



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. Roche (Canada)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF AIDA LUISA LEVIN, SENIOR STAFF MEMBER OF THE SECRETARIAT

The CHAIRMAN: It is my duty to inform the Committee of the sudden and untimely death of a much respected senior staff member of the Secretariat, Miss Aida Luisa Levin, Senior Political Affairs Officer of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. Her unexpected death has come as a shock to all her colleagues and many representatives. She was a dedicated civil servant who served the United Nations and the cause of disarmament for 12 years. She was well admired for her personal commitment and tireless efforts in the work of the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission, as well as this Committee. I am sure you will join me in offering our sincere condolences and sympathy to her family and friends. Miss Levin will be greatly missed by all of us.

Mr. CAPPAGLI (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of my delegation and on behalf of friends and compatriots, and interpreting the feelings of the many delegations represented in this Committee, I should like to express thanks for this well-deserved and heartfelt tribute.

Those of us here who have had the privilege of knowing and working with Aida Levin were familiar with her exceptional professional qualities and her dedication and devotion to her work. Unquestionably, her memory will remain with us and we shall long recall the valuable contribution that she made.

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): During the 12 years Miss Levin was in the United Nations she was Secretary of a Committee that it was my honour to preside over, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament. This gave me an opportunity to see Aida's outstanding, exceptional qualities, her devotion to work, her sound knowledge and her devotion

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

to the United Nations. She was truly an international civil servant.

I thought Aida was in Buenos Aires. I did not know that she was supposed to be in New York. Had I known this, perhaps I could have done something, or would have been able to find out what had happened. In any case, I am sure that Aida, if her end was as I have heard, could not have hoped for anything better. To have died in the trenches as a soldier of the United Nations - as they say about soldiers in combat - fighting for something she believed in - well, that would have pleased her. If indeed that is what happened then, Mr. Chairman, may I repeat, I am sure, that it could not have happened in a better way.

In any case, for those of us who knew her it is a heavy blow, and most certainly it is a cause for deep sadness.

Mr. TAYLHARDAT (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): It was with great sadness that we heard the news of the premature death of Aida Levin. On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, I should like to express our sincere regrets at the loss of an outstanding friend and fine colleague who at all times displayed her gifts of intelligence and dedication and real mastery of disarmament problems.

Aida Levin worked very closely with me during this past year when she was secretary of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space and when I acted as Chairman of that Committee at the Conference on Disarmament. Aida Levin was tireless in giving me her assistance and she helped me greatly in conducting the proceedings of that Committee. Her passing is an irreparable loss to the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament and the Secretariat of the United Nations. My delegation joins, with great sadness, in this posthumous tribute in the First Committee, in which she gave of herself and demonstrated her intellectual qualities, as she gave of herself to the cause of the United Nations.

Mr. FUGLIESE (Italy): As co-ordinator on outer space for the Group of Western States in the Conference on Disarmament, I wish to say a few words in remembrance of our good friend, Miss Aida Levin, who has suddenly and prematurely passed away.

Aida Levin was a sharp-witted, intelligent and skilful worker. She had worked closely with all members of the Conference on Disarmament on outer space since 1985, when the Ad Hoc Committee on this item was established. We should never forget her exceptional sense of humour, which often smoothed the way over some very rough situations.

Miss Levin was also a good friend to all members of the Conference on Disarmament. She had uncommon personal qualities, a deep sensitivity and a warm and sincere approach. In our view, she represented the best of the personnel

(Mr. Pugliese, Italy)

working for the Secretariat, and I can say with the utmost sincerity that she will be missed.

Mr. FAN Guoxiang (China) (interpretation from Chinese): On behalf of the Chinese delegation, as well as on my own behalf, I should like to say, with regard to the sudden and unfortunate passing of Miss Aida Levin, that we are greatly saddened. During the meetings of the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission in New York, I and Miss Aida Levin worked together. I think she was an outstanding worker in the Department of Disarmament Affairs. Not only was she very familiar with the subject matter but she was also patient and enthusiastic. In Geneva, I and other colleagues worked in the Group of 7, and there she rendered tremendous help to us and to other delegations. I should like to request the Ambassador of Argentina to extend our deep sympathy and condolences to the family of Miss Aida Levin, and we wish also to express our sympathy to the Secretariat of the United Nations.

Mr. BUTLER (Australia): I speak on this sorry occasion in my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Western States of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, and I believe I can speak on this occasion on behalf of other Western States Members of the United Nations.

We have had a tragic loss. We have lost a servant of the United Nations who was also a good friend. We all remember Aida Levin's dedication to her work and we all feel very deep gratitude to her for that dedication. May I say personally that I shall never forget the assistance she gave me when I had the privilege of serving as President of the Conference on Disarmament.

We would join others in asking the Ambassador of Argentina to convey to Aida Levin's family our deepest condolences. We offer those condolences also to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, because the Secretariat, we should

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

never forget, is one of the Charter organs of this institution, and its members stand side by side with Member States in the pursuit of the objectives that we hold dear. Aida Levin did that in a way which was exceptional, and as long as there are persons like her in the future in the Secretariat of the United Nations this Organization will make progress and will achieve its goals.

Mr. BAYART (Mongolia) (interpretation from French): I should like to speak on behalf of the group of socialist countries that are members of the Conference on Disarmament, of which I am the co-ordinator on the subject of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The delegations of those countries are indeed deeply saddened by this tragic news of the untimely death of our colleague and friend, Aida Levin.

Like many other colleagues, I knew her for a long time. I had the pleasure of working with her in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. Aida Levin was very highly valued by all those who knew her for her human and professional qualities. She was an extremely well qualified official and dedicated to her work. She understood the objectives of disarmament and made great efforts to contribute to it. For me it was most gratifying to work with her. She was secretary of the Ad Hoc Committee I have mentioned, and she was of great assistance to me in carrying out my duties.

(Mr. Bayart, Mongolia)

I should like to ask the delegation of Argentina to convey to her family and friends our most sincere condolences. We also extend our condolences to the Secretariat of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman, I should like to associate myself with you in saying that her death leaves a huge gap and we shall always remember her.

Mr. FISCHER (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to express the surprise and regret of the delegation of Uruguay at the news that we have just heard. This loss deprives us of the sympathy, the human warmth, the dedication, the professional mastery that characterized Aida Levin. We should like to express our condolences, through the delegation of Argentina, to her family and we also extend our condolences to the Secretary-General.

The CHAIRMAN: These have been very warm and moving tributes to Aida Levin. To respond to them, I should like to invite the Under-Secretary-General for the Department for Disarmament Affairs to speak.

Mr. AKASHI (Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs): I am deeply touched by the words of sincere condolence spoken by a number of representatives here and I shall certainly not fail to convey those deep sentiments to the family of my colleague, Aida Levin.

All my colleagues and I in the Department for Disarmament Affairs would like to associate ourselves with the sentiments expressed. Certainly Aida did represent professionalism in the best sense of the word. She carried out her tasks with great competence and integrity and she was among the most trusted advisers of the Department.

Despite this tragedy, of course, we in the Department will carry out the tasks entrusted to us in order to assist this Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and other bodies to the best of our ability.

The CHAIRMAN: May I ask representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of Aida Levin.

The members of the Committee observed a minute of silence.

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

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. McDONAGH (Ireland): Mr. Chairman, while I am happy to comply with rule 110 of the rules of procedure and to respect your wish that we abjure the expression of congratulatory sentiments, I cannot conceal the deep satisfaction that my delegation feels at seeing you preside over our work, nor can I forbear to express our unwavering support for your endeavours as you guide the Committee's activities to what I am convinced will be a successful and productive outcome.

In his address to the third special session devoted to disarmament, my Prime Minister called for a commitment to make disarmament a real factor in the security policy of every country. He also called for a series of concrete measures which would transform this commitment into reality by setting definite limits to the military dimension of security.

It is generally accepted that an unrestrained arms race is more likely to undermine than to enhance security. Nearly all countries draw the conclusion that some arms control measures are necessary to place upper limits on military expenditures. This does not mean, however, that they are willing to reduce these expenditures far less to reverse the accumulation of weapons and to reduce their number or to forgo qualitative improvements. Despite recent positive developments, plans are being pursued to deploy thousands of new nuclear weapons.

The persistent race for the achievement of greater numbers and greater sophistication of nuclear weapons has not brought stability. Such weapons are in themselves a major source of tension and unease and do not contribute to the

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emergence of an international political climate free from mutual distrust and fear. Ireland is committed to the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The recent improvement in East-West relations holds out the promise that the arms race can, in fact, be checked, despite the disappointments of the past and the difficulties still to be overcome. The elimination of intermediate-range nuclear forces is an important step in the right direction. The ratification at Moscow of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) has been rightly welcomed for the genuine achievement that it is. This Treaty provides a long-awaited demonstration by the super-Powers that they do not regard the preservation of existing levels of nuclear arsenals as essential to their security and that international peace and security in general can be increased through measures of arms control and disarmament.

And yet this undoubtedly historic achievement must not obscure the challenges or delay the work that lie ahead. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the area of strategic nuclear forces. The opportunities presented by the recent dynamic developments in United States-Soviet relations must not be missed. We cannot ignore the disturbing fact that the expansion and development of the world's nuclear arsenals seem to be proceeding inexorably. Thus, in the last four years alone the strategic nuclear stockpiles of the two super-Powers have increased by an estimated 4,500 weapons. Even more disturbing and significant than the increasing numbers is the qualitative upgrading that has occurred, particularly in the accuracy of ballistic missiles.

The progress that has been made on the elaboration of the text of an agreement to reduce by half the strategic nuclear forces of the United States and the Soviet Union is welcome. We have noted that while important work is required before this treaty is ready for signature, many key provisions are considered to be agreed. My

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delegation hopes that these negotiations will proceed to a successful conclusion at the earliest possible moment. We look to the super-Powers, in concluding such an agreement on strategic weapons, to ensure that its achievement does not promote a new race for superiority in other areas not covered in the agreement. The goal must continue to be a genuine, irreversible, downward trend in the numbers of strategic nuclear weapons held by the super-Powers, together with a curb on qualitative improvements.

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Outer space is surely the common heritage of mankind. The prevention of a new arms race in that environment is essential. The safety and security of the world cannot be strengthened by the exploitation of outer space in order to enhance existing strategies for the conduct of a nuclear war. It would indeed be ironic if the culmination of the most recent efforts to curb the arms race on Earth left open the way for an arms race to develop in outer space. It is therefore important that there should be strict compliance with all existing agreements, both bilateral and multilateral, and in particular with the 1972 anti-ballistic missile Treaty. We hope that the two super-Powers will find it possible to reaffirm their commitment to this Treaty, which has served them and the international community well. In addition, it is vital that the impasse on outer space at the multilateral level be resolved and that concrete negotiations get under way at the Conference on Disarmament which will complement the existing legal régime in outer space.

The conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty is a step which is within the capability of the super-Powers to take in the near future in order to demonstrate their commitment to ending the arms race. This should be an immediate, not an ultimate objective. An indefinite future is far too remote a horizon for an issue so central to the continuing nuclear-arms race. The modernization of nuclear weapons and the assurance of their continued deadly effectiveness are the main purposes of testing. A quantitative reduction in the number of nuclear arms is not enough. As long as qualitative improvements can be made, the arms race will maintain its momentum. Thirty years of deliberations and negotiations on a total prohibition of nuclear-test explosions have resulted only in partial agreements. None of the three nuclear-test-limitation Treaties so far concluded has seriously affected weapon programmes by hindering improvements in nuclear weapons. It is clear that inadequate verification or fears about verification can no longer

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credibly be posited as an obstacle to the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty.

An effective international non-proliferation régime has been pivotal to the disarmament process. The nuclear non-proliferation Treaty is central. It has been one of the major success stories of international arms control efforts and must continue to be so. No one can gain through a proliferation of nuclear weapons. It must therefore be the firm objective in the years ahead to strengthen the non-proliferation Treaty, to secure a further expansion in its membership, and to ensure that it will remain an enduring element in an era of greater efforts to promote and achieve nuclear-arms control and disarmament.

My delegation is pleased to note that the non-proliferation Treaty has now been adhered to by some 140 States. It is all the more disturbing then that several countries have chosen to remain outside the non-proliferation Treaty and that some have acquired, or persist in efforts to acquire a nuclear-weapon capability. The possibility that some may have gone even further and actually produced nuclear weapons has to be reckoned with. My delegation is convinced that a universal, effective and enduring nuclear non-proliferation régime is in the best interests of international peace and stability and of all countries, large and small, nuclear and non-nuclear.

Recent reports of the use of chemical weapons have profoundly shocked the international community. We welcome the efforts at the Conference on Disarmament to secure agreement on a chemical-weapons convention and the consensus that has begun to emerge on some of the central elements of a convention, including the question of verification. We recognize that many difficult problems - some technical in character, others wider in scope - have yet to be resolved. We hope that this can be done quickly and that a convention will emerge which will attract

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universal membership and support. It is important that consensus be arrived at both for the sake of eliminating these weapons and for the sake of multilateral disarmament efforts in general. It would provide a timely demonstration that the Conference on Disarmament can move from detailed and complex negotiations to the actual conclusion of an effective and verifiable multilateral agreement. In the meantime, my delegation warmly supports the progress made at the forty-second session of the General Assembly to enhance the role of the Secretary-General in investigations of chemical-weapons use. We also support the recent proposal for an international conference to enhance the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

Conventional disarmament is an integral and important part of the disarmament process. The conventional arms race serves to sharpen tensions and undermine security. It is not confined to the two major alliances but extends to every corner of the globe. It consumes vast resources which are needed - and often desperately needed - for economic and social development. We welcome the indications at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament of a growing awareness that efforts to arrest the conventional arms race are essential. International peace and security cannot be achieved unless all aspects of this growing problem, including the increasing sophistication of conventional weapons, are addressed by the international community.

Twice in this century Europe has seen conventional wars with catastrophic consequences. Europe still contains today the world's greatest concentration of conventional weapons and forces. Ireland is deeply conscious of the threats posed to peace and security by the accumulation and concentration of these arms. The fears which understandably attach to conventional weapons have also grossly distorted relations between the countries of Europe, East and West. My delegation hopes that negotiations within the framework of the Conference on Security and

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Co-operation in Europe on conventional forces in Europe will come quickly after the conclusion of the Vienna follow-up meeting. We hope that a new and determined effort will emerge which will break the spiral of increasing armaments and forces and also eliminate the capability for launching surprise attack and initiating large-scale offensive actions in the whole of Europe.

It is also our hope that negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures, adding to those already agreed at Stockholm in 1986, will begin in the near future and that these will further reduce apprehensions in Europe generated by military activities. This would also contribute to progress in the negotiations on conventional force reductions. Existing measures in operation now for more than two years have already brought about increased openness and greater mutual understanding in military matters, which should become the norm in the security relationship between East and West in Europe.

In welcoming the development of the dialogue and the outcome so far of the negotiations between the super-Powers, my delegation is struck by the failure at the multilateral level to move along with these positive currents and to reach a higher degree of understanding and agreement on some of the most pressing issues facing the international community today. The failure last June of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to reach agreement on a concluding document was a disappointment. It is our belief that the obstacles preventing agreement could and should have been overcome. It is a matter of regret that the improved international atmosphere was not reflected appropriately in the United Nations and that the international community was unable to express itself unanimously on these questions which are of the gravest concern - not just to the powerful, but to each and every nation on Earth. At such an encouraging time in United States-Soviet bilateral arms control and disarmament negotiations, it is now

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all the more important that a fresh commitment to the multilateral process should emerge and that concrete achievements be recorded, thus reaffirming the interest of all countries in the goal of general and complete disarmament.

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It is now necessary to move on to recover lost ground. We hope that in the work of this Committee and elsewhere it will be possible to span those areas where differences persist. What is needed is a parallelism between the bilateral and the multilateral processes. There is, of course, no suggestion of the pace or details of the bilateral negotiations being determined by the multilateral process. Equally, however, the multilateral process must not be a passive bystander bereft of the role and responsibility which belong to all countries. Nor would it help the cause of disarmament to achieve an international consensus by the simple device of lowering our level of ambition to the point of blandness. Realism is not served by resolutions which ignore the real differences that divide us on the course of the arms race and how it could be brought to a halt. While every effort should be made to reach a consensus, this should not be at the cost of ignoring the voice of the international community or reducing it to an indistinct murmur in the background.

It is primarily in the Conference on Disarmament that the hopes for multilateral action have been placed. It is now 10 years since the Conference on Disarmament was constituted in its present form. Its permanent agenda, the so-called decalogue, which was agreed in 1979, and its annual agenda and programme of work are ambitious and comprehensive, as they should be. And yet the hopes that the Conference on Disarmament might move the international community towards agreement on many of the important issues for which it has a negotiating responsibility remain largely unfulfilled.

On a more promising note, we have, in 1988, witnessed a revitalized United Nations: an Organization inspiring confidence and achieving results. We are hopeful that new demonstrations of the potential of the United Nations will reinforce commitment to the Organization as a central component in the multilateral disarmament process. The United Nations, in accordance with the Charter, has

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responsibility to promote disarmament in the context of the maintenance of international peace and security. It is not enough that in the field of disarmament the United Nations General Assembly remains a forum for voting and rhetorical exchange. In recent years we have heard much criticism of the "machinery of deliberation". Several efforts have been made, and are still needed, to refine the institutional framework provided to deal with disarmament. Ultimately, of course, success or failure rests not with the machinery, but with Member States and our political commitment to demonstrate a spirit of mutual accommodation. We look forward to a productive session in this year's First Committee which will also consolidate the efforts so widely supported at the forty-second session of the General Assembly to rationalize our work and make it more effective. Your personal commitment to that objective, Mr. Chairman, has the unstinted support of my delegation. In particular, we hope that this session will see a renewed commitment to the collective institutions of the United Nations and its central role in the preservation of international peace and security.

Mr. AZAMBUJA (Brazil): I should like to join those who have expressed regret at the untimely passing of Aida Levin. She was a dear friend and, I believe, an extremely valuable member of the Secretariat.

My delegation would like to address today the question of chemical weapons and the related problem of verification. The difficulties regarding this last issue that have arisen in the context of the Geneva negotiations on a universal, non-discriminatory chemical-weapons ban are a case in point of the more global difficulties involved in any attempt to ensure compliance with disarmament agreements.

The recent renewed use of chemical weapons shocked international opinion. Long-forgotten memories of suffering and death were revived in dramatic images and

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testimonies. In a trice, obsolete weapons seemed to be the weaponry of the future. We must thus reaffirm the validity and applicability of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, and, in this context, we should like to welcome the formal announcement by Ambassador Pierre Morel of France of the convening of a conference in Paris from 7 to 11 January with a view to solemnly restating international adherence to the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva in 1925, to which Brazil is a party without reservations. In our view, this international gathering will not detract in any way from the work that is being done in Geneva in the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. On the contrary, it will certainly give further momentum to those negotiations. My Government will participate in this conference, proposed by Presidents Ronald Reagan and François Mitterrand, convinced that it will be a forward-looking exercise, responding to the need to increase world-wide awareness of the urgency of concluding a universal, non-discriminatory ban on chemical weapons, and capable also of attracting new adherents to the Protocol.

Interdiction of use, however, is not enough. International law and public opinion and political pressures still fall short of expectations in a world of sovereign entities. We must go a step further and build a multilateral convention banning the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and ensuring their destruction. The negotiations now going on in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, in which my delegation is engaged with enthusiasm and a spirit of flexibility, have to reach completion. The mere passage of time will not erode our differences, which are very well known. Only political will - a worn-out but still irreplaceable concept - can enable us to overcome the remaining obstacles.

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Progress in our chemical weapons negotiations, nevertheless, would be helped by a general move towards disarmament, mainly on the nuclear level. Some might consider it rather hypocritical if they are blamed and scorned for possessing chemical weapons, which have well-known terrible effects, by the same States which display the most formidable nuclear arsenals, arms that can not only bring pain and deaths to millions but even eradicate human life from the surface of the Earth. If, as some say, chemical weapons are the poor man's nuclear bomb, a good way to help their proscription is simultaneously to engage in efforts to achieve the long-range objective of proscribing nuclear weaponry.

Coming to the text of the draft convention now being negotiated by the Conference on Disarmament - the so-called rolling-text contained in the report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly - I have some general comments to make.

The major obligations to be included in the convention are not to develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile or retain chemical weapons, or transfer them to anyone; not to use chemical weapons; and to destroy chemical weapons and chemical-weapons production facilities in the possession of each party. We therefore consider it desirable that mention be made specifically of the universal and non-discriminatory character of our convention, which is one of its most salient features and the one which, together with the verification dispositions, is most suitable to serve as a precedent for future disarmament agreements.

Article VI, "Activities not prohibited by the convention", and article XI, "Economic and technological development", are essential for the civilian chemical industries of all nations, but particularly for those of the developing countries, which cannot accept that their fledgling national sectors be impaired by undue restrictions or by excesses and rigidities in the verification system, especially

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when they have never had chemical weapons or produced them, as in the case of Brazil.

By the same token, the Brazilian Government expects the convention to recognize the importance of international co-operation in the field of chemical industries for peaceful purposes, with due consideration for the needs of the developing countries, as well as the right of all States to have access to technological achievements in the domain of chemistry.

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Assistance - dealt with in article X of the rolling text - constitutes another crucial concept for all States which do not possess chemical weapons and which feel they have a legitimate claim to resort to multilateral help in case of use or threat of use of chemical weapons against them. The resistance shown by certain developed countries against the multilateral and mandatory character of such necessary assistance will certainly tend to decrease when they come to see the central role that a provision of this kind will have if we really intend to draft a treaty of universal application.

As envisaged in article VIII, the political structure of the future organization on the prohibition of chemical weapons, still in its beginnings, is one of the most relevant matters we have to tackle. We hope that it will enable the organization to be representative and effective, and that oligarchic ideas that would give the right to some countries to be permanently represented in the executive council will be abandoned. We are drafting an important instrument and one which, by its role as a possible model for future disarmament agreements, will be looked upon as a main pillar of the new international order. It would be discouraging to look back to schemes that rely on an outdated power mentality.

The role of the organization and, within it, of the executive council will be a central one in guaranteeing adequate verification of compliance. Misuse and abuse can be averted, or at least substantially reduced, only if the State that requests a challenge-inspection - the most effective and intrusive form of verification - knows that such a request and the findings of the inspection itself will be assessed by a collective organ, the executive council, thus giving the process an indispensable multilateral imprint.

The time consumed in drafting the verification provisions of the convention on chemical weapons being negotiated in Geneva indicates the difficulties inherent in the definition of a régime that gives sufficient assurance of other parties'

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compliance with the treaty while avoiding encroachments on peaceful economic activities or intrusions in military activities not related to the object of the convention. Such a balance is very difficult to identify and maintain, for there are differences not only in the approaches of the major military alliances but also in the perceptions of industrialized countries and developing countries.

Verification requirements at the level of bilateral negotiations between the super-Powers take fully into account the dangers involved in the massive nuclear-weapons concentration and the far-reaching range and high accuracy of the delivery systems, where split-second decisions can be vital. When we focus on multilateral negotiations, the control requirements must be tailored to each situation, to each type of weapons system, without making one category of verification measures a general solution to all cases.

There should always be a reasonable balance between the automaticity of verification and some kind of defence against its use for political, propaganda or intelligence-gathering purposes, to avoid something which is generally intended to create confidence becoming a source of mistrust.

Verification is an important element of disarmament agreements, but is not in itself the aim of any disarmament agreement. Verification is essentially treaty-specific, adjusting itself to the scope, nature and purpose of each agreement. The 1988 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission approved 16 general principles that elaborate upon or add to those stated in the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly - the first devoted to disarmament. We are broadly supportive of the work accomplished under your direction, Mr. Chairman, and consider the new principles to be a valuable complement to the ones already enshrined by the international community in the Final Document. Among them, we value most emphatically the tenth

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principle, which attributes to all States equal rights to participate in the process of international verification of agreements to which they are parties; and the fifteenth principle, which reads:

"Verification arrangements should be implemented without discrimination, and, in accomplishing their purpose, avoid unduly interfering with the internal affairs of States parties or other States, or jeopardizing their economic, technological and social development." (A/CN.10/1988/CRP.9, p. 4)

To some extent those two principles epitomize what we think must be the cardinal rule of future systems of verification: equality, non-discrimination, non-interference and non-hindrance of economic development.

Verification must also be practicable and cost-effective. If we extend it to its logical outer limits the mere idea of verification can block any kind of disarmament negotiation. We should, rather, stress the deterrent effect of verification procedures on would-be violators.

Much has been said about a possible role for the United Nations in this field. As we hold that the Organization has a central role and a primary responsibility in the field of disarmament as a whole, we are in favour in principle of envisaging its contribution, particularly since recently its role in the handling of some regional problems has been successful beyond general expectations. The matter is ripe for collective consideration, with the advice of qualified experts, to prepare for eventual future action along these lines.

Verification is receiving growing attention and it is one of the central concepts in disarmament discussions. There is good in this to the extent that it has made possible the adoption of disarmament measures and will continue to do so. However, we must take care not to let it become an obstacle or a pretext for not making progress in specific disarmament negotiations.

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Jorge Luis Borges, the Argentine writer, described in one of his stories a king who wanted maps so perfect and detailed that his cartographers began making maps bigger and bigger until they were in the scale of one to one and merely duplicated reality. Then progressively rain, wind and sun destroyed those perfect reproductions. I hope we shall not push our verification requirements to such unattainable extremes.

Mr. IN SOPHEAP (Democratic Kampuchea) (interpretation from French):

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the delegation of Democratic Kampuchea, it is a great pleasure to extend to you our sincere congratulations on your unanimous election to head this important Committee. Your vast knowledge, your competence and your long experience are the best guarantees of the success of our work. My delegation assures you of its full co-operation. It also extends its congratulations to the other officers of the Committee.

We should also like to extend our thanks to the previous Chairman, Mr. Bagbeni Adefo Nzengeya of Zaire, for his outstanding work during the last session.

In his message dated 20 September for International Peace Day the United Nations Secretary-General declared:

"Today's commemoration of the International Day of Peace is an auspicious and happy occasion, as the pursuit of peace quickens its pace throughout the world. Let us not forget, however, that peace does not come accidentally or automatically. The impressive progress we are making to end a number of conflicts is the result of hard effort, in some cases over many years. The United Nations has been at the forefront of that effort."

He added that, nevertheless, "the guns of war" continue to be heard in other parts of the world.

(Mr. In Sopheap, Democratic
Kampuchea)

Our eminent Secretary-General is right. In fact, the international community can welcome progress accomplished over the last 12 months. On 8 December 1987 the United States of America and the Soviet Union signed the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. East-West relations have improved. The withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan under United Nations supervision, within the framework of an agreement, the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq after eight years of war, the withdrawal of South African forces from Angola, and the prospects for the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) on Namibia, the acceptance by the parties to the conflict of the peace plan presented by the United Nations to settle the problem of Western Sahara - all of these have led to a relaxation of tension in the world. The joint efforts of the international community, together with the role of catalyst of the United Nations, as well as the struggle of enslaved peoples against the policy of power and domination, have contributed to an improvement in the world climate.

This progress is, however, still very limited. Nuclear arsenals continue to be a mortal threat to mankind. No progress has been made in the reduction of conventional weapons. The arms race has not been halted. Despite set-backs, the policy of power, domination and expansion remains very aggressive. Regional wars are continuing. International relations are still marked by distrust. Thus peace and security are still seriously threatened.

One of the major difficulties in solving the problem of disarmament is the correct assessment of the security needs of each State, for it is on those needs that efforts will be based to find a reasonable and just balance and gradually to reduce those needs to the lowest level. In fact, the arms of certain countries are not dictated solely by reasons of national security.

(Mr. In Sopheap, Democratic
Kampuchea)

For example, the United States withdrawal from Viet Nam in 1975, all things being equal, in no way diminished the security of the other super-Power. However, that country took advantage of it to acquire the military bases of Cam Ranh and Danang in Viet Nam, in order to step up its presence in the region in terms of troops, naval units, aircraft, control and surveillance stations and other strategic facilities.

In the same context, our neighbour to the East took advantage of the situation to carry out its own regional expansionist ambitions within the framework of the global, military, ideological and economic strategy of that super-Power. Its Communist Party, from its first congress until its last, held in December 1986, has never failed to reaffirm its determination to form an Indo-Chinese federation under its aegis, first absorbing Laos and Kampuchea - Cambodia in French - and then gradually all the countries of the peninsula located between India and China. For generations, since its founding in 1930, it has systematically inculcated into personnel at all levels, its members and the members of its communist youth, a strategy designed to bring about that federation.

It has formed a gigantic army, commensurate with its ambitions, third in the world in size, with 1,200,000 men in regular units and 1,500,000 in the militia and paramilitary forces. Its enormous arsenal includes, in addition to sophisticated conventional weapons, chemical and bacteriological weapons, which have sown devastation and claimed thousands of victims in Cambodia.

Proudly asserting that it is in the vanguard of socialism, it has taken upon itself the mission of placing the region under the influence of the bloc of the super-Power that is protecting and financing it. Having succeeded in conquering the South in 1975, it is convinced that now nothing can stop it now. In 1977 it

(Mr. In Sopheap, Democratic
Kampuchea)

accomplished the annexation of Laos. In December 1978 it sent a quarter of a million soldiers to invade Kampuchea in order to achieve the formation of the small Indo-Chinese federation, a necessary step towards still greater expansion. It is thus that a regional conflict was born, a conflict which has already lasted 10 years and which will last much longer still if the struggle in the field is weakened and if there is a relaxation of international pressure on the aggressor. This situation has so far thwarted the efforts of the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to establish a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in the region, a proposal to which Democratic Kampuchea fully subscribes.

The facts of the past and the present demonstrate that the strategy of the super-Power in question and its ally is not going to change in the foreseeable future. It remains the source of tension, instability and distrust in the region. It is fuelling the arms race.

We must take advantage of the progress made to move towards radical reductions in nuclear and conventional weapons, the adoption of a convention on chemical weapons, and other disarmament objectives. However, we do not lose sight of the fact that the ultimate goal of disarmament is peace and security. These will not be determined solely by technical measures or by the numbers of weapons which we shall limit. The approach must be enlarged, to cover also legal instruments, political and moral commitments and other appropriate measures. It is here that the importance of the role of the United Nations emerges most clearly: it is indispensable and irreplaceable.

(Mr. In Sopheap, Democratic
Kampuchea)

In your opening statement, Sir, you stressed that

"... there is a renewed respect today for the United Nations, which in turn has generated a restored sense of self-confidence at the United Nations itself. The world wants the dynamic and practical leadership of the United Nations in ending regional conflicts." (A/C.1/43/PV.3, p. 6)

Democratic Kampuchea is among the first to welcome the restored prestige and vigour of our Organization. In fact, as victims of an act of aggression and of foreign occupation, which threaten its very survival, it has always placed its hope in the United Nations, the highest and most representative world organization of the community of nations, endowed with a precise Charter, well established rules of procedure and other necessary measures.

Thus in 1979, when it had just been invaded by the troops of the neighbouring aggressor, Democratic Kampuchea immediately brought that act of aggression before the Security Council. The veto by the super-Power that is an ally of the aggressor did not make it lose faith in the United Nations. It appealed to the General Assembly and to the International Conference on Kampuchea held in 1981 under the auspices of the United Nations. In its peace plans it did not fail to refer to the United Nations. It is known, on the other hand, that our aggressor is challenging the role of the United Nations in the settlement of the problem of Kampuchea and has rejected the nine resolutions of the General Assembly and the Declaration of the International Conference on Kampuchea, which demand the total and unconditional withdrawal of the aggressor's troops from Kampuchea.

(Mr. In Sopheap, Democratic
Kampuchea)

Democratic Kampuchea is still waiting for our Organization to play its part fully and defend the rights, freedom and sovereignty of nations, by ensuring respect for the spirit and the letter of the Charter and international law. In so doing the United Nations would be contributing to fulfilment of the most cherished aspiration of the nations of the world, in particular those that are small and weak, such as Cambodia, to a safer existence, free from acts of aggression carried out by bigger countries motivated by expansionist ambitions. At the same time, it would make its decisive contribution to disarmament, because, if the rights, freedom, independence and sovereignty of nations are guaranteed by the fact that the Charter and international law are respected, weapons will no longer seem so attractive to the great Powers, much less to the small countries.

Mr. van SCHAIK (Netherlands): First of all, I wish to associate myself with the statement the representative of Greece made on behalf of the 12 countries of the European Community. His comprehensive statement makes it possible for me to limit myself to some broader considerations and to focus on some major issues to which my Government attaches great importance. The views I shall express reflect, I hope, a constructive and realistic approach, in the same spirit in which the Secretary-General in his report has addressed disarmament issues. We praise his wise and balanced approach.

Since the beginning of this session of the General Assembly many speakers have noted the improved climate in international relations. The Secretary-General has also eloquently highlighted a number of areas where we witness sustained political progress. Indeed, after years of political stagnation and sometimes violent armed conflict, the present international outlook gives us hope for a better future.

In bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union substantial agreements have been achieved, and there is a distinct prospect that

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

new agreements can be concluded. We trust that the improved climate will lead to further disarmament. The prospects for progress are propitious and encourage us to continue on this path. But patience and perseverance are required - two necessary aspects of the diplomatic effort that need to be sustained if we are to capitalize on the results achieved so far.

I should like for a minute to indulge in looking back in history. War has been a regular feature of thousands of years of history, but, notwithstanding some earlier attempts, arms-control and disarmament measures are relatively new. Some lasting laws of war were developed only at the end of the last century and the beginning of this century. Subsequently, modest efforts towards arms limitation have been made, but with limited or no results. Serious arms-limitation and disarmament agreements have come about only since the 1960s.

A number of those agreements were attempts to restrict and limit the nuclear-arms race in order to stabilize the nuclear balance. Since that time other weapons of mass destruction and conventional forces and armaments have been brought into the negotiating process. But we are still in a learning phase and we should not simply close our eyes to the depth and scope of the problems we face today.

It is certainly not my intention to belittle the achievements at the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is, in my view, a shining example. Arms-limitation agreements have served the cause of disarmament; indeed, I believe they have been the indispensable spadework from which the present negotiations on arms reductions draw benefit. The openness in military affairs between East and West would have been inconceivable only a short time ago. 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, the Stockholm Agreement on security- and

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

confidence-building measures in Europe and the bilateral agreements on notification of ballistic missile launches and on the joint verification experiment in nuclear-test explosions are all major achievements that can and should assist us in our efforts to achieve regional and multilateral arms-control and disarmament measures.

The positive political trend has rightly fostered a sense of optimism. Conviction, together with dedication, is necessary, indeed vital, if Governments are to sustain the painstaking work of negotiating disarmament agreements. True, the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held here in June, did not produce a declaration or a final document. But it did produce a lot of common ground on various substantive issues upon which we can build further, as I hope we shall do during this session.

Disarmament has entered a fundamentally new phase. Let me mention only one important example. We are looking forward to the coming conventional stability talks in Europe which will aim at a stable and secure balance of forces at lower levels. The Netherlands attaches great importance in this context to eliminating destabilizing disparities, in particular in central Europe. Substantial reductions are needed to restore the balance. At the same time, we should like to stress that true stability can be reached only if something is done to reduce the tensions that are at the origin of, and have led to, the present level of armed forces and armaments. We appreciate the fact that tensions are being reduced, but even so mere declaratory expressions are not sufficient for arms control and disarmament. There is a need to verify what is actually agreed. Verification is part of our security.

Verification is more than just a catchword. At last most Governments, if not all, realize that arms-control and disarmament agreements can be serious and lead to increased confidence and a better political climate only if the various parties

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

are indeed in a position to be confident that these agreements are actually complied with. On no other issue can this be seen so clearly as in the implementation - or non-implementation - of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 banning the use of chemical weapons. Recent events are living and tragic proof that the effectiveness of present-day arms-control and disarmament measures, if achieved without adequate verification provisions, is insufficient.

As I said, verification is no longer an insurmountable obstacle to achieving agreements. The INF Treaty is an inspiring example of how even high obstacles can be surmounted. In Europe, observations and on-site inspections of military activities are becoming a routine matter under the Stockholm agreement. In most non-nuclear-weapon States the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is applying safeguards on the complete nuclear fuel cycle. In Geneva we are negotiating intrusive verification schemes under a future chemical-weapons convention. International seismic networks have been designed and are being tested to check on underground nuclear tests. The Secretary-General has been actively involved in investigations concerning alleged use of chemical weapons.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

So what is the role the United Nations can and should play, now and in the future, in this increasingly complex field of verification? The United Nations Disarmament Commission has developed an important set of verification principles, which were adopted by consensus. It is up to the different negotiating forums, be they bilateral, regional or multilateral, to make appropriate use of those guidelines. In particular with respect to multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements, organs of the United Nations family can play a role, both in assisting the negotiating process and in the actual implementation of agreements. The Dutch proposal is that a group of qualified Government experts study ways to improve the assistance the United Nations may be able to render in the verification of arms control agreements, first of multilateral agreements and then of regional or even bilateral agreements, if parties so desire. Together with Canada, France and many other countries we have circulated draft resolution A/C.1/43/L.1 on this subject, which we strongly recommend for the Committee's positive consideration and endorsement. In this draft resolution we have built upon the consensus that emerged during the third special session, on which all countries worked so painstakingly.

It is not realistic to think that countries can immediately dispense with substantial parts of their armed forces and armaments. Arms control and disarmament should serve both national and international security. Security for one can never be insecurity for the other. Moreover, arms control and disarmament may require action in different areas in order to achieve a balance. One issue where progress depends on developments in related areas of international security is, in our view, the achievement of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

Important and promising developments have taken place on the issue of nuclear testing. We welcome those developments. They prove that the test-ban issue cannot be seen in isolation from broader nuclear issues. In their communiqué of 17 September 1987 as well as in the statement of 1 June 1988 following this year's summit conference between them, the Soviet Union and the United States agreed to full-scale stage-by-stage negotiations, leading to the ultimate objective of the complete cessation of nuclear testing as part of an effective disarmament process. They also agreed - as a first step - on the need for effective verification measures which would make it possible to ratify the threshold test-ban Treaties of 1974 and 1976 and to proceed to negotiate on further intermediate limitations on nuclear testing. The results of the joint verification experiment, which in the meantime has been conducted by the Soviet Union and the United States, have given us confidence that these Treaties will soon be ratified. Recent developments have confirmed us in our belief that the nuclear-testing issue is best served by a stage-by-stage approach, linking reductions in nuclear weapons to reductions in the number and yield of tests. Our efforts in this field thus become part of an effective disarmament process, leading to enhanced security and stability.

Now that we are moving towards real disarmament we should also ask ourselves whether the concepts which we discussed in the past are still relevant today. I am specifically thinking about the relevance of the indirect strategy of suffocating the nuclear arms race at a time when the direct approach of substantially reducing nuclear weapons is beginning to bear fruit.

My Government has doubts about the merits of the initiative by a number of countries in calling for a conference with the objective of expanding the scope of the partial test-ban Treaty and converting it into a comprehensive test-ban treaty. It is clear that for various reasons the time is not yet ripe for a

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

comprehensive test ban. We do not see how the proposed amendment conference could settle this controversy. We also see many practical difficulties in holding, for the first time, a conference of this type. Let us stick to our serious efforts in the Conference on Disarmament to make progress on practical nuclear-testing issues. Considering the statements made at the end of the summer session of the Conference on Disarmament on the mandate for an ad hoc committee, my Government trusts that early in the next session of the Conference the road can be paved for agreement on a mandate, permitting those issues to be addressed pragmatically. It would also substantially assist the work in the Conference on Disarmament if the results of the joint verification experiment could be injected into that work. That would stimulate and give further direction to realistic multilateral efforts.

The most important multilateral achievement in the nuclear field has been and remains the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty. We welcome the very broad support that this Treaty has received, including the recent increase in the number of adherents to it.

We know that some countries consider the Treaty to be discriminatory. We respect their views, but I am afraid we do not share their perception. We see nothing discriminatory, or indeed contradictory, in the fundamental objective of the non-proliferation Treaty - the wish to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons, which would inevitably increase the risk of the use of nuclear weapons, the chances of a nuclear war which, as we know, no country can win. The Netherlands will therefore engage with vigour in the upcoming review conference, the last one before the 1995 conference, which has to decide on whether the Treaty "shall continue in force indefinitely, or shall be extended for an additional fixed period or periods". (resolution 2373 (XXII), article X, para. 2)

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

Certain States outside the non-proliferation Treaty have expressed an increased awareness of the dangers of the spread of nuclear weapons. We welcome their declared commitment not to acquire or possess nuclear weapons - indeed, in one case this is even embodied in the Constitution; and we seriously hope that those countries will join multilateral agreements in this field, allowing them, as members, to be involved in shaping future policies with respect to non-proliferation. The review conference presents us with a significant and important opportunity to stimulate an awareness that the non-proliferation Treaty is to the benefit of us all. It is our sincere hope that other countries will feel encouraged by the conclusion and implementation of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - and by the prospects of the United States and the Soviet Union cutting their strategic nuclear arsenals in half - measures in accordance with the letter and spirit of the non-proliferation Treaty, and that they will take a fresh look to see if, really, the option of the possession of nuclear arms could serve any purpose.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

In our view, we should stick to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We should look for ways to strengthen it and we should look for ways to encourage all countries to accede to it.

Outer space is a relatively new domain for mankind. The peaceful uses of space have been of great benefit to mankind and they should continue to be so. Outer space has become an area that cannot be overlooked if we are seriously talking about arms control and disarmament. We must know what we want and, once we do, we must work towards the gradual achievement of our objectives. The Netherlands welcomes the continuing negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union concerning outer space. In their statement on 23 September of this year they noted:

"Solutions are possible. The record of achievement since the November 1985 summit in Geneva attests to this."

We wish to encourage the two major space Powers to make progress towards solutions. We also hope for agreement on a significant period of non-withdrawal from the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, thus adding to predictability in the strategic domain.

Outer space is an area of direct concern to us all. Its extensive use for civilian purposes is spectacular. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space is an active vehicle for the necessary discussions, and we fully support the Committee's efforts. Outer space is also essential for the verification of arms control and disarmament measures. Observation satellites and most other military satellites operating at present have a stabilizing function. We subscribe to the wish of many nations to make outer space an issue of more substantive discussion in multilateral forums. Destabilizing developments with respect to outer space must be avoided. We believe that some tools for multilateral work on outer space are clearly available in the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

We should capitalize on the existing work and achievements of the bilateral negotiations. It is essential, as a matter of priority, to make use of the existing instruments related to outer space. We could, for example, engage in a serious study on the possible implications for other countries of the agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union to notify launches of all long-range ballistic missiles. This is, after all, an agreement the primary function of which is to increase the transparency of possible military moves and thus to strengthen confidence and avoid the risk of misunderstanding. In short, it serves world peace. Why should all the other countries concerned not make similar commitments? It would indeed be a significant step if the commitments made under the present bilateral agreement could in some way be extended to other countries concerned.

Another issue to be addressed may be the registration Convention. The primary function of that Convention is to assist in establishing the legal responsibility arising from having objects in outer space. The scope of the registration Convention and the benefit to be drawn from it could be improved. At this moment that Convention is not even properly applied: this is tangible evidence of the need for a step-by-step approach. One such step could be the proper application of the Convention itself but perhaps an improvement of the Convention is within reach, whereby notification is done before instead of after the launching of objects into space. Also, more detailed information could be given than is strictly required under the Convention itself. Such positive actions, minor as they may seem, would increase transparency and strengthen confidence.

The horrifying experience with chemical weapons during the First World War has apparently not prevented countries from using chemical weapons again and even on a massive scale. Chemical weapon attacks are abhorrent and cannot be justified. Flagrant violations of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 have repeatedly been confirmed. We believe the international community has not yet offered an adequate response.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

Combating the actual use and proliferation of chemical weapons is one of my Government's highest priorities. A stop should be put to such use immediately and the weapons themselves should soon be banned for ever through conclusion of the present negotiations on a convention on chemical weapons and conclusion of that convention itself. The Netherlands is satisfied that this approach is widely shared. We support the proposal by President Reagan that a brief conference should be held in the near future with the aim of strengthening the international commitment not to use chemical weapons. We welcome the invitation by President Mitterrand to hold such a conference in Paris. It should set the scene for more vigorous negotiations in Geneva aimed at banning once and for all the production, possession and use of chemical weapons.

Perhaps the necessary sense of urgency has been somewhat veiled this year by the detailed consideration in the Conference on Disarmament of many complex issues in which negotiators have become involved to make the treaty more effective. Of course, such detailed provisions are necessary; I do not dispute that. At every step in the negotiating process, however, we must, case by case, carefully consider whether a specific issue is important and should therefore be put into the treaty itself or whether it concerns less important details to be elaborated by the Preparatory Committee and subsequently by the organization to be set up under the treaty.

The negotiations must result in a sufficiently, adequately verifiable régime, whereby nations feel secure and are thus prepared to comply fully with the obligations under the convention. The Netherlands is actively contributing to that objective in the negotiations in Geneva and we shall continue to do so. We wish to encourage interested countries that have not yet done so to join in the negotiations in Geneva as observers, as some countries that are not members of the Conference on Disarmament are already doing. Indeed, we hope that all countries,

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

including those which are not in a position at this moment to attend the negotiations, will prepare themselves, thus allowing for a shorter period between signing and entry into force of the chemical weapons convention.

Many speakers have rightly stressed the importance of containing the conventional arms race. As the representative of Greece said on behalf of the Twelve, the subject of conventional disarmament should be kept at the forefront of the multilateral debate on disarmament. It is indeed of the utmost importance that countries should, in particular through regional agreements, stem the tide of ever increasing levels of conventional arsenals.

(Mr. van Schaik, Netherlands)

Since the Second World War over ten million lives have been lost in conventional conflicts. The gigantic costs of conventional weapons threaten to undermine the economic development and even the social fabric of some of the poorer countries. The Gulf war, which has finally come to a halt, has been another illustration, in a series of calamitous conflicts, of the disastrous consequences for everyone concerned of a conventional war in modern times. There are no victors in such conventional wars. Let it inspire all countries, whether in Europe, in the Gulf area, on the south Asian subcontinent, in Central America or elsewhere, to face this great challenge of the next decade: to strengthen stability and security through agreements on the reduction of conventional forces and armaments.

On a closely related matter, arms transfers, proposals by Colombia and Costa Rica, as well as by Italy, are circulating. These are important initiatives on a very complex issue that have never been seriously addressed in the United Nations. We wish to reflect on the various complex aspects of the issue of arms transfers. The Netherlands sincerely hopes that we can, by consensus, make a first step during this session, thus starting a process of systematic consideration of this important issue. For one thing, this could lead to more transparency in the matter. The United Nations may have a role to play in that respect.

Many disarmament and related matters have been raised during these past two weeks. The agenda is rich and broad. Where necessary, we intend to comment on those issues under other agenda items. We trust, Sir, that the constructive spirit shown in this general debate, under your able chairmanship will find itself translated into useful guidelines for our work in the coming years.

Mr. SHARMA (Bhutan): Mr. Chairman, while I appreciate your call to dispense with the usual formalities, allow me simply to wish you well in your endeavours to guide the deliberations of this Committee to a successful conclusion.

(Mr. Sharma, Bhutan)

With each passing day, the infinite genius of man generates greater knowledge and creates means for greater material comfort. Indeed, as we continuously advance to new frontiers of knowledge and technology, the ever shrinking world is witnessing the collapse of traditional political and geographic boundaries. Yet, as Tennyson, in a rare glimpse of truth, wrote, "knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers". We find that in our pursuit of knowledge we have failed to gain from the essence of wisdom that unfolds itself upon every step we take. While our very survival depends on our capacity to live together in peace, we have chosen to magnify and articulate our differences. What has been regrettable is not so much the existence of these differences but the resources and energies that have been committed to their furtherance. The insanity of "mutual deterrence" that triggered the nuclear arms race was inevitable in the resultant climate of deliberate animosity and paranoia.

At a moment when the much-acclaimed spirit of détente and rapprochement between the two super-Powers has created a congenial atmosphere of conciliation, it may seem ill-timed that I should speak of a lamentable past. But my delegation, which has never been euphoric over the largely symbolic Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, maintains that there is much to be accomplished before this gesture is translated into actions that actually remove the threat of a nuclear war. When swords remain ready to be unsheathed, a broken toothpick is no cause for the anticipation of a warm embrace.

It is not the intention of my delegation to undermine the ongoing dialogue between the two super-Powers. In fact we admire the courage with which their leaders have dared to advance thus far. We are aware of the lingering doubts and suspicions and the opposition they face from both within and outside as they lead their nations on the path to peace. They have so far succeeded in conveying a

(Mr. Sharma, Bhutan)

message of hope to a world that has refused to be reconciled with their warped perception of global security. We are convinced that the two super-Powers are now sincere in their search for a more sensible alternative arrangement for mutual security. It is, therefore, not in the so-called achievements that we rejoice but in their willingness to communicate with each other as rational beings, as intelligent people and as responsible world leaders with the aim of the ultimate removal of the threat of a thermonuclear end.

If the production of a final document is not the only measure for the usefulness of a conference, the third special session on disarmament was indeed most successful. It provided a clear insight into the complexity and magnitude of the problem of disarmament, as well as the many differing options. Our conviction that was perhaps shared by the vast majority during the intense deliberations is that the subject of disarmament, by its very nature and intent, is multilateral, demanding a multilateral solution. At the same time, my delegation has always maintained that bilateral initiatives are essential and complementary to the multilateral process. However, the primacy of the role of the United Nations on the subject of general and complete disarmament remains unquestionable. Furthermore, we believe that the attempt of any nation to undermine multilateralism in this context is neither in the interest of genuine disarmament nor in keeping with the spirit of the Charter of this world body.

Even as the super-Powers are engaged in a serious dialogue on the question of disarmament, the process of qualitative and quantitative nuclear arms development continues unabated within an expanding nuclear club. Meanwhile those on the threshold of nuclear arms capability show no inclination to disengage themselves from this pursuit. It is clearly evident that the very premises on which were

(Mr. Sharma, Bhutan)

based the two main instruments aimed at limiting nuclear arms development, namely, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the partial test ban, were inherently wrong in both principle and practice.

(Mr. Sharma, Bhutan)

Any treaty that aims to preserve the leverage of one party over another or seeks only limited adherence cannot be expected to find acceptance or compliance. We are convinced that nothing short of an immediate and comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty can prevent the continued development and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and the threat of their use.

The horror of chemical weapons, which mankind had agreed never to unleash upon itself, has once again returned to haunt the world. The sanctity of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, which had been respected since the First World War, has now been grossly violated. The fact that such weapons of mass destruction are within easy reach of many countries can undermine even the supremacy of the nuclear States. Indeed, the fact that biological weapons are also among the list of available weapon options is clear testimony to the uncontrollable nature of growth in the global arsenal of mass destruction.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes the initiatives being taken to bring into effect a new convention on chemical weapons. We express the hope that this convention will include punitive measures to be taken against those States guilty of using such weapons in conflicts both within and outside their borders. It is with great expectation that we look forward to the conference on this subject to be held in Paris in the coming year.

While the infinite destructive capacity of nuclear weapons is common knowledge and has become the focus of world concern, none can deny the innumerable human lives and properties that conventional weapons have destroyed and continue to destroy. Weapons of mass destruction are only a part of the threat with which we are faced, either as direct parties in the conflict or as innocent victims. On the other hand, conventional weapons that comprise an awesome range and capacity of destructive hardware are acquired by almost every nation in the face of real and imagined threats. These not only pose the greatest threat to peace, but also

(Mr. Sharma, Bhutan)

comprise the objects on which the limited resources of even the poorest among us are lavished, while illiteracy, disease, and hunger wreak havoc among our people. As strongly as we are convinced of the need to support the cause of nuclear disarmament, there is a clear need to free ourselves of fears within our own regional and bilateral spheres so that our basic needs are not left unattended.

It is 17 years since efforts have been made to implement the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. Despite a number of meetings held by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, the proposed Colombo Conference has yet to take place. We believe that the implementation of this Declaration will add to the strengthening of international peace and security while giving impetus to the peaceful development of many countries in and around the region. We are now hopeful that the recent easing of tensions around the world will generate greater support and commitment for its successful implementation in 1990.

Guided by the spirit of non-violence and peaceful co-existence, the people of Bhutan shall continue to live in peace and friendship with their neighbours. We believe that even as the advancement of knowledge and technology shatters the traditional, political and economic barriers, the sovereignty and independent status of nations need not be threatened, but enhanced. What is necessary is the combined will and the wisdom to choose the path of peace. Let us turn away from our baser instincts and reaffirm faith in the goodness of humanity. Let us join together in the search for a better and lasting alternative arrangement for our global, national and individual security.

Tashi Delek. Good luck.

Mr. KATSIGASI (Uganda): Mr. Chairman, I am aware of your appeal and of the need to abide by rule 110, but I will be brief. I wish to express the delight of my delegation at seeing you in the Chair and at seeing the other officers of the Committee direct the work of this important Committee of the General Assembly. I

(Mr. Katsigazi, Uganda)

wish also to thank the Department for Disarmament Affairs for the work it has done in preparing the documents for the Committee.

Although we are meeting at a time that has been described as one full of bright prospects largely because of improving relations between the super-Powers, the world still has numerous problems of different magnitudes that increase the insecurity among nations. My delegation would wish to address itself to some of the issues which we consider the major causes of international insecurity.

The prevention of nuclear war is the greatest and most urgent task facing mankind today. It has been said, and rightly so, that the super-Powers have propelled mankind into the nuclear age and that, therefore, nuclear disarmament is primarily their concern. But in a profoundly deeper sense, in the event of a nuclear explosion, even if by mistake, all humanity, without discrimination, could face the same fate: extinction. So nuclear disarmament becomes, of necessity, the legitimate concern of all mankind.

The international outcry for a comprehensive nuclear arms test ban treaty and a subsequent comprehensive nuclear disarmament treaty is genuine and legitimate.

While it is true that the nuclear disarmament negotiations, like any other negotiations, have their own dynamic and imperative, it is also true that those other negotiations are of such a nature that one can ill afford not to get involved. But here we are talking about the possibility of the destruction of the world we live in many times over, probably as the result of a simple human error. Therefore, the genuine and legitimate concern of the non-nuclear countries must be respected.

My delegation appreciates the improvement in international relations and the bilateral negotiations going on between the super-Powers. However, we do not find much reason to jubilate over those developments because the number of arms so far

(Mr. Katsigazi, Uganda)

addressed is very small and the pace of negotiations is still too slow because of acute mutual distrust and suspicion.

It is in this respect that my delegation wishes to appeal to the super-Powers to lean more to the just and moral side of issues in their negotiations than to the legal side, because, as we all know, law is on many occasions unjust.

(Mr. Katsigasi, Uganda)

At this point let me register my delegation's support for a multilateral approach to disarmament, a multilateral approach which is not at variance with, but rather complementary to, the bilateral efforts. At the 18th meeting, last Friday, Mr. Chairman, you touched on a very crucial point in your statement marking Disarmament Week when you spoke of the commonality being revealed everywhere, the road map to survival being clear: political, ideological or economic domination of one group by another giving way to a new range of cultural and social values to protect the common people who stood on common ground. This was a very telling observation.

At the heart of international insecurity, both military and non-military, and with still more potential in that direction is the asymmetrical economic relationship between developed and developing countries, or to be more precise, between North and South. This asymmetrical relationship, which has been with us for the past 400 years, continues to be well entrenched and complex. It is a situation that was graphically described by President Yoweri Museveni of the Republic of Uganda in his address to the General Assembly at its forty-second session. He said:

"This problem of the net-outflow of resources is not a new problem. We remember the slave trade, in which very healthy human beings were extracted from their communities and taken to the Americas and to the Caribbean to produce commodities cheaply for America and Western Europe in exchange for mirrors, beads and trinkets. This constituted a big haemorrhage of the African societies, and it is still going on. The process of unequal exchange continues relentlessly and could become worse unless there is a radical change to halt it. If we continue to exchange value for no value, copper for wigs, coffee for perfumes, cotton for luxurious cars and so on, the gap between the advanced countries and developing countries will continue to widen."

(A/42/PV.45, pp. 12-13)

(Mr. Katsigazi, Uganda)

The net effect of the grim picture I have just described is that developing countries are contributing to the enhancement of development with its multiplier effect in the North and promoting an equivalent degree of under-development with its multiplier effect in the South.

Last week the world witnessed the most spectacular collaboration between the super-Powers to save the precious lives of three California grey whales. Millions viewed the operation on television throughout the world. My delegation has no quarrel with preserving nature and wildlife and protecting our environment, but the solidarity shown would be better placed if the super-Powers were able just as easily to rise above the political, economic and ideological differences that exacerbate the arms race and threaten international peace and security, so that we could join hands with them and work to free the world of situations in which infant mortality in the South is 108 per thousand as opposed to 20 per thousand in the North; neo-natal mortality in the South is 47 per cent as opposed to almost zero in the North; every minute 18 infants die in the world and 17 of them are in the South; every minute an average of between 26 and 27 infants and young children die in the world and 26 of them are in the South; at least 30 per cent of all deaths at all ages in the world each year are children in the South under the age of five.

These and other lamentable realities are on the increase, mainly because of lack of funds. Yet the people of the South have never ceased to work. On the contrary, they have always continued to work harder and harder but to earn less and less while their imported consumption commodities from the North cost more and more. They work on empty stomachs. When they are lucky enough to have a frugal meal, it is woefully lacking in nourishment. Yet somewhere on this planet there are those who are extremely busy, even frantic, in their effort to boost the megatons of deadly nuclear weapons so as to perfect the efficacy of their destructiveness.

(Mr. Katsigazi, Uganda)

Consider the irony of the predicament in which developing countries in the South find themselves. As we all know, the economies of many developing countries depend on the export of a few raw materials or crops - usually coffee. The world coffee market is flooded with coffee and its price has plummeted. Now, while the International Coffee Organization, on the one hand, logically urges coffee producers to diversify their agriculture and grow crops which are in demand in order to increase their income, the "competent" financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, on the other, compel them to "grow more coffee" in order to qualify for credit facilities. Thus, the coffee growers grow more and get less money, and this money is then spent on paying back-debts and servicing them. Yet coffee importers and roasters in developed countries are packaging less coffee for the consumer and charging more money. We have come to a stage where we can no longer draw up meaningful national development plans because of fluctuating export earnings. This state of affairs does not promote international peace and security.

The people of the South are not entirely to blame for their plight. Neither are the natural disasters. The major problem lies with the unfair trade practices between North and South, in which the South is compelled to trade with the North on most unfair terms. This is an ill wind that blows nobody good. Some leaders from developing countries who have vision and commitment and who have tried to challenge this unacceptable state of affairs have met with stiff resistance inspired from without. Their Governments have been the targets of destabilization and occasionally their countries have not been spared direct invasion. These unfriendly practices cause regional instability and conflicts resulting in a situation in which all sorts of weapons are absorbed into those regions, thus compounding the process of disarmament and arms control.

Under-development in the South and the expensive nuclear armament programme

(Mr. Katsigazi, Uganda)

in the North are not unrelated. Similarly, nuclear disarmament and the development of the South are certainly two sides of the same coin. In his statement to the General Assembly at this forty-third session the Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda said:

"It should by now be self-evident that disarmament is inextricably linked with development. It is a sad commentary on our times that we live in a world order that spends over \$1 trillion a year on armaments. This amount is equivalent to the total indebtedness of the developing countries with its attendant deprivation and misery. That the resources of the world are being used to destroy rather than to improve the welfare of mankind is an eloquent summary of human folly. It is our hope that the recent relaxation of tension will usher in a period in which those resources will be diverted to development." (A/43/PV.28, p. 29)

My delegation strongly believes that any country or group of countries which, in pursuit of its own security, decides to declare its area a nuclear-free zone, for the eventual attainment of a world free of nuclear weapons, should be free to do so without the imposition of external pressure that would frustrate its desire. Since 1964, when the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity issued the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa, nothing of substance has been done to implement the African leaders' decision. There has been too much procrastination. We cannot go on like this indefinitely. We support any action to transform the Declaration into a morally and legally binding instrument.

My delegation is extremely concerned at the continued collaboration among racist South Africa, certain nuclear States and Israel, which has recently

(Mr. Katsigasi, Uganda)

culminated in an open admission by racist South Africa that it has the capability of producing nuclear weapons. Those responsible for equipping the racist régime with that dangerous know-how must immediately desist and must prevail upon that régime to open all its nuclear installations to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

(Mr. Katsigazi, Uganda)

The nuclearisation of South Africa is a real threat to international peace and security. My delegation would like to urge the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency to take a decision on the recommendation of the Board of Governors contained in its report GC(XXXI)/807 to suspend South Africa from the exercise of the privileges and rights of membership in accordance with Article XIX.B of the Statute, at the thirty-third session of the General Conference. My delegation is not about to be deceived as to racist South Africa's having any intention of joining the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

It is a matter of great concern to my delegation that, 17 years after the General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring the Indian Ocean a zone of peace, those who think that their national interests are supreme and above those of any other countries have made it extremely difficult for the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean to complete its work so that the Conference on the Indian Ocean could be convened in Colombo, Sri Lanka. My delegation hopes that, following a relaxation of tension in the area, those who have been obstructing the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean will be positive so that the Conference in Colombo can be held by 1990.

As a State party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Uganda firmly believes that nuclear energy should be used solely for peaceful purposes. Our offer to host a seminar on this important subject still stands. We are counting on maximum collaboration between the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Commission for Africa and other United Nations agencies keen on promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to assist and facilitate the holding of the seminar planned to take place in Uganda next year.

My delegation was extremely perturbed by the reported use of chemical weapons very recently in a regional conflict. We condemn the use of chemical weapons and

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we should like to see a convention put in place as soon as possible prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of all chemical weapons.

We have been greatly disturbed by the attempts of private companies from industrialised countries to dump toxic waste, including nuclear waste, in Africa and other developing countries. We reject such provocative practices and refuse to accept our continent's being turned into a backyard for disposal of dangerous industrial garbage from developed countries. The practice is immoral, it is criminal, and we cannot accept it. It must be stopped at source. We support the enactment of a convention to make such dumping an international crime. Those who engage, collaborate or conspire in this practice should be condemned and mercilessly punished.

In the meantime, my delegation strongly recommends that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, in Togo, which has been doing a wonderful job in promoting confidence-building measures tailored to suit local conditions, be given support and resources to educate our people about the dangers that are involved in the dumping of toxic and nuclear waste. It has been reported that some of our unsuspecting people are taking that deadly stuff for salt!

The world we live in is neutral. It is what we make of it that matters. We must together act now and work for a better and safer world for our children and their children. We have the United Nations, which is a viable structure to help us achieve that. I have faith and trust in the ability of our Organization to deliver the right of people to peace.

Mr. MAHALLATI (Islamic Republic of Iran): In the light of what is considered a positive trend in the international arena, in view of recent developments in the field of disarmament, many encouraging statements have been made in this Committee deriving from in-depth commitment and hope that unaccomplished tasks of disarmament can finally arrive at their expected ends.

(Mr. Mahallati, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

One of the most important issues before this Committee is the question of chemical weapons and the immediate threat of their proliferation. In the recent past, attempts have been made at the United Nations to induce respect for, and implementation of, international rules banning these weapons of mass destruction. This will is manifested in several resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council, namely General Assembly resolution 42/37 C, which for the first time tackled the problem in a serious manner and considered the formation of investigation teams to enable the Secretary-General to inquire into reported use of chemical weapons. I must also refer to Security Council resolutions 612 (1988) and 620 (1988), which were indeed very important resolutions adopted by the Security Council in the last few months.

Although the above-mentioned resolutions were adopted since the previous session of the General Assembly, they did not play an effective role in stopping the use of chemical weapons. In fact, their use against civilian populations intensified. This leads my delegation to conclude that, if the words are not translated into practical deeds, we shall not achieve progress of any kind. The first step towards condemnation of the use of chemical weapons should, in our view, be readiness to act upon any allegation of use, if not upon confirmed reports of the use of these horrible weapons by a country, even against its own civilian population. No doubt, at this point, quite a few important measures should be adopted to convince international public opinion that this international Organization is now serious in what it adopts for implementation. In the face of this situation, at the initiative of the United States and France, a conference will be held in Paris.

As I said in my statement last week, we welcome any genuine move towards eliminating these abhorrent weapons from the face of the Earth. I should

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like to underline here that our concern in this field has nothing to do with bilateral issues between Iran and any other country. For us, the war is over, and today peace talks resume in Geneva to arrive at an agreement for full and complete implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1988). We have suffered the scourge of chemical weapons, and therefore we should like to convey our bitter experience to the world so as to prevent a repetition of this horrendous and barbaric crime against humanity.

Regarding the international conference in Paris, one may immediately pose the question as to why such a conference was not held when the first United Nations report was released in 1984 proving chemical weapons had been used, or even why there was no conference after the first Security Council resolution - resolution 612 (1988). All of this give us the right to be sceptical about the motives of such a conference. Are we going to whitewash what has happened in the past few years? We hope not. To meet our legitimate expectations and questions, concrete ground must be laid here in adopting resolutions on chemical weapons. Those States which justified their positions in the past, claiming that there was a war between the two countries and that they could not take a position should be reminded that the war is over and this issue is no longer a bilateral question, as it has virtually never been. Resolutions 612 (1988) and 620 (1988) have been adopted by consensus by the Security Council, manifesting the will of the international community on the one hand and the lack of sincerity vis-à-vis this issue and the forthcoming Paris Conference on the other.

(Mr. Mahallati, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

In view of the Conference, the Islamic Republic of Iran, as the main victim of chemical weapons since the First World War, has observations to make aimed at a more effective ban on chemical weapons and better results from the Conference as a whole.

Those observations are presented here with regard to the possible benefits they might bring by shedding light on some aspects pertinent to the ban on chemical weapons.

First, a clear reference should be made to the past violations leading to the erosion of the Geneva Protocol of 1925. We should remember that the Protocol was the result of the use of chemical weapons during the First World War.

Secondly, specific mention of the past records of the deliberations of the United Nations in connection with the continuing use of chemical weapons would be a most appropriate and propitious move.

Thirdly, all participating States should pledge that they will never use chemical weapons under any circumstances, and those States which have previously expressed reservations concerning the Geneva Protocol of 1925 should officially waive those reservations.

Fourthly, it would be advisable for the steering committee of the Conference to draw up in advance a draft declaration for the Conference, clearly defining the main elements of the final documents, thereby providing more time for the participants to reflect on the substance of the declaration and, if necessary, to obtain guidance and permission from their respective Governments.

Unfortunately, some ambiguities still overshadow the reason for holding the Conference.

How do the organizers of the Conference perceive the means of reinforcing the Geneva Protocol of 1925? If the answer is that there will be a mere statement by

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high-level officials of the countries which participate in the Conference, it should be said that the logic behind that plan does not seem to be strong, since experience has shown that no country with unlawful intentions openly admits that it intends to violate an agreement to which it has adhered. The point in this case is quite clear and a glance at this year's records of the First Committee shows that the country mainly responsible for the most flagrant violation of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 in recent years simply denied all charges and claimed that it was adhering to that Protocol. If the Conference is viewed as a means of international consolidation against any future use of chemical weapons, the following measures should be adopted as a minimum.

(a) As a first step in the direction of a ban on chemical weapons, a genuine effort should be made without delay fully to implement the relevant international instruments. In this regard, effective and timely implementation of resolution 42/37 C, which provides the necessary elements of investigation, is of the greatest importance. It is regrettable that the procedures of that resolution were not elaborated last year to support the work of the group in Geneva this year.

(b) Pending the adoption of the convention for a comprehensive ban which is under negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament, measures against States violating the principles of a ban on chemical weapons should be adopted as soon as possible.

Such measures could be: (i) the imposition of a trade embargo against States which do not abide by the Geneva Protocol of 1925 banning chemical weapons; (ii) consideration of the issue in the Security Council for prompt and decisive action against the violating States according to Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations; and (iii) condemnation of the violator by all States without any biased political or bilateral considerations. This would create strong moral

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pressure against States which do not abide by the international rules banning chemical weapons.

Those measures could give substance to proposals on chemical weapons. Otherwise, the only goal achieved would be some short-sighted political gains which in the long run would not prevent the genie from coming out of the bottle. More is at stake than short-term results, and this matter needs more sincere and courageous efforts. We salute those who support such a humanitarian rule, and we lend our unconditional support to it. Human destiny is too important to be gambled with.

The international community cannot and should not sacrifice its principles or its security, for the sake of seeking consensus, although consensus is valuable in its place. We should not be expected to compromise our lives and the lives of our children to reach a consensus on issues that are vital to world security. Further, how is it possible to reconcile the views and grievances of victims who have been subjected to chemical weapons with violations of the Geneva Protocol? We cannot have night and day in one place unless we close our eyes.

Lastly, I should like to bring to the attention of this meeting a very interesting quotation from an address given by President Reagan yesterday. He said:

"Those monsters who made the holocaust, they echoed death with results almost too awful to grasp. The mind reels from the enormity of the crime. It begs to be set free from so terrible a fate, to wipe it from memory. But there are people who have made us understand that we must not, we cannot, and we will not."

He continues:

"We vow to be vigilant in our battle against those who follow that example."

Those were the exact words of President Reagan in his speech yesterday. We impatiently await seeing how the holocaust of the 1980s, the very events which took

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place no more than a few months ago, will be dealt with by those who ostensibly still shed tears for a holocaust which took place almost half a century ago. We have no choice: either we choose one standard in dealing with such crimes against humanity or we shall all remain potential victims of this most horrific threat.

The CHAIRMAN: I have received a request from the representative of Israel to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. ZIPPORI (Israel): I am sorry to take up the valuable time of this Committee for a right of reply. I should prefer a constructive debate which would not call for polemics. A few days ago, Mr. Chairman, you commented on the high non-polemical tone of the discussion in our Committee. Unfortunately, not all delegates have followed this exemplary line, and a few have utilized the debate as another arm in their combat against Israel. In almost every region there is a new spirit seeking to diffuse and calm conflicts by peaceful negotiation. However, in the Middle East some of the Arab countries prefer to continue with their long-standing attack against my country. They misuse this forum for false accusations against Israel.

(Mr. Zippori, Israel)

I shall not abuse the patience of the Committee by answering all the allegations. Some of them will be referred to in our statements. However there are three points which I should like to deal with here and now.

First, it was alleged that presumably close nuclear collaboration existed between Israel and South Africa. That is simply not true. My Government has consistently, categorically rejected this allegation. Let me quote the Secretary-General's report of 1981:

"With regard to the question of a possible nuclear collaboration between Israel and South Africa, ... until specific examples of actual nuclear exchanges or transactions could be cited as clear evidence of such co-operation, the whole question remained in a state of uncertainty."

(A/36/431, para. 13)

Furthermore, on 15 May 1986 the United Nations distributed a report by a team of experts from Nigeria, Sweden, the Soviet Union, Venezuela and France, who had investigated South Africa's nuclear weapons capability. The 44-page document (A/CONF.137/CRP.2) was presented at the World Conference on Sanctions against Racist South Africa held in Paris in June 1986. It is the most comprehensive report ever issued by the United Nations on this subject. Certain countries are mentioned in the context of nuclear collaboration with South Africa. Israel is not among them. I repeat, Israel is not mentioned in that report. This should have been sufficient to quiet these false allegations, but unfortunately Arab delegations prefer to continue to repeat them.

Secondly, in this Committee we now hear a new fabricated allegation, namely, that by launching our experimental satellite OFFEQ I - of which we are very proud - Israel has supposedly intensified and extended the arms race in the Middle East. As Israel announced at the time of the launching of the satellite, this is a purely experimental satellite whose functions are: experimentation in the generation of solar power; experimentation in transmission reception from space; verification of

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system's ability to withstand vacuum and weightless conditions; and data collection on space environment conditions and Earth's magnetic field.

This information was furnished to the Secretary-General in conformity with General Assembly resolution 1721 B (XVI) and published in document A/AC.105/INF/395. We are proud to join such countries as Argentina, Brazil and India in becoming one of those developing countries which are actively participating in space research.

Thirdly, Israel is blamed for, supposedly, being the only obstacle to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. I am sure that any unprejudiced observer has noted our repeated offer to negotiate freely the establishment of a nuclear-free zone with all our neighbours and our invitation to them to enter into peace negotiations without prejudice.

The continued hostile attitude of our neighbours in rejecting our overtures is the only real obstacle to peace in the Middle East.

The CHAIRMAN: I remind delegations that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions expired three or four minutes ago, but if any delegation still wishes to put in a draft resolution we will accept it in the next few minutes after the adjournment of this meeting.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.