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Chairman: Mr. MASHHADI (Islamic Republic of Iran) (Vice-Chairman)later: Mr. TAYLHARDAT (Venezuela) (Chairman)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Maahhadi (Islamic Republic of Iran) took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 49 TO 69 AND 151 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Ms. CHAN Heng Chee (Singapore): First of all, allow me to join other delegations in offering Mr. Taylhardat and his Bureau Singapore's sincere congratulations on his election to office. We are pleased and proud that a member of the non-aligned group has been entrusted with the important task of steering the deliberations of the Committee. We are confident that he and his Bureau, with the able assistance of the Secretariat, will guide this Committee through the complex and important agenda before us.

For many pundits, this must surely be a winter of great content. We are meeting in an atmosphere of vast improvement in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, and consequently of growing optimism. Mr. Shevardnadze, Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, said in his statement at the beginning of this year's general debate that talks now going on between the United States and the Soviet Union demonstrate

"increasing awareness by both sides of the need to co-operate for the benefit of mankind and growing confidence that such co-operation ... is possible".

(A/44/PV.6, pp. 34-35)

Similarly, President Bush, in his statement to the General Assembly, spoke of "signs of a new attitude that prevails between the United States and the Soviet Union". (A/44/PV.4, p. 58)

This new attitude in super-Power relations is reflected in important advances in the arms-control process. The Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty, though modest in the number of weapons it

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sought to eliminate, is a historic landmark because of its nature. For the first time, an arms-control agreement was signed which effectively eliminated a whole class of nuclear weapons, not merely setting limits to the arms race as previous agreements had done. There are good prospects for a strategic arms reduction (START) agreement to reduce by half the number of intercontinental strategic weapons. More recently, we have had indications from President Bush and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze that both parties are prepared to negotiate the eventual elimination of chemical weapons.

Beyond the arms-control arena, the very notion of an East-West divide is being questioned. In view of significant domestic changes in the Soviet Union and some Eastern European countries, we may be close to seeing both super-Powers review the fundamental basis of their traditional global rivalry and competition. Ideology is no longer the leitmotiv of super-Power interaction. Consequently, there may be better prospects for negotiations and accommodation.

These developments are to be welcomed. Certainly, the opportunities to check the nuclear-arms race have never been better. What I am about to say, however, will qualify mainstream optimism. It is not my intention to denigrate the real achievements or to diminish the triumphs of diplomacy in super-Power relations, nor do I want to be a Cassandra prophesying doom, but a note of sober reflection may be in order. I speak as the representative of a small country which, like the majority of Members of the United Nations, has little margin for error. Small States cannot afford to take their security for granted. If we lose, we lose all.

Hopes for an improvement in super-Power relations are not new. They wax and they wane. Although the present achievements are real, there are some doubts that an era of peace is at hand. For many of us, the consequences of the improvement in super-Power relations could well be more complex and paradoxical. Consider this: notwithstanding the real improvement in super-Power relations, the various regional

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conflicts still continue. There has been some progress in Namibia and Central America, but in Afghanistan, in spite of the Geneva agreements and the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the killing and destruction have not stopped. In Cambodia, its people, after 11 years of bitter suffering, are still denied their inalienable right to self-determination even as they continue their struggle against foreign occupation. In South Africa, the morally pernicious apartheid system still continues to deny its majority the right to govern their own country. Nor does there appear to be an end to the agony of people in the Middle East.

What are we to make of this? The obvious point is that the super-Power relationship is an important, but not the sole, determinant of international developments. It may not even be the most compelling factor in international developments. It is a common fallacy to hold the super-Powers responsible for the world's ills. According to this argument, if super-Power influences are removed, regions will be at peace, or at least less dangerous places. This is simply not borne out in reality. Indeed, it is arguable that precisely because it is so dangerous, super-Power competition is also inherently more cautious. Precisely because the stakes are so high, each move in the super-Power game needs to be carefully weighed. It is not a coincidence that, in Europe, there has not been a single war since the end of the Second World War. It is not accidental that not a single Soviet soldier has died in combat with an American soldier.

Super-Powers are just like any other State, and no State has a monopoly of virtue. One of the most bitter ironies of the contemporary international system is that some States - and I am not referring to the super-Powers - whose voices are raised loudest in their denunciation of nuclear war have in fact been at the forefront of the development of conventional arms, and have not been loath to use these arms. There are still countries which are attempting to achieve nuclear capability. We have also witnessed some third world countries build up their power

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projection capabilities through the acquisition of blue water navies as their instrument to regional leadership. There have been some third world States that have not hesitated to intimidate their smaller neighbours with a show of arms or actual military intervention. In view of these tendencies, there is no guarantee that these States will exhibit the caution inherent in super-Power competition.

I do not wish to be misunderstood. I am not apportioning blame or praise. I am only trying to draw attention dispassionately to a central fact of international life. The persistence of conflict, of ambition, of hegemony, of domination, despite the improvement in super-Power relations and the blurring of the ideological divide, suggests a more profound and fundamental cause.

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It is true that the super-Powers are the most important actors in the international system, but they, too, operate within, and are circumscribed by, that system. This suggests that conflict is not merely the result of the volitions of individual leaders or the policies of this or that State, but the consequence of the very nature of the international State system itself. In a system of competing sovereign nation States, conflict is inherent; the propensity towards violence, the temptations of ambition, are ever present.

How does a small State find security in a system of competing States? Much has been said about the third world as the victim of super-Power conflict. The case is so obvious that it need hardly be restated. What is equally obvious, though not so often said, is the uncomfortable fact that we have also been the beneficiaries of the super-Power game. In a system of competing sovereignties where conflicts are endemic, super-Power rivalry and the risk of nuclear confrontation had, in its own bizarre, abhorrent way, formed the core of an international system of checks and balances that has afforded a measure of stability in an inherently unstable world. This is certainly not an ideal state of affairs, but then, this is not an ideal world, and in the absence of a fundamental change in the nature of the international State system, it is possible that the super-Power balance of power has as often served the cause of stability as it has generated instability.

This leads to a central and uncomfortable paradox. The improvement in super-Power relations does not necessarily make the world safer for all of us. Indeed, it may make the world more dangerous for some of us. If some regional Powers are now acting in less discreet ways than they have in the past, it may be because of their general reading that the super-Powers are losing interest in the regions that were previously regarded as the cockpits for their contests of supremacy. There is a recognition that the super-Powers are taking stock of their

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own power limits and capabilities, and correspondingly winding down their interests in these peripheral regions. It is to be noted that the regional leviathans are beginning to flex their muscles, hoping that their forays will go unchallenged, because the super-Powers may no longer see it to be in their interests to be involved in the regional trouble-spots. Regional Powers hope that they will no longer be restrained by the inherent caution of super-Power competition. Smaller countries like mine are inherently limited in their ability to counter such activities.

What can we do about this? Small States cannot sit and wait for the uncertain fruits of the new détente. Our options are not many. We can be passive and leave the playing field open for more powerful countries with ambitions of dominance to carve out little empires for themselves, but that would be a situation no better than the super-Power rivalry we have been living with. It makes little difference whether we lose our sovereignty to a super-Power or to a country with pretensions to great power: loss of sovereignty is loss of sovereignty.

If we are to avoid such an unhappy fate, we should first recognize the stark truth that the State system is a fact we cannot wish away. We need to structure our policies accordingly. All countries that have survived have exercised hard-headed, pragmatic policies and have avoided the idealistic approaches to international problems which may invite disaster. This is a counsel, not of despair, but of realism. This does not mean that the imperatives of the international State system cannot be mitigated. The best cure for this systemic problem is pragmatic multilateralism. It offers small and vulnerable States an alternative to the super-Power balance of power and the prospect of regional power domination.

There are some who argue that the United Nations is a toothless tiger, but they have misidentified the cause. Our problem has been, not the incapacity to

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deal with problems, but the failure to recognize their root causes. A closely interdependent world of numerous, competitive sovereign nations is less able to function peacefully and effectively without an effective international organization. We should realistically admit that, whilst we may be unable to prevent conflicts, we can find ways of moderating them. We can persuade States that the conflict endemic in the international system should not require resort to armed intervention and will not be overcome by a build-up of nuclear-weapon stockpiles. We could try to convince them that conflict can be resolved in peaceful ways. In today's world, no State can afford to ignore the official expression of world public opinion conveyed through the resolutions emerging from the United Nations.

In the search for conflict resolution, the only practical alternative we have to super-Power balance consists of the ability of the United Nations to provide both peace-keeping and peace-making functions. United Nations peace-keeping forces were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize last year. This is a well-deserved recognition of their vital role in the international system. Certainly, more can be done to strengthen and rationalize this democratic security system: this is in the interests of all small States. The United Nations may not be able to change the essential conflictual nature of the international State system. It may not have the power to persuade certain States to abrogate those interests they harbour that are detrimental to other States. But a strong and effective United Nations can certainly offer a third, viable option between domination by the super-Powers and domination by the regional Powers. Thus, the United Nations can mitigate the worst effects of the international State system because, in representing the moral weight of all its Members, the United Nations can help ensure that violations of the sovereignty of one country by another do not go unchallenged. These are the

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promises of the United Nations Charter, and these remain the promises of survival for smaller States like Singapore.

Mr. SOUIDI (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): The Tunisian delegation warmly welcomes the Chairman's election to his post. As a seasoned diplomat with a thorough and extensive knowledge of the problems affecting the world, a record of devotion to peace and many other qualities, he is well fitted to be a dynamic and extremely successful Committee Chairman. Our congratulations go likewise to the other members of the Bureau and to the Chairman's distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Roche, who played an admirable role during his term of office at the last session.

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In recent years we have witnessed events of vital importance to mankind. History suddenly seems to have switched into a higher gear. Events which only recently seemed unthinkable, even Utopian, are no longer so. The distrust which was a feature of international relations for half a century, particularly between the two super-Powers, is gradually giving way to relative mutual understanding. Countries which have a monopoly of weapons of mass destruction and which compete in the devising of ever-more-sophisticated weapons have recognized that the strategy of deterrence, which everyone recognizes has allowed mankind to live in relative peace for the past four decades, has now evolved towards more understanding, to what we can describe as genuine détente in international relations.

It is said that to err is human, and the irreparable may occur, despite every preventive measure and precaution, at any time. We have a wealth of examples. However, aware of their global responsibilities and the intolerable burden of military expenditures, the two super-Powers felt that the time was right to take tentative steps towards each other, to the great satisfaction of the international community.

The five recent summit meetings between the United States and the Soviet Union were crowned by the signing in Washington of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty on 8 December 1987. Encouraged by the successful implementation of various provisions of that Treaty, the two signatories now envisage the conclusion of new agreements.

The momentum engendered by that first success gives promising prospects. Significant negotiations are under way and proposals have been made to reduce offensive strategic weapons by 50 per cent.

The two super-Powers propose to eliminate chemical weapons before the end of the century, on a reciprocal basis. They have just reaffirmed, in a joint statement, their common desire to persevere in their efforts to achieve

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"a comprehensive, verifiable and truly global ban on chemical weapons"

(A/44/578, p. 5)

together with the destruction of all stocks of such weapons.

Tunisia can only welcome those constructive steps, and we take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the United States and the Soviet Union for the progress, even if limited, already made in regard to disarmament. We call on them to persist in that direction and to redouble their efforts, because the survival of all mankind is at stake.

Dialogue therefore seems to have regained its rightful place in international relations, and its benefits are starting to be seen. Better understanding between East and West can foster the climate of détente, for which everyone has yearned for so long. It has a real impact on the regional conflicts which unfortunately continue to threaten international peace and security. The many hotbeds of tension to be found in countries of the third world pose a serious threat to the fragile balance in international relations. It is vital to eliminate these trouble-spots, which have lasted for far too long, as soon as possible. Solutions consistent with law and justice must be devised to that end.

Tunisia, which has constantly worked for just causes, therefore appeals for a drastic reduction of conventional weapons. Everyone knows that it is such weapons, not nuclear weapons, that have killed millions of human beings since the Second World War. They are often acquired by third-world countries, worsening the state of underdevelopment in which those countries find themselves. Despite their increasingly exorbitant costs, the traffic in weapons continues to flourish.

The Tunisian delegation feels that conventional weapons are as dangerous as nuclear arms, and we call upon the great Powers and all the other countries producing them to reduce to the greatest extent possible the production of, and trade in, such weapons. During the last session the General Assembly emphasized

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the harmful effects of weapons transfers in regions where tensions persisted. It requested Member States to consider a number of measures, including

"Reinforcement of their national systems of control and vigilance concerning production and transport of arms;

"Examination of ways and means of refraining from acquiring arms additional to those needed for legitimate national security requirements ..."

(resolution 43/75 I, para. 2).

It is no secret that military expenditures are a grave burden on national budgets. We are talking about limiting weapons and about disarmament, but competition continues apace. The Treaty on intermediate- and shorter-range missiles signed at Washington affects barely 4 per cent of the weapons in the stockpiles of the two super-Powers. The General Assembly has rightly charged the Disarmament Commission with reconsidering the item entitled "Reduction of military budgets". Unfortunately, the Commission's recommendations in that regard have so far come to nothing.

The considerable resources invested in the production and accumulation of increasingly sophisticated weapons could usefully be devoted to more noble purposes. We are today witnessing an unprecedented worsening of the underdevelopment of many third-world countries; entire populations are being decimated by famine and disease. The international community cannot remain indifferent to such a deterioration. Out of solidarity and respect for the noble principles to which it is committed, it must without further delay consider the situation, which otherwise can only get worse, and find a solution that is effective and produces rapid results.

Leading economists are convinced that it would be possible to overcome underdevelopment if a modest percentage of military expenditures were devoted to

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that end. Disarmament and development aid are closely linked, and we feel that this must become a major issue in the coming decade.

Tunisia, which has a special position on the Mediterranean shore and which has a leading tourist industry, reiterates the pressing appeal that the Mediterranean, cradle of our oldest civilizations, should become a genuine sea of peace. Together with the other coastal States, it yearns to be spared military competition and the rivalry of naval forces.

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Israel, however, not satisfied with the sowing of hatred, death and terror in the Middle East, particularly in the occupied Arab territories, is now working to expand the range of its aggression in order to experiment with ever more sophisticated weaponry. Indeed, it chose the shores of the Mediterranean to explode a new missile. Benefiting from the indulgence and impunity extended to it by certain Powers, Tel Aviv, which really has a sizeable nuclear arsenal, continues to disregard the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, seriously threatening world peace and security. The time has now come to call it to order and to urge it to show some restraint.

The proliferation in nuclear weapons throughout the world is deeply disturbing to all countries committed to peace. Tunisia has already had occasion to draw the attention of the international community to the gravity of this issue and has repeatedly appealed for the creation of denuclearized zones, particularly in the Middle East and in Africa. In this respect, we might remind you that two countries located in those regions are continuing to flout United Nations resolutions on this subject. Israel and South Africa, the two countries in question, already possess sizeable stockpiles of nuclear weapons, but they are now working actively to develop still more sophisticated armaments. The international community, particularly the major Powers, is duty-bound to call upon these two recalcitrant countries to comply with its wishes, repeatedly expressed in international forums, and to implement the recommendations of the General Assembly. Tel Aviv and Pretoria must adhere without delay to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and refrain from the development and further testing of new weapons of mass or selective destruction. Both must submit their nuclear facilities to monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the sole body qualified to perform the appropriate verification exercises and to provide, in return, the necessary guarantees.

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If Tunisia is placing special emphasis on this matter, we do so because our country was, on two occasions within a period of four years, the victim of Israeli aggression, despite the considerable distance between our two countries. More recently, despite the many rebukes and expressions of condemnation by the Security Council, Israel tested a missile close to the territorial waters of a neighbouring State. I am quite sure that the majority of my colleagues here share the legitimate concerns of the Tunisian delegation.

Indeed, how can one not draw attention to the gravity of a fresh scourge which could have serious consequences for the environment and soil fertility, threatening the health of entire peoples if it is not soon stopped? As you may have guessed, I am referring to the dumping, in certain parts of the world, of toxic and radioactive industrial waste. The choice of certain industrialized countries - a very small number, it is true - has fallen upon Africa, our own continent: victim as it is of so many ills and natural disasters it should be spared further sacrifices and, instead, helped to emerge as soon as possible from its state of underdevelopment. Our generation inherited a world which was a relatively decent place to live in. Weapons of mass destruction had not appeared on the scene and pollution was practically unknown. This is no longer the case: humanity is running enormous risks. Nuclear and conventional weapons accumulated here and there around the world are capable of destroying our planet many times over.

Tunisia, which has always attached great importance to dialogue in international relations as well as in domestic relations, will continue to work tirelessly for the complete prohibition of nuclear tests, the conclusion of new agreements for the prevention of the arms race and for complete and verifiable disarmament as the only way to achieve international peace and security.

At the end of my brief statement - today, on United Nations Day - let me pay a

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warm tribute to the Secretary-General for his energy and devoted service to the cause of peace and for the commendable work already performed under his leadership by the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

Mr. PHAM NGAC (Viet Nam): Permit me to take this opportunity to extend the felicitations of my delegation to Mr. Taylhardat on his assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee for the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. I am confident that his experience of many years in the field of disarmament will be of value guiding the deliberations of the Committee to a successful conclusion. I should also like to congratulate other members of the Bureau who will be assisting the Chairman in carrying out his responsibilities. The delegation of Viet Nam would like to assure the Chairman of its full co-operation in the discharge of his mandate.

The positive developments of the very recent past give grounds, despite any trends to the contrary, for speaking of substantive changes in international relations. This process is also being promoted by the successes achieved in the resolution of regional conflicts by political means, the relaxation of tensions and the growing support for a comprehensive approach to international peace and security. On the whole, there seem to exist at present favourable conditions for the achievement, by further, far-reaching disarmament steps, of a state of international relations that would effectively exclude a policy of confrontation and arms build-up. The increasingly dynamic reductions in military arsenals have proved basic to the positive changes that have made it possible definitely to ward off the military threat and to redirect the course of world affairs away from confrontation and towards co-operation, understanding and negotiation.

Everyone desires peace, but opinions differ as to how best it can be achieved. Some in the West are convinced that the best guarantee of their peace is absolute military superiority, but unless the other side accepts military

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inferiority, which is a doubtful assumption, this position inevitably leads to an arms race that has brought us into the dangerous situation we are in today. We hold the view that the best way to prevent war, nuclear war included, on a lasting basis, is to transform the international system into a new global order in which disputes between nations can be resolved without resorting to violence. Until such a new world order is established, workable measures are needed for nations to defend themselves. Two alternative methods are deterrence or else maintenance of mutually beneficial peaceful relations among nations.

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A whole variety of measures can be taken to eliminate or at least reduce the danger of nuclear war. Some are simple short-term measures; others are more far-reaching and will take longer. Our ultimate goal is, of course, a totally disarmed world. In such a world, the construction of instruments of murder with the primary purpose of killing people would no longer be socially acceptable, but this is a long-term goal that cannot be achieved overnight.

Like a train, the arms race must first come to a halt before it can be reversed. The most modest, but in the short term perhaps the most feasible negotiated arms-control measure would be an agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States for an immediate nuclear-arms freeze which would, inter alia, provide for a simultaneous, total stoppage of any further production of nuclear weapons and a complete halt to the production of fissionable material for weapon purposes. A nuclear-arms freeze, while not an end in itself, would constitute an effective step towards preventing the continued increase and qualitative improvement of existing nuclear weaponry during the period when negotiations were taking place, and at the same time would provide a favourable environment in which to conduct negotiations to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons. To the arms race, a nuclear freeze is what a cease-fire is to a war. Usually, an agreement on a cease-fire is needed before any meaningful peace negotiations can begin.

Less far-reaching than a freeze, but a very useful agreement nevertheless, would be a comprehensive test ban on all nuclear weapons, whether of old or new types. In this connection, we welcome the ongoing negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States, and note with satisfaction the significant developments on improved verification arrangements to facilitate the ratification of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear Weapon Tests, signed

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on 3 July 1974, and the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes, signed on 28 May 1976. We see an organic link between the issues of continued nuclear testing and the nuclear non-proliferation régime.

Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, speaking on 8 June 1988 at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, emphasized that

"... without limiting and banning nuclear tests it is difficult, and even impossible, to prevent the global spread of nuclear weapons". (A/S-15/PV.12, p. 69-70)

The Soviet moratorium bore out one of the main conclusions that can be drawn from the 1963 Moscow Treaty, namely, that political will is a decisive factor in halting nuclear tests. At its plenary meetings yesterday and today the General Assembly discussed at length the protection of the environment; certainly, the cessation of nuclear tests would in large measure be a fitting response to the heart-felt appeal of mankind. This question takes on a special urgency inasmuch as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) comes up for a periodic review in 1990. The Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT is scheduled for August 1990; the first session of the partial test-ban Treaty amendment conference can and should be held before that date. In its turn, the 1990 Review Conference could give impetus to the work of the partial test-ban treaty amendment conference. Any attempt to delay or stall negotiations at the amendment conference would not only constitute non-compliance with Treaty commitments, it would also prevent other parties from fulfilling their obligations. In article VI of the NPT, all parties to that Treaty have undertaken to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear-arms race at an early

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date. A comprehensive test-ban treaty is the premier effective measure, and an early date certainly means some time before the expiration of the original term in force of the NPT.

Nuclear issues have always accompanied the attempts towards arms reductions in Europe. The INF Treaty between the Soviet Union and United States has had a multiple impact on the negotiations on conventional armed forces. On the one hand, it has made the issue of conventional disarmament in Europe even more imperative. Stability on the conventional level must be achieved with a view to avoiding fears of a surprise attack and large-scale offensive operations. The forces should be restructured for effective defence of their own territory, but be incapable of offensive operations deep into the territory of others. On the other hand, the agreement, by the very fact of its having been reached, could have a positive influence on disarmament efforts on other levels of the military balance in Europe. The INF Treaty contains a verification régime which has gone far beyond what had been even optimistic expectations only a few years ago. It has thus set important precedents for arms control which may also contribute in a positive way to addressing the issue of conventional forces in Europe. Finally, it has been both the expression of, and a further factor in, improved East-West relations, which are essential for a successful arms-control dialogue.

We are also following with great interest the strategic arms reduction talks (START) going on between the Soviet Union and the United States. Substantial progress on this matter has been made. The two sides have confirmed the 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive weapons. The Moscow meeting between President Mikhail Gorbachev and then President Ronald Reagan in June 1988 confirmed the earlier decisions on strategic offensive weapons and anti-ballistic missiles, and significantly broadened the area of agreement. The agreements concluded at the

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Soviet-American talks in Wyoming have given rise to the hope that they will provide strong impetus for the work of other multilateral negotiating forums on disarmament. So far, all the unresolved questions are questions of principle. If the understandings already reached in Washington and Moscow are strictly adhered to, those questions can be settled. The conclusion of a treaty on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic weapons would have an extremely beneficial effect on the further reduction of strategic arms as well as of all other weapons, and on the development of mutually advantageous co-operation between the countries in science, culture, and economic and trade relations. This would be a historic human achievement of immense significance on the road of genuine nuclear disarmament and of the abatement and eventual removal of the threat of nuclear war, and an improvement in all aspects of international relations. Nuclear weapons can in fact become impotent and obsolete, if no one will design them, no one will build them, no one will vote for them, no one will pay for them, and no one will use them.

Much has been said about the proliferation of chemical weapons. The Paris Conference held in January this year on the prohibition of chemical weapons highlighted the importance of the prevention of any further proliferation and use of chemical weapons. The Conference served as a vehicle for reaffirming the validity of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and rallying stronger support for it. Even though the Geneva negotiations have worked out general provisions covering many of the major elements of a convention on chemical weapons, several very sensitive and complex problems remain to be solved.*

* The Chairman took the Chair.

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We fully share the views of the participants in the Paris Conference, as stated in its Final Declaration:

"The participating States stress the necessity of concluding, at an early date, a Convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of all chemical weapons, and on their destruction. This Convention shall be global and comprehensive and effectively verifiable. ... All states are requested to make, in an appropriate way, a significant contribution to the negotiations in Geneva by undertaking efforts in the relevant fields." (A/44/88, para. 3)

The Government-Industry Conference against Chemical Weapons recently held in Canberra, Australia, also made its contribution to this end.

Because of the existence of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, with both their quantitative and qualitative aspects, and the continuing danger of their proliferation, it remains important to promote regional disarmament initiatives in support of peace and disarmament, including the designation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace as well as the implementation of confidence-building measures. Viet Nam consistently supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa, the Balkans, Central Europe, the Middle East, the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, South-East Asia and the South Pacific, the zone of peace in the Indian Ocean and the zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic.

As the Second Disarmament Decade draws to a close, the need for a third disarmament decade is widely recognized, with a view to maintaining the current momentum and accelerating the disarmament process. We share the views of many Member States which advocate the declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade. The Third Disarmament Decade should serve the ultimate objective of the disarmament process, which is general and complete disarmament under effective

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international control. It should help to intensify joint efforts, at the multilateral and bilateral levels, to solve the broad spectrum of disarmament issues, strengthen security and ensure greater confidence and an atmosphere of trust.

Our world today is one of lessening tension and stress, though that is not to say that it yet verges on co-operation and peace. We also realize that we are living today in a state of interdependence between nations. Our country was dominated by foreign Powers for centuries, and during the last 50 years four consecutive wars have wrought havoc on our country. While the Vietnamese people have made sacrifices to regain and maintain their independence, other nations have been able to enjoy peace and stability and devote themselves to development. For this reason, Viet Nam, more than any other nation, needs peace and stability. Our top priorities today are peace and development. Over the last two years Viet Nam has already demobilized half a million men and women from its army and it is continuing to demobilize. Viet Nam is also firmly committed to improving its relations with other countries, primarily with the countries of our region. The ever-closer co-operation of the countries in the region and the widening of relations between each of the regional countries and other countries are indispensable factors for any country in seizing the opportunities for development and for the region to become more dynamic and resilient.

We are rapidly approaching the last decade of the twentieth century. It has been a century of breathtaking advance in life-saving and life-enhancing medical technology, of breaking through the boundaries that for all of human history had kept us to the surface of the planet on which we were born, a century of incredible progress in the technologies of communication and transportation binding us to each

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other in one world. It has also been a century with more than 200 wars, including the two most destructive wars in human history and, of course, the emergence of the grave threat of nuclear self-annihilation.

We have but one more decade to write the story of this century. Shall it be the last chapter in the story of a deeply flawed species whose technical brilliance outran its instinct for survival? In what remains of this century there is still time to find the wisdom to change the course of history. It is within our power to make the end of the twentieth century the beginning of a new era. We can choose to direct our resources away from destructive and towards constructive purposes and so create unprecedented prosperity to accompany our new-found security. It is literally a choice between life and death, and it is up to us. We can choose life, we must choose life, and I believe we will.

Mr. ALMUAKKAF (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): I wish to begin by conveying to you, Sir, my warmest congratulations on your election as Chairman of the Committee for the current session. I am confident that, with your well-known experience in disarmament matters, you will contribute to the success of the Committee's work. I wish you every success. I cannot fail to express my thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador Roche, for his wise guidance of the Committee's business in the last session. I wish also to congratulate the other officers of the Committee.

In recent years the world has witnessed a remarkable development towards détente in international relations. This development has created political and security changes in international relations and changes in the field of disarmament, leading, in a positive manner, to progress towards the finding of solutions to some current problems and conflicts. My delegation expresses its satisfaction at the developments witnessed by the world today in bilateral and multilateral negotiations with a view to achieving agreements on the general and

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complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the ending of the nuclear-arms race between States possessing such weapons. My delegation also supports all the proposals and broad principles aimed at the general and complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the cessation of the arms race in all its aspects with a view to the achievement of international peace and security.

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There is no doubt that nuclear disarmament is fundamental to questions of disarmament in general. Because the process of disarmament affects the vital security interests of all States, and given the role of disarmament and arms-limitation measures in the consolidation of peace and the strengthening of international security, my country attaches special importance to this question in accordance with the order of priority established in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament of 1978: nuclear weapons, then other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. The vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons has become a great threat to the international community. The nuclear stockpiles and arsenals of nuclear-weapon States are sufficient to destroy the world dozens of times over. Thus it is incumbent on us all to make further efforts and to muster the necessary political will to carry out more negotiations on a comprehensive ban on all forms of nuclear weapons. At the same time, all members of the international community, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, must fully abide by the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which must be expanded so that its implementation is truly universal.

The efforts of many Members of the United Nations, in particular the States members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, to amend the partial test-ban Treaty so that it may become a comprehensive test-ban treaty must be fully supported by all States as a serious and tangible contribution to the limitation of the proliferation and development of nuclear weapons and their eventual banning and elimination, so that that menace may be ended once and for all. We support the initiative taken by the six States on the convening of an international conference for the consideration of the proposed amendment of the Limited Test-Ban Treaty

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in order to make it a comprehensive test ban. We also support the proposal on the mandate under which the Conference on Disarmament would establish another committee with a view to conducting multilateral negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

My country supports the idea of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and peace zones in various regions of the world with a view to bringing about a world completely free from nuclear weapons, a world of international peace and security. In that process the special characteristics of every region must be taken into account.

In this regard my delegation would recall the decision of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on the denuclearization of Africa. That objective will be distant and difficult to attain as long as the racist régimes in South Africa and occupied Palestine continue to acquire nuclear weapons, to conduct nuclear tests, to develop their nuclear programmes and to strengthen their nuclear-weapons capability, and as long as they continue to refuse to accede to the non-proliferation Treaty and to place all their nuclear facilities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency - not to mention the constant and organic collaboration of those two régimes in developing their nuclear-weapon capabilities and delivery systems. The two acts of direct aggression against sisterly Tunisia by the Zionist entity; its act of armed aggression against sisterly Iraq; its recent test of intermediate-range missiles and their delivery systems, during which one missile fell close to the second-largest city in our country, threatening the security and safety of my country and jeopardizing peace and security in the whole region; and the acquisition by the Israelis of nuclear

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weapons and other weapons of mass destruction - all this threatens peace and security not only in the Middle East region but throughout the world.

It is apparent from statistics that each year the world spends over \$30 billion on armaments, especially on research, experimentation and the development of new kinds of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. This expenditure not only threatens the security of peoples, but also deprives billions of food and shelter; it is a stumbling-block in the path of social and economic development, as the majority of the States have devoted their natural and human resources to the accumulation and stockpiling of weapons, leaving their peoples suffering from ignorance, poverty and disease.

Any discussion of disarmament is incomplete if it does not deal with the question of conventional disarmament. The world has witnessed many armed conflicts in the last 40 years, conflicts in which conventional weapons have been used, taking a toll of millions of lives - not to mention the exorbitant sums spent to acquire such weapons. In calling upon all States to accord more attention to this matter, we find it necessary to state that all States must respect the principles of the United Nations Charter and refrain from the threat or use of force and from interference in the internal affairs of other States. In this regard we welcome the efforts made in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, meeting at Vienna and Stockholm, aimed at the reduction of conventional weapons. As a signatory of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, which calls for the prohibition of the proliferation, stockpiling and use of chemical and bacteriological weapons, my country welcomes the results of the Paris and Canberra Conferences and deems it necessary that a link be made between the prohibition of nuclear weapons and the prohibition of chemical weapons, as provided for by paragraph 45 of the Final

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Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The question of naval armaments and disarmament is of high priority to my country. We believe it is necessary to adopt effective measures to build confidence and to provide security, especially through reducing the risk of naval incidents and confrontations, in particular between vessels and submarines carrying nuclear weapons. My delegation would like to reiterate the importance of United Nations resolutions concerning security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region and its becoming a lake of security, co-operation and peace. We also call for measures to be adopted to provide security guarantees for non-military activities on the seas and oceans.

The world has witnessed great progress in the field of the exploitation of outer space. My country shares the position of other States concerned with the maintenance of outer space free from military activities. My country calls upon all States, in particular those having capabilities in that field, to safeguard outer space, and to exploit it for fruitful, peaceful co-operation exclusively for peaceful purposes, free of international conflicts.

My delegation supports the idea of the establishment of an international organization on space affairs that would work for its use exclusively for peaceful purposes and make it truly the common heritage of mankind. We would like in this regard to express our great concern at the space activities recently undertaken by certain régimes known for their aggressive nature and their racist practices. It is our fear that these activities will be used for aggressive actions that threaten international peace and security and accelerate the arms race.

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My country, being a part of the African continent, attaches special importance to the question of the dumping by some nuclear-weapon States and their corporations of toxic and nuclear wastes in the territories of developing countries, in particular African countries. This is immoral and does grave harm to the environment and to human beings. My country supports all the measures called for by the OAU; we also support the position taken by the International Atomic Energy Agency, which has condemned such actions. We support all the efforts and programmes of other international organizations and institutions in this field, and we demand that this Committee take concrete, practical measures to deal with such actions.

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The verification process has become an important question and any progress in the field of disarmament has become conditional on it. My country attaches especial importance to multilateral and bilateral conventions in this regard; therefore, we call for further co-ordination, exchange of data, publication of statistics and other co-operative measures that would make further information available and would ensure compliance with international conventions.

My delegation calls for serious consideration of the negative effects that may result from a lack of attention to the principles of verification. Aware as we are of the importance of this question and of the significant role of the United Nations in the field of verification, we call on the members of the international community to co-operate further in that area and in the area of confidence-building.

My delegation wishes to reaffirm its belief in the primary importance of the role of the United Nations and its primary responsibility in the field of disarmament, pursuant to its Charter.

The United Nations is a forum that enables all States to participate in deliberations and negotiations on disarmament. My delegation appreciates the important role played and the efforts made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We have perused his reports in this regard and we appeal to the international community to increase its effective contribution in order to ensure the success of the work of this Organization in the discharge of its special responsibility in the field of disarmament, with regard, in particular, to the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. KEO Puth-Rasmey (Democratic Kampuchea) (interpretation from French):
On behalf of the delegation of Democratic Kampuchea, I wish to associate myself with all the representatives who have spoken before me to congratulate you

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sincerely on your unanimous election as Chairman of the First Committee. Your election is an acknowledgement of your competence, wisdom and diplomatic talent. I am quite sure that under your guidance our work will be crowned with success. Allow me also to offer my congratulations to the other officers of the Committee and to assure you of our fullest co-operation.

The international community has welcomed the positive developments that have occurred since the beginning of last year, leading to a certain improvement in the international climate. A start has been made on the political settlement of certain regional conflicts. There has been an improvement in East-West relations, and there have been concrete initiatives in the disarmament field, such as the implementation of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty, the international Conference on the prohibition of chemical weapons, held last January in Paris, the negotiations on conventional armed forces in Europe, the Government-Industry Conference against Chemical Weapons, which was held recently in Canberra, and the recent statements by the great Powers.

However, world stability and peace are still precarious. Regional conflicts and the tensions which have posed serious threats to international peace and stability persist. This is true of Cambodia, where the Vietnamese war of aggression and occupation continues, and of Afghanistan, where the withdrawal of the Soviet troops has not brought the war to an end because the Afghan people continue to be deprived of their right to self-determination. The policy of power, domination and expansion, despite the set-backs it has endured, is still at root very aggressive, and it is therefore no surprise that the arms race is still going on. Notwithstanding the commitment of the two super-Powers to a 50 per cent reduction of their strategic nuclear arsenals, their negotiations have not made

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substantial progress. The hopes aroused when the INF Treaty was signed, two years ago, have not been fulfilled; even when the proposed reductions are carried out, the remaining arsenals will still be capable of annihilating our planet several times over. Also, the problem of poverty and the economic crisis in the third world continues to worsen.

In this situation, we have good reason to wonder if the current détente is not merely a temporary arrangement that is likely to come to an end at any moment. It is up to humanity, which loves peace and justice, to make sure it becomes an irreversible process leading to a safer world for all of us.

My delegation considers conventional disarmament to be of fundamental importance. At the present time, conventional weapons are, without any doubt, the most immediate danger and concrete threat to international peace and security. This very day, while we are examining the issue of disarmament and worrying about the prospect of a possible apocalyptic nuclear war, conventional weapons are actually being used in several conflicts throughout the world. It has often been said that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. The same assertion is more rarely applied to a conventional war. In the matter of local wars such as those in Afghanistan and Cambodia, we cannot help noting that the global and regional Powers which started them still nurture the hope of being able to win them one day or other in some way or other. It is significant that, whereas it can show flexibility on a number of disarmament questions, the super-Power which finances the war of aggression and occupation in Cambodia remains intransigent on the issue of regional conflicts. It is conventional weapons that the occupation troops have used and continue to use to kill hundreds of thousands of people in my country.

Democratic Kampuchea has been a victim of chemical weapons and on several occasions has denounced the aggressor using them. Up till now, the aggressor has

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obtained them from a super-Power. However, in view of the ease of manufacture of these weapons and their relatively low cost, it could very well become a producer of chemical weapons. We therefore wish for a convention on the prohibition, development, production, stockpiling and use of all chemical weapons and on their destruction. From now on, we should not turn a blind eye to the use of these weapons.

Nuclear weapons are a threat to humanity as a whole and without distinction. It is natural that eliminating them should have priority in the international community's efforts. Democratic Kampuchea associates itself with the other countries which cherish peace and justice in calling for the total prohibition and complete destruction of nuclear weapons. It also supports the principle of creating nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace in the world.

The peace, security and stability of the South-East Asian region are threatened by the war of aggression and occupation waged against my country by a country bristling with arms. That country has, in effect, an army of 1.1 million men in regular units and 1.5 million militia, without counting the 3 million reservists. In other words, 1 in 23 of the population are under arms.

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It possesses an enormous arsenal, including the most sophisticated conventional weapons as well as chemical weapons, which have already claimed hundreds of thousands of victims in Cambodia. This gigantic army is the third largest in the world in manpower terms. It is capable of launching an invasion of neighbouring countries at any time. It has been built up and maintained with the help of a super-Power, whose aid amounts to \$3 million a day. In return, that super-Power has acquired two major military bases - at Cam Ranh and Da Nang, its first warm-water ports, which it has so ardently desired.

National security is clearly not the sole purpose of such over-armament. It serves the policy of expansion and domination of the country that possesses it and that country's financier. It has already made possible the annexation of a neighbouring country and the invasion of Cambodia and its occupation, which has lasted 11 years. Today, after the so-called total withdrawal of its occupation troops, that aggressor still has in my country some 130,000 armed men, under disguise in the puppet army of Phnom Penh or concealed among the Vietnamese settlers, numbering about a million, who have moved in as true peasant-soldiers in the midst of only 7 million Cambodians - one Vietnamese occupier for fewer than seven Cambodians.

We welcome the negotiations on the reduction of conventional forces in Europe, where steady progress has been made. Unfortunately, such initiatives are unlikely to be seen in South-East Asia as long as the war of aggression continues in Cambodia. The countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has put forward the idea of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality, a concept which Democratic Kampuchea fully supports. But their efforts have been hampered, and will continue to be hampered, by the persistence of that war. The occupying Power - which has pursued an aggressive policy of expansion, which possesses

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excessive armaments, unequalled in South-East Asia, and which is inseparably linked to a super-Power by a military, political, economic and ideological alliance - is a dangerous destabilizing factor. If it succeeded in realizing its long-standing dream of annexing Cambodia, in an Indochinese federation, under its domination, a very dangerous geo-political situation would develop, stimulating the arms race and rivalries which would drag the region into a new era of even more serious upheaval than it has known so far.

Several relevant measures to establish confidence have been proposed. My delegation fully supports them. We believe that the best confidence-building measures are absolute respect for the United Nations Charter, the implementation of its resolutions and the peaceful settlement of disputes. On the other hand, aggression, disregard for United Nations resolutions and evasion of one's responsibility for reaching a political solution to conflicts can only heighten distrust.

One super-Power, while declaring that it is necessary to reach a comprehensive political settlement of the problem of Cambodia, continues to provide political and military support and assistance to our aggressor and its puppet régime. Its negative attitude to the International Conference on Cambodia, held in Paris, and increased deliveries of arms and war matériel to Phnom Penh encourage our aggressor to reject a political solution and to continue the occupation of Cambodia. How can confidence-building measures be bolstered in that way? Rather, is it not likely to strengthen the feeling of third-world countries that their improved relations with the other great Powers have not brought them more security?

It is deplorable that in Cambodia the occupying Power is trying to exploit the atmosphere of détente to engage in its treacherous diplomatic manoeuvres in order to obtain what it has been unable to gain in the field. It has taken advantage of

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the hope aroused by glasnost and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan to have everyone believe that it is also withdrawing its troops from Cambodia, whereas it is continuing to occupy the country. It is blocking the search for a comprehensive solution to the so-called problem of Kampuchea. It accuses the United Nations of bias, because it has kept a seat for Democratic Kampuchea, the victim of the occupying Power's aggression, and because the United Nations has adopted resolutions calling for the withdrawal of its troops from the occupied country. It refuses to accept the international control mechanism of the United Nations and the dispatch of a United Nations peace-keeping force to Cambodia.

If the improved international climate is to last and confidence-building measures are to take hold, *détente* must not be a means for any Power simply to pursue its strategy in a different way. On the other hand, in recent years our Organization has regained much of its prestige and vigour, and it is expected to play a central role in the settlement of international problems - particularly those relating to peace and security. This trend must not be allowed to be reversed.

The question of disarmament must be considered with a view to practical action, to achieve peace and security for all. Otherwise, what would be the point of a 50 per cent reduction of strategic weapons when the other 50 per cent would still be capable of destroying our world several times over? What would be the point of a prohibition of nuclear and chemical weapons, when conventional weapons - even when reduced to their lowest level - could still decimate populations? What would be the point of East-West *détente* if regional conflicts continued or could be ignited at any time at the will of the strongest?

In his 1989 report on the work of the Organization, our Secretary-General has emphasized:

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"Efforts to prevent possible conflicts, reduce the risk of war and achieve definitive settlements of disputes, whether long-standing or new, are part and parcel of a credible strategy for peace.

"The United Nations needs to demonstrate its capacity to function as guardian of the world's security." (A/44/1, pp. 10-11)

Democratic Kampuchea is convinced that the United Nations will prove able to do that. It has always placed its hope in the Organization and acted in conformity with its Charter. In 1979, when it had just been invaded by Vietnamese troops, it immediately brought the question of that aggression before the Security Council, and for 11 years it has steadfastly pursued its efforts in the General Assembly. It has not lost faith, despite the vetoes of a super-Power and the repeated rejection by the aggressor of resolutions of the General Assembly and the International Conference on Cambodia.

Although obliged to wage armed resistance against the foreign military occupation, the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea has always advocated a political solution to the so-called problem of Kampuchea.

It is well known that His Royal Highness Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, President of Democratic Kampuchea and head of the Cambodian national resistance, has proposed a five-point peace plan for a comprehensive, just and equitable solution to the problem of Cambodia, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

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That solution is based on two crucial elements. The first, and the more urgent, is the total and definitive withdrawal of all categories of Vietnamese forces and of all Vietnamese settlers from Cambodia, supervised and verified by an international control mechanism under United Nations auspices, with the assistance of a United Nations peace-keeping force.

The second key element is the exercise by the sovereign Cambodian people of its inalienable right to self-determination.

Within the framework of that comprehensive solution, His Royal Highness has also proposed the assistance of a control mechanism under United Nations auspices to supervise elections and the presence of a substantial United Nations peace-keeping force with a renewable mandate of five years. He also proposes that after the total withdrawal of the occupation forces the armed forces of the four Cambodian parties should be completely disarmed or, failing that, that they should be reduced to a strength of 10,000 men for each Cambodian party, and be confined to barracks.

That plan is just and reasonable and magnanimous towards the aggressor and its quislings. We are well aware of the expansionist strategy - past and present - of the aggressor with regard to Cambodia, and we realize that the plan involves risks. Without our faith in our people, without the support of the international community for the five-point peace plan of His Royal Highness Samdech Norodom Sihanouk and without the United Nations - under whose auspices the control mechanism and peace-keeping force should be placed - we would never dare to take those risks. However, Viet Nam continues to reject the plan.

The final goal of disarmament is international peace and security, which cannot be measured in terms of quantitative reductions of nuclear, chemical or conventional weapons. What is needed is a very broad approach in order to

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encompass, in addition to the technical measurements of disarmament and to legal instruments, credible political, moral and other commitments. True disarmament, capable of guaranteeing a safe and stable world for the good of all is based on good faith, respect for commitments and actions in conformity with the principles of the Charter, which Member States have freely undertaken to respect.

Mr. MOUMOUNI D. ABDOULAYE (Niger) (interpretation from French): The Minister of State and Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Colonel Moumouni Adamou Djermaakoye, was to have made Niger's contribution to this debate on the question of disarmament and testify to the commitment of the Government of Niger to working for the fostering of international peace and security through disarmament. Unfortunately, official duties - he is also our Ambassador to the United States - have detained him in Washington and have prevented him from coming to New York in time to make this statement this afternoon, despite his desire to do so. He regrets this very much. I have the honour and privilege of making this statement on behalf of the Niger in his place.

Despite your appeal, Mr. Chairman, allow me to perform on behalf of my country and delegation the agreeable duty of extending our sincere congratulations to you on your election to chair the Committee during this forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. Aware of your great qualities as a seasoned diplomat and your wealth of experience in international affairs, and aware of the active commitment of your country, Venezuela, to the cause of peace, understanding and co-operation between peoples, we are sure that under your leadership our Committee will fully discharge its mandate and see its debates crowned with success.

I also wish to congratulate the other officers of the Committee and to give an assurance of the whole-hearted collaboration of the Niger delegation.

(Mr. Moumouni D. Abdoulaye,
Niger)

On 10 October, in the general debate in the General Assembly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of my country said:

"Swift and profound changes are taking place in the international arena. We are seeing political, economic, social, cultural and even ideological changes which are shaping and foreshadowing international relations and the new stakes and challenges of the next century." (A/44/PV.27, pp. 67-68)

The great majority of previous speakers in this debate have generally shared that view. They have recognized the marked improvement in the international political climate and the warming of relations and dialogue between East and West. This new atmosphere of détente, which reflects a lessening of military and ideological confrontation, has also made a clear contribution to the settlement, or the first step towards the settlement, of several regional conflicts, just as it has given a new impetus to bilateral and multilateral disarmament negotiations.

However, this optimism - I was about to say euphoria - is limited, as North-South relations do not seem to have benefited to the same extent from the improvement in the world climate. Can one remain optimistic and unconcerned in the face of the magnitude of the inequalities prevailing in the world, a world which has become increasingly interdependent?

In that regard, I wish to quote once again Niger's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, who said in the General Assembly:

"It is certainly frustrating to note the state of the world today and to see that today we have a striking if not repugnant paradox: on the one hand there is the exponential increase in military budgets and arsenals and on the other, there is the chronic poverty and wretchedness of many in the world." (ibid., pp. 68-69)

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Niger)

It seems quite simply unfair and morally intolerable that the planet's human, scientific, technical, economic and financial resources are being used for the production and refinement of ways of destroying man and his environment, while economic and social progress are so unequally and inequitably distributed in the world. That is why we in the Niger see the problem of disarmament clearly and unequivocally; we see it in the light of the close relationship with concerns about economic and social development.

Our beliefs are fully consistent with the conclusions of the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Nicosia, Cyprus, from 5 to 10 September 1988, subsequently confirmed by the Movement's ninth summit meeting, held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, from 4 to 7 September 1989. The Ministers reaffirmed the close links between the following: disarmament; the relaxation of international tension; respect for the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter - in particular, the sovereign equality of all States, the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-recourse to the use or threat of use of force against the territorial integrity and unity or the political independence of any State; the total elimination of colonialism, apartheid and all other forms of racial discrimination, aggression and occupation; respect for the right to self-determination and national independence; respect for human rights; economic and social development; and the strengthening of international peace and security.

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The relationship between disarmament and development is one of the questions that concerns the international community today as it seeks ways and means to curb the arms race and to achieve disarmament. The first Peace Conference, which was held at The Hague in 1899, reached the conclusion that lightening the military burden weighing upon the world was highly desirable for the enhanced material and moral well-being of mankind. Following two World Wars that caused appalling loss and devastation, the founding fathers of the United Nations felt it necessary to set limits to the weapons policies of States to promote, as in Article 26 the Charter states,

"the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources".

However, the idea of establishing a direct link between disarmament and development did not find direct expression until the General Assembly's adoption in 1950 of a number of resolutions calling for the comprehensive reduction of military expenditures and a reallocation of the funds thus realized to economic and social development, particularly in the developing countries. The International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development held at United Nations Headquarters from 24 August to 11 September 1987 was a milestone in this respect, highlighting the gravity and complexity of the problem.

First, the arms race and the production of weapons swallow up considerable quantities of natural resources, particularly so-called strategic resources. Thus, according to available statistics and by way of example, the construction and deployment of 200 intercontinental ballistic missiles requires approximately 10,000 tons of aluminium, 2,500 tons of chromium, 150 tons of titanium, 24 tons of beryllium, 890,000 tons of steel and 2,400 tons of cement. Taking another example,

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oil consumption by the military represents more than 5 per cent of total world consumption, more than half the total oil consumption of all developing countries.

Secondly, military programmes, particularly in recent years, have been a major factor in the imbalance in financial flows and the growing debt problem. Between 1975 and 1985, 40 per cent of all indebtedness contracted by developing countries could be attributed to the import of armaments. Furthermore, there is a striking difference between the sums allocated to assistance to developing countries - some \$30 billion - and the cost of armaments exports by rich countries to third-world countries, estimated at approximately \$34 billion.

Thirdly, military expenditures create imbalances, fluctuations and bottle-necks in the world economy, particularly through their impact on the scale of investments and the nature of technological innovations, on terms of trade and on international movements of capital, on world inflation and debt. Between 1978 and the present, military expenditures rose from some \$450 billion to \$1,000 billion. In the same period official development assistance rose hardly at all, while the foreign debt of developing countries increased from \$650 billion in 1980 to far in excess of \$1 trillion today.

Still according to current estimates, more than a billion of our planet's people are living below the poverty threshold, 780 million are illiterate, 1.5 billion lack basic health care and a billion do not have adequate housing.

According to data contained in a recent 1987 study by World Military and Social Expenditures, world military expenditures today equal the total income of the 2.6 billion people living in the 44 least-developed countries. Another impressive figure provides food for thought. In a statement in a meeting of the Governing Council of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in April 1988, the Swedish representative pointed out that in the space of four hours the world

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spends on armaments the equivalent of UNICEF's entire two-year budget - some \$500 million.

All those factors underscore the relevance of the 1987 International Conference that established the triangular relationship between disarmament, development and security.

The Final Document of the Conference recognized that disarmament and development are two of the most urgent challenges facing the world today and that they are also the two pillars on which enduring international peace and security can be built. It goes on to state that the continuing arms race, in addition to hindering the process of confidence-building among States, is absorbing far too great a proportion of the world's human, financial, natural and technological resources, placing a heavy burden on the economies of all countries and affecting the international flow of trade, finance and technology.

In addition, the Conference recognized two basic realities: on the one hand, disarmament and development are distinct processes, even though both strengthen international peace and security and promote prosperity. On the other hand, disarmament and development have a close and multidimensional relationship. Each of them can have an impact at the national, regional and global levels in such a way as to create an environment conducive to the promotion of the other.

Hence, States must find the political will to promote development through disarmament, through a reduction of their level of military expenditures, through an increase in their level of development assistance, and through the inclusion in disarmament agreements of a provision for machinery to reallocate the savings realized in military spending to economic and social development activities.

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Lastly, the concretization of the relationship of disarmament to development requires a review of present concepts of security, taking into account the fact that security can no longer be conceived solely in military terms. Non-military threats to security must also be dealt with. The situation in Africa deserves mention in this regard.

(Mr. Moumouni D. Abdoulaye, Niger)

Can we in fact talk of disarmament in Africa, where, with the exception of South Africa, there are no structures for the manufacture of weapons? Disarmament, in Africa, must be viewed in terms of reducing military expenditures, which are still, in total, rather high relative to the resources of our States, which are crushed by the debt burden and are seeing the prices of their primary commodities dropping constantly, whereas the prices of imported manufactures continue to shoot up, worsening the terms of trade. The mortality rate is still highest in Africa, where life expectancy is no more than 47 years on average; that is, 20 years short of life expectancies elsewhere; 15 to 25 per cent of our children die at birth. Furthermore, Africa is regularly afflicted by natural disasters such as drought, desertification, floods and the locust menace, which all cause serious disturbance to the most important sector in our economies, which is agriculture.

In these conditions, it is obvious that the amounts spent on acquiring weapons instead of being used to support economic and social development, cannot but cause us anguished heart-searching. Africa, according to the most authoritative indications, is a region where the rate of military expenditure exceeds the growth in gross national product. As early as 1983, we are told, military expenditure in Africa was \$16.9 billion, an increase of more than 400 per cent over the 1973 figure, which was \$3.8 billion. A World Bank study shows that, South Africa apart, the real rate of growth in military expenditures by the African countries was 7.3 per cent in the period 1973-1983, whereas the rate of growth in gross national product over the same period was only 4.2 per cent.

There is no longer any need to show that the African countries hold dear their concerns for peace, security, and development. However, while they do recognize and admit that excessive military expenditures can jeopardize these objectives,

(Mr. Moumouni D. Abdoulaye, Niger)

they maintain that they must also protect their territories and populations by all possible means, including military means. Nevertheless, it is heartening to note that the Organization of African Unity (OAU), since the conference of Ministers on security, disarmament and development in Africa, which it held at Lomé, Togo, in August 1985, has set about the process of developing a framework for promoting development and security in Africa, a framework which would take into account African conditions and the concerns of the community of its States as a whole.

In the field of nuclear disarmament, the international community has had real hope since the signing and entry into force of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. That Treaty is a fundamental achievement testifying to the political will of the two super-Powers to set out resolutely on the path of nuclear disarmament and subject themselves to unprecedented verification mechanisms.

The atmosphere of détente and confidence which now characterizes relations between these two countries could give fresh impetus to the bilateral negotiations between them to reduce their strategic nuclear arsenals by 50 per cent.

In the matter of nuclear tests, we should redouble our efforts, within the framework of a constructive dialogue, to find, together, the ways and means to bring about the total elimination of such tests. The forthcoming conference to amend the partial test-ban Treaty will, we very much hope, lead to a total ban.

The international community, and the nuclear Powers in particular, must understand that true nuclear disarmament would not be without pain and would entail re-examining our ideas of security and the ways of safeguarding it.

(Mr. Moumouni D. Abdoulaye, Niger)

For the Niger, the issue of nuclear and toxic wastes is a matter of legitimate concern, as for us the question is one of safeguarding our fragile environment, which is already suffering natural degradation. We believe that whole-hearted co-operation between all States should make it possible to find the right solutions for processing, transferring and eliminating such wastes.

My delegation believes that the various negotiation processes under way in the field of disarmament should not be to the exclusion of other process, as it is true to say that bilateral and multilateral channels complement one another. The United Nations is, in our view, a special forum, which we should strengthen in the fields of disarmament and the quest for international peace and security. All parties should unite their efforts to bring down the walls of mistrust and suspicion, which have harmed our peoples so much, so that we can work resolutely for mutual confidence, the only way for mankind to save itself.

The entire world has recognized the need for us to do our utmost to achieve the complete and rapid elimination of chemical weapons from the planet. This new awareness was a significant factor in the success of the Paris Conference of States Parties to the Geneva Protocol of 1925. The consensus on the Final Declaration of the Conference not only serves to strengthen the authority of the Protocol but may also add fresh political momentum to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, leading to an early conclusion of the draft convention on the elimination of chemical weapons.

The recent Conference at Canberra, Australia, which brought together representatives of governments and the chemical industry, is an additional earnest of success for the forthcoming convention.

The progress in the bilateral negotiations between the two super-Powers on eliminating their chemical weapons will without a doubt have a positive influence on the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Moumouni D. Abdoulaye, Niger)

There is real hope today, not only that the difficulties over the verification issue will be overcome, but also, most important, that the long-awaited draft convention will shortly be submitted to the General Assembly of the United Nations. For the developing countries, as I said in the first part of my statement, the issue of conventional disarmament is an especially urgent one. The developing countries, which are the foci of most of the regional conflicts, some of which are fortunately being settled, have become major importers of conventional weapons.

Arms transfers to the developing world have now reached alarming proportions, and make it necessary for us to co-operate not only in controlling the trend, but also in modifying it, if not reversing it. In this respect, we encourage the United Nations, which, with the help of governmental experts, is trying to achieve greater transparency in the field of arms transfers.

Serving the cause of disarmament should prompt us to expand our concept of security, which nowadays goes far beyond its purely military aspect. Mankind is aware, in effect, that there are other challenges, other enemies which, like poverty, deprivation, environmental degradation, desertification and drugs, will not be taken up and beaten without mobilization and determination on the part of each and every one of us.

Mr. NEGROTTI CAMBIASO (Italy): On behalf of the Italian Government and on my own behalf, allow me first, Sir, to express to you the warmest congratulations on your unanimous election to preside over this very important Committee. I am fully confident that under your skilful guidance our work will be constructive and we shall be able to achieve those positive results that in the present favourable circumstances world public opinion is expecting.

While fully sharing and supporting the views expressed by the representative of France on behalf of the 12 members of the European Community, I cannot miss the opportunity of this debate - at a time of positive change in the international situation and of great promise in various disarmament negotiations - to illustrate Italy's position on some specific and most important issues.

In general, I should underline our satisfaction over the developments that have taken place since the last session of the General Assembly, which seem to justify great optimism and trust that we are finally setting out on the right track - after so many years - towards the dramatic reduction of the most offensive and dangerous categories of armaments, and the consequent establishment of a more secure and stable world at lower level of forces and weapons.

The Italian Government feels, in particular, that the East-West dialogue on disarmament issues has intensified and achieved remarkable progress towards concrete results that had proven elusive until very recently. The latest Soviet-American high-level meetings in Wyoming seem to have imparted a further, very appreciable impulse to the search for essential agreements, both in the field of nuclear strategic armaments and in other crucial fields of arms control.

Italy welcomes such developments and firmly believes that we should take the utmost advantage of this favourable moment and promote the dynamic trend of disarmament negotiations in order to achieve an irreversible drastic reduction of

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the military component in international relations. The United Nations can play an important role in this field, establishing the conditions in which the level of conflict in the world will gradually decrease and the use of force will be abandoned. We believe that the current level of technological development, especially in the field of armaments, leaves no alternative, short of catastrophe, to the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, and that the most proper answer can therefore be found in an enhanced role for the United Nations and its organs, primarily the Security Council, and the Secretary-General.

As I have said, in the view of the Italian Government, some unprecedented progress has recently been made towards the achievement of a number of important disarmament goals. In fact, it seems to us that one of the most remarkable developments is represented by the latest turn towards the possible solution of remaining obstacles on the path to a strategic arms reduction agreement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on a 50 per cent reduction of their strategic arsenals. The Italian Government, like many other Governments, attaches great priority to this goal. We feel, in fact, that increased strategic stability at much lower levels of forces can further strengthen the prospects of peace and bring about more fruitful international relations, beneficial to all peoples.

Italy has always believed that the conclusion of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty was only a first, though very promising, step towards the reduction of nuclear weapons, and that additional, even more important steps would quickly follow. The successful experience of the conclusion and implementation of this Treaty, to which Italy has contributed, is already showing its positive effects, and represents a historic achievement in the process of nuclear disarmament.

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We trust that in the wake of these developments multilateral efforts will also bear fruit, as we believe that, with vertical reductions of nuclear arsenals, there will be a strengthening of the non-proliferation régime. In this context, the Italian Government believes that the successful outcome of the 1990 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is essential to strengthen the prospects of nuclear disarmament. We are firmly determined to work towards this goal with the utmost sense of commitment.

Among the multilateral endeavours in the field of arms control, reductions of conventional armaments bear great significance if we are really to minimize the risk of conflicts and to promote a restructuring of economic priorities in favour of civil and social development. In this context, the Vienna negotiations on conventional armed forces in Europe constitute, in our view, a very good example of how to pursue greater stability at lower levels of forces. A decrease in the concentration of armaments on the European continent, where it has been highest over long decades, will, hopefully, help to set in motion a process of general reduction of the arms build-up. Italy believes that Member States have a duty to contribute to such a process and renounce expensive and dangerous programmes of conventional rearmament. At this stage of technological advance all weapons, including conventional ones, become increasingly destructive and pose a great risk to the survival of mankind.

It is on the basis of these considerations that the Italian Government finds it essential to identify ways and means to achieve increased transparency and openness in arms transfers, with a view to some limitations and the prevention of illegal deals. We welcome the opportunity of an in-depth reflection on these issues offered by the forthcoming study by the Secretary-General, with the

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assistance of governmental experts. We stand ready to ensure the utmost contribution to this study and to its eventual follow-up, which we believe has great importance for us all.

Indeed, we believe that military forces should have the purpose of individual and collective self-defence and that all countries should promote their gradual restructuring on the basis of such concepts with a view to ensuring durable and positive peace, enhancing mutual confidence and facilitating an improvement of international relations on the basis of co-operation and solidarity. In the field of confidence-building, Italy is convinced that the implementation of the measures agreed at the 1986 Stockholm Conference is fully satisfactory, and believes that in other regions of the world such ways could be usefully explored.

The Italian Government wishes 1990 to be a crucial year in the overdue negotiating process for the total ban of chemical weapons, and expects this to be the year of the long-awaited final conclusion of the convention. However, for this to come about we believe it will be necessary to consolidate the common political will so as to conclude negotiations in Geneva within a specific and close deadline; it would thus be possible to avoid its indefinite postponement to a future which we all envisage to be close, but which in fact is slipping further and further away.

(Mr. Negrotto Cambiaso, Italy)

My Government believes that there comes a point in any negotiations when it is necessary to show the political will to carry them to a positive conclusion. That need was clearly expressed in March by Mr. Genscher, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, when for the second consecutive year he went to Geneva, together with Mr. Andreotti, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, to convey strong political support a few weeks after the conclusion of the Paris Conference. On that occasion Mr. Genscher said, inter alia, that "It is possible to solve by the end of this year the problems still obstructing the conclusion of a convention".

Since that day in March 1989 we have been able to count on the excellent in-depth analysis of various technical, legal and political aspects that has been carried out by the Ad Hoc Committee, under the intelligent and dedicated guidance of its Chairman, Ambassador Morel. Sweden's forthcoming chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Committee also promises to be very encouraging. The report submitted to the General Assembly by the Conference on Disarmament shows in concrete terms the progress achieved at the 1989 session. We do not claim that everything is now settled. Rather, we should like to confirm our total agreement with the solution of the pending essential technical aspects, which are not to be underestimated. We consider, however, that the work accomplished so far allows us better to distinguish the essential points that remain to be clarified and agreed upon - for example, verification or institutional aspects - from those which, on the basis of an evolving approach, could be subsequently dealt with once the convention is actually being implemented. We cannot exclude the possibility that the convention will have certain flaws, which, in our view, can only be eliminated by means of subsequent constant fine tuning.

(Mr. Negrotto Cambiaso, Italy)

The optimistic and resolute approach with which the Italian Government looks ahead to the future of those negotiations found further encouragement in the address by President Bush to the United Nations. It was a meaningful address for the Conference on Disarmament, since it brought hope and confirmed the extraordinary commitment of the President of the United States to the total elimination of the chemical threat. We also welcomed the resolve of the United States and the Soviet Union - reaffirmed at Jackson Hole by the two Foreign Ministers - to spare no effort to give an effective and decisive impetus to the banning of chemical weapons and the destruction of the respective arsenals on the basis of a universal and verifiable agreement. As early as the spring of 1988 Italy was one of the co-sponsors of the initiative introduced by the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States calling for the exchange of data prior to the entry into force of the convention.

We have also carried out a trial inspection with regard to verification, both on a national basis and with the participation of foreign experts and scientists. I am today in a position to state that Italy stands ready for any other possible verification arrangement, even on an intermediate and preliminary basis, if it is conducive to the positive conclusion of the multilateral negotiations.

Another quite encouraging factor is the positive outcome of the Canberra Conference. It witnessed, for the first time, unanimous agreement by the international chemical industry on the need for the ban and for its urgent implementation. I would like to express the appreciation and gratitude of the Italian authorities to the Australian Government. The Italian Government also considers appropriate the proposal put forward in that framework to set up in Geneva a group of experts to provide the negotiations with constant advice on

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outstanding technical aspects and to establish the necessary co-ordination between public authorities and the industrial sector.

We are convinced that the specific provisions of the convention should allow for both technological progress and for the development of the chemical industry in countries not yet able to satisfy their own basic national needs. Those countries too should be given the capability to ensure committed support for the ban, while at the same time they should be able to feel that they are adequately represented in the central bodies in charge of the convention's implementation. To that end we consider that the Executive Council represents a crucial point for the future effectiveness of the ban. It should therefore be structured in such a way that member countries feel they are adequately and actively represented.

My Government is firmly convinced that an arms race in outer space should be prevented. Greater efforts should therefore be made to increase understanding about what is currently taking place in the outer-space environment.

The Conference on Disarmament is the only existing multilateral forum on the issue. Debate within the competent subsidiary body, albeit still in a preliminary phase, should continue. Encouraging indications emerged within that framework as a result of the substantive and high-quality activity carried out at the 1989 session. Greater participation by delegations led to the submission of a number of suggestions and proposals worthy of attentive consideration.

Further progress should also be pursued on such issues as correct and uniform terminology, appropriate and stable relationships between bilateral and multilateral forums, improved access to information, the strengthening of the existing régime governing outer space and the promotion of confidence-building measures consistent with technological innovations. In that framework we also believe that growing stability in space relationships can greatly benefit from

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strengthened co-operation in the civil exploitation of space, given the close interconnection between the civil and military uses of outer space.

Any viable and effective initiative put forward with the purpose of fostering international security, preserving stability and increasing transparency in outer space should be taken into account. At this stage we believe it to be of the highest importance for bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on space and defence issues to achieve positive results in order to meet growing expectations that developments on a bilateral level promote advancement on the multilateral level as well.

As to the question of effective international arrangements to ensure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, the Italian Government is still convinced that the issue deserves more effort and attentive consideration, since it represents an important step towards nuclear disarmament and the achievement of greater stability and security. The lack of progress within the subsidiary body of the Conference on Disarmament registered once again at the 1989 session at Geneva is in growing contradiction with the increasingly positive international climate.

Italy remains willing to search for further improvements in the existing situation in this field and to consider any constructive proposals that may be put before the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament. Moreover, since, in our view, nuclear non-proliferation commitments by non-nuclear-weapon States legitimize greater expectations vis-à-vis nuclear-weapon States, wider adherence to the non-proliferation Treaty or to regional arrangements, such as those of Tlatelolco and Raretonga, should be envisaged.

As a non-nuclear-weapon State, Italy would encourage efforts towards a single consensus resolution on negative security assurances. In our view such a significant development could represent a further step towards better understanding

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and a community of ideas between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States. However, we would like to stress that we cannot accept the premise that, lacking a single common formula, nothing has been achieved. On the contrary, it is our firm belief that, while searching for improvement of a more comprehensive nature on this issue, the existing unilateral guarantees given by the five nuclear-weapon States provide a consistent and reliable ground upon which to build further.

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The Italian Government continues to take an active part in the efforts aimed at creating more favourable conditions for the pursuance of the ultimate goal of a verifiable and comprehensive nuclear test ban. We wish to reiterate our support for the efforts made to identify a procedural compromise and an appropriate mandate for the resumption at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament of the Ad Hoc Committee on a nuclear test ban. We consider that such efforts are far from having exhausted their purpose. We also welcome the continued important activity of the Group of Scientific Experts on seismic events, which we regard as an indispensable component of a future multilateral verification régime for nuclear explosions.

The objective of re-establishing a subsidiary body at the Conference on Disarmament on the item is all the more important if we bear in mind the deadlines for the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1990. In fact, there appears to be little doubt as to the legitimacy of the security concerns of the non-nuclear-weapon States, in particular of those that have undertaken specific obligations by signing the NPT. It is therefore necessary to unite our efforts in order to identify a realistic and efficient formula which would adequately take into account reciprocal requirements. This should in turn be conducive to the elaboration of a future programme of work taking account of the important deadlines in such a way as to make sure that we refrain from purely abstract and confrontational exercises unlikely to lead to progress and that we concentrate instead on a pragmatic approach likely to make possible substantive achievement on a step-by-step basis.

The Fourth Review Conference on the sea-bed Treaty, which took place in Geneva in September this year, has once again confirmed the effectiveness of this Treaty as an instrument of international law of a preventive nature. The Italian Government welcomes the unanimous recognition that the Treaty has served its

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purpose well and that no violation of its provisions is to be reported. One of the results of the meeting which, however, seems worthy of specific mention and which is viewed with particular satisfaction by the Italian delegation is the direct and active involvement of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the process with regard to verification and technological developments relevant to the Treaty.

Italy wishes to reiterate its full commitment to the cause of disarmament and peace. We shall spare no effort to facilitate the rapid and significant progress of the arms control process during the coming, decisive, months. In our view, some results which may have a great influence on future events seem now at hand, and should be pursued with the utmost determination.

We are also willing to promote an enhanced role for the United Nations in this context. It is with this in mind that we look with particular interest to the work of this Committee during the present session of the General Assembly, and wish you, and all the delegations participating in the deliberations, every possible success.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

I draw the Committee's attention to the following decision of the General Assembly:

"Delegations should exercise their right of reply at the end of the day whenever two meetings have been scheduled for that day and whenever such meetings are devoted to the consideration of the same item.

"The number of interventions in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to two per item.

"The first intervention in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting should be limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention should be limited to five minutes."

(The Chairman)

I should also like to point out that interventions made in exercise of the right of reply, and replies to them, should be delivered in the spirit which has characterized the general debate so far.

I call on the representative of Iraq.

Mr. ALMUSAWI (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): I am not exercising the right of reply to engage in verbal warfare with my neighbour the representative of Iran. The war has already been decided in the field, victory going to one and the "bitterness of poison" to the other. I want only to state that Iran's incessant unfounded allegations against Iraq do not serve the cause of peace. I say so as my country prepares to celebrate, tomorrow, the completion of the campaign to reconstruct Faw, destroyed by Iran during its wartime occupation of the city. The process of reconstruction is one of Iraq's efforts to foster a climate of peace and confidence-building. Other instances which I mention only as examples and not exhaustively at all, are the reconstruction of border towns, especially Basrah, the demobilization of the First Special Brigade and five army divisions, and the disbanding of all sectors of the Popular Army.

In order to shed light on the truth, allow me to recall the following to refresh the memory of the representative of Iran.

First, he lamented the slow implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). He appears to forget that Iran rejected that resolution for a whole year, describing it in the most foul terms. Then, after its military defeat, Iran accepted that resolution. He also seems to forget that Iran's refusal of the principle of direct negotiations and its selective conditions have obstructed the implementation of that resolution. If Iran does have the political will to carry out this peace plan, then it must initiate the process of the exchange of prisoners in accordance with the third Geneva Convention, of 1949, which stipulates the release of prisoners without delay after the cessation of effective hostilities.

(Mr. Almusawi, Iraq)

Secondly, reports by the Secretary-General of the United Nations based on the findings of his expert missions to both Iran and Iraq confirm Iran's use of chemical weapons on all fronts in its expansionist war against Iraq.

(Mr. Almusawi, Iraq)

The representative of Iran knows better than anyone that his régime possesses chemical weapons and the means of their production, and that it is striving to develop its technological capabilities in this field. Was it not the Minister responsible for the Iranian guards who declared on 2 September 1988 on Tehran radio that that country has a group working on the manufacture of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons? Was not that reaffirmed by the now President of Iran, when he stated last year that Iran was working to enhance its capability to produce chemical, bacteriological and nuclear weapons? In addition, news agencies carry frequent reports to the effect that Iran is concluding suspicious transactions to upgrade its military chemical industry. It is regrettable that Iran persists in justifying its defeat in war by raising the issue of chemical weapons, while disregarding the true cause of the war - its ambitions on Arab territory it coveted, and the infamous principle that Iran adopted: the principle of exporting revolution.

Thirdly, the representative of Iran referred to the victims of gas chambers. I do not know why he does not bat an eyelid over the daily massacre of Palestinian children, who confront all kinds of weapons, including tear gas and other gases.

Fourthly, the representative of Iran lamented the fate of the national minorities in Iraq, ignoring the sinister record of the Iranian régime in dealing with the various Iranian peoples and the sequels of Iran's aggressive war and the havoc it wrought among those peoples. I remind him that the Kurds in my country enjoy all legitimate national rights, under a system of self-government. What has Iran done for its minorities? I shall not refer to human rights, because that matter can be raised in another forum.

Mr. ZIPPORI (Israel): The delegations of Libya, Kuwait and Bahrain have seen fit to repeat here once again the accusation about collaboration in the nuclear field between Israel and South Africa. Israel is repeatedly singled out and condemned for alleged nuclear collaboration with South Africa. My Government has categorically rejected this allegation.

What does the United Nations have to say on the subject? In the annex to the report of the Secretary-General on the subject dated 1981 (A/36/431), it states:

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

(A/36/431, para. 13)

That was in 1981. What has happened since? On 15 May 1986 the United Nations distributed a report by a team of experts from Nigeria, Sweden, the Soviet Union, Venezuela and France, who had investigated South Africa's nuclear-weapon capability. The 44-page document was presented at the United Nations World Conference on Sanctions against Racist South Africa, held in Paris in June 1986. It is the most comprehensive report ever issued by the United Nations on the subject. Certain countries are mentioned in the context of nuclear collaboration with South Africa. Israel is not among them.

The false allegation of nuclear collaboration between Israel and South Africa is nothing but an empty political campaign to discredit Israel in the eyes of black Africa. The continued repetition of an untruth does not make it true.

The Libyan representative has accused Israel of threatening the other States in the region. We have stated many times that it is our policy not to be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East. No responsible Israeli leader

(Mr. Zippori, Israel)

has ever threatened anyone. The Libyan dictator has a very different idea of international relations. In a far-reaching interview published in the United States publication Vanity Fair in July this year, he advocated the destruction of Israel and the expulsion of its Jewish inhabitants. He also stated:

"The Arabs are compelled to own and possess nuclear weapons. The Palestinian State must have the right to its own weapons, to have chemical weapons, to have nuclear weapons."

The writer of the article went on later:

"He said the Arabs needed nuclear weapons in the same way the United States and Libya needed mutual understanding, as though it were the most natural, non-controversial thing in the world."

That is the President of a country whose representative has today declared his country's devotion to nuclear non-proliferation.

Mr. MASHHADI (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am sorry to have to speak at this late hour, but I was astonished to hear what the representative of Iraq said, since in my statement this morning I made no reference to Iraq. Rather, my statement was based upon general observations and general principles of my country and my delegation.

With regard to the first point, implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987), as the representative of Iraq said, it is more than two years since the resolution was adopted, and it is more than a year since the cease-fire between the two countries was established, and still the resolution has not been implemented. We believe that there is a slow pace in the resolution's implementation, and we asked for its speedy implementation. That was a request to the international community and the Security Council, which adopted the resolution by consensus. There was no need for the representative of Iraq to return to the jingoistic

(Mr. Mashhadi, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

attitude of his Government, saying which country was the victor and which was the vanquished. That was a resolution of the Security Council and it must be implemented. If he does not want it, he can say so, in other words.

Secondly, with regard to chemical weapons, I did not refer to Iraq in my statement, and I do not know why the representative of Iraq thought it was a reference to his country when I spoke of the use of chemical weapons. I did not say that Iraq had used chemical weapons, but if the representative of Iraq wishes to admit that his Government used chemical weapons and asks for the credit for it, I shall not deprive him of that pleasure. Of course, everybody has read the reports of the Security Council and the teams dispatched to the area to investigate the use of chemical weapons, and I shall be happy if the name of Iran as a user of chemical weapons be found there.

(Mr. Mashhadi, Islamic
Republic of Iran)

The third point concerned why we did not refer to Israel's use of asphyxiating gas against the Palestinian people. Our position is that we condemn any use of chemical weapons anywhere, any time, by any State or party. Two wrongs do not make a right.

Concerning the point about the Iraqi Kurds, I have a question: Are Iranian Kurds in Iraq and Turkey or vice versa?

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.