

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 26 August 1976, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. M. Domokos

(Hungary)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

<u>Argentina:</u>	Mr. V.E. HERASATEGUI Mr. J.M. OTEGUI
<u>Brazil:</u>	Mr. G.A. MACIEL Mr. I.M.A. MASTROGIOVANNI
<u>Bulgaria:</u>	Mr. B. GRINEBERG Mr. M. SREBREV
<u>Burma:</u>	Mr. U THET TUN
<u>Canada:</u>	Mr. H. JAY Mr. J.T. SIMARD
<u>Czechoslovakia:</u>	Mr. V. SOJAK
<u>Egypt:</u>	Mr. F. EL IBRASHI Mr. A. MANSOUR Miss L. EMARA
<u>Ethiopia:</u>	Mr. G. DEMISSE
<u>German Democratic Republic:</u>	Mr. G. HERDER Mr. M. GRACZYNSKI Mr. H. THIELICKE
<u>Germany, Federal Republic of:</u>	Mr. G.J. SCHLAICH Mr. J. BAUCH
<u>Hungary:</u>	Mr. M. DOMOKOS Mr. I. KORMENDY
<u>India:</u>	Mr. B.C. MISHRA Mr. P.R. SOOD Mr. P.K. GUPTA
<u>Iran:</u>	Mr. H. AMERI Miss C. TAHMASSEB Mr. D. CHILATY

Italy:

Mr. N. DI BERNARDO

Mr. M. MORENO

Mr. G. VALDEVIT

Mr. A. BIZZARINI

Japan:

Mr. M. OGISO

Mr. T. SAWAI

Mr. H. OKA

Mexico:

Mr. A. GARCIA ROBLES

Mr. M. MARIN

Mr. S. CAMPOS-ICARDO

Mr. M.A. CACERES

Mongolia:

Mr. P. KHALIOUNE

Mr. L. BAYARTE

Morocco:

Mr. S.M. RAHHALI

Netherlands:

Mr. A.J. MEERBURG

Nigeria:

Mr. B.A. CLARK

Mr. S.T. ADAMU

Pakistan:

Mr. K. SALEEM

Peru:

Mr. M. CHAUNY

Poland:

Mr. E. WYZNER

Mr. H. PAC

Mr. A. CZERKAWSKI

Mr. B. MROZEK

Romania:

Mr. C. ENE

Mr. V. TUDOR

Mr. G. TINCA

Mr. C. IVASCU

Sweden:

Mr. G. HAMILTON

Mr. U. REINIUS

Mr. L. JOHANSSON

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:

Mr. V.I. LIKHATCHEV  
 Mr. Y.K. NAZARKINE  
 Mr. N.V. PESTEREV

United Kingdom:

Mr. M.E. ALLEN  
 Mr. I.R. KENYON

United States of America:

Mr. J. MARTIN, Jnr.  
 Mr. D.P. BLACK  
 Mr. J.C. BOWDEN  
 Mr. R. EINHORN  
 Mr. N. WALDROP

Yugoslavia:

Mr. M. MIHAJLOVIC

Zaire:

Mr. BINTU 'A-TSHIABOLA  
 Mr. LUKABU-K'HABOUJI

Special Representative of the Secretary-General:

Mr. RISTO HYVÄRINEN

Alternate Representative of the Secretary-General:

Mr. A. CORRADINI

Communiqué of the meeting

The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament today held its 724th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the Chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador Mátyás Domokos, Representative of the Hungarian People's Republic.

The Representative of Mexico (H.E. Alfonso García Robles, Minister for Foreign Affairs) made a statement covering the following points: the lack of real progress in the Committee regarding the two priority items assigned to it; the complete cessation of all nuclear-weapon tests and the elimination of chemical weapons; the grave dangers which a partial prohibition of the military or other hostile use of environmental modification techniques would entail; the need for the Committee to change its traditional procedure and modify its structure; and the main decisions on disarmament adopted by the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Representative of Brazil (H.E. Ambassador George A. Maciel) made a statement on some aspects of the Draft Convention on the Prohibition of Military and Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques and on the need for further measures towards general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

The Representative of Italy (H.E. Ambassador Nicolo Di Bernardo) made a general statement on the work of the CCD during its 1976 session. In particular, he dealt with the question of a ban on chemical weapons and made some preliminary comments on the draft Convention submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on 12 August 1976. He also referred to the recent informal meetings on the question of new weapons of mass destruction, as well as to international co-operative measures to detect and identify seismic events.

The Representative of Nigeria (H.E. Ambassador B. Akporode Clark) reminded the CCD of its outstanding responsibility to formulate conclusions from its mid-term review of the Disarmament Decade for submission to the General Assembly.

The Committee decided that the final meeting of the present session be held not later than Friday, 3 September, at 10.30 a.m.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 31 August 1976, at 10.30 a.m.

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Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): In the statement which I had occasion to make at the meeting inaugurating the work of CCD for the current year, on Tuesday 17 February 1976, I ventured to emphasize the urgent need for the Committee to endeavour to achieve tangible progress in the disarmament negotiations entrusted to it.

In this connexion I also said that the Committee should introduce some innovations in its traditional procedures; I went on to say:

"I believe that the greater degree of effectiveness attained in the later part of last year's session would appear to indicate that it would be desirable for the Committee to establish, this year, from the very outset, a plenary sub-committee. We believe that the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts, which, under the auspices of the CCD, worked out a comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones, functioned practically as a sub-committee of the CCD itself. The results obtained through that procedure would seem to indicate the desirability of making the necessary changes in it and of duly institutionalizing it for the current year's work."

Today I should like to begin my statement at this meeting -- which, if we were to abide by what was agreed last year, should be the final meeting of the 1976 session -- by saying how glad we were that the Committee accepted our suggestion, although it gave the title of "Working Group" to the body for which we had suggested the title of "Sub-Committee" -- a fact which, certainly, in no way modifies the essence of our proposal.

We have seen with particular pleasure that the Working Group has fully justified its title by its tireless activity. It has also been a source of satisfaction to us that this year the Committee itself has held, apart from its customary plenary meetings, about 20 informal meetings, some with the participation of experts.

It has thus been demonstrated beyond all doubt that CCD, with the assistance of its Working Group, is procedurally equipped to do an efficient job in the field of disarmament negotiations; but at the same time, unfortunately, proof has been given once again of the lack of political will on the part of the so-called super-Powers -- sometimes one, sometimes the other, or both together -- to accept commitments which mean genuine disarmament measures, this is clear from the sterility of the Committee's proceedings in 1976 as reflected in the draft report prepared by the Secretariat.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

Indeed, the facts set out in this report must inescapably lead any objective reader to the following two conclusions:

- (1) As to the "draft Convention on the Prohibition of Military of Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques" which, for reasons that are difficult to understand, monopolized most of the Committee's attention, the improvements made in the text have almost all been of a merely cosmetic nature and have left intact the provisions of article I -- those which, for some delegations including that of Mexico, present insuperable difficulties in their present form;
- (2) The Committee has totally ignored the General Assembly's express request that it should give "the highest priority" to the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement banning nuclear weapon tests (resolution 3466 (XXX) of 11 December 1975) and has complied only superficially with the request to treat "as a matter of high priority" the conclusion of an early agreement on the elimination of "all chemical weapons" (resolution 3465 (XXX), also of 11 December 1975).

I shall now put forward a few considerations and comments which will serve to explain and justify the above conclusions.

With regard to the first conclusion I would emphasize that, although we consider that the new text of article V prepared by the Working Group -- particularly the addition which provides for the convening of an advisory committee of experts for the purposes indicated therein -- represents an appreciable step forward, that can in no way allow us to forget the very serious dangers involved in the provisions of article I of the identical drafts submitted by the Soviet Union and the United States of America in August 1975.

In order to assess those dangers correctly, it should be remembered that the text of article I of the Soviet Union's original draft, reproduced in the annex to resolution 3264 (XXIX) of 9 December 1974, read as follows:

"Each of the Parties to this Convention undertakes not to develop meteorological, geophysical or any other scientific or technological means of influencing the environment, including the weather and climate, for military and other purposes incompatible with the maintenance of international

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

security, human well-being and health, and, furthermore, never under any circumstances to resort to such means of influencing the environment and climate or to carry out preparations for their use."

Compared with this text, which is fully comprehensive in its prohibitions and categorical and unequivocal in its ideas, the text of article I which the super-Powers are now proposing to us is, by any reckoning, inadequate and ambiguous; so much is evident from the first paragraph, which reads as follows:

"Each State Party to this Convention undertakes not to engage in military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques having widespread, long-lasting or severe effects as the means of destruction, damage or injury to another State Party."

In order to make clear what we have called the "very serious dangers" of the foregoing provisions, we need only re-word them in a positive form which is equivalent from the legal point of view; the text would then read:

"Each State Party to this Convention shall be entitled to use environmental modification techniques for military or other hostile purposes as the means of destruction, damage or injury to another State Party, provided that such techniques do not have widespread, long-lasting or severe effects."

The risks that would entail, not only from the legal but also from the practical point of view, can be appreciated even more if we take into account the explanations of the scope of the expression "environmental modification techniques" which are given in article II, to the effect that this expression would cover inter alia the deliberate manipulation of natural processes to cause earthquakes, tsunamis, cyclones of various types and tornadic storms, or changes in the state of the ozone layer or ionosphere or in ocean currents.

It really seems to us extremely alarming that there can be any thought of legitimizing, in an international convention such monstrous actions as these, provided that they do not have "widespread, long-lasting or severe effects", especially if it is borne in mind that in the assessment of such effects there will always, inevitably, be a large subjective element.



(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

Furthermore it must be borne in mind that the effects of environmental warfare techniques which would be permitted because they would not be considered sufficiently "widespread" to matter would include, as the co-sponsoring super-Powers have already explained to us, those which might affect an area of less than "several hundred square kilometres", and that effects which would also be tolerated, as not falling within the "long-lasting" category under the Convention, would include those having a duration short of "several months or about a season".

The foregoing looks even graver when we consider that we are legislating on a subject -- environmental modification for military purposes -- which is completely new. Because of that, any multilateral instrument adopted in the matter will constitute a precedent of incalculable consequences for the development of international law in a field of such momentous importance to the future of mankind.

For all the reasons I have just given, my delegation deems it essential, if we are to be able to consider the possibility of recommending to the General Assembly the draft Convention I have been speaking of, that the restrictive clause "having widespread, long-lasting or severe effects" should be deleted. This would make the provisions of article I, paragraph 1 -- although far inferior to those of the original Soviet text which I read out a few moments ago -- acceptable to us, since they would read as follows:

"Each State Party to this Convention undertakes not to engage in military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques as the means of destruction, damage or injury to another State Party."

Incidentally I would add that, although we do not regard this as indispensable, we would have preferred the last line of the paragraph to speak of "another State", as in paragraph 2, instead of "another State Party".

If it should unfortunately prove impossible to secure the consent of one or both of the super-Powers sponsoring the draft Convention to the change I have just proposed, the Mexican delegation will, much to its regret, be unable to support the draft. Furthermore, if the intention should be that the United Nations General Assembly should examine the draft Convention at its next session, my delegation would be compelled fully to reserve its freedom of position and action in the matter.

Turning to the second of the conclusions I mentioned earlier -- namely the absence of any serious negotiation in the Committee during 1976 on the matter which

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the most representative organ of the international community had specifically recommended for "the highest priority" -- I would merely point out that this seems all the stranger in that in six separate resolutions the General Assembly itself, using terms normally reserved for such questions as the policy of apartheid in South Africa, has condemned all nuclear weapon tests and steadily repeated its conviction that, whatever differences may exist on the subject of verification, there is no valid reason to postpone the conclusion of an agreement on the total prohibition of such tests, in accordance with the provisions laid down in the preamble to the Moscow Treaty over 13 years ago.

Despite the almost universally accepted view that a system of verification based on national means of detection would be adequate, our Committee seems determined to go on convening informal meetings with the participation of experts in order to study such questions as "international co-operation to detect and to identify seismic events". This year we have not only held meetings with experts on this subject but have even gone so far as to set up an Ad Hoc Group composed of governmental scientific experts to consider the matter further. The best we can hope for is that CCD will have a report on the work of this Group by February 1978. Measures such as this, it seems to us, merely serve to thicken the smokescreen of technical considerations behind which attempts are made to conceal the lack of political will on the part of some nuclear-weapon States. This is all the more regrettable when an agreement on the complete prohibition of all nuclear weapon tests would, as the United Nations has pointed out on innumerable occasions, be a truly effective first step towards nuclear disarmament.

With regard to the elimination of chemical weapons -- the subject which should have held second place among the Committee's priorities -- the position is less discouraging. However, we very much fear that, unless timely steps are taken to check the tendency to overrate the importance of technical considerations, we shall very soon be confronted with a situation similar to that prevailing in the negotiations on the complete cessation of all nuclear weapon tests. No fewer than 13 of the 30 working papers submitted by members of the Committee, with which it is

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our custom to pad out the report we submit annually to the General Assembly, have dealt with this subject, and most of them have taken up only technical aspects.

To the lack of political will on the part of the super-Powers to find solutions to the problems referred to us with priority has been added once again this year their lack of flexibility in agreeing to changes in the outmoded structure of the Committee. The result of that rigidity was that the discussions on this topic were prolonged unnecessarily at the spring session without achieving any significant results or lasting changes. What little was achieved is reflected in working paper CCD/500, whose preparation is due largely to the delegations members of the so-called Group of 15. We are convinced that, with a minimum of effort, it would be possible to adopt decisions, for instance, to make it permanently the task of the Secretariat, to prepare the draft report to the General Assembly, and to institutionalize the Working Group of CCD.

In the light of the foregoing, and taking into account the provisions of resolution 3470 (XXX) in which the General Assembly invited the Committee "to review the work done in the implementation of the purposes and objectives of the Disarmament Decade and in this light to reappraise its tasks and duties, as necessary, in order to accelerate the pace of its efforts to negotiate truly effective disarmament and arms limitation agreements", we are convinced that, when we begin our meeting in 1977, we should resume consideration of a drastic revision of the Committee's procedure and structure.

On the present occasion, contrary to normal practice, I have arrived in Geneva not from my own country but from Colombo, the hospitable capital of Sri Lanka, where I had the honour, as chairman of the Mexican delegation, of attending the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries.

At that meeting, at which over two-thirds of the Members of the United Nations were represented, decisions were adopted which reflect the growing concern of the peoples of the Third World at the reluctant attitude of the nuclear-weapon States towards anything which might mean adopting genuine measures of disarmament. That concern, sometimes allied with impatience, is reflected clearly in the "Disarmament and Security" section of the Political Declaration adopted by the Conference. It seems to be that the contents of this Declaration could be studied with profit by all members of CCD. For that reason I shall take the liberty of reading it out in full so that it may form part of the verbatim records of the Committee:

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"The Conference expresses its conviction that universal peace and security can only be assured through general and complete disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, under effective international control and that the essential measures for those purposes should include the complete cessation of all nuclear weapon tests until such time as a treaty on the total prohibition of nuclear tests is concluded, the use or threat of the use of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is unequivocally renounced, and stockpiles of all these weapons are eliminated.

"The Conference declares that the armaments race is incompatible with the efforts undertaken to achieve the New International Economic Order, in view of the urgent need that the resources used to accelerate the armaments race should be diverted to social and economic development, particularly of the developing countries.

"The Conference urges all States to intensify negotiations with a view to achieving, as speedily as possible and in the course of the work of the Diplomatic Conference to be held at Geneva next year, the prohibition of certain conventional weapons having indiscriminate or cruel effects and, in particular, the prohibition of the use of napalm and other incendiary weapons.

"The Conference stresses again the urgent need to adopt effective measures to convene a world disarmament conference.

"The Conference, in the meantime, further recommends that members of the non-aligned movement should request that a special session of the General Assembly should be held as soon as possible and not later than 1978, and that its agenda should include the following items:

- (a) Examination of disarmament questions;
- (b) The promotion and preparation of a programme of priorities and recommendations on disarmament;
- (c) The question of convening a world disarmament conference."

[Translation by the United Nations Secretariat]

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

As I listened at the Colombo Summit Conference to the eloquent arguments advanced during the discussions which led to the adoption of the Declaration I have just quoted, I was able to appreciate once again the validity of what Luis Echeverría, the President of Mexico, stated in April 1973, when he said the following words, with which I shall end my present statement:

"Disarmament is, in principle, an agreement between military Powers. However, the moral conscience of mankind, the political determination of the international majority and its effective participation in matters which concern everyone constitute the only conceivable counterweight to the arrogance of power."

Mr. MACIEL (Brazil): May I first of all join in the expressions of welcome that have already been voiced to the very recent members of the CCD, Ambassador Bintu'a-Tshiabola of Zaïre, Ambassador Jay of Canada, Ambassador Jargalsaikhan of Mongolia and last but not least, and a little belatedly, Ambassador Likhatchev, our new dynamic Co-Chairman. May I also express my pleasure in having among us again the distinguished Foreign Minister of Mexico, Mr. Garcia Robles, and in listening to his lucid statement today.

As we near the closing day of this session of the CCD, I would like to make some brief comments on the main difficulties that have arisen during the negotiations on the draft Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques.

From the outset, as it will be certainly recalled, the Brazilian delegation was prepared to support the original draft Convention submitted by the Co-Chairmen. None the less, acting in a spirit of good will and compromise, we made all possible efforts in order to accommodate different views expressed in the Working Group. It was for the sake of flexibility that we accepted preambular paragraph 4 bis, although it takes account of a Declaration that has nothing to do with military or any other hostile uses of environmental modification techniques. Likewise, we agreed upon new language for article V and for article III, despite our belief that questions dealt with in the latter go far beyond the range of the draft Convention. Finally, it was also for the sake of conciliation that we accepted a proposal for withdrawal of the list of examples from article II. My delegation would have much preferred to retain this list because of its importance as a general guideline and illustration of the scope of the Convention.

(Mr. Maciel, Brazil)

This large measure of flexibility reflects our realistic acceptance of the fact that an agreement has to be a necessary compromise.

On the other hand, we cannot but share the views about article I expressed by many a delegation concerning the risks that questions of lesser importance and controversies falling outside the scope of this Convention could give rise to unnecessary friction and complaints. We are certain these risks would be even greater after new language had been agreed for articles III and V. For these reasons, my delegation has been fully supporting the original provisions of article I.

I would also like to reiterate the understanding of my Government that the scope of the first part of paragraph 2 of article III is restricted to the right of every State Party to have free access to technological and scientific information on environmental modification techniques for peaceful purposes.

My country has been among those who deplore that efforts have been made to draft and approve conventions on collateral measures of disarmament, while the central issues of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, including, above all, nuclear disarmament, are left by the wayside. Nevertheless, we will welcome the prohibition of military or other hostile uses of environmental modification techniques, as we have accepted other collateral measures such as the Bacteriological Weapons Convention. Partial measures certainly play a role in broadening the areas of understanding, so long as they are not discriminatory and so long as we do not lose sight of the fact that they are definitely not our main goal.

Once again, I wish to stress that it is a matter of deep concern to the Brazilian Government that multilateral negotiations on general disarmament are at a standstill, while bilateral negotiations, valuable as they may be, remain confined to the realm of arms control and arms limitation. This deplorable circumstance becomes even more so if observed against the background of bare facts in the arms race. Total world military expenditure, as we are all quite aware, has reached the annual sum of about \$US 280 billion. Of this total 72 per cent is attributable to countries belonging to the two most important military pacts and 79 per cent to the six best-armed countries of the world. We cannot fail to recall the widening economic gap between developed

(Mr. Maciel, Brazil)

and developing countries as well as to emphasize the immense potential uses that resources liberated from military purposes would have for the benefit of mankind.

In the light of these simple facts and figures, it is not only unfair but also unwise to try to ascribe responsibility for this highly regrettable situation to a lack of concern on the part of the international community as a whole. We believe, on the contrary, that this responsibility rests primarily upon those who spend the most on armaments and especially on nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, I wish to point out the importance of measuring the mildly gratifying results we have obtained so far against the enormous difficulties that still prevent our most cherished hopes from coming true. Let us work for and accept partial and collateral measures, but let us not forget that it is our duty -- especially the duty of the big Powers -- to eliminate these difficulties and to reach our ultimate, broad objectives.

Mr. DI BERNARDO (Italy) (translated from French): First of all, permit me to express my pleasure at the presence among us today of His Excellency Mr. Alfonso García Robles, the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, whose devotion and effective contribution to the cause of disarmament we have long valued.

My delegation listened with the greatest interest to the statement and suggestions of the very distinguished head of the Mexican delegation, and will not fail to study them thoroughly.

I should also like to bid a most hearty welcome to our new colleagues from Canada, Mongolia and Zaire.

We are particularly happy to welcome among us His Excellency Ambassador Jay, the representative of Canada, whose human and professional qualities are already known to us. It will be a great pleasure for my delegation to continue with him the relations of very friendly collaboration we had with Ambassador Barton, his predecessor.

I also take pleasure in greeting His Excellency Ambassador Jargalsaikhan, the new representative of Mongolia. We wish him every success in his mission and are glad to be able to work with him in our Conference.

(Mr. Di Bernardo, Italy)

Permit me, lastly, to address His Excellency Bintu'a Tshiabola, the distinguished representative of Zaïre, in order to tell him how much we shall appreciate his contribution to our common task and to express our best wishes for his mission.

This year the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament has worked with renewed vigour and tenacity, which my delegation particularly welcomes.

On the eve of the closure of the session, and approaching the time when the United Nations General Assembly will be called upon to judge our work and the results of our efforts, allow me to make a few comments on some of the questions which we have examined.

In accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly -- resolution 3465 (XXX) -- and after a relatively static period, CCD has this year devoted great attention to the problem of chemical weapons, kindling hopes that, this time, real progress towards the conclusion of an agreement can be achieved in the near future.

The informal meetings of CCD which were held from 5 to 8 July last on the initiative of the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany proved particularly useful because they provided an opportunity to take stock of the situation.

We hope that the sincere and constructive efforts made by the members of CCD will be translated into practical measures which will enable us to bring the negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons to a successful conclusion.

The recent disaster at Seveso, where the accidental production of a minimal quantity of dioxin has had effects terrifying in their virulence and extent, proves once again, if proof were needed, the danger which certain highly toxic chemical agents represent for mankind.

The painful lesson of Seveso should, in my delegation's view, be regarded as a cry of warning which carries the moral obligation to tackle in conscientious and constructive fashion the problem of the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons.

As many other delegations have pointed out, the idea of reaching, by a gradual process, an agreement on the total prohibition of chemical weapons is winning increasingly broad acceptance. With the same aim in view, a considerable convergence of opinions has emerged on the problem of those chemical agents which should be prohibited ab initio, and on the criteria for defining such agents.



(Mr. di Bernardo, Italy)

Nevertheless, the debate on the problem of monitoring a possible prohibition agreement did not hold out any appreciable prospects of agreement.

The Italian delegation has repeatedly insisted that the development of effective instruments of control constitutes the touchstone of any disarmament agreement. In the sphere of chemical weapons, the need for effective control measures makes itself particularly keenly felt if we consider the nature of the weapons, the complexity of the activities which should be undertaken to ensure effective compliance with the prohibitions and, lastly, the need to give the various States the broadest possible guarantees of universal observance of the treaty.

The Italian delegation is aware that international control of the prohibition of chemical warfare agents presents great difficulties and requires the solution of complex problems; it nevertheless considers that this is the road to follow, and that all practical possibilities of reaching the goal will have to be fully explored.

The problem is certainly quite complex and difficult. But we think that this difficulty should not discourage our efforts and that, since progress has been made on the problem of definition, every effort should also be made to shed more light on the various aspects of the question of controls with a view to finding solutions which, while meeting the essential requirements of firm and authentic guarantees, can reasonably be accepted by the States concerned.

The Italian delegation is particularly grateful to the delegation of the United Kingdom for having submitted a draft Convention on chemical weapons which attempts to offer a solution to the thorny and complex problems that we have just mentioned.

We listened with the greatest interest to the commentary which Ambassador Allen of the United Kingdom made on this draft Convention at the official meeting of 12 August 1976.

In that statement, our distinguished colleague from the United Kingdom reviewed with his customary clarity and effectiveness the most important stages in the negotiation on chemical weapons, bringing out the progress made so far but not neglecting the shadowy areas which still remain.

(Mr. di Bernardo, Italy)

The Italian delegation intends to study the United Kingdom draft with the greatest care in order to be able to comment more pertinently upon it. For the moment it feels able to put forward the following preliminary considerations.

Without wishing in any way to minimize the contribution of the other delegations which submitted their draft Conventions before that of the United Kingdom, we consider that the British draft represents an appreciable step forward with regard to the method of negotiation. Not only does it offer the formula for a compromise between the various proposals which have been made recently, but it also paves the way for a constructive comparison which may lead to their reconciliation. What we consider to be the most significant feature of the British draft text — and the one which will consequently have to be examined with the greatest care — is the provision for successive stages in a gradual process leading, through appropriate control instruments and procedures, to the verification, the destruction and ultimately the conversion to peaceful uses of stocks of chemical weapons.

We hope that the British draft will give all members of the Committee new ideas and new food for thought. In particular, we express the hope that the United States and the Soviet Union, which bear special responsibilities in the field of disarmament and in the conduct of negotiations in CCD, will be induced by this new draft to intensify their bilateral contacts in order to give tangible form to the joint initiative which everyone is awaiting with justified impatience.

The problem of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction was widely discussed at the spring session and during the informal meetings of CCD held from 9 to 12 August 1976.

An Italian expert participated in the Committee's informal meetings and contributed to the study of the particularly difficult and complex problems which were taken up, and whose scope remains largely unexplored.

The Soviet delegation, which requested that series of informal meetings, indicated in a working paper the criteria which should govern the search for and development of a definition of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction that would enable us to delimit the precise scope and content of a possible future ban.

(Mr. di Bernardo, Italy)

The document submitted by the Soviet Union will be studied with the greatest possible care by my Government in order to analyse its scientific and technological, and also legal, implications.

The Italian delegation, while reiterating its faith in the supreme objectives of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, wishes to emphasize that it is ready to promote the development of any initiative which is potentially capable of leading to positive progress, in a form yet to be defined, in the sphere of disarmament. It nevertheless considers that the efforts made to identify and forestall the potential dangers associated with the development of science and technology must in no case compromise or interfere with opportunities for fundamental research.

In this connexion the Italian delegation takes note of the statements made by Ambassador Likhatchev, our distinguished colleague from the Soviet Union, at the official meeting of 17 August 1976, to the effect that the Soviet draft Convention "would not in any way affect peaceful research and development". In addition, our delegation wishes strongly to reaffirm the need that the discussion on new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction should not lead to restrictive interpretations of treaties already in force; furthermore it should in no case prejudice or delay the conclusion of agreements now being negotiated.

The Italian delegation considers that the legitimate concern to prevent the development of new, more sophisticated devices should not cause us to lose sight of the Committee's priority objectives, including in particular the negotiation of disarmament measures proper. In this context I wish to confirm expressly the priority which we accord to the negotiations aimed at the general and complete prohibition of underground nuclear tests.

During the informal meetings of CCD held from 20 to 22 April 1976, many experts expressed themselves on the credibility of control techniques based on seismological readings. The conflict of opinions on that occasion made it impossible to determine sufficiently clearly how much progress technology had made in this particular sphere. That is why we welcomed the Swedish proposal for the establishment at Geneva, under the auspices of CCD, of a group of scientific experts to consider international co-operative measures to detect and identify seismic events.

(Mr. di Bernardo, Italy)

The Group of Experts has held its first round of consultations for the purpose of drawing up a programme of work and is preparing to get down to the technical discussion at the next session, which is due to be held at Geneva in October.

The Italian delegation associates itself with the opinion expressed by other delegations and hopes that the greatest possible number of States members of CCD will be able to play an active role in the discussions at the next session of the Ad Hoc Group, so that the exchange of information on seismic data which is essential to a study of the installation of a global seismographic network may take place on the basis of the broadest possible geographical representation.

The task which has been entrusted to the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts is particularly important, since no acceptable solution has yet been found to the problems of monitoring a possible agreement on the prohibition of underground nuclear tests.

The credibility of a control system based on teleseismic data has long been the subject of much discussion.

The great number of working papers which have successively appeared show that such a system would leave margins of doubt; moreover the extent of those margins is in dispute.

We consider that, if the study undertaken by the experts was sufficiently thorough and free from political prejudice, it could dispose of a great many problems which to this day have a negative influence on the outcome of the negotiations.

In particular our delegation is of the opinion that, once the technical limitations of seismographic readings were determined, it would be easier to consider the possibility of applying additional control measures of a more intrusive nature, on the lines of those provided for in the Soviet-American Treaty on Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes.

We shall therefore follow with the greatest interest the work which the Group will be doing in the future, in close collaboration with CCD, to solve the problems which have so far prevented the Committee from reaching a general and complete agreement on the prohibition of underground nuclear tests.

Mr. CLARK (Nigeria): I wish to take advantage of this short intervention to acknowledge the presence in our midst of His Excellency Dr. Alfonso García Robles, the distinguished Foreign Minister of Mexico. His interest in and dedication to the mandate of this Conference, in its true and original sense, has always been a source of personal inspiration to me and, I am sure, to many others who share his conviction that the primary objective of the Disarmament Decade of the 1970s is to halt the arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race, and to adopt without further delay concrete measures of general and complete disarmament under international supervision. I had the privilege of meeting him at the Colombo Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries and I look forward with pleasurable anticipation to visiting his country next month to attend the Conference on Co-operation among Developing Countries, which his Government has graciously agreed to sponsor. We are richer today that he has again lent his weight and wisdom to our plea for a good ENMOD convention and has reminded us of the importance of the Colombo Summit.

Permit me also to welcome our brother, the distinguished Ambassador of Zaïre, and our friends, the distinguished Ambassadors of Canada and Mongolia. We look forward to fruitful co-operation with them.

I also wish to pay special tribute to the Secretariat, so competently staffed by Ambassador Hyvärinen and his able colleagues, for the draft report on our work at both the spring and the summer session, which they have been kind enough to prepare and submit to us on time, dated 24 August 1976. It is a magnificent and comprehensive work, full of relevant details and objectivity. But it will be remembered more for its historical context and significance. For the first time in 15 years, preparation of the annual report of our Conference has been entrusted to the Secretariat and everyone seems happy with the outcome.

My intervention of today relates to only one subject: the Mid-Term Review of the Disarmament Decade. The section of our draft report on it appears hanging. The draft report faithfully recounts what delegations took part in the review exercise and proceeds to give summaries of what each delegation said. All this is well and good. But the substance of our assignment under United Nations resolution 3470 (XXX) relating to the mid-term review of the Disarmament Decade has not yet been touched and recorded in our draft report.

In brief, United Nations resolution 3470 (XXX) invited our Conference to review the progress it had made in implementing the purposes and objectives of the Disarmament Decade and in that light, to reappraise its tasks and duties, as necessary, in order to

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accelerate the pace of its efforts to negotiate truly effective disarmament and arms limitation agreements. In fulfilment of the mandate, I think the Conference did a pretty fair and reasonable job of work in reviewing and reappraising the situation, including the successes and failures so far attained in the negotiations in the Conference and in other forums. I also think that our draft report reflects this situation succinctly.

But I presume that the General Assembly would still like to know how we intend to proceed with our work in the sessions ahead, particularly after our review exercise, in order to obtain better results. Unfortunately, one can only see through one's own eyes. In face of this human weakness, I submitted a working paper which has been referred to in our draft report as CCD/510. I am overjoyed to note that my friends and colleagues of Romania and Yugoslavia have already supported the proposals in our working paper. I don't know whether others share our views as well. I have just returned from Colombo and I have not had time to sound opinions. However, I dare to believe that many of us present at this Conference would like to submit some form of conclusions to the General Assembly. Such conclusions could be substantive and procedural. Alternatively, they could be either substantive or procedural with an eye to the future, having regard to the fact that time is against us. There is still so much to do to tie up the bits and pieces of the draft report, including the section on the ENMOD.

Naturally, my plea would be that we should adopt the working paper tabled by my delegation as the basis for our conclusions to be submitted to the General Assembly. It is short and the ideas therein are consensus-oriented. That being the case, it would save us time and enable us to proceed with other matters still outstanding, like the ENMOD. I am also prepared, though reluctantly, to consider other alternatives, provided they enable us to report purposefully to the General Assembly and to envisage the adoption of a comprehensive programme of work next spring session so that we can give priority consideration to CTB and CWB above everything else.

The desirability of adopting some form of conclusions along the lines I have proposed is clear and incontrovertible. Besides, it will enable us to discharge another obligation which we assumed during the last session of the Conference. That obligation was to consider the reorganization and procedures of our work so as to provide the basis for new and more concrete progress in conformity with United Nations General Assembly

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resolutions and commensurate with the functions and responsibilities of the Conference. The section of the draft report on the organization of the work of the Committee correctly reflects the degree of seriousness we gave to the exercise and the general outlines of the agreements reached. I believe some expression of how we plan to determine priorities for our work and abide by agreed rules of procedure is a self-evident necessity.

The CHAIRMAN: I have been asked to read the following statement on behalf of the Co-Chairmen:

"On 10 April 1975, at its 665th plenary meeting, the Committee decided that its annual report should be transmitted to the United Nations General Assembly on the last Thursday in August unless decided otherwise. In the last few days, several delegations have proposed informally that the present session should be extended by approximately one week in order to permit the Working Group on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques to conclude its work and to permit the Committee adequate time to consider and adopt its annual report to the United Nations General Assembly. Therefore, after consultations with other members of the Committee, the Co-Chairmen wish to suggest, for the consideration of the Committee, that the final meeting of the present session should be held Friday, 3 September, at 10.30 a.m."

The Committee decided to adopt the proposal of the Co-Chairmen with the addition of the word "some" (proposed by Nigeria) before the words "other members of the Committee" and the words "not later than" (proposed by India) before the words "Friday, 3 September".

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.