

# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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## FINAL RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND NINETY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Tuesday, 28 March 1989, at 10 a.m.

President:

Mr. Chusei Yamada

(Japan)

The PRESIDENT: The 498th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is now called to order.

The Conference continues today its consideration of agenda item 4, entitled "Chemical weapons". Nevertheless, in accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure, any member wishing to do so may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference. I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of the Netherlands, Viet Nam and the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. van SCHAIK (Netherlands): It was your Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. President, who said at the Paris Conference that "as long as chemical weapons are allowed to exist, mankind can never be freed from the danger of the use of these weapons". That is one of the reasons why chemical weapons should continue to have high priority on our agenda. That is also the reason why a ban on the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons, which also provides for their total destruction, should continue to have priority on the world's disarmament agenda. The urgency of reaching agreement on such a convention found expression in the Paris Declaration, where we participating countries in this Conference were called upon to redouble our efforts, as a matter of urgency. We should therefore direct our efforts at resolving expeditiously the remaining issues and concluding the convention at the earliest date. The language the Ministers chose could not have been clearer. This signal coming from Paris should be translated into practical action here in Geneva.

Let me first say a few words on the underlying reasons why agreement on an effectively verifiable convention banning chemical weapons is so urgent. First, of course, because there are horrendous weapons of mass destruction with a capacity to kill and wound people indiscriminately on a massive scale. But second, also, because chemical weapons have actually been used recently. They are no longer weapons of the past. The taboo that long seemed to exist on the use of chemical weapons has been lifted. That is why the reconfirmation of the condemnation of the use of chemical weapons at the Paris Conference was so important. A third reason for accelerating our pace is that agreement on a convention seems to be within reach. Also for that reason we consider any linkage with progress in other arms control and disarmament areas not a fruitful approach. The bird, almost in our hand, would escape us.

There are other reasons why the chemical weapons negotiations are urgent. And I return now to what the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan said when he added to the words I have just quoted that, apart from the risk of use arising from the existence of chemical weapons, there was another risk: the threat of the use of chemical weapons may in its turn prevent countries from actually getting rid of their chemical weapons. It is this vicious circle that we must break through, and that is a fourth reason why we have to cut some Gordian knots, why we must urgently work towards a situation in which all chemical weapons - and therewith the risk of their use - are eliminated. In a world in which countries continue to produce chemical weapons and more and more countries possess those weapons, it will become increasingly difficult to achieve our common objective of banning those

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weapons. The risk of proliferation cannot effectively be averted by imposing a freeze upon the further spread of chemical weapons, or by any other half-way interim measures. Only a total ban responds to our common objective. Only a total ban can effectively be verified.

There is a fifth reason: countries have been devoting their attention to the elimination of chemical weapons now for more than 18 years. I am not sure whether the world community could be proud of itself in 1991 when celebrating the twentieth anniversary of these negotiations without a final agreement. There is a limit to the duration of such negotiations, beyond which the air becomes stale. We believe that, with the advent of ever-newer technologies, time may, at some moment in the future, become our enemy. Aristide Briand once referred to time as "my most useful colleague". That is not the case here at the Conference. Ambassador Pierre Morel, as the new Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee, has rightly placed our work under a certain time constraint, drafting a work programme that exerts the required degree of pressure on our delegations, as well as on those at home that have to furnish us with instructions. We thank him for that and for the impulse he has given to the work. We also thank last year's Chairman, Ambassador Sujka, and the Polish delegation for their efforts and devotion and the useful work they undertook.

In our view, the most formidable problem to be solved is that of verification. Not because of the technicalities of the problem of finding an adequate verification régime. Although the technical problems are complex, they cover more fundamental questions. They conceal the underlying issue of how to strike a balance between confidence and suspicion. If there is no effectively verifiable convention, suspicions about non-compliance cannot be removed. On the other hand, confidence is required, confidence that the risk of detection is sufficiently serious for countries to deter them from illicit action. The risk of undetected deliberate non-compliance can never be entirely eliminated. But we must at some moment reach the point at which we can say that that risk is considered smaller than the risk of getting entangled in an ever-expanding cobweb of proliferation and building up of new chemical weapons.

Challenge inspection remains fundamental for the verification régime to be established. An international inspection team should at any moment, at very short notice, be permitted to inspect a site or plant, if a country has doubts about compliance with the core rules of the convention. We are pleased that this concept has broadly been accepted. An essential feature of the challenge inspection régime remains that the country to which the request is addressed has no right to refuse and, in fact, should fully co-operate, guided by the desire to remove the doubts that are at the origin of the request.

However important challenge inspections under the convention may be, the basic pattern should, of course, remain the routine inspections, inspections that are part of the normal system, not triggered by a country that is suspicious about non-compliance. Routine inspections will take place to monitor chemical weapons stocks, production facilities and destruction plants, as well as to search for hidden operations within parts of the chemical industry. It is important that this "normal" part of the verification régime

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should not only be effective, by deterring non-compliance, but also realistic, by being geared to specific situations, as these may arise, and by being pursued with a sense of practicality. It is for that reason that we welcome trial inspections being carried out by various countries, in particular to test schedule [2] procedures. The results of the trial inspections will help in paving the way for a number of international trial inspections, which in turn should give us here in the Conference the information required for the finalization of the detailed provisions concerned.

I might recall that the first trial inspection was held in the Netherlands in 1986 at a time when, of course, work on the verification provisions was less advanced. In a few months, a new trial inspection will be held in my country in a sophisticated schedule [2] multi-purpose plant. Moreover, preparations to test certain challenge inspection procedures in military establishments are at an advanced stage. Trial inspections are also helpful in alerting ministries and governmental agencies concerned to the role they will have to play with respect to the actual implementation of the verification provisions. The experience thus gained will be a starting-point for the preparation of national legislation and other provisions required for the implementation of the convention, including the appointment of the national authority, which is needed as a liaison with the Technical Secretariat.

Various speakers have addressed the question of whether we may need another type of inspection, in addition to the routine inspections and challenge inspections, and if so, in what form. In my statement on 13 September last year, I briefly touched upon the concept of ad hoc checks, a system to deter illegal production in chemical facilities that may be capable of producing chemicals relevant to the convention, but that are not covered by the routine inspections under schedules [1] and [2]. Minister Genscher made clear in his statement of 2 March that these ad hoc checks could be triggered without the prior request of another country. It is clear that other variants of inspections could be envisaged, inspections that are not triggered by suspicion, yet are necessary in order to enable inspection teams to visit locations outside the areas of schedules [1] and [2]. Perhaps it is premature to discuss the modalities of additional types of inspection, as long as we have not a sufficiently clear picture of the nature of the lacuna to be filled. At any rate, my delegation has an open mind on ways to cope with possible devices to make the inspection régime more comprehensive, more suitable to deter any form of circumvention of the core obligations under the convention. However, we wish to make a few general observations on any possible complementary types of inspection, whether they are called ad hoc checks, ad hoc inspections, or otherwise.

The first is that we should review any additional types of inspection as to their deterrence value. What is the risk assessment of situations that would be covered by these inspections? What is the risk assessment of situations outside declared or registered activities? What is the chance of detection? Of course, the higher the risk and the greater the deterrence value, the more reason there would be to consider additional measures. Second, we think additional types of inspection should also be considered in

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terms of their cost-effectiveness. The higher the cost and the greater the risk that illegal activities will not be detected, the more cautious we must be in treading new paths. Third, any inspection outside the realm of routine inspections cannot rely on procedures laid down in the "facility attachments", or on permanent verification equipment installed on the spot. The effectiveness of challenge inspections and any other additional inspections outside routine inspections will greatly rely on the intrusiveness and analytical capabilities of portable equipment carried by the inspectors. In my country an initial modest research programme on mobile verification equipment has started. We understand that in other countries research and development is also under way. It is important that such efforts focus on the development of portable equipment that can easily be carried by inspectors. The exchange of information on different programmes in this area could lead to the development and production of a full range of tools necessary for effective inspections.

Besides verification, there are other complex problems to be addressed. They may be delicate, sometimes thorny, but perhaps they can more easily be solved once an effective verification régime has been agreed upon. I am thinking of such problems as: the tasks of the Executive Council vis-à-vis those of the Conference of States Parties, and the composition of the Council; ratification requirements; questions of assistance and sanctions in the event of non-compliance; the relationship with the Geneva Protocol of 1925; and the issue of technical co-operation, which is particularly important for developing countries.

Let me at this moment limit myself to the time perspective within which the ban could be realized. Minister Genscher said earlier this month that, given the good will of all concerned, it ought to be possible to reach agreement by the end of the year. Others think that we will need the whole of next year and perhaps even much more. But let us assume for a moment that the convention will be signed by the end of 1990. For some it undoubtedly sounds like an optimistic scenario. But then an interim phase starts, which lasts till the convention enters into force. We think that, given the great complexities of the convention and the need for elaborate national legislation to permit implementation, it would be realistic to assume that a couple of years will elapse before the required number of ratifications has been reached. In that case the destruction of stocks would start well into the 1990s, and the last stocks would be destroyed at the end of a 10-year period - maybe far beyond the year 2000. I for my part do not consider this an entirely satisfactory perspective. What can we do to shorten this period, without, of course, deviating from the course of diligence and caution that has characterized the negotiations up to now?

First, we must consider leaving purely technical matters as much as possible to the Preparatory Commission to be established after the signing of the convention. This is normal practice during the inception phase of an international convention. Time can be saved, and it has the additional advantage that arrangements can be made without the time-consuming legal niceties inherent in treaty language. We feel that sometimes costly time is spent in working groups on issues that are in themselves important and

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interesting, but do not need to be settled now in legal texts. Moreover, certain matters should, in our view, be left to the Technical Secretariat, under the guidance of the Executive Council, in order to ensure effective handling of purely technical and administrative matters.

Second, we would be in favour of a more rational, effective rhythm for the conduct of the negotiations. As Minister Andreotti said, we should also think in terms of restructuring some negotiating methods. The tempo of our negotiations seems mainly to be determined by the time required for the drafting of position papers and the response to such initiatives. My delegation still believes that time would be saved if more time were available for preparing positions, at home and within our delegations, but also in consultations within groups and in informal contacts between members of different groups. In my statement a year ago I made a few organizational suggestions for the Conference on Disarmament, including a change in the time schedule of the Conference, by spreading the sessions over the whole year, allowing delegations to use the intervals for reflection and preparation of positions. Limiting myself now to chemical weapons only, I wish to repeat what I have already said for the Conference as a whole: a system of, let us say, four to six weeks of negotiations alternating with three-to-five-week intervals for preparation of positions and informal contacts would in our view be far more effective and would in itself lead to intensified efforts during the sessions.

A third way in which we could accelerate the process would be to make optimum use of the period between the signing and the entry into force of the convention. Therefore discussions in the Ad hoc Committee on the tasks of the Preparatory Commission are useful, in particular in order to assess the financial needs for the work of the Technical Secretariat, as well as possible ways to cover those needs. We also hope that the period between signature and entry into force might be shortened if countries could prepare in time for the legislative process. As I said, trial inspections may have a catalytic function in this respect.

Finally, I wonder whether there would not be scope for shortening the destruction period. Many years ago the transition period was set at 10 years. At the time, the two major Powers considered that such a period was technically needed to destroy all obsolete and modern chemical weapon stockpiles, assuming also that actual destruction would only start some time after the entry into force of the convention. In practice, the situation seems to have changed. Both Powers have started, or will soon start, with the destruction of their stockpiles on a voluntary basis. We assume that at the time of entry into force of the convention the bulk of the obsolete stocks may have been destroyed. Once we have a better insight into the size of the stocks of the two big stock-holding countries and their destruction capacity, we may also be able to assess the existing technical capacity for any possible accelerated destruction programme. In fact, would it not be worth considering creating the technical facilities that would enable parties to shorten the destruction period?

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I would remind delegates that it was in 1899 that the issue of chemical weapons was addressed for the first time. In that year, 90 years ago now, the Hague Declaration on the prohibition of the use of asphyxiating gases was adopted. We hope that, 100 years later, after a century of suffering and perseverance, a world without chemical weapons will no longer be an illusion.

Another important subject on the agenda is item 1, on a comprehensive nuclear test ban. We think that the debate on the test ban and the work on testing issues here in the CD should be seen against the background of what is being done elsewhere, and in the perspective of what on the international agenda will be done on the subject. First, I should mention the bilateral negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States, which are now starting their second year. We hope that soon the stage-by-stage negotiations, which began in December 1987, will produce their first concrete outcome. Once the conditions for ratification of the threshold test-ban Treaty and the peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty with their new protocols are fulfilled, the next stage of the negotiations will - as we have been given to understand - focus on negotiations on further intermediate limitations in yield and/or numbers on nuclear testing. We look forward to the results of those negotiations.

Progress is also important in the light of the non-proliferation Treaty review conference, to be held in 1990. Let me add that we do not yet see how the proposed conference to amend the partial test-ban Treaty could lead to concrete results. In our view it is painstaking work on concrete issues, of which verification is the most important one, that is required. That work is being undertaken in the bilateral negotiations, and it should be complemented in the CD. In addition to the valuable work of the Group of Seismic Experts, such concrete, pragmatic work should also be undertaken again in the ad hoc committee, which now has not met for more than five years.

For my delegation it continues to be puzzling why the Conference cannot do concrete work on testing issues, whilst the major nuclear Powers have shown that on their part they are prepared to do the work and, in their bilateral context, have given us an example of how to deal with problems that up to now have prevented us from agreeing on a mandate for the ad hoc committee. I have carefully listened to the statements of those who have not yet accepted the proposal of former Ambassador Vejvoda of Czechoslovakia as a basis for discussion of the mandate. I have full understanding for the points they make. But the net result is that we cannot do the type of work that actually is going on in the bilateral talks between the United States and the Soviet Union. In the words of Stanley Baldwin: "I often think that we rather resemble Alice in Wonderland, who tried to play croquet with a flamingo instead of a mallet". In fact, we need a mallet to do concrete work. And concrete work is needed, even if we disagree on the time span within which a comprehensive test ban should come within reach. We therefore wholeheartedly endorse the efforts you, Mr. President, are actually undertaking in your individual contacts, trying to bridge the narrowing gap, trying to find that mallet.

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Let me also add that agreement on the modalities of doing concrete work in an ad hoc committee should in our view not serve as a device to dodge actual differences that continue to exist on the urgency of reaching the goal of a CTB as such. Those differences of view continue to exist and they ought to be discussed here at the Conference, in parallel with the concrete work of the ad hoc committee. My delegation is, in fact, anxious to discuss those differences. We see the realization of the ultimate goal of a CTB in close relation with the bilateral negotiations under way on the actual reduction and elimination of categories of nuclear weapons. We believe that efforts to secure reductions in testing and the ultimate achievement of a CTB should be placed in the context of the overall efforts to reduce nuclear arsenals. As long as nuclear arsenals are needed as part of the overall strategy of deterrence and dissuasion of the Western Alliance, the nuclear testing issue is in our opinion best served by a stage-by-stage approach, as part of an effective disarmament process. As regards the efforts in the Conference on Disarmament to make progress on practical nuclear issues, we believe that the work in the CD would greatly benefit from the results of the joint American-Soviet verification experiments, once these results could be injected into the work of the CD.

Finally, a word on outer space. In that field the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union have, of course, major consequences for our work in the CD. We hope that the negotiations on the period of non-withdrawal from the anti-ballistic missile Treaty will soon resume and bear fruit, thus adding to stability. In the multilateral context further work needs to be done. The mandate of the Ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space offers us a broad orientation for our activities. The mandate directs us, amongst other issues, to "take into account all existing agreements", and I think we should make proper use of that language.

I believe we should keep in mind two realities. One is that there is at present no consensus on the need to design and draft new legislation in order to prevent an arms race in outer space. But second, on the basis of existing legislation there seems to be scope for at least the introduction of confidence-building and security-building measures in relation to outer space. My delegation therefore supports the Australian/Canadian initiative in August 1988 embodied in document CD/OS/WP.25. In this document suggestions are made aiming at increasing the transparency of States' activities in relation to outer space. We also agree with those who argue that both the outer space Treaty of 1967 and the registration Convention of 1975 contain provisions that lend themselves to further elaboration and clarification.

We therefore propose that the Ad hoc Committee should review the text of those conventions, in order to identify areas where implementation could be strengthened and where, if appropriate, countries may agree voluntarily to take further measures on the basis of the provisions of those conventions. Of course, it is the common goal of prevention of an arms race in outer space that should inspire such further steps. In particular, in the field of information to be supplied under the registration Convention, we believe that there is room for improvement. This would also be in accordance with the



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recommendations of the European Space Agency. The information to be provided to the Secretary-General of the United Nations could become more extensive, on the basis of guidelines to be drafted to this effect. Also, we may think about an understanding on the importance of providing information prior to the launching of space objects.

In short, we would be in favour of setting a modest goal for the short term: gathering more timely information on space activities, thus increasing their transparency. Progress in this direction would assist us in creating conditions in which a longer-term goal could be considered: the immunity of certain types of satellites. I believe that progress on the latter will not be possible if we have not achieved first a clearer understanding on the present ongoing activities in outer space.

Time and timing have been an essential element in my statement. Some may think I want to go too fast on one subject, others that I am too slow on another one. So be it. The differences on timing will vanish. This weekend was Easter. Who still remembers that the timing of Easter was hotly debated and finally fixed at the Nicene Council in the year 325 A.D.? How unimportant those differences of the past now seem to be! Let us hope our differences will soon also vanish as the melting snow did on this sunny Easter weekend.

Mr. TRAN HOAN (Viet Nam) (translated from French): Mr. President, since this is the first time I have taken the floor, allow me first of all, on behalf of the delegation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, to extend to you my warmest congratulations on your success in conducting the work of the Conference as President during the month of March. I am firmly convinced that, thanks to your personal prestige and your wealth of diplomatic experience in international affairs, you will greatly contribute to speeding up the pace of negotiations here in Geneva. I would also like to welcome warmly Mr. Akashi, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, whose presence testifies to the importance of disarmament issues and the role to be played by the United Nations in this field. I would also like to extend my warmest greetings to all the distinguished delegates present here.

Among the very important matters on the agenda of this Conference, even if nuclear disarmament always has the highest priority, the elimination of chemical weapons would also deserve special attention from the international community. In my view there is not the slightest doubt that chemical weapons, whose appearance on our planet dates back earlier, constitute one of those means of mass extermination which has caused so many disasters for all of mankind. During the First World War, where chemical weapons were used for the first time, although they were still primitive in nature, they caused the death of nearly 90,000 people and left their mark on more than a million others. During the Second World War, more than two and a half million prisoners in concentration camps died because of the effects of these same weapons. During the war in Viet Nam, the utilization of the toxic Agent Orange had harmful long-term consequences for the ecology and the environment and for successive generations of Vietnamese. Today, 14 years after the end of the Viet Nam war, one may still see areas of arid land, denuded forests and deformations.

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Currently, the prodigious development of the chemical industry has led to the appearance of new types of highly sophisticated chemical weapons with a destructive power several times greater than the chemical weapons which existed at the beginning of this century. Needless to say, chemical weapons now constitute a grave danger for peace and international security, a great danger indeed for the whole of mankind, both for human life and human health and for the ecology and the environment. And in the face of such a threat, we may rightly rejoice at the success of the international conference on chemical weapons held in Paris in January 1989, where a common feeling emerged which President Mitterrand in his opening statement described in the following terms: "Everywhere there is an expectation, a new demand that the world should be released from the threat of chemical weapons". It was in Paris that the 149 States taking part in the Conference stressed "the necessity of concluding, at an early date, a convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of all chemical weapons, and on their destruction". Moreover, whilst recognizing "the importance and continuing validity of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed on 17 June 1925 in Geneva", the participating States called on the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva "to redouble its efforts, as a matter of urgency, to resolve expeditiously the remaining issues and to conclude the convention at the earliest date". Is the international Conference in Paris not a decisive milestone for the whole of mankind on the road towards the elimination of chemical weapons?

Whilst appreciating the historic importance of the international Conference in Paris on chemical weapons, we cannot in any way underestimate the problems which will be encountered by the negotiations in Geneva on the elimination of these weapons. To arrive at a global convention to ban chemical weapons, the negotiations here in Geneva will have many concrete problems to resolve relating to the intricate system of verification, the guarantee of undiminished security for all participating States, protection of the victims of chemical attack, the system of assistance and co-operation to develop civilian chemical industries in the participating States, the composition of the Executive Council, and so on. Yet it could be stated that once the basic issues have been settled, all the outstanding problems will be certainly resolved by a spirit of consensus, provided that all the parties concerned continue to display the necessary political will. Is there any need to add that France's decision to abandon the maintenance of security stocks, the Soviet Union's unilateral decision to destroy chemical weapons, the positive statements made by the leader of the present American Administration during his election campaign, and finally the active participation of all delegations in the Conference on Disarmament all constitute favourable factors which will help to speed up the negotiating process in this decisive stage as we work towards the final draft of the convention?

We fully agree with the view expressed by several delegations that for the time being the negotiations ought to be focused on the settlement of the principal outstanding problems relating to the order of destruction of chemical weapons and production facilities in order to guarantee undiminished security for all participating States during the 10-year period of transition

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from the entry into force of the convention, and the elaboration of inspection procedures within the context of an effective international system for verification of the non-production of chemical weapons in industry. Obviously, we would like to stress here the need for the convention to include specific provisions guaranteeing protection for victims of attack using chemical weapons, as well as provisions which provide for assistance and co-operation to participating States in the development of their civilian chemical industry. We welcome the national trial inspections of chemical weapon production facilities conducted by a number of countries. The experience gained from these inspections could undoubtedly help to speed up our work to draw up inspection procedures.

On the one hand, Viet Nam has been the victim of the use of chemical weapons on an enormous scale, while on the other it neither produces nor holds any chemical weapon. We oppose the use of any chemical weapon of any description. We call for and are working for a world without chemical weapons. Together with the other countries in South-East Asia we are striving for a chemical-weapon-free and nuclear-weapon-free zone. In this spirit we continue to support the initiative of the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania for the establishment of a chemical-weapon-free zone in central Europe. We also support the Australian initiative for the non-proliferation of chemical weapons in South-East Asia and the Pacific.

Allow me to conclude by expressing the hope that the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva will "redouble its efforts, as a matter of urgency, to resolve expeditiously the remaining issues and to conclude the convention at the earliest date", thus responding to the pressing appeal of the 149 States participating in the international Conference in Paris on the prohibition of chemical weapons, and meeting the interests of peace and international security.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Tran Hoan of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for his statement and for the very kind words he addressed to me. The next speaker is the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Lüdeking.

Mr. LUDEKING (Federal Republic of Germany): At the last plenary meeting the Chairman of the Group of Scientific Experts, Dr. Dahlman, presented the Group's fifth report to the Conference on Disarmament. We take note with satisfaction of the results achieved during the 27th session of the GSE. We are particularly pleased about the progress recorded in the report regarding a common concept of a future global seismic data exchange system. The successful conclusion of this latest round of GSE discussions has taken us a step forward towards the establishment of a world-wide seismic monitoring system that could effectively verify compliance with a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Owing to the spirit of co-operation and compromise displayed by all members of the Group of Scientific Experts, it was possible to adopt a pragmatic approach which provides for experimental exploration of all proposed

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data exchange systems. We are encouraged by the growing support for our "open station" concept, which we believe will provide the most effective and, at the same time, easy-to-handle system for the exchange of seismic data. The preparations for the second comprehensive data exchange experiment was the focal point of the discussions during the latest round of the Group of Scientific Experts. We have already taken part in all start-up tests which took place in 1988. We welcome the agreement reached on the stages of the implementation of the experiment. To meet the suggested timeframes for these stages, extensive and detailed preparations are required. My delegation will not be found wanting in efforts to make the second comprehensive data exchange experiment a success. Comprehensive participation in this experiment is of crucial importance. Only with broad participation by countries in all parts of the world will we be able to test a system which will have to be reliable and truly global. I thus urgently call upon all States to join in the undertaking and actively take part in the experiment.

A comprehensive nuclear test ban is an important arms control objective. I wish to underline my Government's long-held commitment to this goal. At the same time I wish to stress also that a comprehensive nuclear test ban cannot be a substitute for substantial reductions in existing nuclear arsenals. We are thus hoping for early results in the START negotiations between the United States of America and the Soviet Union.

In preparing for a comprehensive nuclear test ban the Conference on Disarmament has an important role to play. We attach great importance to the very concrete and valuable work undertaken by the Group of Scientific Experts. The establishment of a reliable seismological monitoring system is, in our view, an essential precondition for a CTB. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank the members of the Group of Scientific Experts for their dedication and commitment, and I would in particular like to thank Dr. Dahlman, who as Chairman of that Group has significantly contributed to its success.

We would also welcome the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee on item 1 of our agenda. I hope that your consultations, Mr. President, on the question of the mandate will be successful.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Mr. Lüdeking of the Federal Republic of Germany for his statement. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? There seems to be none.

I have no other business for today. I now intend to adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 30 March at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.