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**VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING**

Chairman: Mr. ROCHE (Canada)

**CONTENTS**

- CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS ON DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS [51 to 69, 139, 141 and 145] (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 51 TO 69, 139, 141 AND 145

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS (continued)

The CHAIRMAN: The first speaker will be the Under-Secretary-General of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, who wishes to make a statement.

Mr. AKASHI (Under-Secretary-General, Department for Disarmament Affairs): Mr. Chairman, may I at the outset express my sincere appreciation to you for giving me this opportunity to address the Committee in its consideration of the various disarmament and disarmament-related items on its agenda.

The Committee has before it a number of reports submitted by the Secretary-General in implementation of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its previous sessions. It is not my intention to introduce each and every report of the Secretary-General. I should, however, like to draw the attention of representatives to some of them, especially those which have a direct bearing on the work of the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

My purpose in making this brief presentation is twofold: first, to inform Member States on how the Department is carrying out various mandates given by the General Assembly and to show the scope of its work; secondly, to indicate how the Department seeks to respond to emerging developments in the disarmament field and in the broad spectrum of international relations.

The provision of substantive services to the First Committee and other bodies established by the General Assembly and to the Conference on Disarmament and its subsidiary bodies continues to be a main responsibility of the Department. Another principal function has been the gathering, presentation and publication of information about United Nations activities in disarmament, as may be seen from the

(Mr. Akashi)

Department's publication programme. In this connection let me highlight some of the activities of the Department during the past year.

In the interest of facilitating a better understanding of effective verification measures in the context of multilateral institutions, the Department for Disarmament Affairs convened in January of this year a meeting of experts to determine a practical agenda for a somewhat larger meeting of diplomats and technical experts in this field which was generously hosted by the Soviet Government at Dagomys in April. The Dagomys meeting was organized by the Department to explore the prospects and potential problems of multilateral verification of arms control and disarmament measures. All the participants appeared to be satisfied that that purpose had been accomplished. I believe that the symposium made a useful contribution to the discussion of that complex issue, including the discussion at the Disarmament Commission last May. The summer issue of the periodical Disarmament contains a report on that symposium.

Similarly it was in response to growing interest in the scientific and technological aspects of new weapons development, the role of science and technology in the verification of future disarmament agreements and their implications for global security that the Department of Disarmament Affairs took the initiative of organizing a symposium, with the co-operation of the Pugwash Conference joined by the United Nations University, to consider these issues. The proceedings of that symposium, which was held in New York in May, are contained in the autumn issue of the periodical Disarmament. In the same manner we had the co-operation of the United Nations Association of the United States to convene two small week-end informal discussions last autumn and this spring in order to stimulate thinking on the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to

(Mr. Akashi)

disarmament and to help to ascertain possibilities of agreement at the special session.

The use of chemical weapons has been strongly condemned by the international community. The Secretary-General has indicated his readiness to undertake further action and carry out whatever new measures the General Assembly and the Security Council deem necessary to promote strict adherence to the 1925 Geneva Protocol. As requested by the General Assembly last year in resolution 42/37 C, the Secretary-General appointed a Group of Experts to assist him in developing further technical guidelines and procedures to be available to him for the timely and effective investigation of reports of the alleged use of chemical weapons. A substantial amount of work was accomplished by the Group. However, taking into account the view of the Chairman of the Group that its work could be successfully completed if more time were provided, the Secretary-General has recommended in his report (A/43/690) that the General Assembly provide for the experts to meet again to fulfil their mandate as soon as possible.

(Mr. Akashi)

During 1988 two more disarmament studies were completed, bringing to a total of 26 the number of disarmament studies that have been carried out by the Secretary-General since 1979, with the aid of groups of appointed experts. The studies completed in 1988 were the "Study on the climatic and other global effects of nuclear war" (A/43/351) and the "Study on the economic and social consequences of the arms race and military expenditures" (A/43/368). I am pleased to note that a number of speakers in the general debate in the Committee have referred to these studies.

In the area of disarmament and development the Department has engaged in determining ways to carry out the tasks assigned to the Secretary-General in the Final Document of the International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development held last year. The Secretary-General set up a high-level Secretariat task force for the implementation, in particular, of paragraph 35 (c) (ix) of the action programme. The task force has focused its attention on developing measures: first, to promote collective knowledge of non-military threats to international security; secondly, to establish an improved and comprehensive data base on global and national military expenditures; thirdly, to monitor trends in military spending; and, lastly, to facilitate an international exchange of views and experience in the field of conversion. In this endeavour, the Department is in consultation with a number of organizations in the United Nations system, including the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).

This year is the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme. By the end of the year, the Programme will have trained 216 governmental officials from 94 countries. The Secretary-General's report on the Programme is contained in document A/43/719. Member States have continued to show keen interest in the Programme, as can be seen from the increasing number of

(Mr. Akashi)

candidates they nominate each year for it. This fact also attests to the value Member States attach to the Programme, which has as its main objective the promotion of knowledge and expertise in disarmament in governmental circles, with emphasis on the developing countries.

Member States are well aware of the range of activities that have been carried out within the framework of the World Disarmament Campaign. The Secretary-General's report on the World Disarmament Campaign may be found in document A/43/642. In connection with the Campaign, I wish only to say that over the years, there has been increasing public demand for factual information, whether in print, on film or in spoken form.

In spite of the present constraints the Department has been able to maintain and revitalize its mandated publications programme. We are rather proud to have been able to publish our latest United Nations Disarmament Yearbook only five months after the end of the year concerned. Our Disarmament Newsletter is back to the planned six issues a year. Representatives may have noted the new format in which the Disarmament Newsletter now comes out.

Besides providing information, the other two objectives of the Campaign are to educate and to generate public understanding and support for the objectives of the United Nations in the field of arms limitation and disarmament. The Department will continue to fulfil these responsibilities in a balanced, factual and objective manner, aiming at all principal constituencies of the Campaign, namely, elected representatives, media, non-governmental organizations, educational communities and research institutes.

At the same time I feel it is necessary to draw the attention of representatives to one important aspect - the financial viability of the campaign. While public interest and political support by Member States for the Campaign have increased in recent years, total financial contributions available for Campaign

(Mr. Akashi)

activities as such have been steadily decreasing. I therefore hope that at the next World Disarmament Campaign Pledging Conference, now scheduled to take place the day after tomorrow, member States will again demonstrate their commitment to the objectives of the Campaign and ensure, through their financial support, its continued viability.

Three regional centres for peace and disarmament have now been established, in Loné and Lima and with the signing of an agreement with the Government of the Kingdom of Nepal in June, in Kathmandu. The centres have great potential, not only as centres for the dissemination of disarmament information, but more important as centres for the substantive consideration of regional disarmament and security issues.

This potential may become particularly valuable as the subject of conventional weapons and arms transfers comes more and more to the fore in a regional context. Provided that funds are available, there will be greater opportunity to consider and investigate these issues in ways that will be applicable to each individual region and subregion. I wish to take this opportunity to record my gratitude to the Governments of Nepal, Peru and Togo for their support to the respective centres, as well as to other Governments and several foundations, which have made voluntary contributions. The Secretary-General's reports on the regional centres are contained in documents A/43/568, A/43/614 and A/43/689.

The report of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies is before you in document A/43/685. Originally established by the Secretary-General in 1978 as a board of eminent persons and given a broader mandate in 1982, the Board has indicated its intention to address issues of disarmament in greater depth in the future. The Department is at present giving consideration to the best way of meeting the Board's wishes and thereby benefiting from the intellectual resources the Board provides.

(Mr. Akashi)

As is known, the Advisory Board also serves as the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR, which has brought a new element to United Nations consideration of disarmament topics. The functions and responsibilities of the Department for Disarmament Affairs are quite different from those of UNIDIR and studies carried out by the Department are mostly with the assistance of governmental experts selected on an equitable geographical basis. Yet it is manifestly apparent that we have many interests and concerns in common. It is essential that the Department and UNIDIR co-operate closely as far as is appropriate and compatible with the academic independence of the Institute, both for the efficient conduct of business and also to achieve maximum cost-effectiveness. The Director of UNIDIR and I will continue our efforts to this end.

Arms, arms limitation and disarmament are highly complex issues: sometimes there is too little information, and sometimes there is perhaps too much. For our own information in the Department, we have found it invaluable to develop in New York and Geneva libraries of specialized information. Increasing use has been made of our facilities by members of permanent missions, participants in the Disarmament Fellowship Programme, scholars, non-governmental organizations and the media. We welcome them all and will continue to improve our collection and broaden our sources of information.



(Mr. Akashi)

The Group of 18, the so-called wise men, recommended that the Department for Disarmament Affairs should be structured in a way that enables it better to assist Member States in their negotiations on disarmament and related matters. Consequently, I am glad to report, the Department has been reorganized within its existing resources to include a Monitoring, Analysis and Studies Branch.

In this connection, I wish to add that the resource constraints on the Department have become extremely serious, especially in view of the impending reduction of six posts. Although we always welcome new tasks, I feel I must point out that they may have to be carried out either at the expense of existing activities or at the cost of lowering the present high standards of performance which Member States have every right to expect.

Looking ahead to next year, in addition to servicing regular meetings the Secretariat is asked to provide services to meetings of the preparatory committees for the review of the sea-bed Treaty and the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty, and later in the year to the sea-bed Treaty review conference itself. Preparations are also under way for the convening of seminars, symposiums and other meetings at our Regional Centres in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Furthermore, we shall organize a conference in Japan in April and another Conference, primarily for non-governmental organizations, in the USSR in June. The Committee will agree with me that that is indeed a full plate of work for the Secretariat.

As the Secretary-General has noted in his annual report on the work of the Organization, the past few years have brought changes in perceptions and attitudes, and the international community may be witnessing a decisive transition to a new and more peaceful pattern of relationships at the global level. There is indeed a welcome improvement in the climate of international relations. There is also broad agreement that the opportunity for further disarmament measures presented by recent positive developments should not be lost.

(Mr. Akashi)

I should like to conclude my remarks by assuring the Committee that the Department for Disarmament Affairs will endeavour, as far as its limited resources will permit, to play its part to the full in responding to the new developments and exhilarating challenges that lie ahead for the United Nations and for the community of nations.

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Committee as well as on my own behalf I express my thanks to Mr. Akashi for the excellent survey of the activities of the Department for Disarmament Affairs he has just provided us. I think Mr. Akashi has enlarged our understanding of the broad scope of activities of the Department and, indeed, has helped make us more sensitive to the ongoing needs of the Department in participating in our tasks as fully as it does.

Mr. ENGO (Cameroon): It is with great satisfaction that we have welcomed and continue to welcome a Canadian to the Chair of the First Committee in these critical times. Your personal concern, Mr. Chairman, for a consensus approach to the resolution of political issues in the complex domain of disarmament is characteristic of the mediating role that your great nation, Canada, has endeavoured to play in international relations. We unhesitatingly pledge our support for your efforts, because of the fellowship of our two countries in our common desire to promote international peace and security.

Our views on the issues on the Committee's agenda are well known. We do not consider it desirable to come to each session of the General Assembly merely to repeat unchanged positions in new language - as if the rudiments of international life remained static and left no room for change.

What we seek in the Committee are avenues of understanding in line with the Charter's aim of making the United Nations a true centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of common ends. The end of establishing and maintaining the quality of international peace and security is central to the

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

purposes and principles of our Charter. What is more, it is singularly the most critical concern of all peoples and all nations, large and small, in the nuclear age into which we have consciously introduced this generation.

We are passing through a period in history in which growth, progress, development, better standards of life in freedom elude the most dynamic generation known to history. The rich and powerful nations are, we hope, learning the lessons of the futility of the misuse of economic and military might and power - lessons that history has attempted, in vain, to teach from the days of Julius Ceasar. They are beginning to grapple with the dilemma of the increasingly high percentages of national budgets which are spent on so called defence but which produce nothing but threats and counter-threats to the security they seek to protect. The maintenance of occupation forces, as well as the support for those who have chosen or been induced to become contestants in the domestic strife of other countries, has proved too costly for the economies of even the richest among them.

Pride is swallowed when realities present no real alternative.

The poorer nations have been driven to a false sense of security by the rhetoric and vibrations of the ideological conflict among the rich. But they have been quickly tamed by the unproductive impediments to nation-building, to economic and social development.

It may remain a matter of conjecture whether or not the infusion of these realities into international relations is responsible for what appears to be generally regarded as a new climate conducive to the peaceful settlement of disputes. It is, however, important for this universal feeling to be exploited. We must undertake a systematic review of the nature of our contemporary world and the priorities that the present situation dictates.

There is only one option really open to us as we prepare for a new century in which the products of man's creative genius - computers and other creatures of

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

run-away technological developments - may well make irrelevant the strength of the human mind and intellect. That option is collective action backed by a universal conscience calling for the development of conditions that foster friendly rather than belligerent relations, co-operation rather than conflict among States.

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

Cameroon commends every endeavour towards peace. We share the warning sentiments expressed by the Chairman of Sweden's disarmament commission, Ambassador Maj Britt Theorin, that "playing games with disarmament means gambling with our future" (A/C.1/43/PV.3, p. 38). The Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency has said that arms control is a serious business and must be treated as such.

We welcome the visible change in the political spectrum of the national positions of various parties at this session of the General Assembly. It seems to have drawn breath from the lost opportunity of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, where the heralds of change first appeared. We do not share the pessimism of those who hastened to categorize that special session as a failure. The United Nations was not established to score points and merely produce consensus on every issue posed. That many Heads of State and Government came to underline the growing importance of the multilateral process, that serious negotiations took place and agreement was achieved on many hitherto difficult issues, that a significant consensus emerged on the machinery facet of our discussions - all this in our view spells advancement, and advancement at its best.

The productive dialogue between the leaders of the two super-Powers has set a pace which has produced the early beginning of what might well prove to be a revival of faith in the United Nations. It is our view that complacency remains the worst enemy of what has so far been achieved in the political climate. It appears imperative that we employ that climate as an effective instrument for settling outstanding disagreements.

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

One important area in which illusion and miscalculation could pollute and destroy the delicate political atmosphere is that of regional conflicts. It is clear that in spite of announced breakthroughs in southern Africa, Angola, the Middle East, Western Sahara, Afghanistan, Kampuchea and elsewhere, there still appear to be persistent deadlocks. This calls for the exploitation of the heralds of ends to conflicts, ensuring the dawn of real, lasting peace without the menacing threat of renewal of hostilities. The achievement of a fragile climate is no substitute for the attainment of durable peace.

We are proud to be able to identify such productive efforts in the restoration of peace between Libya and Chad. The international community must not cease to show concern about that situation. To help burn the bridges of conflict it is even more important to help those sister nations towards new forms of relationship, fostering development and mastering the art of co-operation for mutual benefit.

We also welcome the follow-up to 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 - in the continuance of bilateral negotiations, accompanied by the revitalization of the negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. This means that the two super-Powers recognize that the achievements of the past two years are only a start of a long process, a desirable process, a process for lasting peace and security, with valuable budgetary savings. On the substance, all States which have addressed the General Assembly this year share the same opinion. May we dare to hope that results will emerge from the strategic arms reduction talks (START) in the months ahead? President Reagan has pointed out that no agreement is better than a

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

bad agreement. Comfort can be drawn from that declaration only if both sides continue in the belief that, with patience, persistent brackets will indeed disappear from texts, before things get worse.

We intend to contribute to the present exchange of views with a number of brief observations.

Our delegation recognizes that progress has been achieved on a number of issues and continues to hope that we shall spend some time at this session narrowing areas of disagreement with a view to their total elimination. We are of the view that an arbitrary cut in the number of items would have proved to be politically unrealistic. Many draft resolutions not only are repetitive but also differ from others in only limited aspects. We should like to see a new approach to the reduction of the number of draft resolutions, by way of serious negotiation on issues purported to divide the sponsors. Nations might well be ready to accept that their proposals were also central to the elaboration of compromise texts. In the present situation, success and progress seem, inappropriately, to be measured in tranquillizing terms of numbers, and numbers alone.

Cameroon fully shares the concerns of these two leaders, and Mr. Mitterrand's renewed call for an increase in the role of the United Nations in the struggle against the proliferation and use of chemical weapons.

I should like to apologize for the fact that my statement was typed only this morning and there are a great deal of omissions. A true copy will in fact be submitted to the précis writers in order to make sure that the records are correct.

As I was saying, Cameroon fully shares the concerns of the leaders of the United States and France and their renewed call for an increase in the role of the United Nations in the struggle against both the proliferation and use of chemical weapons.

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

We are prepared to join in a universal effort to elaborate a decisive convention in this field. We look forward to participating in the proposed preparatory committee on the Paris conference.

It is our intention to join in ensuring the adoption of a consensus resolution on this subject.

We consider that another practical step towards arms control and disarmament is the establishment of denuclearized zones. Non-proliferation, as provided for by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), is impossible de facto where steps are not taken at establishing guarantees to such zones. The threat of proliferation in Africa remains vivid as long as the racists of South Africa continue to possess and develop nuclear weapons.

We would recommend that the Disarmament Commission continue its work on the denuclearization issue in Africa. Deadlocks are not solutions. Friends of South Africa must understand that the NPT is greatly threatened by what appears to be hypocrisy in attempting to exempt the racist cliques.

President Paul Biya of my country has drawn attention to the real danger to peace involved in this unfortunate situation. In the desperation to which circumstances have driven Botha and his collaborators in retrograde immorality and international crime there could be no guarantees either way. The men, women and children live each passing day - under a cloud of uncertainty for generations to come - and the nature of the track to be trod in some day building a multiracial South Africa has become bleak.



(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

We are parties to the non-proliferation Treaty, and cannot subscribe to the undermining of a Treaty whose basic objective is to commence a process of curbing and eliminating danger. We sincerely hope that the 1990 review conference will be adequately prepared by its preparatory committee, in order to ensure the desired success.

We believe that the progress made at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, even if limited in terms of the resulting documentation, must be preserved. We must not add the special session to the list of lost opportunities, as someone has referred to it. There is clearly universal consensus on the issue of the Charter's assignment to the United Nations of the task of developing inter-State agreements.

The special session, in our view, made some significant progress on the scope of the relevant international machinery. Consultations on the preservation of common ground must continue. The present regular session must demonstrate the ongoing nature of dialogue and negotiations in the pursuit of solutions. The existing machinery must be strengthened and given the encouragement of our declared common resolve to continue a job well begun. It is our intention to address this subject in detail at some future opportunity.

We continue to welcome the importance attached to the subject of verification in the promotion of agreements and the establishment of confidence-building measures. We shall fully support efforts aimed at a clear statement of that importance in a draft resolution.

We consider the threat or use of radioactive and toxic wastes - deliberate or accidental - to be as reprehensible as the threat or use of any weapon of mass destruction. The African continent has been the victim of conscious and

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

premeditated dumping of dangerous substances. It would be unacceptable to limit the defined scope of the crime involved in this act to the dumping of what has been referred to as hostile waste.

Unscrupulous middlemen engaged in financially profitable enterprises never bother about definitions. It is hostile, by any definition, for anyone to transport or dump noxious radioactive or toxic wastes in places where these, to the knowledge of the transporting agent, would cause serious harm to human life.

At this session the General Assembly must address this issue urgently, without resorting to mere statements of condemnation of identified culprits. That action will fortify decisions and activities undertaken by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on aspects of the management of these wastes. The working group of experts established by the IAEA should be encouraged to elaborate firm codes against illegal transactions, especially those involving nuclear wastes. We endorse the undertaking by UNEP to elaborate a convention on the trans-boundary movement of hazardous wastes. The prohibition must be wide and complete.

On the issue of the forum in which this important subject can best be addressed, we remain fairly open. In order to save unproductive debate, we shall support the decision to have the matter discussed partly in the First Committee and partly in the Second. We look forward to that dialogue and to the final decisions to be taken in plenary meeting.

We have followed with interest the developing discussion on the question of comprehensive security initiated by the Soviet and other Eastern European delegations. We certainly look forward to further dialogue on the issue. As presented, the issue appears to address what our friend Mr. Petrovsky referred to as

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

"the vast potential of common creative effort (that can be tapped) through joint and open actions and through the channelling of all its unilateral, bilateral, regional and global efforts into one course propelled by collective reason". (A/C.1/43/PV.4, p. 52)

Put that way, it remains within the realm of ideological perceptions. We are, however, drawn to consider his later reference to that creative effort being the driving force behind "reliable and equal security free from mutual apprehension or suspicion" (p. 52).

Its interaction with the discourse on confidence-building measures is not very clear to us, but that provides no reason for rejecting it. We hope there will be opportunity to discuss the Soviet proposal at some length. New concepts are frequently condemned as having no content before fruitful discourse or, in some cases, consultations. Mr. Petrovsky's statement contained some interesting ideas which need to be addressed in such a context.

Once again, Mr. Chairman, we pledge our full support for your efforts, and our co-operation in seeking new areas of agreement in the First Committee, a Committee charged with the critical consideration of disarmament and arms control as instruments in the peace process.

Mr. GHEZAL (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, the Tunisian delegation is pleased to know that the First Committee is benefiting at this session from your well known competence, skill and devotion. We are confident that with your engrained and highly appreciated wisdom, experience and efficiency you will direct the work of the Committee in the best possible way. My delegation's co-operation is all the more assured in the light of the excellent relations of friendship and co-operation between your country, Canada, and mine.

(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

I wish also to pay a tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Permanent Representative of Zaire, for his personal qualities and his great experience and for his outstanding work as Chairman of the First Committee at its last session.

The forty-third session of the General Assembly convened in an international climate where, I am sure for the first time in the history of the United Nations, hope appears to be the prevailing feeling.

For the entire international community, the turning point was first and foremost the signing on 8 December 1987 in Washington 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, which breathed new life into the disarmament process and opened the way to détente between the two super-Powers.

(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

The breakthroughs made since then in the settlement of conflicts, which are to the great credit of the United Nations and its Secretary-General, have all been advances that have strengthened the hope of a new era of peace and security for the world. More and more countries involved in conflicts and disputes are gradually coming to understand that it is dialogue, not force, that will solve problems. The cost of war and confrontation seems more and more morally and materially intolerable and even less justifiable.

The Afghanistan Accords, the cease-fire and peace negotiations between Iraq and Iran, the quadripartite negotiations on Angola, the encouraging prospects of Namibia's accession to independence and the peace process initiated in Western Sahara by the Secretary-General in co-operation with the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and by the Security Council explain the tremendous hopes now being pinned on our Organization by the suffering peoples.

The recent award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces is a well-deserved tribute to their courage and self-sacrifice, and the work of the United Nations for peace and security.

But concern has not been completely eliminated, and the reasons for it are real. The peace initiatives and plans remain fragile, and other hotbeds of tension continue to pose a serious threat to peace and security, particularly in the Middle East. The vast nuclear arsenals of the great Powers are still capable of destroying the whole world more than 10 times over. Conventional weapons continue to sow death and destruction and to drain the resources of nations great and small. Peoples are suffering from hunger and poverty while the world economic crisis is increasingly jeopardizing the stability and security of developing countries.

(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

We regret that the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held last June, did not yield the desired results; unfortunately, the political will was simply lacking. Nevertheless, we hope that it will have contributed to stimulating the great Powers to reduce their strategic weapons and conclude other disarmament agreements, thus strengthening hopes of peace and security throughout the world.

The Programme of Action adopted by consensus in 1978 at the end of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament specified even then that a gradual reduction of military budgets on a mutually acceptable basis, particularly by the nuclear-weapon States and other militarily important States, would do a great deal to slow the arms race and, moreover, offer the possibility of diverting to social and economic development, in particular to the benefit of developing countries, resources now being used for military purposes.

While hunger, poverty and underdevelopment are still the daily lot of the vast majority of the people on Earth, vast sums of money are being invested every day in the design and manufacture of ever more powerful, sophisticated and deadly means of destruction; for the feverish pace of the arms race has not slackened, and the military expenditure of the major Powers now runs into billions of dollars, wasting enormous human resources and vast amounts of money and know-how that our world so sorely needs, particularly at this time of economic crisis.

The interdependence that is increasingly a characteristic of international relations today should make us reflect together on ways of ending that absurd contradiction. The ever growing gap between North and South will inevitably, in the medium or long term, have ill effects on the progress and security of all. It has been well said that development is the new name for peace.

The gradual diversion of the sizeable resources now invested in armaments to economic and social development would not only rid our planet of a clear danger,

(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

but also ensure the well-being and prosperity of all the peoples of the world, including the peoples of the developing countries. Everyone would benefit, particularly the developed countries themselves, which could then devote all their resources to their own economic and social development, thus strengthening the security of their peoples while reducing the risks of war and conflagration.

That is a noble objective whose attainment requires resolute action by the international community, and at the same time, a challenge to which we must all respond, for the very survival of mankind is at stake.

However, that is not the only area in which common efforts are needed. An alarming proliferation of nuclear weapons is occurring before our very eyes in the Middle East and southern Africa, without any vigorous action having been taken to stop it. There is no longer any doubt that there is a very serious danger now threatening the African and Arab States because of the close and continued co-operation between Israel and South Africa in the nuclear sphere and because of the acquisition of nuclear weapons by those two aggressor countries, thus thwarting the wish of the African and Arab countries to make their two regions into nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Another threat to Africa's security is the dumping on our continent of toxic industrial wastes, which is a crime against the African peoples and an affront to international morality. We hope that this question, which we have asked be put on the General Assembly's agenda for the current session, will be the subject of serious debate from which will result vigorous measures to protect Africa from the serious dangers posed by toxic wastes from industrialized countries.

(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

The Brioni meeting, which brought together recently the Mediterranean members of the Non-Aligned Movement, provided an opportunity to reaffirm our common will to promote co-operation and security in the region and remove the nuclear threat, notably by the elimination of the missiles carried by the fleets in the Mediterranean.



(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

Is it possible to make the Mediterranean a lake of peace and stability when Israel has become the sixth atomic Power in the world and already possesses, by all accounts, a sizeable nuclear force comprising, it would appear, inter alia, neutron and hydrogen bombs.

The threat of nuclear catastrophe, which still hangs over our planet, is accompanied by the danger of technological advances in the realm of conventional weapons, which now have undreamt-of destructive power.

The developing countries, which have become the exclusive theatre of tragic armed conflicts that have afflicted the world since the second world war, are now becoming the theatre for deploying and experimenting with ever more sophisticated and deadly conventional weapons. It is to be hoped, therefore, that an accord on a substantial reduction of these weapons will soon be reached.

Arms-supply contracts, which now involve vast sums of money and are greatly enriching arms dealers and the military-industrial complexes of the military Powers - and into which many developing countries have allowed themselves or been compelled to enter - have the result of condemning those developing countries to onerous expenditure, which puts a brake on their own economic and social development and arouses distrust and competitiveness among them, thus, in turn, threatening regional peace.

Of this sense of insecurity is born, in large measure, the determination of States to organize their own defence, because, in the absence of any system of collective security, such as is provided for in the Charter of our Organization, it is clear that every country has the right, and indeed the duty, to protect its people and its territory. This is one of the major problems now, unfortunately, facing a number of third world countries.

The position of Tunisia on the items of our agenda has been set forth on a number of occasions, both in the First Committee and at plenary meetings of the

(Mr. Ghezal, Tunisia)

General Assembly. Many previous speakers have clearly described the dangers posed by the current international situation and have gone into detail in examining the vagaries of the arms race, which in recent years has become, and is still becoming, more and more frantic and is a matter of very profound concern - concern that my country shares wholeheartedly. Together with the other countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, Tunisia has always striven to establish an era of peace and stability in which arms would be reduced to the lowest possible level, in the hope of their ultimate and final elimination. We are profoundly convinced that in the realm of disarmament the United Nations must play a central role - a role that belongs to it both because of its universality and because of its moral authority, particularly in the present climate of dialogue between the Powers who bear a large share of the responsibility in the realm of the arms race.

The United Nations Charter itself underlines the importance of international co-operation in economic relations and the need to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security, with the least diversion of human and economic resources on armaments. It is our profound hope that we will see a uniting of efforts and a manifestation of the political will of all, so that the reality of our lives will very soon be in conformity with the ideal reflected by the principles and objectives of the Charter.

Mr. DA COSTA PEREIRA (Portugal): Mr. Chairman, bearing in mind your request that we abide by rule 110, I will limit myself, in this introduction, to expressing Portuguese satisfaction at seeing you preside over the work of the First Committee.

The delegation of Greece has already spoken on behalf of the Twelve. As we fully support that statement, what I have to say will be of a complementary nature.

As the Portuguese Minister for Foreign Affairs stated in his recent address at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly, Portugal - a member of the North

(Mr. Da Costa Pereira,  
Portugal)

Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and of the European Community (EC) - follows East-West developments attentively. We cannot but note with satisfaction the present improvement in East-West relations and the important steps taken by both super-Powers in the field of arms control and disarmament - namely, the signing and ratification of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) - as well as the ongoing negotiations towards a 50-per-cent reduction of their strategic nuclear arsenals.

Those events, extremely significant in themselves, should, however, be followed up by concrete progress in other areas of arms control and disarmament, so as to confirm that we are entering a new epoch in the quest for international peace and security. In this process, the reduction of nuclear arsenals, the maintenance and reinforcement of the non-proliferation régime, and the step-by-step approach to the cessation of nuclear testing, constitute essential steps in the field of nuclear disarmament.

It seems to us that the best way to overcome some persistent difficulties concerning the issue of nuclear non-proliferation, and its practical side, would be to strengthen the existing international norms and co-operation. Portugal, a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, expects the fourth review conference to underpin further the non-proliferation régime.

So far as nuclear testing is concerned, we recognize with satisfaction that real progress has been made through the ongoing, full-scale, stage-by-stage negotiations between the United States and the USSR. These may open the way, as a first step, to early ratification of the Treaty on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear Weapon Tests (TTBT) and the Treaty on peaceful nuclear explosions.

Simultaneously, we welcome the efforts being made in Geneva, within the Conference on Disarmament, towards increasing involvement by that unique

(Mr. Da Costa Pereira,  
Portugal)

multilateral-disarmament negotiating body in the debate on item 1 of its agenda, "Nuclear-test ban". The regular reports forwarded to the Conference on Disarmament by a group of seismic experts have been useful in the consultations between the members on this subject, and, therefore, we wish also to express our appreciation for their co-operation.

(Mr. Da Costa Pereira, Portugal)

Another item being discussed within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament to which we attach the appropriate importance is the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We hope that the pertinent ad hoc committee will be re-established during the next spring session of the Conference on Disarmament in order to enable work to be resumed on that issue and to allow participants in the negotiations to submit a substantive report to the General Assembly at its next session.

Conventional disarmament and arms control, as well as the global and verifiable elimination of chemical weapons, also represent two main elements of the over-all disarmament process. We expect great things from the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process, and we hope that an early and balanced settlement at the Vienna Conference will open the way to talks on conventional stability and a new conference on confidence-building and security-building measures. Portugal attaches the greatest importance to the rapid achievement of a realistic mandate allowing for the early commencement of conventional-stability talks. The whole CSCE process remains the central element of a policy of East-West dialogue aimed at strengthening international peace and security on the basis of co-operation and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

With regard to chemical weapons we welcome the progress being made in both the bilateral and multilateral fields. At the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, in which my country participates as an observer, the negotiations to conclude a global and verifiable convention on chemical weapons are indeed evolving in a positive manner. We would like to express our appreciation for the business-like attitude all participants demonstrated at the last session. Given the spirit of realism that prevails in the pertinent ad hoc committee, we think that the relevant issues still to be resolved can be successfully dealt with in the near future.

(Mr. Da Costa Pereira, Portugal)

Nevertheless, and despite favourable trends with regard to the question of chemical weapons, some shadows darken our expectations in this area, making the goal of the elimination of chemical weapons more urgent than ever. Those shadows and the accompanying sense of urgency stem, of course, from the recent and repeated use of chemical weapons in warfare, as well as from the phenomenon of the proliferation of chemical weapons, which is of equal concern.

Portugal, a signatory of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, shares with its partners and allies the opinion that there is indeed need for an international message to be conveyed to all people of the planet confirming the commitment by all States Members of the United Nations not to use this particularly repugnant means of mass destruction. For that reason, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal has already stated, we fully support the proposal made in that connection by the President of the United States.

Arms control without effective and reliable verification makes no sense and may even jeopardize security. That dynamic was recognized last May at the session of the Disarmament Commission. Without wanting to infringe upon your modesty, Mr. Chairman, I feel it is only fair to stress the role your guidance and determination played in achieving that recognition. We hope that the endorsement of that dynamic by all will allow us to broaden the number of principles to be agreed upon with a view to monitoring the various verification régimes needed to deal appropriately with the particularities of each arms control agreement.

The development of confidence-building measures and the promotion of more openness and transparency in the military field constitute central elements for progress in arms control, both at the global and the no-less-important regional level.

(Mr. Da Costa Pereira, Portugal)

The adoption of concrete confidence-building measures is an essential step towards strengthening international peace and security. On the basis of that idea it proved possible to conclude the Stockholm document and to open new prospects of reinforced trust in Europe. We believe that the catalogue of guidelines for confidence-building measures agreed upon at the United Nations Disarmament Commission, at the initiative of one of the 12 members of the European community, represents a solid basis for furthering the relaxation of international tensions. That is why we look forward to its adoption at the present session of the United Nations General Assembly.

In that connection Portugal appeals to all countries not yet taking part in the United Nations standardized reporting system to do so in the near future, for it represents a commitment to more transparency in multilateral disarmament affairs.

The question of the United Nations role in the field of disarmament has been thoroughly discussed for some years now. To be unaware of the complexities of the United Nations system and the natural difficulties that arise from the differences between over 100 sovereign nations, each of them trying to preserve what it perceives as representing its national security interests, would be to ignore the very essence of the issue. The fact remains that in an increasingly interdependent world time presses, but time is also needed to find a coherent answer to this important question.

Portugal is of the opinion that the United Nations must play its role in the quest for peace and disarmament in keeping with the purposes and principles of the Charter and that the First Committee should continue to be the General Assembly's main subsidiary body for disarmament and related international security questions. Of course, we must persist in seeking ways to reach a greater rationalization of the Committee's work. We are aware of the practical obstacles that still hinder

(Mr. Da Costa Pereira, Portugal)

the way towards that objective. In any event, the fact that the last session of the General Assembly adopted more consensus resolutions than the previous one makes us hope that that trend will prove to be enduring. We feel certain, Mr. Chairman, that your wisdom and knowledge in those matters will be of great help in our quest for positive results at this session and, accordingly, of capital advantage to the enhancement of the First Committee's credibility.

The Disarmament Commission constitutes an indispensable link in the multilateral disarmament process. Its annual sessions have proved to be of great usefulness to our work in the Committee because of the important items that are discussed in the framework of the Commission's working groups, contact groups or consultation groups. Moreover, the fact that the United Nations Disarmament Commission's in-depth deliberations on such issues take place a few months prior to the convening of the annual session of the United Nations General Assembly is a relevant and timely factor that ought not be underestimated.

As a final word, Mr. Chairman, allow me to assure you of my delegation's support at this session of the Committee. We hope that together we will prove able to help inaugurate a new atmosphere of awareness and responsibility that may pave the way for further progress in the over-all process of disarmament and arms control under the aegis of the United Nations.

As the President of the Republic of Portugal stated in his address last June to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament:

"We are at a turning point in history where, at last, common sense seems to prevail over national selfishness." (A/S-15/PV.12, p. 13)

The momentum is there. Let us spare no effort so as not to lose it.



Mr. TANASIE (Romania) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, although it has been agreed that delegations would refrain in their statements from congratulating members of the Bureau, I would not wish to let this opportunity pass without telling you how pleased my delegation is to see you guiding the work of the Committee. In congratulating you most warmly we are convinced that your personal qualities, competence and dynamism are all guarantees that the Committee's activities will be successful, in what seem to be improving circumstances. We wish also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and the very able members of the Secretariat who work together with us, and to assure them all of our full co-operation throughout the Committee's work.

The general debate in the General Assembly and the statements that have already been made in our Committee have shown that certain positive steps have been taken in the international arena in the year that has elapsed since the previous session. I am of course, referring to the conclusion of the Treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States of America on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - and the start of its implementation, as well as to the first steps taken towards the settlement of some international disputes through negotiation.

Indeed, this progress, which opens up better prospects for the future of mankind, has been achieved through the ongoing resolute action in recent years by all peoples and realist political forces of all countries with a view to genuine disarmament and the establishment of new relations of co-operation among States.

However, a realistic assessment of the overall situation in the world shows that we have not yet reached a decisive turning-point towards peace and security, towards enhancing mutual trust, towards respect for equality among States and for their independence and sovereignty, as well as non-interference in their internal affairs.

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

Far from slowing down, the quantitative and qualitative arms race, having been spurred by research and the development of new nuclear weapons, has continued unabated and is using up more than 1,000 million dollars per year. Serious conflicts and sources of tension still persist in various regions of the world, continuously jeopardizing international peace and security. The economic and financial situation of developing countries has deteriorated even further, and the gap separating them from the developed countries has further widened.

As stated recently by the President of Romania, Mr. Nicolae Ceausescu:

"Against the backdrop of that reality and the fact that the international situation continues to be very complex and contradictory, the basic problem of our times is that of achieving disarmament - first and foremost nuclear disarmament - and the defence of the supreme right of peoples and individuals to life, peace and a free and worthy existence."

In this context, all possible efforts should now be undertaken, first to implement the Soviet-American INF Treaty, and then to open up the way towards a reduction of strategic nuclear weapons and the adoption of other disarmament measures, with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear and chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, the prevention of the militarization of outer space and a significant reduction in conventional weapons under strict international control.

Although the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament ended without adopting decisions on the important items on its agenda, it unquestionably demonstrated the international community's awareness of the gravity of disarmament problems and of the urgent need for the adoption of measures on nuclear disarmament and on general disarmament. In this connection, many proposals were submitted by the participating States. For its part, Romania put

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

before the session its considerations and proposals on disarmament problems and the guidelines States should follow with a view to their solution. Along with other delegations, my delegation believes that all those proposals should go forward and be given an opportunity for discussion in United Nations negotiating bodies on disarmament or in other multilateral negotiating bodies.

In view of the current international situation, and since the arms race, especially the nuclear-arms race, is a serious threat to the peace and security of mankind, all attention should be focused on the United Nations adopting a comprehensive programme for nuclear disarmament and general disarmament, taking also into account the relevant proposals made by States at the recent special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Preparing such a programme should allow the taking into account of the interests of all States by ensuring their right to equal security. The programme should encompass all actions and measures undertaken by international bodies and by Member States in all fields of disarmament. To attain this goal, negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva should be stepped up on the draft comprehensive programme on disarmament on the Conference's agenda.

Like many other delegations we share the incontrovertible truth that international peace and security cannot be better kept and strengthened through the stockpiling of new nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction; on the contrary, such weapons increase insecurity and instability in the world. Hence firm actions must be taken to give new momentum to negotiations on nuclear disarmament with a view to the complete elimination of the nuclear weapons from the arsenals of States.

The true value of the Soviet-American INF Treaty will become obvious if it is

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

followed by other agreements. We believe that the General Assembly should urgently appeal to the Soviet Union and the United States of America to conclude, at the earliest possible date, the Treaty on a 50-per-cent reduction of their strategic nuclear arsenals as a very important step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Romania stands ready to support any draft resolution containing such an appeal.

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

Given today's more favourable international climate, an element of crucial importance in putting a stop to the arms race would be the achievement of a comprehensive ban on nuclear-weapon tests and the halting of the further development of all such weapons, and of the new military technologies and weapons of mass destruction. To this end, further efforts must be made at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to enter into negotiations for a treaty on a general and complete ban on nuclear-weapon tests without further delay.

Romania supports the initiative taken by five States to turn the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water into a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. In our view, it would also be very important for all nuclear disarmament agreements to include clauses prohibiting research and development in respect of new technologies in various fields.

In a broader context, we believe the time has come for the United Nations to tackle seriously the implications, for international relations, of scientific and technological progress, with a view to adopting all the measures necessary to ensure that scientific research serves the interests only of peace and development for all peoples.

The interests of international peace and security increasingly call for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, mutual understanding and co-operation. It is in this context that Romania continues to work for the transformation of the Balkans into a zone of good-neighbourliness, peace and co-operation, free from nuclear weapons, without foreign military bases or forces. We share the conviction that the United Nations should further encourage the establishment of such zones in the Balkans, in Northern and Central Europe, and in other regions of the world.

Romania firmly opposes all measures to militarize outer space and believes that all nations should be made to use outer space solely for peaceful purposes.

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

My country supports the conclusion of an international treaty on the use of outer space solely for peaceful purposes, renouncing all use thereof for military purposes. We also feel that it would be useful to establish, within the United Nations system, a special body to deal with questions relating to outer space.

To ensure conditions of security for all States, to reduce the danger of war and to achieve disarmament, it would also be appropriate, in close connection with measures to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons, to achieve the elimination of chemical weapons.

We wish to join all other delegations which have supported the speeding up of negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva with a view to finalizing, as soon as possible, the convention on the complete prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. The convention should eliminate for all time the great threat posed by chemical weapons while at the same time guaranteeing the development of the chemical industry and of the technical and scientific potential of all countries solely for peaceful purposes and for their economic and social progress. At the same time, the convention should provide for unlimited access by all countries to scientific and technological discoveries and should promote peaceful international co-operation in this field.

In the appeal to chemical engineers and researchers all over the world made by the participants in the third National Chemistry Congress held in Romania on 24 September 1988, the requirements are very clearly set forth:

"Today, together with the other sciences, chemistry can contribute to the development of natural resources, the enrichment of our soils, the creation of new ways to serve man's health needs and of new materials necessary for technical progress. We must strengthen co-operation in this and in all other scientific areas and we must see to it that the enormous potential of science and technology contributes to the economic and social development of nations

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

and to the solution of the serious problems resulting from underdevelopment; that it helps to bridge the large economic gaps between States, and to preserve and protect the environment, and that it contributes to the progress of mankind as a whole."

The importance which my country attaches to the elimination of chemical weapons can be seen also in the initiative taken jointly by Romania and Bulgaria with a view to the establishment of a chemical-weapon-free zone in the Balkans. It is our view that the United Nations should encourage the establishment of such zones in Europe and other regions of the world, as a means of supporting the process of negotiating a convention on the complete prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons.

As part of the same concern over the elimination of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction, Romania is also in favour of speeding up, the preparation at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, of a draft convention on the prohibition of radiological weapons. We also favour the conclusion of an international agreement providing for the prohibition of attacks on nuclear facilities.

While paying careful attention to problems of nuclear disarmament, Romania believes that resolute and concrete measures are needed to reduce conventional weapons and military expenditures and forces. Convinced that an important part can be played in this field by unilateral measures on the part of States, Romania decided, on the basis of a national referendum held in November 1986, to make a unilateral 5 per cent reduction of its troops, weapons and military expenditures.

Given the fact that we still find the largest concentration of conventional weapons and armed forces in Europe, and that this is a major threat to the peace of the continent and the world, Romania has proposed that the States participating in the two major military alliances - the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

Warsaw Pact - with the participation of all European States, should undertake negotiations towards a substantial reduction - of at least 20 per cent by 1990, 30-35 per cent by 1995, and 50 per cent by the end of the century - of their conventional weapons and armed forces.

Together with other countries, Romania favours the opening of negotiations on conventional disarmament in Europe by the end of the year, leading to the adoption of measures for a substantial reduction of conventional weapons and forces on the continent.

In my country's view, all measures to reduce weapons and armed forces should be coupled with measures to reduce military expenditures, thus freeing resources for the economic and social development of all countries, above all the developing countries. This idea is clearly expressed in the Final Document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.



(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

As you know, Romania, together with Sweden, took the initiative at the United Nations of defining the principles governing the activities of States in their negotiations on a freeze and reduction of military budgets with a view to finding points of agreement among States and to promoting the opening of negotiations on concrete measures with regard to a freeze on or reduction of military expenses.

The Disarmament Commission came very close this year to reaching consensus on the principle - which continues to be held in abeyance - of transparency and the communication of data, but in the end it did not succeed in adopting a set of principles as such.

Given the positive spirit that has prevailed in our Committee's debate so far and the fact that many States have reaffirmed their will to ensure the adoption of real measures of disarmament and measures on the reduction of military expenses, we believe the time has come to move from words to action and to finish our work in this field. Once the principles governing the activities of States in negotiations on a freeze on or reduction of military budgets, these principles will become another instrument that the United Nations will then make available to States to use in their efforts to create a world without weapons, a world of co-operation and peace. My delegation will submit a draft resolution on this question at this session.

The implementation of the set of measures for halting the arms race and moving towards disarmament calls for strict and effective verification and control as obligations assumed by States. In our view, verification should be a means of increasing confidence among States and ensuring the viability of disarmament agreements. Along these lines the United Nations could make an important contribution to the elaboration of verification and control procedures and also to verification agreements in the field of disarmament.

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

We have before us this year a very important document, which is an updated report on the economic and social consequences of the arms race and military expenditures prepared by the Secretary-General with the assistance of a group of experts (A/43/368). The report shows that in the 1980s the arms race has not only persisted, in particular at the qualitative level, without losing its intensity, but has actually increased and accelerated. The document also offers details on the economic implications of the stockpiling of weapons. It confronts us with two major problems, between which we must choose: the arms race or development. In our view, this report will be a very useful instrument and could be used in the World Disarmament Campaign as well as in future United Nations activities in the field of disarmament. This report should also be brought to the attention of States, negotiating bodies and public opinion at large.

The last comment that I should like to make refers to the mechanism of multilateral disarmament.

The realities of today's world make it more than ever necessary to democratize international relations and bring about the active participation of all States in the settlement of the serious and complex problems that mankind has to face. In this connection a particular role and a major responsibility fall to the United Nations in the field of disarmament, as is aptly stated in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The United Nations must encourage all States, in particular the nuclear-weapon States and the other well-armed States, to display the necessary political will to arrive at concrete agreements on a cessation of the arms race and on disarmament.

For their part, States which have undertaken bilateral or regional disarmament negotiations should systematically keep other States Members of the United Nations informed, through the Secretary-General or other channels, of ongoing negotiations and their results.

(Mr. Tanasie, Romania)

We must also participate constructively at the Conference on Disarmament, in Geneva, taking into account the proposals put forth, in order to bring to a successful conclusion the negotiations on all items on the Conference's agenda, in particular the negotiations on nuclear disarmament and the conclusion of an international convention on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons.

We should also enhance the role of the Secretary-General, who could work effectively to overcome the difficulties that arise in the process of disarmament negotiations. The very important contribution of the Secretary-General in the start of negotiations towards solving certain regional conflicts has been clear proof of this.

These are the few comments which the delegation of Romania wanted to make on the very important and very current items on our Committee's agenda. The foregoing considerations flow from our delegation's wish to make a positive contribution to our debates. We assure you, Mr. Chairman, of our full support as you carry the task entrusted to this Committee to a successful conclusion.

Mr. MANIKFAN (Maldives): I should like to take this opportunity to state briefly the position of my Government on a subject that is very important to us, inasmuch as Maldives is both a littoral State of the Indian Ocean and a part of the South Asian region. First, however, allow me to reiterate my Government's firm belief in disarmament and the reduction of arms. My Government fully supports the concept of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in South Asia. This is clear evidence of the importance we attach to general disarmament and especially to the prohibition of nuclear weapons. The production of more conventional weapons and of chemical and biological weapons and the prospects for the militarization of outer space still remain a serious concern for the world community. My delegation is of the view that the reduction of arms and the establishment of zones of peace and

(Mr. Manikfan, Maldives)

nuclear-weapon-free zones would greatly reduce tension and establish greater stability and confidence. My Minister of Foreign Affairs, in his statement in the general debate at this session of the General Assembly and at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, has very clearly outlined our commitment to disarmament in all its aspects.

(Mr. Manikfan, Maldives)

The concept of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia dates back to 1974. A resolution on this important issue was adopted at the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Since then, similar resolutions have continued to be adopted by an overwhelming majority at successive sessions of the General Assembly. Maldives has always supported this concept and has always voted in favour of such resolutions. Recently we have played a much more active role in improving the text of the draft resolutions on the issue. At the forty-first session of the General Assembly my delegation, being of the view that this important draft resolution offered ample room for revision and improvement, successfully injected certain amendments aimed at making the resolution more general and thus more acceptable while retaining its essence. These amendments were made in the wake of new emerging political realities in individual States and in the region as a whole. These initiatives were received in a positive way by the General Assembly. However, during the forty-second session of the General Assembly certain new specific elements were included in that year's draft resolution, which prompted my delegation to express its reservations with regard to those new elements.

Allow me therefore to reiterate the opinion my delegation expressed last year, which is that it is premature to bring in specific ideas such as the proposal for the convening of a conference on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in South Asia and the proposal for the conclusion of bilateral or regional nuclear-test-ban agreements in South Asia.

As we see it, ample time should be given to the Secretary-General and to the countries concerned to carry out consultations with a view to narrowing the gap between differing opinions. The widest possible participation would be required in

(Mr. Manikfan, Maldives)

order effectively to carry out our desire to establish the South Asia region as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Allow me to assure representatives that the comments of my delegation in no way reflect a deviation from our firm stand of strong and total support for the concept of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.