Resolution 35/142 A appeals to all States, in particular the most heavily armed States, to exercise self-restraint in their military expenditures pending the conclusion of agreements on the reduction of military expenditures.

Reduction of military budgets represents a disarmament-related question, on which the attention of the international community has rightly been focused.

Since the reduction of military budgets is part of the general issue of disarmament, Italy considers that it should be dealt with on the basis of the same fundamental principles guiding disarmament, among which the maintenance of the balance is central, as a condition for international security.

As a matter of fact, to the extent it does affect defence expenditures, reduction of military budgets could have serious destabilizing consequences for the security of States if the principle of balanced reduction was not fully applied. Reductions in terms of percentage points or in absolute figures to be applied uniformly to all States could in fact create or consolidate imbalances, since defence spending varies considerably from country to country according to their respective security thresholds.

This is why paragraph 5 of resolution 35/142 A states, inter alia, that action to be carried out by the Disarmament Commission under the point in its agenda entitled "Reduction of military budgets" should be regarded as complementary to any other ongoing activity within the framework of the United Nations related to the question of reduction of military budgets.
In the view of the Italian Government, since the size of military expenditures of States vary according to different estimates, it is essential to determine in an objective and verifiable manner the expenditures actually affected by States to defence. Such a determination seems to be an indispensable preliminary step for proceeding with good prospects of success to any negotiation with a view to reaching agreement on reductions of military budgets without affecting the security of any concerned country.

In this respect, Italy attaches the greatest importance to the fact that a first reporting instrument for military expenditures has already become available for general and regular implementation as well as to the activity that, according to resolution 35/142 B, the Secretary-General has been requested to carry out, with the assistance of an ad hoc group of qualified experts in the field of military budgets, in order to refine further this reporting instrument during its general and regular implementation, on the basis of future comments and suggestions received from States.

Of course, only a truly universal participation of countries of all regions will make possible an adequate solution of the question of comparing the military expenditures of different States, including those whose budgetary structures and categorization procedures are different from those normally used.

Since only in this way will it be possible to establish the necessary prerequisite for agreements on the reduction of military budgets in full respect of the central need for undiminished security, the Italian Government emphasizes the importance of the recommendation made by the General Assembly in its resolution 35/142 B "that all Member States should make use of the reporting instrument and report annually to the Secretary-General their military expenditures of the latest fiscal year for which data are available".
Believing that all peoples have a right to peace, security and economic and social development, the Rwandese Government cannot but be concerned at the ever-growing danger to mankind posed by the unbridled arms race and at the harmful effects of that race on the economic and social development of all nations, but especially of the poorest countries.

In line with that position, the Rwandese Government reaffirms its profound commitment to the principles of the Charter and its unswerving will to co-operate with other peace-loving nations in the pursuit of conditions conducive to the cessation of the arms race, especially the race in nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction, with the ultimate aim of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

In that connexion, the Rwandese Government shares the view that the reduction of military expenditure will effectively help to bring about a cessation of the arms race, while releasing resources for development, especially for the benefit of the developing countries. The reduction of military budgets can also contribute in some measure to confidence-building at the regional level.

However, the Rwandese Government believes that any reduction of military budgets must take place on a basis agreed upon between States and take into account each country's level of armament, so that greater efforts are required of the heavily armed States. Percentage or absolute-figure limits might be set for each country, especially the great Powers.
Disarmament cannot, however, be divorced from questions of security. Precisely because disarmament measures can help to promote security, they should be subject to effective verification. In that connexion, a system of permanent and effective international control under United Nations supervision is a necessity.

Moreover, reductions should be made first and as a matter of priority in the unprecedented expenditure devoted to research and experimentation on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and to their manufacture.

Conventional weapons, even though their scope is limited in comparison with nuclear weapons, constitute a danger and a heavy burden for the economies of a large number of countries. The cost of purchasing sophisticated weapons and equipment and maintaining the men who swell the ranks of the armies weighs heavily on the economies of many countries.

In that regard, every State should:

(a) Limit its standing army to the minimum level required for the defence of its national territory;

(b) Limit its expenditure to the purchase of weapons and equipment that are primarily defensive rather than offensive;

(c) Keep its defence budget down to a reasonable percentage of the national budget;

(d) Refrain from acquiring arms and recruiting men with the aim of threatening its neighbours; in so far as "deterrence" is nothing more than a threat, the principle should be abandoned.

As a general rule, if measures for the reduction of military budgets are to be practicable, all States should endeavour to observe the principles set forth in the United Nations Charter for ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security, namely, respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the non-use of force, and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.