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Chairman: Mr. FAHMY (Egypt) (Vice-Chairman)

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In the absence of the the Chairman, Mr. Fahmy (Egypt), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

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

AGENDA ITEMS 49 TO 69 AND 151 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. AGUILAR (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): As has been said by many delegations, the work of the First Committee is being conducted this year in a favourable climate, thanks to the changes that are taking place in various areas of international political life. The progress that has been made in the settlement of a number of regional conflicts and the prospect that other trouble spots too will benefit from the prevailing climate of détente are significant factors working for international peace and security. The winds of change and renewal that are blowing in many parts of the world, the surprising and rapid evolution towards recognition of political freedoms, the search for new foundations for social institutions and the introduction, in many countries, of political reforms through democratic practices are leaving their own imprint on this historic period.

While mindful that there are still situations marked by fratricidal violence, tension, fanaticism, aggression and intolerance, with the corresponding risk to international peace and security, we have to recognize that the general world political climate has improved considerably. The positive trend that is evident in international relations should be consolidated, making it possible for us to turn to a new page in modern history, to leave the cold war behind and commence a chapter of peace, co-operation, harmony and disarmament.

(Mr. Aguilar, Venezuela)

The strengthening of international security through disarmament remains a fundamental aspiration of mankind. In this area too, there have been important results and encouraging progress. Frequent meetings at the highest level between the leaders of the two main military Powers and the agreements achieved between them have had beneficial effects that encourage the view that the world has begun to take its first steps on the road leading to the end of the arms race.

While acknowledging those positive indications, we would be naive to think that all the obstacles on the road to disarmament have disappeared. Among those obstacles, the most disturbing remains the persistence of doctrines of deterrence underlying the nuclear policies of some major Powers. So long as those doctrines continue to be used to justify the existence of nuclear arsenals, the world will live under the threat of nuclear holocaust. It is time the nuclear Powers recognized the intrinsic contradictions in the notion of deterrence and saw that it is absurd to keep trying to base their security on self-immolation and the threat of world annihilation.

It is obvious that the lack of movement in the main multilateral disarmament organs, particularly the Conference on Disarmament, is due by and large to the persistence of doctrines of deterrence. To date there has been no progress at all on nuclear disarmament issues. It has not been possible even to make substantive efforts to ban nuclear tests because one of the super-Powers continues to base its security on the possession of nuclear weapons and on its ability to deter a possible nuclear opponent.

Because of the need to take measures to end the nuclear threat, the total prohibition of nuclear tests is a priority matter. That is why my country, along with a representative group of other countries, took the initiative now supported by 41 States to encourage the transformation of the partial test-ban Treaty into a

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total test-ban treaty. We trust that a conference to amend the Treaty can be held shortly, if possible early in 1990, as recommended by the ninth summit Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We trust too that the conference will not be hampered by secondary considerations. In our view, the costs of the conference should be allocated among the States parties to the Treaty on a basis similar to that used to assess Members' contributions to the United Nations.

Venezuela, as a State party to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, rejects and condemns the possession and use in any circumstances of chemical weapons. Therefore, as a member of the Conference on Disarmament, my country is participating actively in the work to formulate a general and comprehensive convention for the prohibition of chemical weapons and the destruction of arsenals of such weapons. We are pleased to note the significant events of the past year in the field of chemical weapons. Intensified efforts in the Conference on Disarmament, under the skilful and expert leadership of Ambassador Pierre Morel, have made it possible to make progress in the solution of some outstanding problems. The Paris and Canberra conferences made a decisive contribution to raising public awareness and providing incentives for the sectors most directly involved in implementing a convention: Governments and industry. Along with the recent results of the meeting between the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Baker and the Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Shevardnadze, all this makes us somewhat optimistic about future developments in the Geneva negotiations.

Venezuela wishes to make a substantive, if modest, contribution to efforts to prepare the way for the speedy entry into force of a future convention, and we have taken the initiative of organizing for next year a regional seminar with the participation of Latin American and Caribbean countries. The seminar will aim to

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familiarize States not members of the Conference on Disarmament with the scope, purposes and objectives of the convention and the verification machinery to be established.

As the Geneva negotiations proceed, it becomes increasingly necessary to consider carefully the financial implications of a future convention on chemical weapons. Venezuela has repeatedly expressed its concern at the scale and complexity of the proposed Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons provided for in the convention, particularly because of the financial burden its operation will impose on States parties to the convention. We have stressed, and we reiterate, the need for clear definition of the principles on which the allocation of the costs of that organization's operations will be based. In our view, the basis for the distribution of costs should be equity. In this case, equity means that the main financial burden should be borne by those who possess chemical weapons arsenals and by those, with a more developed chemicals industry, are closest to becoming producers of chemical weapons. Other countries, like my own, which have no chemical weapons and have no intention of acquiring any, should make only a symbolic contribution reflecting their solidarity with the international community's determination to abolish chemical weapons and their support for the objectives of the convention.

At the same time, to minimize the costs of the functioning of the convention, it will be necessary to keep the structure and composition of the administrative organs of the organization within the limits strictly necessary to ensure effective functioning and the fulfilment of its mandate. It would certainly be paradoxical if the first disarmament measure to emerge from the Conference on Disarmament, rather than freeing financial resources for use in encouraging the development of

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developing countries, imposed a heavy financial burden on countries that have neither chemical weapons nor the capacity to produce them - much less the intention of acquiring them.

With respect to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, Venezuela reaffirms its well-known position. We believe that the exploration and use of outer space should be solely for peaceful purposes and should benefit the entire international community. The prospect of the arms race spreading to outer space causes us deep and justified concern, and makes us stress the need to decide on concrete action to keep outer space free from strategic rivalry between major Powers.

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That is another aspect of disarmament in which primary responsibility lies with the countries possessing advanced technology. It is equally true, however, that it affects all countries, great and small. The existence of weapons in outer space and the use of those weapons would entail great risks throughout the world. It is therefore impossible to be indifferent to the possibility that outer space might become yet another arena for political and military rivalry with the risk of military confrontation.

As we have repeatedly emphasized, the legal régime governing outer space is insufficient and inadequate. Major scientific and technological advances taking place in space sciences are bringing man closer and closer to the time when he will be able to deploy weapons of war in outer space. We would therefore re-emphasize the proposal made by my country in the Conference on Disarmament for the conversion of the partial ban on space weapons enshrined in the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space into a total ban covering all forms of weapons or weapons systems that could be employed in, or from, or launched into, outer space.

Venezuela is concerned that this year, notwithstanding the considerable efforts made by Mr. Bayart of Mongolia as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, it has proved impossible for the Conference on Disarmament to make progress in its work. The attitude of a number of countries that are seeking to limit the activity of the Conference to a purely academic exercise has continued to impede the efforts of the great majority of countries that wish to begin consideration of practical measures to prevent an arms race in outer space.

We trust that it will be possible next year to make progress on the substantive consideration of the question of preventing an arms race in outer

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space, and that the Conference will finally be able to concentrate on consideration of practical steps towards that end.

The increasingly intense use of advances in science and technology for the production of weapons is having a doubly negative effect upon disarmament, which must be corrected. On the one hand, the production of more and more sophisticated, accurate and efficient weapons is making the distinction between conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction increasingly tenuous. On the other hand, the sheer cost of the technology employed in new weapons is making the financial element of the arms race ever more burdensome.

It is therefore appropriate and advisable for the international community to attach increasing importance to that question, so as to ensure that progress in science and technology be used as a matter of priority for the welfare of mankind instead of for producing weapons of death and destruction. In a world where natural disasters, attacks on the environment, and the critical economic and social situation are major concerns for mankind, it is not right that the fruits of science and technology should be wasted, as they are in the armaments industry.

In our statement, we have confined ourselves to a number of the main concerns arising from the question of disarmament. That does not mean that we minimize the importance of the other issues on the disarmament agenda.

We do not wish to end our statement in the general debate, however, without re-emphasizing our view that it is necessary to revitalize and strengthen the role of multilateral forums active in the field of disarmament, particularly the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral negotiating forum in that field. That is why, as we have repeatedly said, it is necessary to give practical expression to the relationship of strict interdependence and complementarity

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between the multilateral forums and more restricted mechanisms - be they bilateral or regional - used by the principal military Powers and the two great military alliances.

As has been said repeatedly, disarmament concerns all countries, great and small, powerful and weak, because the arms race represents a threat to all and affects the security of all. Cessation of the arms race will be beneficial to all. That is why it is not advisable to hold multilateral forums hostage to the development of negotiations at other levels, above all when the issues involved are of concern to the international community as a whole.

In an interdependent world such as ours is today, to emphasize the concept of security based exclusively on military considerations is not very realistic. We must not forget that security also affects other, non-military considerations - political, economic, social, humanitarian, ecological and human rights issues, among others. Failure to pay attention to those other elements of security introduces distortions into the consideration of the subject of disarmament.

In the prevailing economic circumstances, the relationship between disarmament and development becomes increasingly clear. In view of the close relationship between those two objectives, the international community must make increasing efforts to progress simultaneously towards both goals, in view of the fact that the process of economic development will benefit from any progress or positive achievements in the field of disarmament. Reduction of military expenditure, releasing important material and human resources for other uses, will contribute to the reactivation of the great developed countries and provide an added impulse for the development process in general and the resumption of growth in developing countries.

Mr. NOETZEL (German Democratic Republic): My delegation would like to make a few comments on agenda item 63 (f), entitled "Objective information on military matters". That subject is also gaining in importance within the framework of the United Nations, not least owing to the activities of the Disarmament Commission. The Commission has done a great deal in regard to the standardized reporting of military expenditures, thus creating the conditions necessary for broader participation in the reporting system. The Commission successfully prepared the guidelines for confidence-building measures adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/78 H. Implementation of the guidelines will be considered, and first experience exchanged, by the First Committee at the next session of the General Assembly. Proceeding from General Assembly resolution 43/75 G, the Disarmament Commission at its 1990 session will discuss ways and means of further consolidating the emerging trend towards greater openness in military matters, specifically with regard to the provision of objective information on military matters.

My delegation believes that objective information and openness in military matters are not, and cannot be, ends in itself; they have rather to strengthen confidence, security and predictability; that objective information and openness in military matters should lead to the limitation of military activities, taking into account specific regional conditions; and that objective information and openness should be based on reciprocity and entail equal rights and duties for the parties involved.

Objective information and greater openness in military matters should become a natural rule in relations between States. They are among the prerequisites for a genuine and verifiable process of arms limitation and disarmament. The process should start with greater transparency and confidence-building measures in individual fields of military activity and eventually lead to a broad policy of trust and predictability covering all those activities.

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Like other Warsaw Treaty States the German Democratic Republic has launched a number of initiatives in this direction, which have been reported in detail to the United Nations. The survey submitted by them on 30 January 1989 entitled "On the relative strength of the armed forces and armaments of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Europe and adjacent water areas" - document A/44/114 of 9 February 1989 - is an example of that. It contains some 500 items of data on 26 categories of armed forces and armaments and provides a realistic picture of total strength, structures, national potentials and capabilities.

The German Democratic Republic fully lives up to its obligations where the implementation of confidence-building or verification measures is concerned. In 1988 it received at manoeuvres 117 observers from 23 States participants in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and, in turn, it sent 30 observers to military exercises. The 1989 annual survey of notifiable military activities was submitted to all CSCE participating States according to schedule. That approach also includes compliance with all obligations arising for my country from the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty. Thus, eight inspections by the United States have taken place in our country, in addition to a visit by a group of members of the United States Senate Armed-Forces Committee to military facilities on the territory of the German Democratic Republic. As my delegation has already stated, the German Democratic Republic will participate in the standardized reporting system of military expenditures and provide the available data as from 1990.

My delegation believes that objective information on military matters, openness and confidence- and security-building measures, as well as related

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measures, complement each other and should promote the process of arms limitation and disarmament. Mutual information and verification are elements of trust and predictability. They promote the fulfilment of obligations undertaken. It is against that background that the German Democratic Republic plays an active part in the Vienna negotiations of the 35 CSCE participating States on confidence- and security-building measures and has submitted regional initiatives for disarmament and confidence-building.

Permit me in this connection to point out that the foreign ministers of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty at their recent session at Warsaw from 26 to 27 October 1989 spoke in favour of adopting, within the framework of those negotiations, a set of new measures that would cover all kinds of military activities, including those of air and naval forces. It would be of essential importance, they stated, to establish in Europe a centre for the reduction of the risk of war and the prevention of surprise attack. In addition, the Final Declaration of the Non-Aligned Summit Meeting at Belgrade states that the participants noted in particular that

"the establishment and strengthening of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace and co-operation in various parts of the world would significantly contribute to the strengthening of international security". (A/44/551, annex, p. 24)

Great expectations are placed on the Vienna negotiations which started in March 1989. Experience gathered so far in the fields of openness and confidence-building should be followed up. Recent proposals by all sides participating tend in that direction.

The first two generations of confidence- and security-building measures include, basically, the following three categories: measures to enhance military

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transparency, such as data exchange, notification and observation of exercises and so on; first measures of constraint - limitation of manoeuvres, movements, dislocations, and so on; and co-operative measures such as the exchange of military delegations, discussions, and so on.

The implementation of the confidence-building measures agreed at Stockholm has already resulted in a higher degree of objective information and openness in military matters. The positions put forward so far by all delegations to the Vienna negotiations show, in my delegation's view, that there are several areas of agreement - on the regular exchange of information on armed forces in Europe, that is, their organization, strength, dislocation and so on; improved methods of and lower levels for notification; a greater number of observations and an improvement in their quality; better communications; the exchange of military delegations; and discussion of military doctrines and/or strategies.

The question arises, however, as to whether or not those steps will be enough for a third generation of confidence- and security-building measures accompanied by more openness and greater limitations of military activities. The German Democratic Republic works for the inclusion of as many qualitatively new elements as possible. The Warsaw Treaty States, among them the German Democratic Republic, submitted at Vienna proposals concerning the limitation of military activities and greater objective information as well as verification.

My delegation also believes that openness and confidence-building can be promoted by manifold regional measures. Such initiatives are now under consideration in and for a number of regions. In that context we wish to point once again to the initiatives launched by Poland and Czechoslovakia that are backed by the German Democratic Republic. The proposals by the German Democratic Republic

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concerning the creation of nuclear- and chemical-weapon-free zones and of a zone of confidence and security in Central Europe are aimed at reducing military activities and at the same time they are of relevance for enhancing openness and confidence on the divide between the two alliances in Europe. They contain measures for the exchange of information, notification, verification and limitation of military activities. A system of intensive supervision of the corridors or zones to be established, with basically reduced forces, would increase the warning time for, and help detect, any violation of the agreed military situation. Thus, we believe that regional confidence- and security-building measures in Europe, particularly in Central Europe, should be seen as a decisive element for strengthening stability and security.

For the reasons I have mentioned my delegation regards the adoption of a draft resolution on objective information and a thorough preparation of the consideration of that item in the Disarmament Commission next year as important tasks, and it will take an active part in their fulfilment.

Mr. AWAD (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): My delegation welcomes the fact that our debate on disarmament issues is taking place against the backdrop of détente and an improved international climate. This marks the transition of our world, after long years of confrontation, tension and cold war, to the stage of détente, dialogue and co-operation. This changed atmosphere of international relations is the result of dialogue between the Soviet Union and the United States. This dialogue has led, so far, to historic initiatives and agreements in the field of nuclear and chemical disarmament, such as the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - and the agreement in principle on a 50 per cent reduction of strategic nuclear forces. Nevertheless, the international community cannot be satisfied with these achievements, important though they may be. It must continue to strive for an end to the nuclear-arms race, the cessation, once and for all, of nuclear tests, by all States and in all environments, and, ultimately, general and complete disarmament.

The aspiration to peace and security is, in essence, the expression of mankind's desire to live a normal life free of all forms of nuclear threat. This desire crystallizes the persistent need to ensure the survival of mankind and create a better future for succeeding generations - an objective can be achieved only through the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. The maintenance of any stockpiles of those weapons, no matter how limited, constitutes a terrifying nightmare for all people.

The continued escalation of the arms race, in particular the nuclear-arms race, and the possibility of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons are a source of concern for the whole world, and, in particular, for non-nuclear-weapon

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States. It is therefore incumbent upon the international community, pending the achievement of general and complete nuclear disarmament on a universal basis, to take effective measures to ensure the security of non-nuclear-weapon States.

The establishment of an international order free of nuclear weapons requires strict adherence to the principle of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The violation of that principle by some nuclear Powers by providing direct or indirect assistance and nuclear technology to Israel and South Africa has enabled those two States to produce nuclear weapons and thus to threaten the security and safety of the States in their respective regions. The United States press has recently reported on the collaboration between South Africa and Israel in the development of medium-range missiles. This proves the validity of the Arab and African States' concern with regard to that collaboration, which constitutes a grave threat to peace and security in Asia and Africa.

Israel's refusal to comply with the will of the international community and place its nuclear facilities under the international safeguards régime has increased tension in the region and hampered the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The Security Council has had to address a specific request only to Israel to place its nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. However, Israel, as usual, has failed to comply with the Security Council resolution. Israel has also ignored the fact that the General Conference of IAEA condemned it for its continued refusal to renounce the acquisition of nuclear weapons and to place all its nuclear facilities under the Agency safeguards. Instead of complying with those resolutions, Israel has attacked and destroyed nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes, as part and parcel of its policy in the area of nuclear armament.

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The establishment and expansion of nuclear-weapon-free zones would contribute greatly to the reduction of the risk of nuclear confrontation and of the stockpiling and transfer of nuclear weapons. It would also help to strengthen the non-proliferation régime throughout the world.

The Syrian Arab Republic fully supports the establishment of such zones. It has called for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Mediterranean region and in the Middle East region and the implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. It has also called for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, and supports efforts to ensure the convening of the international Conference to achieve that objective. My country also supports Democratic Korea in calling for the establishment of a zone of peace free of nuclear weapons in the Korean Peninsula.

The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in accordance with the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, paragraphs 60 to 63 inclusive, in particular sub-paragraph 63 (d), which makes it incumbent upon Israel to comply with the resolutions of the General Assembly, as other States of the region have done, by acceding to the non-proliferation Treaty and placing its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. If Israel continues to disregard those resolutions, appropriate international punitive measures must be taken, such as the imposition of comprehensive mandatory sanctions against Israel.

Despite these facts, the representative of Israel in his statement in this Committee yesterday, ignored the conditions for the establishment of such a zone in the region. He called upon the Arab States to negotiate with Israel for the establishment of such a zone. My delegation wonders why negotiations are necessary for Israel to sign the non-proliferation Treaty and place its nuclear facilities

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under the IAEA safeguards régime as the other States of the region have done. The representative of Israel also called yesterday for the establishment of a chemical-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, ignoring the fact that the Arab States, including my own country, have called for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear and chemical weapons. Why did the representative of Israel exclude nuclear weapons? The answer is very simple: obviously, it is because Israel possesses such weapons and does not want to renounce them. It follows that the proposals made by the representative of Israel are designed only to mislead and procrastinate.

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My delegation believes that the destruction of the Israeli nuclear weapons and the halting of their development and production is a sine qua non for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. On 29 September last, in detail, the Syrian Arab Republic made clear its point of view in its reply to the Secretary-General's letter on this subject.

All States, regardless of their degree of scientific or economic progress, must share in the benefits for mankind that result from the exploration of space for exclusively peaceful purposes. Therefore the prohibition of the militarization of outer space is a question of extreme importance. The international community has more than once expressed its opposition to the extension of the arms race to outer space, and that is why it has rejected the strategic defence initiative.

The Syrian Arab Republic believes that the strategic defence initiative is all the more dangerous since Israel as a strategic ally of the United States of America is associated with it and thus is able to acquire the most up-to-date nuclear weapon technology, which has increased its nuclear military capability and reinforced its expansionist and aggressive policies and practices in the occupied Arab territories. Israel's launching last year of the OFFEQ-I satellite has enhanced its military capability. That is one of the results of its participation in the strategic defence initiative.

The Syrian Arab Republic, aware of the potential dangers inherent in the dumping of nuclear wastes and of the transborder effects of radiation that could adversely affect international and regional security, and in particular the security of the developing countries, calls upon the international community to elaborate comprehensive international instruments to prohibit the transfer of dangerous toxic wastes from industrialized countries to the developing countries and the burial of such wastes there. These wastes must be destroyed in the

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producing countries. My delegation would point out that at the beginning of this month the Syrian Arab Republic signed the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.

My delegation believes that it is important to reaffirm the commitment to protect humanity from chemical and biological warfare and strictly to adhere to the principles and objectives of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. My delegation reaffirms the Syrian Arab Republic's commitment to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

Disarmament issues are now among the most urgent questions of our day. The world has been transformed into an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. Today it is possible to create a better life for mankind thanks to technological development, yet at the same time the means are available to destroy all forms of life on Earth. Certainly, the achievement of substantial progress towards disarmament would create the necessary climate for peoples to engage in efforts for development, progress and welfare.

The Syrian Arab Republic welcomes the results achieved by the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, and calls for implementation of the programme of action it has adopted.

The current state of affairs in the international arena makes it necessary for the principles of disarmament, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter, to be an integral part of any collective effort aimed at creating a secure world. It is my delegation's hope that, in accordance with its Charter, the United Nations will play a primary role in the field of disarmament and the strengthening of international security.

Miss MONCADA BERMUDEZ (Nicaragua) (interpretation from Spanish): The present international situation is characterized by unprecedented developments that are having a considerable impact on international disarmament and development and other global and regional issues on our common agenda. We are seeing the sudden and profound shaking up of the post-war order and the crumbling of the main political theses and security arrangements that ushered it in. The attention of the world community now seems more realistically focused on the most crucial matters affecting it: genuine peace and comprehensive international security. Those who have persisted in putting forward agendas based on self-interest and unilateral advantage have become discordant voices in the present political climate.

Nevertheless Nicaragua welcomes the joint efforts of the United States and the Soviet Union in considering mutual and occasionally competing - definitions of concepts such as openness, transparency and new thinking, which are relevant to all aspects of their relationship but particularly important in negotiating on arms limitation and disarmament. As the North American professor Jerome Bernstein points out in his well-known book Power and Politics, the fact that both countries are providing each other with numbers, telemetry, location, firepower, protective defences, cost factors, photographs and the like on their respective weapons systems and so on would have been considered treason, if not madness, a short time ago, yet all of these activities are routine today.

These important shifts in the negotiation postures of both great Powers have been decisive in generating new diplomatic headway and agreements such as the INF agreements of 1987, the recent progress in Vienna on conventional forces in Europe and the ministerial meeting just concluded in Wyoming between United States Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. Nevertheless, Nicaragua and many other countries are keenly aware that the overall

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relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union is characterized by myriad topics as yet unresolved. Experience has shown that procrastination can sow uncertainty and hesitancy can breed mistrust.

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It is therefore imperative that the negotiations continue with a view to seeking a convergence of views in areas where positions are already not far apart, enhancing confidence-building measures where there may still be lingering or substantial differences, and rejecting the inadmissible concept that given categories of disarmament should remain outside the area of negotiations.

Nicaragua, as a non-aligned country that does not have any nuclear weapons, holds the view expressed at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, that the international community has an inescapable responsibility in dealing with such issues as disarmament and international security. As the non-aligned countries stated at their ninth summit meeting, held in Belgrade last September, the potential stakes are too high to allow disarmament to be left exclusively to the most powerful countries.

We look forward to further progress between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective military alliances in all aspects of disarmament. We believe however that East-West negotiations can be reinforced more effectively through the multilateral forum available in the United Nations. Moreover, such efforts can be further strengthened by the establishment of an integrated multilateral verification system within the United Nations. When they accord to the United Nations and its specialized agencies a pivotal role in the sphere of disarmament, nuclear and non-nuclear States alike forge opportunities for serious interaction and decision-making. Although few real breakthroughs have been evident in multilateral disarmament, negotiations for the elimination of chemical weapons have been an exception. Against the backdrop of three related international conferences held on the subject in Geneva, Paris and Canberra, an overwhelming number of States have expressed a desire to conclude at an early date an agreement

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establishing a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons. Nicaragua's position on this issue is one of support for the speedy conclusion of such a convention.

The idea which emerged in Reykjavik and at the Moscow summit in 1988 of a world free from nuclear weapons gave rise to great international expectations. The sobering passage of time has, however, demonstrated the inherent complexity of the relationship between the great Powers and the difficulties involved in attaining that goal.

There are members of the international community who would have us believe that total nuclear disarmament is not possible or desirable. They would have us concentrate an inordinate amount of attention on the reduction of a given class or generation of weapons, forgetting deeper concerns with regard to the nature of such technology. They would even attempt to convince us of the practicality of lowering the threshold of nuclear deterrence as if that were a rational option.

In Nicaragua's view, the use of nuclear weapons in any circumstances is an inherently unacceptable proposition. Our Government is committed not only to the prohibition of the use of such weapons, but also to their testing.

As advocates of multilateral negotiations for a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty, Nicaragua agrees that the Conference on Disarmament in 1990 should have a mandate to negotiate such a treaty. In this connection, it is of the utmost importance that the depositary States which are signatories to the non-proliferation Treaty should participate fully in the negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty since this will help to assure or reassure all nuclear-weapon States that there is a genuine desire to move towards general and complete nuclear disarmament.

In conclusion, I should like to place on record the conviction of my Government that the negotiation process should also envisage concrete steps to

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prevent the militarization of outer space. The idea that outer space should serve as a new frontier for the deployment of advanced weapons systems is an outrage. Outer space should be the universal domain of all mankind, serving the peaceful pursuit of his creative genius.

Mr. SAENZ DE TEJADA (Guatemala) (interpretation from Spanish): We are encouraged by the spirit now prevailing in this Organization and between all countries, in the desire to seek peace, to halt armed conflicts, to contribute to the balanced development of peoples and to promote participation of every kind in the solution of the problems affecting mankind. As the representative of Guatemala stated last year in the First Committee, Central America has been convulsed by internal conflict.

Guatemala has refrained from taking part in the arms race in the region and takes no part in international military manoeuvres. There are no foreign military installations or foreign military advisers in Guatemala. We do not permit the existence of irregular forces in our territory nor do we support any group interested in destabilizing the Governments of the region.

We therefore reiterate what was said by the President of Guatemala in his address to the General Assembly that the Government of Guatemala has taken an active part in the peace process in Central America:

"... in the promotion of dialogue, the negotiated settlement of conflicts, and co-ordination for the establishment of consensus, as in the peace plan known as Esquipulas II". (A/44/PV.7, p. 6)

Central American presidents held two meetings this year at which they adopted new decisions on verification and also on the demobilization of certain regular forces. The Government of Guatemala has undertaken to co-operate in the joint plan for the demobilization, repatriation or voluntary relocation of members of the

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Nicaraguan resistance and their families to be carried out by the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

There can be no doubt that disarmament is an integral and fundamental part of the process of consolidating peace. In this regard, my delegation wishes to make the following points: first, Guatemala is a party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco on the banning of nuclear arms in Latin America. I should like to appeal for the earliest possible ratification of Protocol I of the Treaty by all signatory countries.

Secondly, my country has a particular interest in the complete banning of nuclear tests. The urgency of a verifiable treaty prohibiting any kind of nuclear test is obvious if we bear in mind the number of explosions that have occurred in the last few years. A treaty of this kind will be an important contribution to the halting of the nuclear arms race.

Guatemala recognizes the importance of bilateral negotiations on the prohibition of nuclear tests and welcomes the progress in the negotiations between the great Powers. Nevertheless, we share the opinion of the majority that multilateral negotiations on the complete prohibition of nuclear testing must be started without further delay.

In this regard we note with interest the position taken by the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Belgrade in September 1989, which included a proposal to convene, as soon as possible, a conference to amend the partial test-ban Treaty of 1963 and convert it into a treaty prohibiting all nuclear tests, including underground tests.

We fully support this.

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Recent progress in verification techniques will help to eliminate obstacles to the complete prohibition of nuclear tests. In my Government's view, this is one of the most important measures towards putting a halt to the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and the development of new types of such weapons.

Third, Guatemala believes that the Non-Proliferation Treaty has served as an important conciliation framework with regard to the need for non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the peaceful use of nuclear energy and the maintenance of world security. We recognize that significant progress has been made since the Treaty came into force. We hope that the 1990 and 1995 review conferences will contribute to the maintenance of peace and security. If the Non-Proliferation Treaty régime is to be maintained and strengthened, nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States must strive to achieve positive results.

Fourth, my Government wishes to point out the importance of ensuring that bilateral and multilateral negotiations are continued, so that a multilateral Convention on the prevention of an arms race in outer space may be concluded as soon as possible. The current legal régime should be consolidated and strengthened by the adoption of appropriate and effective verification measures to secure the maintenance of international peace and security.

Fifth, chemical weapons are a threat to the international community. We believe that every effort must be made to strengthen compliance with the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods in Warfare. An appeal has been made to States that have not so far done so to sign the Protocol, and all States have been asked to comply strictly with its principles and objectives.

As a Convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and utilization of chemical weapons and on their destruction is being worked out,

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we must halt the proliferation of chemical weapons. Every State must act in conformity with paragraph 4 of the final declaration adopted at the Conference on chemical weapons, held in Paris last January. We trust that the Conference on Disarmament will step up its efforts to achieve this goal - encouraged by the bilateral negotiations on the subject between the United States and the Soviet Union and by the significant results achieved at the Canherra conference, in which private chemical industries from many countries participated.

Sixth, Guatemala is happy to see the steady progress that has been achieved in negotiations on conventional forces in Europe, which will undoubtedly promote an atmosphere of peace and security, not only in Europe but throughout the world.

Seventh, my country stresses the urgency of formulating and defining principles to govern steps taken by States in future to reduce and freeze military budgets. This would help to create confidence between States and to bring about international agreements on a reduction in military budgets. If there were a reduction in military expenditure the resources thus released could be devoted to the social and economic development of peoples.

Eighth, my Government believes that there should be more widespread acceptance of the need to prohibit the use of certain conventional weapons that might be deemed excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects. Furthermore, we support the adoption of effective measures to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons.

Ninth, Guatemala shares the view that the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof has made a positive contribution to disarmament, and we are pleased at the results of the recent review conference on this international instrument.

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Tenth, we believe it to be a matter of urgent necessity that, pending complete disarmament, early agreement be reached on effective international arrangements guaranteeing the security of all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use, or the threat of the use, of nuclear weapons.

Guatemala firmly believes that the role of the United Nations in the field of international security is fundamental, and that everything possible must be done to strengthen it. My country is confident that in future deliberations the Conference on Disarmament, as an international multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, and the Disarmament Commission will achieve the desired success.

The complicated problem of disarmament calls for bilateral, regional and multilateral efforts. Progress in bilateral and regional disarmament does not necessarily lead to similar progress in multilateral disarmament. Therefore this Committee must try to see to it that multilateral negotiations are positive. To that end, we must have the concurrence of all nations in tackling problems of disarmament and arms limitation, which jeopardize international peace and security.

We hope that the present international climate of détente and understanding will continue to improve at the pace that we have seen recently. We are sure that this favourable political climate will help us to achieve consensus on most of our draft resolutions.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: As was announced at the 20th meeting on 30 October, from tomorrow, Thursday 2 November, until Wednesday 8 November meetings of the Committee will be set aside for the introduction of, and for comments on, draft resolutions that have been submitted under the disarmament agenda items. In order that time

(The Chairman)

and conference facilities may be utilized fully, I urge those delegations wishing to introduce draft resolutions or to make comments on them kindly to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.