambassador Butler well represented a country which has a responsible approach towards matters affecting international peace and security. A vivid example of this valuable approach is manifested, as we have seen, in today's paper by Australia and the strong position adopted by that country vis-à-vis the repeated and verified use of chemical weapons. On behalf of the Conference, I wish him well in his new functions and in his personal life.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Loeis of Indonesia.

Mr. LOEIS (Indonesia): As I am taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, may I at the outset express the pleasure of my delegation at seeing you, Sir, the representative of an Islamic country with which Indonesia enjoys friendly relations, assuming the highest office of this Conference? May I also take this opportunity to warmly welcome the distinguished ambassadors of Burma and India, Ambassador Aung Thant and Ambassador Sharma, and pledge the co-operation of my delegation? We have learned that our distinguished colleague Ambassador Harald Rose of the German Democratic Republic will be leaving us soon. It has also just been made known to us that Ambassador Richard Butler of Australia is to end his service as leader of the Australian delegation to the CD. We wish Ambassador Rose and Ambassador Butler all the best in their future assignments.

As the co-ordinator of the Group of 21 for the month of September, I wish to comment on the references to the Group of 21 concerning item 1 made by the distinguished co-ordinator of the Western group and Ambassador van Schaik during the plenary session on Tuesday, 13 September 1988.

I would like to start by recalling that the Conference on Disarmament is not a deliberative but a negotiating body. In the context of item 1 of the Conference agenda, it is only natural that the Conference on Disarmament should immediately negotiate and conclude a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. The Group of 21 firmly believes that by doing so the Conference would make a concrete and meaningful contribution to disarmament. Throughout its existence, however, the Conference has been prevented from undertaking such negotiations. Most unfortunately, the Conference has succumbed to procedural debates over these last few years.

During those debates the Group of 21 has demonstrated its flexibility in the search for a consensus so that an ad hoc committee on item 1 could be established. As evidence, the Group of 21 in the course of these last five years has put forward three concrete and distinct proposals, namely CD/492, CD/520 and CD/829. The latter was tabled just this year on 21 April 1988, and was acceptable to the socialist group and a nuclear-weapon State not belonging to any group. Furthermore, the Group of 21 would like to

(Mr. Loeis, Indonesia)

point out that CD/829 also incorporates the main elements of the proposal made by a member of the Western group during its presidency in February 1986. Accordingly, the Group of 21 maintains that CD/829 is best suited to accommodate the positions of all States represented in the Conference. To our regret, this flexibility on the part of our Group, supported by the majority of the Conference, was not reciprocated by the Western group. On the contrary, the Western group has kept on insisting on CD/521 for more than four years, and to date this is still considered as its official position.

The proposal contained in CD/863 was officially tabled by the distinguished Ambassador of Czechoslovakia on 25 August 1988, when the Conference was at its busiest preparing the report of its 1988 session. Even then, the Group of 21 apparently was the group which spent more time than any other group in discussing the proposal and analysing it in depth because of the highest importance it attaches to this item. The reason is clear: we want to treat the proposal in a constructive and responsible way. Indeed, we also wish to prevent the Conference from being plunged into an unnecessary round of procedural debates in the final days of its 1988 session, which would complicate the work of the Conference.

The Group of 21 will live up to its commitment in the most appropriate manner and at the most appropriate time, and will be prepared to give its response to and discuss the proposal as well as other proposals at our next session.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Loeis of Indonesia for his statement and for his kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of India, Ambassador Sharma.

Mr. SHARMA (India): Mr. President, I have sought the floor briefly to thank you and the many colleagues who have spoken today for their words of welcome to me. Ambassador Butler suggested in his address that we seem to be expending too much time in congratulating each other on our appointments, but I must say that I feel quite comfortable at being made welcome with so much warmth. I would like to assure you, Mr. President, that I and my delegation will work tirelessly towards the fulfilment of the crucial goals and objectives of this Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Sharma for his statement and I assure him, as I said at the beginning on behalf of the Conference, of the full co-operation of the Conference during his work. I now give the floor to Ambassador Vejvoda of Czechoslovakia.

Mr. VEJVODA (Czechoslovakia): Excuse me for taking the floor again, Mr. President, but this time I shall be very brief. I only wanted to express in a more formal way, and independently of my longer statement, how myself, my delegation and my group regret that Ambassador Rose of the German Democratic Republic is leaving us. Yes, it is the rule of diplomatic life, that merry-go-round of colleagues and friends, to which there is no exception and which sooner or later affects all of us. But anyway, I deem it quite proper to express good wishes, congratulations and appreciation for the work of our colleagues, and especially, in my case, for the work of Ambassador Rose, one of my closest friends in the Conference, and my close friend for many years before, who has been representing his country, with which my country has excellent brotherly relations, so well.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

Allow me also, Mr. President, to say goodbye to Ambassador Butler, who just announced that he is leaving us too. He also was one of the outstanding figures of this body, and I wish him all the best in his future career. In doing this, I hope that he will forgive me for the fact that I have probably breached rule 110 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure, which Ambassador Butler just called us to observe strictly.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Vejvoda for his statement, and now I certainly have to give the floor to Ambassador Butler.

Mr. BUTLER (Australia): As everyone is breaking rule 110, let me express my pleasure in seeing at this table my old friend Mr. Sharma from India. I really took the floor to speak as Western co-ordinator on item 1 of the agenda in response to what the distinguished Ambassador of Indonesia has just said on behalf of the Group of 21. First, a point of clarification: the official position of Western group on this subject was as expressed in the statement made by my delegation at our last plenary meeting. Secondly, I want to express our appreciation to Ambassador Loeis for the assurance that he gave us in the statement that he made on behalf of the Group of 21.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Butler for his statement, and with this I think that concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other member wish to take the floor? I see none.

As announced at our last plenary meeting, I now intend to invite the Conference to take action on the reports of the Ad hoc Committee on Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-nuclear-weapon States against the Use of Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons and the Ad hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament. The relevant documents, CD/868 and CD/867 respectively, were circulated at the last plenary meeting.

May I suggest that we turn now to the report of the Ad hoc Committee on Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-nuclear-weapons States against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons? I put before the Conference for adoption document CD/868. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts the report of the Ad hoc Committee.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: We shall now turn to the report of the Ad hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament. I put before the Conference for adoption document CD/867 containing the report of that Ad hoc Committee. If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts it.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I now turn to another subject. You will recall that, at our last plenary meeting, I drew attention to the fact that we were well behind in the preparation of the annual report to the General Assembly of the United Nations. I noted then that there was a large amount of documentation to be processed during the last stages of our work, and pointed to the possibility that we might not even be able to conclude the 1988 session on

(The President)

Friday at 5 p.m., as I tentatively indicated. Unfortunately, my doubts have been confirmed. I am informed by the Secretariat that it will not be possible for the technical services to process the documentation required for adoption of the report in all languages, as is the rule in this Conference.

This morning I informed the group co-ordinators of the situation and, on the basis of the needs of the technical services, suggested to them as the new closing date Tuesday, 20 September at 10 a.m., a possibility that I had already mentioned on 7 September. As documents will be issued immediately after processing, we should be able to receive some of them before that date. The translated versions of the report of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons will be available between tonight and tomorrow morning, and document CD/WP.348/Rev.1, containing the technical parts as well as the substantive paragraphs of the draft report, will be ready in English in the delegations' pigeon-holes on Monday at 11 a.m., followed in the afternoon by some of the other languages.

I therefore propose that we adjourn the 1988 session of the Conference on Tuesday, 20 September and that, for that purpose, we hold a plenary meeting devoted exclusively to adoption of the report. I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I have no other business for today. I shall now adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday, 20 September at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.