



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. Roche (Canada)

later: Mr. Batiouk (Ukrainian SSR)
(Vice-Chairman)

CONTENTS

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS (continued)

EXPRESSIONS OF SYMPATHY ON THE DEATH OF AIDA LOUISA LEVIN, SENIOR STAFF MEMBER OF
THE SECRETARIAT

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS (continued)

*This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned within one week of the date of publication to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 51 TO 69, 139, 141 AND 145 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE OF ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. KUNDA (Zambia): Let me join other delegates who have spoken before me in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the Chairmanship of the First Committee during this session of the General Assembly. Your election and that of the other officers is a reaffirmation of the Committee's confidence in your ability to spur the work of the Committee on to a successful conclusion.

Our Committee began its work this year at a time when the international community has high expectations for international peace and security. The international political climate is characterized by some positive developments. We have, for instance, seen long and complex conflicts give way to negotiations. In the area of disarmament, the signing of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) has been a signal accomplishment. Although it represents only four per cent of the nuclear arsenals of the two super-Powers, it is significant in that it symbolizes a departure from a past characterized by arms control, limitation and reduction towards a new era of genuine disarmament measures. Its intrusive verification measures should go a long way towards allaying any underlying mistrust between the parties concerned and indeed augurs well for future disarmament efforts. The INF régime is also significant in that it has struck at the heart of deterrence, which my country has always considered to be a pernicious concept that has rationalized the unbridled accumulation of quantitative and qualitative nuclear weapons ever since the advent of the nuclear era.

(Mr. Kunda, Zambia)

These positive developments manifest a new political realism more likely to give international peace and security a chance. They must, therefore, be consolidated so that in the fullness of time more progress can be built upon them. In this connection, we urge the two super-Powers to move with deliberate speed beyond agreement in principle to the actual reduction by 50 per cent of their strategic nuclear forces as yet another act of genuine disarmament.

The role of the United Nations as the embodiment of the multilateral approach in disarmament cannot be overemphasized. It is for that reason that we placed much hope in the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament here in New York last summer. We regret the failure of that session to agree on a final document. However, that failure should not discourage us from intensifying our efforts. The session helped us to identify the major sources of contention where more work needs to be done as we strive towards general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

It cannot be denied that despite improvement in the international political climate, the world is far from achieving its noble goal of general and complete disarmament. The arms race in its nuclear and conventional forms continues to menace the survival of mankind without any sign of abating.

In recent years, there has been mounting concern about the increase in the naval arms race. More and more nuclear-weapon-bearing vessels roam the international blue waters today than ever before. It makes a mockery of disarmament efforts if weapons of one kind are removed from one environment but maintained in another. By the same token, we deplore the extension of the arms race into outer space. Outer space is the heritage of mankind. It should be explored and all its potential exploited for peaceful uses to the benefit of all humankind.

(Mr. Kunda, Zambia)

Zambia attaches great importance to regional disarmament measures. To that end, we support the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones wherever they may exist. Thus, Zambia has always been supportive of all efforts aimed at the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

(Mr. Kunda, Zambia)

Regrettably, work in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean has for the past 17 years been painfully slow, and it is currently stalemated over the question of the unfavourable political climate in Afghanistan. In the light of the improvement in the situation in Afghanistan owing to the continuing withdrawal of foreign forces, we see no reason why progress should be held hostage to the situation in that country. For as long as the Indian Ocean is not made into a zone of peace, nuclear weapons will continue to be deployed there, constituting a threat to the survival of the human species.

Talking about nuclear-weapon-free zones brings me to the denuclearization of Africa. The denuclearization of Africa, agreed upon by the Organization of African States in 1964, underscored Africa's commitment to disarmament. However, South Africa's acquisition of a nuclear-weapon capability runs counter to the letter and spirit of the denuclearization of Africa. The racist South African régime has only one purpose in assuming this capability - to use its nuclear weapons as an instrument of intimidation of Africa and especially of those African countries in the neighbourhood of South Africa. By so doing, South Africa thinks that it can protect and prolong its obnoxious system of apartheid through the nuclear-weapon fraud. We once again urge those countries that collaborate with the racist Pretoria régime in the nuclear field to desist from this collaboration, as any collaboration makes them accomplices to whatever crime South Africa might commit against its neighbours through nuclear blackmail.

Furthermore, Zambia is profoundly perturbed by recent reports regarding the dumping of radioactive and toxic wastes by certain developed countries in some African countries. Africa already has innumerable problems, and it should not be subjected to this complex problem. It is morally wrong for countries that have decided to utilize nuclear energy to fail to devise measures for toxic waste management. They must have the foresight to prepare for the disposal of nuclear

(Mr. Kunda, Zambia)

waste. The obligation to use nuclear energy should always be accompanied by the obligation to secure disposal sites within the confines of each energy user. To this end, it is our considered view that the international community should, through an international instrument, prohibit the dumping of radioactive and toxic wastes in the developing countries.

The question of nuclear testing has been on the Committee's agenda for years on end without any consensus. We regard the realization of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban as the hallmark of our activities in our endeavour to halt and reverse the arms race and eventually to bring about general and complete disarmament under effective international control. We should be unrelenting in our efforts towards a comprehensive test ban.

Zambia has been following with keen interest the progress in the multilateral negotiations on the elimination of chemical weapons. Chemical weapons are weapons of mass destruction which are next to nuclear weapons in lethality. In view of the disturbing reports about the use of deadly chemical weapons in recent years, my delegation calls on the Conference on Disarmament to speed up negotiations leading to a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons. In this regard, my delegation welcomes and supports the proposal by the United States of America on the holding of an international conference to consider actions that we can take together to reverse the hitherto serious erosion of the 1925 Geneva Protocol outlawing the use of chemical weapons. In this connection, my delegation wishes to thank the Government of France for its quick response in offering to host such a conference in Paris from 7 to 11 January 1989.

The question of conventional arms deserves urgent attention. It is common knowledge that, owing to the development of science and technology, conventional weapons have become increasingly lethal and destructive, thus diminishing significantly the distinction between conventional and low-power nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Kunda, Zambia)

It is therefore necessary that the two super-Powers and their respective military blocs, which possess the largest and most sophisticated conventional weapons, take the lead, as in the case of nuclear weapons, in the endeavour to reduce the stockpiles of conventional weapons to a reasonable level of sufficiency.

In this connection, it is our hope that the East-West conventional stability talks will seriously consider trimming the heavy concentration of conventional forces in Europe as a mark of the two blocs' seriousness about conventional disarmament.

EXPRESSIONS OF SYMPATHY ON THE DEATH OF AIDA LOUISA LEVIN, SENIOR STAFF MEMBER OF THE SECRETARIAT

The CHAIRMAN: I have received a request from two delegations to make special statements concerning the late Aida Levin. I shall call first on the Permanent Representative of Zaire, a former Chairman of our Committee, Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, and then on the representative of Jordan, Mr. Obeidat.

Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): On behalf of the African Group of States, which I have the honour to chair this month, I wish to express my most sincere condolences to the Department for Disarmament Affairs on the untimely death of Aida Levin, a senior officer of the United Nations, who devoted most of her life to the United Nations and with whom it was our honour to work closely over the past few years. I also wish to extend to the Argentine Government and to her family the sympathy of all the members of the African Group.

Mr. OBEIDAT (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): I speak today as this month's Chairman of the Arab Group of States. We received with sadness the news of the sudden death of Aida Levin, who had an excellent record in disarmament affairs. She worked seriously and diligently, and we appreciated the exemplary

Mr. Obaidat, Jordan

manner in which she performed her work. We extend to her family, to her country, Argentina, and to the Secretary-General our sincerest condolences. I pray God that she will go to Paradise and be blessed.*

*Mr. Batiouk (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) took the Chair.

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS (continued)

Mr. CHACON (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): My Government's pleasure at the election of the Chairman and other officers of the Committee is well known, but I shall heed his reminder about article 110 of the rules of procedure and refrain from offering congratulations to them.

My delegation noted the results of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament with a mixture of disappointment and optimism. Disappointment, because we had felt that the seemingly propitious international climate that prevailed at the time because of the conclusion of arms agreements between the two super-Powers would lead to a successful outcome of our deliberations, whereas that was not the case and we were unable to reach the safe harbour of consensus. Optimism, because although agreement was not reached on a final document, we were, in fact, able to reach agreement on some very important issues.

In his report on the work of the Organization the Secretary-General set forth ideas that might form the basis for productive discussions and action in the General Assembly in the field of disarmament in coming years. Our delegation fully agrees with him, because his ideas also form the basis of Costa Rica's foreign policy. We comment upon them freely, because they appear to be an indirect result of the discussions at the third special session devoted to disarmament.

We are in complete agreement with the Secretary-General's statement that: "Disarmament is not the exclusive responsibility of the two most powerful States, but a joint undertaking of all States" (A/43/1, p. 13).

(Mr. Chacon, Costa Rica)

Our country has stressed that point in various forums. The President of Costa Rica, Dr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, did so in his statement at the third special session devoted to disarmament, when he said:

"In this crusade each nation has its own responsibility: some will have to destroy nuclear warheads, others the uniforms of soldiers; but all of us must work untiringly for disarmament." (A/S-15/PV.12, p. 26)

The Secretary-General is correct when he states:

"While nuclear disarmament must continue to be the primary concern, conventional disarmament has acquired a new importance and urgency" (A/43/1, p. 13).

We would go even further and say that, where conventional disarmament is concerned, a tremendous responsibility is borne by the countries of the third world, because they are the principal consumers of armaments in the world and because it is in those countries that the bloodiest wars since the end of the second world war have occurred. In his statement last June, the President of Costa Rica also said:

"To strengthen common international efforts we must make the principles we apply uniform and make the morality by which we judge our own actions uniform as well. The fear of nuclear war, the horrors of an atomic end to the world, have rendered us insensitive to conventional warfare.

"The memory of Hiroshima is stronger than the memory of Viet Nam."

(A/S-15/PV.12, pp. 27, 28)

(Mr. Chacon, Costa Rica)

There should be the same respect with regard to the atomic bomb as there is with regard to the use of conventional weapons. We would like to see it made just as reprehensible to kill many people little by little every day as to kill everybody at one stroke. We live in a world in which if the atomic bomb was possessed by all countries in the world and the destiny of the world were to depend on one madman, we would have more respect for the use of conventional weapons and the peace of the universe would be more secure. Do we have the right to forget all those people who fell in the various wars of the twentieth century?

Today the world is divided into those who suffer from the terror of being destroyed in a nuclear war and those who are dying every day in conventional wars. The terror of ultimate war is so great that we have become insensitive to the use of and race in non-nuclear weapons. It is a matter of urgency, of simple intelligence and of morality that we should fight equally to see that there is no recurrence of Hiroshima, Viet Nam or Afghanistan.

The Secretary-General quite rightly in his report states that the qualitative aspect of the arms race needs to be addressed along with its quantitative aspect. It is indispensable to do that particularly because the borders between the conventional arms race and the nuclear arms race are becoming blurred. Weapons of mass destruction, the development of new arms technologies, the incorporation of space technology in the invention of new machines of war and the application of the most sophisticated advances in micro-electronics or genetics have all contributed to this change in the environment of possible warfare and we are forced, therefore, to create new ways of thinking about disarmament.

We are not convinced, as we were before, that it is good to concentrate our attention solely on nuclear weapons or on what are known as conventional weapons. We believe that the Secretary-General is entirely right when he stresses

(Mr. Chacon, Costa Rica)

that national security needs to be viewed in the broader context of global issues and international concerns.

We live in a completely interdependent world. That might seem to be an obvious truth in the economic field but it has not been properly perceived in the political sphere. Whether we like it or not, today the security of each State is determined by the security of all and no nation can evade that issue. The major Powers and the medium-sized Powers all consider that their integrity is threatened when a regional or national conflict breaks out, even if it is very remote. Similarly, the poor or small countries have a base for feeling that the major and more powerful States, by their competition, are threatening their internal or regional security. Within this context the small States have every right to demand of the great and powerful States that they put an end to the arms race in the nuclear and space spheres because they feel, quite rightly, that they are threatened by the insanities that might be committed.

The same could be said about the feelings of the major and medium-sized Powers which stress that disarmament as a multilateral negotiation should be carried out particularly within the field of conventional weapons. No State can however deny the undoubted fact that a growing arms race of any type is a threat to the security of all and does not engender security for anyone.

We entirely agree with the Secretary-General when he points out that the goals of disarmament and arms limitation need to be pursued in conjunction with efforts to resolve conflicts, build confidence and promote economic and social development. This was precisely my country's purpose when we put forward the peace plan which laid the foundation for the procedure for achieving a stable and lasting peace in Central America. We must pursue efforts to resolve conflicts such as those afflicting the Central American nations by promoting confidence among them

(Mr. Chacon, Costa Rica)

and by promoting their economic and social development, while at the same time pursuing the goal of disarmament and arms limitation in our own area.

The same, we think, should be done in other parts of the world where, although various conflicts have been resolved in a precarious manner, we do not think the root causes of those conflicts have been eradicated. Along with the Secretary-General we believe, as he states, that the existing machinery for disarmament can and should be utilized better. For us there is no doubt that all States can have recourse at any time to the instruments placed in our hands by the United Nations Charter and the organizations emanating therefrom. We do not agree with those who think that we need to reform the Charter because of the new requirements of the so-called technological era. Rather we feel that it is advisable to make better use of the existing provisions of the Charter and give the United Nations more political and financial support.

The capacity demonstrated over the past few months by the existing machinery of the United Nations in the resolution of a number of regional conflicts has persuaded us even more that what was said by the Secretary-General should be a guideline for our conduct in the quest for disarmament, peace and international security.

Finally, we think that the Secretary-General has accurately interpreted the outlines of the thinking in the disarmament field when he referred to other promising elements deriving from the proceedings of the special session.

(Mr. Chacon, Costa Rica)

He includes among these the common positions with regard to the need to conclude a chemical weapons convention at the earliest; to mobilize modern technology in the cause of disarmament; to encourage States with major space capabilities to contribute actively to the objective of the exclusively peaceful use of outer space; and, finally, to consider the phenomenon of international arms transfers, with their impact on situations of actual or potential conflict.

Having placed itself within this promising context, my delegation, along with that of Colombia, submitted a draft resolution aimed at promoting not only an in-depth debate on this problem but also a series of measures culminating, in the next few years, in the effective regulation of trade in arms, whether official or unofficial, legal or illegal, licit or illicit, and whether the weapons be conventional or non-conventional.

We know that the question is a very complex one, but we know also that it is now necessary for the international community to take measures to confront it with determination. It is becoming clearer every day that these transfers are a threat to the security, not only of nations, but of the international community and that they actively contribute to the exacerbation of regional conflicts in many parts of the world. We think that our initiative enjoys the support of the great majority of countries of good will and that it can lay the foundation for a completely new international process aimed at resolving a problem which, for a long time, has been considered more or less taboo in disarmament forums.

There is one further question of concern to us - the rationalization of the work of the First Committee. At its forty-second session the General Assembly, by a vast majority and with no negative votes, approved a resolution that was co-sponsored by my delegation. We think that because that resolution was adopted

(Mr. Chacon, Costa Rica)

by an overwhelming majority of Member States, with no outright opposition, it should guide our search for rationalization of the work of this Committee. There can be no doubt as to its origin or the way it was adopted, nor can any doubt be cast on the results of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development by using the argument about not participating in it. Democracy is about majorities, and if we are unable to accept the verdict of a majority we are not ready to live in such a system.

Together with the binding mandate of resolution 42/42 N, it seems to us, the summary given by the Secretary-General in his report, to which we have referred several times, and the paper proposed recently by the Chairman of this Committee constitute another basis for looking for better organization of our work. Nevertheless, nothing can replace political will when it comes to putting order into the work of the Committee in this hour of financial crisis for the United Nations. Therefore my delegation has hastened to support with all its energy the efforts initiated at an early stage of our work by the Chairman of this Committee, Mr. Roche, and we offer him all possible assistance in finding a prompt and effective solution to these problems.

Mr. MOHIUDDIN (Bangladesh): The diligence and dexterity with which the Chairman of this Committee, Mr. Roche, has been conducting our deliberations deserve our highest praise. I wish therefore to felicitate him and the other officers of the Committee upon their election. My delegation assures him of its fullest co-operation.

We are happy to be able to note that at this session we are meeting in an atmosphere of hope. The breaking out of peace everywhere, the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, the general relaxation of tensions, and the enhanced interest in disarmament among Member

(Mr. Mohiuddin, Bangladesh)

States, provide us with a backdrop knitted with confidence. We must, however, beware of the risk that such confidence may be transformed into complacency. Nor must we believe that we have achieved enough to allow ourselves to be diverted, even momentarily, from our aims or to reduce the momentum in the pursuit of what we seek to attain.

We live in a world where there still exists the explosive power of almost four tons of dynamite for each living person. Our planet still bristles with over 50,000 nuclear warheads - sufficient to obliterate the global population hundreds of times over. Our combined conventional armoury contains over 140,000 main battle tanks, 45,000 combat aircraft, 21,000 helicopters, 1,100 major warships and over 700 attack submarines - a most formidable plethora of devices for destruction. We still spend a trillion United States dollars on arms procurement. There are no signs that these figures will decline in the near future. Our search for solutions to these problems must, therefore, continue relentlessly.

The stupendous stockpiling of weapons and the astronomical expenditure on armaments are unjustified and unethical. Mere weapons cannot ensure security. Peace and stability will continue to be threatened as long as poverty, hunger, squalour and despair continue to bedevil the lives of billions. Is it not simply incredible that the total amount disbursed globally as official development assistance is less than 20 per cent of that spent on weaponry, or that the eradication of malaria would cost less than 33 per cent of the price of a modern submarine? Is it, therefore, wrong to ask that we spend less on arms and divert the rest to alleviating the suffering of the millions? We may debate the modalities, but can we question the need?

We do not despair that the third special session on disarmament fell short of our expectations. True, it failed to result in the adoption of a document by consensus. It nevertheless represented a significant advance in heightening

(Mr. Mohiuddin, Bangladesh)

awareness of the crucial issues involved. It succeeded in identifying some areas for progress towards negotiated settlement. It encouraged Member States to deliberate on and debate ideas and issues that will surely facilitate future agreement. It also pointed to the risks of a continued arms race and underscored the urgings of the overwhelming majority that the new atmosphere of understanding should propel us to peace.

Bangladesh, as all are aware, has rejected the nuclear alternative. We have therefore acceded to the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty. We firmly believe that further progress towards nuclear disarmament is a categorical imperative towards peace and security. We support all measures that could promote disarmament and deter both the horizontal and the vertical spread of the arms race. To our minds, a comprehensive test-ban treaty would narrow the arms competition by rendering impossible further development of nuclear weapons. Even if some States were to produce first-generation fission weapons without tests they would be unlikely to use them for fear of effective reprisals. By their commitment to a comprehensive test ban, States would signal their willingness to abjure the arms race, thus reducing the chance of proliferation. Adequate security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States would also diminish their propensity to adopt the nuclear option.

(Mr. Mohiuddin, Bangladesh)

Nuclear weapons undeniably constitute the greatest threat and demand priority attention. It is also true that the use of nuclear weapons represents an infinitely greater prospect of incalculable harm to the future of mankind than the use of conventional weapons.

This is fraught with ever-increasing risks as irrational régimes like South Africa and Israel acquire these capabilities. Nuclear armaments in their hands could have horrendous consequences for the world at large. We strongly condemn their acquisition of nuclear arms.

At the same time we cannot afford to forget that all the wars fought since World War II, which have cost over 20 million lives, have been conventional. There are regions in the world today where a breakdown of the intricate conventional balance would engulf the region concerned, and perhaps the world, in an Armageddon that could include nuclear horror.

Today these conventional weapons are acquiring increasing sophistication through technological advances. Some precision-guided munitions are now able to strike at exact targets at vast distances. In terms of destruction caused, the differences between these and some low-yield nuclear weapons are being gradually and alarmingly reduced. Therefore my delegation believes that if some States have developed conventional capabilities and force structures that have become a cause of apprehension for others, there must be reductions in a balanced and equitable manner so that, while not affecting genuine security requirements, stability is enhanced at lower military levels.

There should be adequate transparency and exchange of data and information among States so as to generate an ambiance of confidence in the region. With the successful Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, Europe has shown the way, and this is worthy of emulation by

(Mr. Mohiuddin, Bangladesh)

other regions. If neighbours began to have confidence in the behaviour patterns of their neighbours, the ensuing process would vastly reduce tension in every region of the world.

Our outlet to the sea is important for Bangladesh. We are, therefore, committed to peaceful uses of the sea and its resources. Our abiding support for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace is in pursuance of this commitment. Naval build-up can spread fear and apprehension. There is, therefore, a clear case for restraint in naval activities in every region. The criteria for legitimate security needs of States in this sphere should be carefully formulated.

The importance of verification both as a concept and set of procedures is acquiring a significant dimension. For instance, if we do have a comprehensive test ban treaty, a global seismic system would be required to verify compliance. We are happy that considerable technical work is being carried out in this respect.

It is our firm belief that in all these and related endeavours the United Nations should play an effective and expanded role. This is a forum where nearly all States of the world are represented. The United Nations can, and must, make an important contribution in encouraging agreements and laying down verification procedures. If this role is gradually acquiring more salience, it is a positive development.

At this point may I stress that, in our opinion, and it is one shared by many, an expanded conference on disarmament could adequately reflect the global political situation. Such expansion could be achieved gradually over a limited time-frame, maintaining the balance of the Conference and thus enhancing its ability to function more effectively.

(Mr. Mchiuddin, Bangladesh)

We in Bangladesh hope for a world where force, and the threat of its use, can be totally abjured as an instrument of policies of States. We are wedded to the concept of general and complete disarmament. This is what led us to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. For the same reasons we support the early convening of the review conference on it. May I reiterate our firm and total conviction that durable peace can only be established through the elimination and destruction of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. We therefore support the establishment of nuclear free zones and zones of peace in every region.

The fate of mankind rests in our hands. In our noble aim we cannot and we must not fail.

If our hope is for disarmament, our quest is for peace, and our aspiration is for development.

There is nothing that human will and determination cannot achieve. Our own goals are no different. The Chairman's wise guidance will no doubt bring us close to their achievement.

Mrs. DIALLO (Senegal) (interpretation from French): My delegation has participated with real interest in the work of each session of the First Committee the deliberative and leading body in the field of disarmament and international security. This year, we are particularly gratified to note that as we are holding our meetings the complexity of challenges and the succession of threats are giving way to a clear will to restore and strengthen peace and stability. The international community is no longer a helpless witness to the useless, costly and destabilizing build-up of weapons.

(Mrs. Diallo, Senegal)

On the contrary, in addition to the effort made on the bilateral and regional level, the search for a strategy is continuing within the competent bodies of the United Nations in order better to cope with all aspects of the phenomenon. The numerous contacts and dialogues are continuing and ideas are being further developed by those bodies responsible for disarmament. And, for the first time since World War II, the objective of eliminating the danger of nuclear war and, therefore, the broader objective of general and complete disarmament, is within our grasp.

That is why, for my delegation, the fact that the Chairman of the Committee is from Canada is not an accident. Canada shows the world the image of a peaceful people dedicated to freedom, champions of peace and universal justice. It is therefore natural that at this time one of its best diplomats should be the Chairman of the First Committee - a fertile field for a flourishing of ideas in the area of disarmament and international security.

My delegation would like to welcome the start of the implementation of the first nuclear disarmament agreement concluded between the Soviet Union and the United States to eliminate their intermediate- and shorter-range nuclear missiles. We should also like to pay tribute to the efforts which are being made by these two countries to conclude a treaty for a 50 per cent reduction of their strategic nuclear weapons. Senegal views these acts and attitudes as harbingers of a new dynamism leading to an era of lasting peace for which all States, nuclear or non-nuclear, large or small, rich or poor, must work tirelessly.

This positive development allows us to be optimistic regarding the future of disarmament and makes us urge the Committee, within the framework of its work, to

(Mrs. Diallo, Senegal)

give greater attention to the question of the non-use of nuclear weapons against States which are signatories to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In fact those States which have formally renounced a sovereign right solely in order to contribute to the elimination of the danger of nuclear war, deserve reliable and verifiable guarantees of their own security from the nuclear Powers. It would therefore be right to give thought to their situation, bearing in mind that any measures taken to protect them are in fact tantamount to a strengthening of the authority of the NPT.

(Mrs. Diallo, Senegal)

My delegation is concerned by the massive use of conventional weapons in many conflicts, their devastating effects in terms of loss of life and material and ecological damage, and the vast financial resources devoted to them. We therefore encourage the efforts under way in some regions, in particular Europe, towards a substantial reduction of these weapons, whose tendency to engender war is widely recognized.

Similarly, the creation and development of new categories of airborne or outer space weapons must be discouraged. In that context we welcome France's decision to act as host, from 7 to 11 January 1989 at Paris, to a conference to consider ways of strengthening respect for the 1925 Geneva Protocol banning chemical weapons.

The Committee is considering the question of the dumping in Africa of nuclear and toxic industrial wastes. Disposal of these wastes is creating more and more problems. There have been attempts to submerge them at sea, to hurl them into the stratosphere and to bury them under ground. None of those methods having yielded technically satisfactory results, certain transnational corporations have begun dumping their wastes in Africa. To us, that is unacceptable and the threat particularly serious. My delegation demands that these practices be condemned and that measures be adopted to put an end to them, to the benefit of all.

The United Nations is now experiencing a period of renewal, marked by increasing convergence of Member States' assessments of the international situation, and by prospects for solution of regional conflicts such as those in Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf, Western Sahara, Chad and southern Africa. In all those regions, where each conflict has its own dynamic and internal logic, the United Nations has brought about a true peace process it would now like to conclude successfully. My delegation hopes this will be encouraged, for the final establishment of international peace and security.

(Mrs. Diallo, Senegal)

Only in that way can we reverse the present trend and reallocate to development the insane sums now spent on weapons. In the final analysis, disarmament is meaningful only when it frees energy for the only useful struggle: the struggle against hunger, ignorance, illness and underdevelopment.

Clearly, our hopes are tinged with distress. The decolonization of Africa is incomplete; apartheid persists as an insult to human dignity; the situation in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories remains alarming; and entire regions are the constant victims of natural disasters.

The reasons are the same as those set out as early as 16 April 1953 by President Eisenhower:

"Each cannon manufactured, each warship launched, each shot fired is ultimately something stolen from those who are hungry and have no food, from those who are cold and have no clothes. This armed world is not spending only money; it is spending the sweat of its workers, the brilliance of its sages, the hopes of its children."

That is why, despite our weak influence in the area of arms and disarmament - or perhaps because of it - we continue to recall the need to take account in our assessments of the actions and positions of all sides, values linked to the higher interests of all and to the universal aspiration to peace.

My delegation is among those that believe the machinery and institutions for disarmament should be strengthened. Similarly, the promotion of disarmament should be continued with determination, through training and information programmes. Here we support the United Nations programme of fellowships in disarmament, the World Disarmament Campaign and Disarmament Week. We believe in the value of disarmament research and studies, and consider that there is a great role for the regional centres for peace and disarmament.

(Mrs. Diallo, Senegal)

My delegation is convinced that each generation must find its own mission, and either fulfil it or betray it. Senegal's is to establish universal peace and justice, and for our part we renew our commitment to spare no effort for the triumph of the ideals of peace and solidarity among peoples and nations.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.