

UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

UNITED NATIONS
CENTRE FOR DISARMAMENT
DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL AND SECURITY AFFAIRS
Reference: A/CN.10/PV.10



A/CN.10/PV.10
15 May 1979

ENGLISH

DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 15 May 1979, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. VELLODI

(India)

- General exchange of views

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages, preferably in the same language as the text to which they refer. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also, if possible, incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room A-3550.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

The CHAIRMAN: As agreed yesterday, the Commission will begin this morning a general exchange of views focusing on our priority item - namely, the consideration of a comprehensive programme of disarmament. It is my hope, as I stated yesterday, that this exchange of views, together with the final document of the special session and other relevant documentation -- including, in particular, document A/CN.10/1 and its addenda, reproducing the comments received from a fairly large number of Governments of Member States in reply to the Secretary-General's communication of 16 January 1979 soliciting their views on the elements of a comprehensive programme - will provide adequate source material for the detailed consideration of agenda item 3 by the Working Group, which will commence its work on Monday, 21 May.

In this context, and in an attempt to clarify the parameters within which the Commission should deliberate on this item, I take the liberty of making some observations which I hope will help to highlight the considerations we should keep in mind as we embark on the consideration of the elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament.

As I see it, there are three issues on which we should seek consensus in the Commission and in our recommendations to the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly. Essentially, they are the following: First, what is understood by the term "comprehensive programme of disarmament"? Secondly, what should be the constituent elements of such a programme? And, thirdly, what are the respective roles of the Disarmament Commission and the Committee on Disarmament in dealing with the finalization of the comprehensive programme of disarmament?

I trust that the exchange of views between now and Friday will help, at least to some extent, to clarify these issues on the basis of generally agreed parameters.

(The Chairman)

The first issue deals with the definition and the objectives of a comprehensive programme of disarmament. Many of the replies received from Member States to the Secretary-General's communication of 16 January 1979 contain extremely useful and valuable ideas and thoughts on this question. It would appear to me that a consensus already exists on the link between a comprehensive programme for disarmament and the goal of general and complete disarmament. To put it differently, there is recognition of the fact that we need a comprehensive programme of disarmament to progress toward the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament. If this basic premise is accepted, the answer to the second question - namely, what should be the constituent elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament - may not be difficult to arrive at.

Resolution 2602 E (XXIV), adopted by the General Assembly in December 1969, was perhaps the first resolution that made a specific reference to the comprehensive programme of disarmament. One of the operative paragraphs of that resolution states that a comprehensive programme of disarmament must deal with

"all aspects of the problem of the cessation of the arms race and general and complete disarmament under effective international control".
(General Assembly resolution 2602 E (XXIV), para. 4)

The cessation or halting of the arms race is a short-term objective, and general and complete disarmament is a long-term objective. Therefore, it is clear to me that the comprehensive programme must necessarily cover both short-term and long-term objectives.

Paragraph 109 of the final document refers to a comprehensive programme of disarmament as

"encompassing all measures thought to be advisable in order to ensure that the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control becomes a reality in a world in which international peace and security prevail and in which the new international economic order is strengthened and consolidated". (General Assembly resolution S-10/2, para. 109)

(The Chairman)

That would mean, in my opinion, that the comprehensive programme should not deal merely with measures of arms control and disarmament, but should also encompass related issues of international peace and security and economic and social development.

It would therefore seem to me that the initiation and development of confidence-building measures and the link between disarmament and development must find a legitimate and prominent place in the comprehensive programme of disarmament.

Needless to say, so far as disarmament and arms control are concerned, the comprehensive programme must cover all aspects of the problem. Here again, the final document of the special session provides adequate source material.

I shall now deal with the third question, relating to the respective roles of the Disarmament Commission and the Committee on Disarmament. Here we have to start from the respective mandates referred to in paragraphs 109 and 118 (a) of the final document of the special session. Paragraph 109 states that

"the Committee on Disarmament will undertake the elaboration of a comprehensive programme of disarmament ...".

This is also in keeping with earlier decisions of the General Assembly, starting with resolution 2602 E (XXIV), which entrusted the Geneva negotiating forum with the task of working out a comprehensive programme of disarmament. Therefore, the role of the Committee on Disarmament in relation to the comprehensive programme is very clear. As far as the Disarmament Commission is concerned, the final document of the special session states, in paragraph 118 (a) that

"The Disarmament Commission should, inter alia, consider the elements of a comprehensive programme for disarmament to be submitted as recommendations to the General Assembly and, through it, ... to the Committee on Disarmament".

Although there is reference to a comprehensive programme "of" disarmament in the context of the Committee on Disarmament and a comprehensive programme "for" disarmament in the context of the Disarmament Commission, we should assume that they are one and the same.

(The Chairman)

Thus, we in this forum are mandated by the General Assembly to "... consider the elements of a comprehensive programme for disarmament..." (Ibid.) What do we understand by the term "elements"? Some of us who participated in a seminar on this subject last week-end were told that the dictionary definitions of the word "element" are: first, "a fundamental, essential or irreducible constituent of a composite unity"; and, secondly, "a basic assumption or proposition". I submit that the first definition is more relevant and appropriate in our context. In other words, the comprehensive programme is to be viewed as a composite entity and the elements we are asked to consider are its fundamental and essential constituents.

I have already referred to what, according to the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Final Document of the tenth special session, should be the parameters that we should take into account while identifying the elements of a comprehensive programme for disarmament. The Final Document of the special session and the replies from Governments contained in documents A/CN.10/1 and Add.1 provide useful suggestions in this regard.

Finally, I come to the question of what the Disarmament Commission is mandated to undertake at this session on this question. We have been asked - and I wish to make this very clear - not merely to identify the elements but also to consider them and make our recommendations on them to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session and, through it, to the Committee on Disarmament. I would therefore venture to submit that we should attempt not merely to identify or list the elements but also to explain in some detail the relevance and importance of those elements in the formulation of the comprehensive programme which is to be elaborated by the Committee on Disarmament in the form of a formal document, which we hope will be ready for consideration at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament scheduled to be held in 1982.

Before I conclude, I should like to touch upon another important point that came up repeatedly during my consultations and which has a bearing on the deliberations of the Commission on the question of a comprehensive programme of disarmament. Specifically, the issue is whether, with the

(The Chairman)

consideration of the elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament, the Commission's involvement in the formulation of the programme is completed. Since the Commission's general mandate is

"... to consider and make recommendations on various problems in the field of disarmament..." (Ibid),

and since the formulation of a comprehensive programme is an essential and integral part of this continuing exercise, I would submit for the Commission's consideration that what we have been asked to do by way of recommendations to the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly cannot be a one-shot process and that this forum, which represents in a sense the global constituency in the area of disarmament, should be continuously involved in the drawing up of the comprehensive programme which is related to general and complete disarmament and is thus the concern of the whole of mankind.

The last sentence of paragraph 109 of the Final Document states:

"The comprehensive programme should contain appropriate procedures for ensuring that the General Assembly is kept fully informed of the progress of the negotiations, including an appraisal of the situation when appropriate and, in particular, a continuing review of the implementation of the programme."

I trust that in their statements in the coming days representatives will direct their attention to this important aspect of the problem so that an appropriate recommendation on this issue can also be included in our report to the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

I understand from the Secretary that we have speakers - perhaps not adequate numbers of them - for all the meetings between now and Friday afternoon. As I said yesterday, it is our intention to close the list of speakers at 5 p.m. today. As of now, we have three speakers for this morning and four for this afternoon; for tomorrow and the day after the list looks a little better. Once again I appeal to those who wish to participate in this general exchange of views to give their names to the Secretary of the Commission.

Mr. LA ROCCA (Italy): Mr. Chairman, my delegation is most gratified to see you presiding once again over our deliberations and we assure you of our full co-operation in the implementation of the complex and delicate task before us. I am sure that under your wise leadership and effective guidance this Commission will be able to progress in the search for solutions to the problems which are crucial to the fulfilment of our mandate.

The tenth special session was able to revitalize the long-dormant Disarmament Commission as a continuing deliberative body. In so doing, the session afforded us both the forum and the time necessary to examine in depth the possible measures for accelerating progress towards disarmament.

This Commission in particular has been entrusted, along with its other responsibilities, with a most important mandate, that is, to consider at this session, with priority, the elements of a comprehensive disarmament programme to be submitted as recommendations to the General Assembly and, through it, to the Committee on Disarmament.

The Italian delegation has already noted such decisions with satisfaction. For many years Italy has stressed the need to incorporate the progress made, or to be made, in specific sectors of disarmament into the comprehensive framework of a coherent and articulated programme of disarmament, to be achieved gradually and in stages. Our proposals in this regard have been included in the Final Document, and I should like to reiterate here our satisfaction at that decision, as well as at the decision to begin concrete preparation of the comprehensive programme.

Now we have gathered to discuss with priority the elements of this future programme, on the basis of the legacy acquired during the debates which have taken place both here and at Geneva. This legacy has recently been enriched by the comments on the subject submitted by Member States to the Secretary-General. Thus we have an ample fund of documentation and ideas upon which to draft together a plan which, in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the Programme of Action, should contain the guidelines of a medium-term and long-term scheme aimed at achieving the final goal of a disarmed and secure world.

For too long a time the world has been living between hope and fear, and yet with confidence that in the long run a higher common interest - the superior interest of mankind - can and must prevail; that in the end it will be possible

(Mr. La Rocca, Italy)

to achieve the goal of a disarmed, more stable and more just world based on a permanent peace, and on mutual trust, and not on a precarious military balance. This is the fundamental hope of the international community which was reiterated in the consensus Final Document adopted at the special session.

In spite of the discouragement - albeit understandable - that we may experience at times in the face of the extreme difficulty of halting and reversing the arms race, we all remain convinced of the absolute necessity for disarmament. The lack of substantial results in many sectors of arms control and disarmament should not overshadow the fact that the current historical phase offers a most significant opportunity to achieve the progress for which we all aim, as the proceedings of the special session and the last session of the General Assembly have clearly confirmed. It is clear, however, that we will not be able to say that we have reduced or eliminated the dangers associated with the world's arms race until we have engaged in a far-reaching and decisive disarmament process. As long as huge resources, both human and material, are used to build engines of war, stability and peace will remain fragile.

(Mr. La Rocca, Italy)

Disarmament continues to be a major yardstick of our determination to establish a new trend in the history of humanity. As far as my delegation is concerned, I should like to reiterate here the solemn commitment of the Italian Government to sparing no effort, in any relevant forum, for the adoption of effective and balanced disarmament measures in both the conventional weapons sector and that of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear and chemical weapons - having in mind the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

In looking forward to such progress towards disarmament, we must of course bear in mind the complexities of the present international situation, in which the global arms race is accompanied by other disturbing developments, threatening the structure of national societies as well as of the international community, in particular the economic imbalances among various areas of the world and the dramatic consequences of those imbalances. These are problems of such magnitude that they induce us to seek, all the more, the co-operation and solidarity at the international level which is essential if we are to proceed collectively to the construction of a more just international order truly inspired by the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

We are encouraged, in this regard, by the significance which the disarmament debate has assumed, especially in the time since the special session. This confirms our view that, in its consideration of the various disarmament problems, the international community has perceived an occasion to stress again the absolute necessity of seeking solutions to its problems through a more intense and direct dialogue, especially among the great Powers - all of which are here present - and, in general, through a return to a more co-operative atmosphere on the global level. In this framework Italy welcomes with satisfaction the announcement that SALT II negotiations between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will soon be concluded, and notes that this important agreement, which limits to equal levels the intercontinental nuclear weapons of the two super-Powers, is in fact a true disarmament agreement, because it will bring about a reduction of the systems exceeding the agreed level.

Without any doubt, SALT II will give an important new impulse to disarmament negotiations.

(Mr. La Rocca, Italy)

The Italian working paper (A/AC.187/97), which is recalled in the Secretariat report containing the comments of Governments in view of the discussions on the comprehensive programme during the sessions of the Commission, has attempted to take into account short-term and more urgent measures and, at the same time, to draft the main lines of a continuous disarmament process. It therefore contemplates the total prohibition of nuclear tests; the strengthening of a régime of non-proliferation, both vertical and horizontal, and the limitation and gradual elimination of existing nuclear stockpiles; a complete ban on chemical weapons and the destruction of present stockpiles; the prohibition of other well-identified weapons of mass destruction; and the control of the increasingly serious problem of international transfers of conventional weapons, as well as their gradual reduction. On a parallel with efforts towards nuclear disarmament should be established a substantial reduction of conventional weapons, according to an organic and balanced scheme for the achievement of the ultimate goal of the total elimination of all weapons, under effective international control.

Such a continuous process - to be carried out in successive stages, but without rigid time-tables - would enable us not only to cover in a gradual and orderly manner the distance towards a disarmed and secure world, but also progressively to create the indispensable conditions for trust and security.

Each step of the disarmament programme should in fact be accompanied by the parallel adoption of adequate provisions for collective security so that all States will feel truly protected. Progress in the search for methods for the peaceful settlement of disputes, for the organization of peace, and for the establishment of international security forces should correspond to progress made in the field of disarmament, which, in turn, should allow for the mobilization of additional resources for the improvement of social and economic conditions in all countries, and especially in the developing ones.

I consider it appropriate at this stage to stress again certain essential points on which there already seems to be a general consensus and from which we should begin.

(Mr. La Rocca, Italy)

Everyone recognizes that maintenance of the current volume of world armaments is extravagantly expensive; it would suffice to liberate even a fraction of the resources spent on them in order to confront in a substantial way some of the innumerable problems which face every country and mankind as a whole. Therefore we should commit ourselves in an open spirit to the effort to achieve concrete results in this field in the immediate future.

I also believe that all can agree on the importance of disarmament as a means to build confidence among nations - the confidence that would result from not being subject to threats from abroad. The very existence of a comprehensive plan will create trust, we believe, to the extent that it fulfils a number of basic requirements.

The programme should not entail, in any of its measures, military advantages for any one State or group of States. For this reason, the disarmament process must be comprehensive and world-wide, and must embrace all kinds of forces and weapons, as well as relevant military materials. The importance of nuclear disarmament is evident to all, but nuclear disarmament, if achieved in isolation from a ban on other types of weapons, would leave certain countries in a position of superiority with respect to conventional forces, thus creating imbalances bound to aggravate suspicion, nourish tensions and thus increase the risk of conflict. The real problem is to control and eventually remove the capacity of States to wage wars of any kind, through a gradual process which would preclude the possibility of any State's acquiring a dangerous military superiority over others.

Another fundamental principle for progress in the field of disarmament is that every measure and, consequently, every stage of the programme must be actually verifiable. In other words, each measure and phase of the disarmament process should be monitored in such a way that all countries would be assured of compliance and effectiveness, especially in respect of their national security and defence capability.

Trust must mature gradually, by stages, in an instinctive awareness of the ultimate goal. The trust nurtured in each phase of the disarmament process will most likely facilitate the solution of other political problems and exercise thus a positive influence on further disarmament efforts in a process of interaction, with widespread beneficial results.

(Mr. La Rocca, Italy)

It is our sincere hope that our discussion may also encourage substantive negotiations on urgent disarmament measures -- negotiations to be conducted in the Geneva body or elsewhere. For our part, in anticipation of the elaboration of the envisaged comprehensive programme, we have already sought to give impetus in Geneva to the adoption of these urgent measures stipulated in the Final Document of the special session and further specified at the thirty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly, in particular the total ban on nuclear tests and the prohibition of chemical weapons. We introduced a working paper (CD/5) on chemical weapons and another containing our suggestions for the application of paragraph 80 of the Programme of Action adopted at the special session. In fact, we maintain the necessity of adopting further specific measures to prevent an arms race in outer space, an area whose use must remain peaceful in the supreme interest of mankind.

At this stage I should like to deal more specifically with the subject of conventional disarmament. It seems evident that in a balanced and verifiable disarmament process characterized by the step-by-step approach and designed to enhance the security of States at a lower level of armaments, the conventional aspect cannot, by any means, be neglected or omitted.

In this context the Italian delegation deems it suitable to limit its remarks to two main points we consider of particular importance, while the thorough evaluation of the whole problem and of the solutions so far proposed will be reserved for the Committee on Disarmament.

Disarmament, and in particular conventional disarmament, must take into account, as far as possible, local and regional realities so as to avoid difficulties arising from the application, in a somewhat forced manner, of principles and means studied and approved on the basis of their general conformity to abstract schemes.

It is in this context of regional realities that, among other questions, the issue of international arms transfer has to be dealt with. As members of the Commission are aware, this constitutes one of the main points of the wider framework of conventional disarmament and can be resolved only through the joint initiative of all the countries concerned, on the basis of their specific involvement in the sector.

(Mr. La Rocca, Italy)

The urgent need for an initiative in this field that would supplement in an appropriate way the praiseworthy steps already taken by some countries is indeed evidenced by the massive increase in expenditure, together with the accumulation of ever more sophisticated weapons in many regions of the world.

At this point I would briefly recall the initiative of Mexico and other Latin American and Caribbean countries aimed at limiting the transfer of arms and military equipment in their areas. Italy considers this initiative an interesting and fruitful starting point. It should therefore be encouraged in order that a better understanding of all its implications may be reached and its structure developed.

Though the initiative of Mexico and other Latin American and Caribbean States is undoubtedly positive, we must not forget that in other many areas of the world there exist equally urgent problems of conventional disarmament and limitation of the transfer of conventional weapons. In that connexion, we consider it necessary to examine the timeliness of working out a more global structure capable of dealing with the question of the limitation of the transfer of conventional weapons and at the same time consistent with regional realities.

At the special session devoted to disarmament, Italy proposed that there be established, on the basis of Article 29 of the United Nations Charter, a subsidiary body of the Security Council in charge of controlling this trade and divided into parallel regional sub-committees whose membership would consist of major arms suppliers and of the main recipient countries of the region, in order that the volume of conventional weapons in each region might be maintained at the lowest acceptable level.

In spite of considerable support, some friendly countries stated that such a proposal would place too great an emphasis on the role of the Security Council. While reconfirming our view that the Security Council has an institutional competence in this field, we have been led by the constructive remarks of those countries to modify our proposal, though not in its substance. We therefore suggest the establishment of a United Nations agency for the control, on a regional basis, of the international transfer of conventional weapons through the conclusion of an adequate agreement within the United Nations framework.

(Mr. La Rocca, Italy)

I shall not dwell on the details of such an initiative, which will be illustrated in an ad hoc memorandum to be delivered to the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva, but I should like to recall once again that in Italy's view the agency's structure, subdivided into commissions where States of the region would be represented, is the only realistic way conceivable at present to face the problem, if one really intends to solve it.

Should the Italian initiative obtain the necessary support in Geneva, the Committee on Disarmament will be asked to carry out a study for setting out the necessary premises for a draft agreement on the establishment of the proposed agency. That agreement would subsequently be subject to the procedures provided for in the United Nations Charter.

My Government is well aware of the difficulties that a study of the limitation of international transfers of conventional weapons may entail. However, given the seriousness of the problem, there can be no doubt that some agreement, even if only partial as a first step, would serve the general interest, and it is in this spirit that the Italian Government submits these considerations to the Commission.

This session of our Commission presents some opportunities for increasing mutual trust and favouring agreement. By the contacts it establishes, by the results it hopes to achieve, our Commission can influence in a positive way both the general situation and the creation of favourable conditions for the negotiated solution of the problem on the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament.

There is no doubt that if at this very session the Commission could lay the groundwork for an agreement on the far-reaching plan that I have mentioned several times, if it could establish some important understandings, especially among the nuclear Powers, or even merely dispel some suspicion, a ray of hope would emerge among peoples conveying with it psychological encouragement and producing practical effects that would certainly extend beyond the scope of our agreement. It is up to all of us to act in such a spirit during the weeks to come that our work may help to produce all the results desired, in both the military and the psychological realm of disarmament.

I should like to conclude by expressing our full confidence that what has been called the "spirit of the special session" may continue to prevail during

(Mr. La Rocca, Italy)

our debates so that they may be infused with a mood of productiveness and mutual understanding. The reaffirmation of these sentiments, beyond the extreme difficulty of the subjects under consideration, would constitute an element of great value, signifying a denial of a certain pessimism and corresponding to the hopes of all peoples for the peace and security of the world.

Mr. KLESTIL (Austria): Mr. Chairman, first of all, I should like to express my delegation's sincere satisfaction at seeing you presiding over the work of this Commission. We have taken note with great interest of your introductory remarks, and I am confident that your well-known and lengthy experience in the field of disarmament will prove to be the best guarantee for constructive work in the coming weeks.

We are starting this week the first substantive session of the Disarmament Commission, which has been established in accordance with paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the special session devoted to disarmament. It is therefore only natural that we should now have embarked on what has been termed a general exchange of views on the items we find on our agenda. The Austrian delegation would like at this stage to express some general remarks on agenda item 3, "Consideration of the elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament".

(Mr. Klestil, Austria)

That should in no way be interpreted as a lack of interest on the part of this delegation as far as the other agenda items are concerned. However, we fully concur with your proposal, Mr. Chairman, that this Commission at its present session should focus primarily on questions related to the comprehensive programme on disarmament. In this connexion we take note of the agreed partition of work between the Disarmament Commission and the Committee on Disarmament, according to which the Commission would first consider the elements of the comprehensive programme whereas the Committee would start the relevant detailed negotiations. It will be up to the Commission in the course of this session, therefore, to employ its best endeavours in order to arrive at an agreement on the main components of the comprehensive programme and, in so doing, establish the structure of the programme.

My delegation has also taken note of the fact that the item "Comprehensive programme of disarmament leading to general and complete disarmament under effective international control" figures now as item X, that is the last item, on the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament. We would like to hope that this does not mean that the Committee will shelve consideration of this issue for the foreseeable future. If, as would appear from the Final Document of the special session, the elaboration of the comprehensive programme is considered by all Member States as an important issue, then all efforts should be undertaken to ensure that this task will be finalized in time for the second special session so that it could serve as a basis for consideration by that special session. I should also like to support the suggestion made in the reply of the Mexican Government in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 33/91 A to the effect that the partial reports by the Committee on Disarmament to the General Assembly on the preparation of the comprehensive programme should be examined also by the Commission, and that the Commission, in the course of its future meetings, should be in a position to express its views on the content of those reports. Only by following that procedure would it be possible to bring about an interaction between the two bodies so close as to ensure that the comprehensive programme would meet the concerns of all Member States of the United Nations and thus find general acceptance by both members and non-members of the Committee on Disarmament.

(Mr. Klestil, Austria)

Coming now to substantive questions in relation to the comprehensive programme I should first like to reiterate my Government's conviction that disarmament measures should be based on a global and comprehensive concept. Within this framework, partial measures have to be evaluated according to their possible contribution to more far-reaching disarmament objectives. Furthermore, disarmament efforts must take into account the interrelationship of different armament systems in military planning. For that reason, the pursuance of disarmament objectives relating to only one category of armaments will not yield positive results. Austria places particular emphasis on the equilibrium to be sought in all disarmament measures. Thus, throughout its various stages, disarmament must be considered in relation to the existing balance of power and must not jeopardize international security by giving any country or group of countries an advantage over others.

That basic approach can best be pursued within the framework of a comprehensive programme of disarmament which, while being directed towards the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament, acknowledges at the same time the usefulness of partial measures, which are not only meaningful but also hold out prospects for early realization. The comprehensive programme of disarmament should also reflect the necessity of various accompanying measures which must be taken to enable the process of disarmament to take place and to encourage that process. In this connexion more emphasis must be laid on institutional measures with regard to disarmament mechanisms; on measures for social and economic development and the conversion to social and economic development purposes of resources freed through disarmament measures; and on measures to strengthen existing peace-keeping and peace-making procedures as well as procedures for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The Austrian Government welcomes the approach taken by the special session devoted to disarmament with regard to a comprehensive programme of disarmament as reflected in paragraphs 109-111 of the Final Document because that approach coincides with these basic considerations.

On the basis of these general remarks the Austrian delegation considers that the comprehensive programme of disarmament should, inter alia, contain the following main components.

(Mr. Klestil, Austria)

First, objectives, principles and priorities. This section should contain a statement on the guiding principles for negotiations and measures in the field of disarmament and set forth the main priorities to be achieved. Wherever appropriate the comprehensive programme should reaffirm the relevant paragraphs of the Final Document of the special session. The relevant sections of the Declaration on Disarmament adopted by the special session have been carefully negotiated and contain in themselves a delicate balance. Furthermore the section on principles for disarmament negotiations has been elaborated in such a way that its value certainly goes beyond the first special session. Within the context of these principles and priorities the main objectives of the comprehensive programme, as reflected in paragraphs 109-111 of the Final Document, should be elaborated.

Secondly, disarmament measures. The main component of the comprehensive programme will have to take the form of a systematized presentation of all disarmament measures deemed to be conducive to general and complete disarmament. That presentation should be built upon the decisions and recommendations of the special session, which should be defined in a more concrete and action-oriented way. Furthermore the inclusion of additional disarmament measures of a medium-term and long-term nature will be necessary. In the context of measures which will have to be carried out over a longer period of time it might be advisable to include adequate procedures for a periodic review. The presentation of disarmament measures should reflect the basic consensus that general and complete disarmament will be achieved only through a step-by-step approach. However, the significance of every single step within the wider context of a process leading to general and complete disarmament should be clearly defined. Furthermore, the possibility of negotiations on different kinds of disarmament measures to be carried out concurrently should be recognized.

The various stages of the disarmament process will have to be designed in a flexible way, although the indication of certain realistic time frames may prove to be necessary, both in order to increase the political impact of the programme and to allow for subsequent evaluations of its implementation.

(Mr. Klestil, Austria)

The comprehensive programme will have to address the difficult problems posed by the continuous qualitative refinements in the weapons systems that are currently being produced and deployed, because they constitute today the essential question in the field of disarmament. We have to realize that this misguided technological ingenuity has a definite tendency to outstrip the pace of negotiations which still focus primarily on the quantitative aspects of the arms race. These developments are responsible for the growing momentum of the arms race, while at the same time introducing potentially destabilizing elements which work against an already precarious balance of deterrence. Therefore ways and means will have to be found to make disarmament negotiations more responsive to the constant technological improvements in weaponry, as well as to the growing interdependence between global and regional, nuclear and conventional components of the East-West military relationship. We are of course fully aware of the intricate problems encountered in any attempt to address the question of possible restrictions in military research and development. However, these problems will have to be faced and overcome through arduous negotiations, because otherwise all disarmament efforts will ultimately lose their usefulness.

(Mr. Klestil, Austria)

The comprehensive programme will have to place particular emphasis on effective measures of nuclear disarmament, to which at its special session the Assembly accorded the highest priority. In this connexion, in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the Final Document of the special session, the programme will have to call for appropriate and verifiable measures for the cessation of the qualitative improvement and development of nuclear-weapons testing; for the cessation of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes and the production of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery; and for a progressive and balanced reduction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. It will be of particular importance to realize the urgency of actual reductions of the stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, negotiations on nuclear disarmament will have to be extended to those categories of weapons that are at present not subject to any negotiations. The comprehensive programme should also contain measures designed to strengthen the non-proliferation régime based on the elaboration of generally acceptable and non-discriminatory safeguards under IAEA auspices and an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to engage in nuclear disarmament.

In this connexion, and in relation to questions of nuclear disarmament in general, my delegation welcomes the recent announcements regarding the forthcoming meeting between President Brezhnev and President Carter, at which the long awaited SALT-II treaty will be signed. We should like to express the hope that this positive development will in the near future be followed up by a new round of negotiations leading to a SALT-III treaty, which should place further restrictions on the nuclear arsenals of the two super-Powers and broaden the scope of the agreement reached so far.

Concerning other weapons of mass destruction, the comprehensive programme will have to provide for measures to ensure the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and their destruction, as well as for measures to prevent the emergence and development of new types of weapons of mass destruction based on new scientific principles and achievements. In this connexion, it is of course the earnest hope of this delegation that a treaty on the prohibition of chemical weapons, negotiations on which have now been going on for so many years, will be finalized in the very near future.

(Mr. Klestil, Austria)

The comprehensive programme should contain appropriate measures to put into effect the provision of paragraph 81 of the Final Document according to which, together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, the limitation and gradual reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons should be resolutely pursued within the framework of progress towards general and complete disarmament. In this connexion the Austrian Government wishes to repeat its view that such measures would most likely succeed at the regional level. The comprehensive programme will also have to incorporate in an appropriate form the results of the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Prohibitions or Restrictions of Use of Certain Conventional Weapons and should furthermore provide for procedures to broaden the agreements that might be reached at that Conference.

The reduction of military budgets, in particular the military budgets of the nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States, has been recognized by the General Assembly as an important disarmament measure that would increase the possibilities of the reallocation of resources now being used for military purposes to economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries. The comprehensive programme should therefore contain concrete steps for such reductions on the basis of the elaboration of a satisfactory instrument for standardized reporting on the military expenditures of Member States.

Movement towards greater openness regarding military budgets could in itself constitute an important confidence-building measure. The comprehensive programme should also give adequate consideration to the usefulness of other confidence-building measures such as prior notification of military manoeuvres and movements, the exchange of military observers, and the reduction of military presence in border areas, and it should explore the confidence-building effects of verification measures in general.

Finally, as far as the list of the main elements of the comprehensive programme is concerned, adequate attention will have to be paid to the disturbing phenomenon of the proliferation of the arms race into space. Developments in the relevant programmes of both the two major space Powers seem to be moving towards a new phase in space militarization characterized by the emplacement of weapon systems in space around the earth. In particular, efforts to develop a capability to interfere with observation satellites or other space systems could prove to be very destabilizing in peace-time and could open up a whole new arena for space warfare, with unforeseeable security effects. Paragraph 80 of the Final Document

(Mr. Klestil, Austria)

calls for appropriate international negotiations in accordance with the spirit of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty in order to prevent an arms race in outer space. In this connexion we take note with some satisfaction of the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union, the third round of which is currently being held in Vienna. We hope that the two negotiating Powers will be prepared to give a report on these negotiations to the forthcoming session of the General Assembly. I should also like to express my delegation's satisfaction with the initiative taken by the Government of Italy in submitting to the Committee on Disarmament the draft for an additional protocol to the 1967 Outer Space Treaty providing for a further demilitarization of outer space. The Austrian delegation hopes that multilateral negotiations on this basis will soon be taken up either in Geneva or in the framework of the Outer Space Committee.

Thirdly, concerning organizational aspects, the General Assembly at the special session acknowledged the need for an appropriately constituted machinery for disarmament deliberations and negotiations. The comprehensive programme should supplement provisions for that machinery with adequate international organizational and institutional arrangements concerning the implementation of disarmament measures. The United Nations should assume a central role and responsibility in this field. In order to create the necessary confidence and to ensure that disarmament and arms limitation agreements are being observed by all parties, adequate measures of verification will have to be agreed upon. The involvement of the United Nations system in the verification process would facilitate the participation of all parties to disarmament agreements in the verification of such agreements. In this connexion it is relevant to recall existing proposals for the establishment of an international disarmament organization and an international satellite monitoring agency.

My fourth point concerns measures to strengthen institutions for maintaining peace and for the settlement of international disputes. Progress towards general and complete disarmament will require the strengthening of the existing machinery for peace-keeping as well as appropriate measures to facilitate the peaceful settlement of international disputes. It is the view of the Austrian Government that the comprehensive programme should therefore contain appropriate provisions to that end.

(Mr. Klestil, Austria)

Those, Mr. Chairman, are our basic ideas on what we consider to be the most important elements that will have to be incorporated in a comprehensive programme of disarmament. This delegation is ready to co-operate with you and all other members of the Commission in future discussions on these and all other proposals.

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation is confident that what happened at our previous session devoted to procedural questions will also happen in this our first session devoted to substantive questions and that we shall, under your experienced chairmanship, be able to arrive at the results which we seek.

As will be recalled, my delegation was one of those which believed and still believe that it would be preferable to reduce as much as possible, if not entirely to eliminate what has come to be known as the general debate. That is why we welcomed your suggestion, Mr. Chairman, that we have a general exchange of views - as you called it - focused on agenda item 3, "Consideration of the elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament".

That is why my statement now will be very brief; it seemed to me unnecessary to write a speech and then read it out. I shall merely mention a few ideas on the points which seem to us to be basic, and I shall in a sense be thinking aloud.

The first of these two points is that, in our opinion, we must bear in mind that the question of the preparation of a comprehensive programme of disarmament, the initiative for that preparation, does not date from yesterday but goes back almost 10 years, to December 1969 when, on the eve of the decision to proclaim the decade beginning in 1970 as the Disarmament Decade, it was requested that a draft comprehensive programme of disarmament be prepared.

The views of the Government of Mexico, submitted on 15 March, enumerated all the resolutions that had from then until now been adopted by the Assembly on this subject. Bearing that in mind and bearing in mind also that the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) had in the last stages of its work got to the point of establishing a working group entrusted with the task of drafting such a programme and that, furthermore, the Assembly had decided that in 1982 a second special session devoted to disarmament should be held, at which time it would be highly advisable that the comprehensive programme of disarmament should be completed - taking all these things into account, my delegation believes that it is imperative that at the end of this session the Commission be in a position to transmit, incorporated in its report to the Assembly, the elements whose preparation has been entrusted to us.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

That is the first point which, in my opinion, is of paramount importance at this time.

The second is that, in order for it to be feasible to reach this goal, we must not be too ambitious. As you said yesterday, Mr. Chairman, we have two weeks of work which we can devote to this subject. Therefore, I believe that in this respect we could begin with the fact that we must scrupulously adhere to the directives given to us by the Assembly, and the General Assembly has asked us to confine ourselves to the consideration of the elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament. Hence, we have not been asked here to prepare the programme itself - a task which in any case would be impossible in the short time available to us - nor have we been asked to prepare a draft or a preliminary draft programme. What we have been asked to do is to consider the elements of this programme, which in the form of a draft will have to be prepared by the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva.

On the other hand, there exist general but very clear and precise guidelines, adopted by the General Assembly - and adopted by consensus - as to the contents of this programme. Paragraph 109 of the Final Document says:

"Negotiations on general and complete disarmament shall be conducted concurrently with negotiations on partial measures of disarmament." (A/S-10/4)
It is added that the comprehensive programme of disarmament should encompass

"... all measures thought to be advisable in order to ensure that the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control becomes a reality in a world in which international peace and security prevail and in which the new international economic order is strengthened and consolidated." (Ibid.)

It is a matter, then, of the elements of a comprehensive programme whose general definition is contained therein, not of a hypothetical comprehensive programme or of one which we can begin to discuss here in order to decide the form it should take.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

If we accept that premise, then the task of completing within two weeks the preparation of our recommendations to the General Assembly on the elements of a comprehensive programme for disarmament is a feasible one, particularly if account is taken of the fact that only last year we adopted by consensus a Final Document containing abundant material that can now be used for the elements of a comprehensive programme, and later, in Geneva, for the preparation of the programme itself.

My delegation believes that the recommendations we transmit to the General Assembly on the elements can very easily be confined to a series of titles and subtitles that we would recommend as the main sections and subsections that we think should make up the comprehensive programme for disarmament. Under those titles and subtitles we might give a brief explanatory description.

We are convinced that we should, as the saying goes, leave well alone, and that the essential thing is to accomplish the task entrusted to us. If we do that - and I believe that under the Chairman's enlightened guidance we shall be able to do it - we shall have laid the foundation for the prestige of this new Disarmament Commission.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.