DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 9 May 1986, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. WEGENER (Federal Republic of Germany)

later: Mr. MEISZTER (Vice-Chairman) (Hungary)

later: Mr. WEGENER (Chairman) (Federal Republic of Germany)

- Statement by the Chairman
- General exchange of views (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: On 6 May, the Disarmament Commission established a Working Group on agenda item 6, on the question of the nuclear capability of South Africa, with the understanding that the Chairman of that Group would be elected at a later stage. Since that time I have consulted with the other Commission officers and with a large number of delegations on a candidate for that important chairmanship. Unfortunately, those efforts have not so far come to fruition. However, the significance of item 6 for our work is such that the beginning of our work on that subject cannot wait indefinitely. The Working Group should be convened, at least for an organizational meeting, at an early juncture in order to stimulate the search for a Chairman and to allow delegations to focus on the subject through an initial exchange of views on the substance of the issue. I have therefore scheduled a first meeting of the Working Group on agenda item 6 for Monday, 12 May, and have asked Ambassador Davidson Hepburn of the Bahamas, who served as Chairman of that group at earlier sessions of the Commission, to preside over the meeting as Chairman ad interim. Ambassador Hepburn has generously acceded to that request. I hope that that meeting will be followed quickly by a series of meetings under an elected Chairman.

I should like now to make a statement on the way in which the Commission might consider item 8 of its agenda, the question of the naval arms race and disarmament. As I indicated on 6 May, I have felt compelled to conduct intensive consultations on this issue with all delegations concerned. Those consultations have continued until this very time. They have convinced me that, at this juncture, the most appropriate way to consider item 8 would be for the Chairman to hold sustained substantive consultations on the subject, under his own
responsibility. These consultations should commence early next week. They should be structured and should obviously take account of all General Assembly resolutions relevant to the subject, as adopted and with all relevant comments and views expressed on them, and of the recently completed comprehensive study on the naval arms race, naval forces and naval arms systems. Specifically, that study would have to be submitted to a critical review in the light of the views of member Governments as communicated to the Secretary-General in accordance with resolution 40/94 F.

The burden on the Chairman is considerable at present. I should like therefore to reserve the possibility of delegating the actual conduct of the substantive consultations to be held under my responsibility to a "friend of the Chairman". I have gratefully noted that Ambassador Ali Alatas of Indonesia would be available to assist me thus in discharging my obligations. The time and place of the substantive consultations will be included in the timetable of meetings along with the meetings of the formal working bodies of the Commission. That timetable, which is indicative and subject to change, will be available for approval by members later today.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued)

The CHAIRMAN: I hope that, in response to my earlier appeal, delegations will make the effort to make their statements brief and directly relevant to the items on our agenda.
Mr. ALATAS (Indonesia): Let me first say, Sir, how pleased my delegation is at seeing you in the chair and guiding our deliberations with your customary skill, vigour and aplomb. We are confident that under your experienced stewardship the Commission at this session will be able to achieve substantive progress. I should also like to extend my sincere congratulations to the other officers of the Commission. To Ambassador Ahmad of Pakistan, who so ably presided over the Commission's work last year, I wish to convey, if I may, through the kind intermediary of the Pakistani delegation, our sincere gratitude and appreciation.

As 1985 drew to a close the world community was seized by a resurgence of hope generated by the summit meeting between the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union. We were all encouraged by the outcome of that meeting, which reaffirmed the imperative for continued dialogue, recognized the need for an accelerated pace of negotiations on the priority issues of nuclear and space weapons and acknowledged the fallacy of the notion that a nuclear war could ever be won or, indeed, should ever be fought. The expectation was raised that the resumed bilateral arms negotiations in Geneva would finally yield substantive results in arms reductions and in other fields.

To our deep regret, however, the first round of talks has ended with very little to show in terms of concrete progress. Worse, a perceptible diminution of goodwill and mutual confidence appears to have set in over the entire atmosphere of the dialogue, as exemplified in the now all-too-familiar pattern of mutual recrimination and accusation, with each side blaming the other for the deadlock.

The next round of talks has now resumed. We continue to hope and to expect that it will yet produce early and tangible results.

The world today has become neither more secure nor more peaceful in any sense. The continued escalation in the arms race, particularly in nuclear arms, is now being rationalized by new doctrines that purport to justify the development and
(Mr. Alatas, Indonesia)
deployment of new weapons of mass destruction of increasing sophistication. Advanced technologies are being applied to bring into being this new generation of weapons systems, even in outer space, thus seriously threatening to blur the distinction between offensive and defensive capabilities, between nuclear and "conventional" arms. Meanwhile the fate of mankind under the global threat of nuclear catastrophe remains hostage to the perceived security interests of a few nuclear-weapon States, in particular the major Powers and their allies. Concurrently, increased resort to military force in the settlement of disputes and the growing tendency to cast regional problems in an East-West confrontational context, have become characteristic features of relations among States. In this respect, the arms race - and indeed the entire armaments culture that is manifested by soaring global military expenditures and the burgeoning trade in arms - is both a symptom and a cause. Clearly, the situation calls for bold and far-reaching initiatives to eliminate the danger of nuclear war, to halt and reverse the arms race and to seek common security in disarmament.

In this context my delegation has long been convinced that the piecemeal disarmament efforts of the past have proved insufficient, particularly with regard to the cessation of the nuclear-arms race. Hence, what is needed is a new, integrated approach encompassing the entire range of efforts in arms reductions and disarmament that would serve as a common platform for negotiations in the relevant forums on the various aspects of disarmament, both in their quantitative and their qualitative dimensions.

The immediate objective should be the initiation of urgent negotiations on halting the nuclear-arms race in all its aspects and the launching of a process of genuine disarmament. Within that approach, all measures with regard to arms limitation and reduction, the elimination of stockpiles and dismantling of military installations and the reduction of armed forces should be enumerated and
presented separately for each category of weapons and weapons systems. While priority must necessarily be accorded nuclear disarmament, we should also pursue conventional disarmament measures, especially by the major Powers, which develop, produce and sell by far the greatest proportion of those armaments. Progress in implementation should, inter alia, be gauged by linking reductions in military budgets to cuts in specific weapons systems and related activities in research and development. In order to stem qualitative improvements and the prevention of new types of weapons, the need for a comprehensive treaty banning the testing of all types of nuclear weapons in all environments is of paramount importance.

The main responsibility for initiating this approach rests in the nuclear Powers' first agreeing to an immediate freeze on the production and development of nuclear weapons and fissionable materials. That should be followed by sustained bilateral, regional and multilateral discussions and negotiations with a view to reaching binding agreements on specific measures of disarmament. Throughout the process it is essential to devise appropriate methods and procedures that are non-discriminatory and that will ensure the undiminished security of all States at progressively lower levels of armaments. The participation and the political will of the nuclear Powers and other militarily significant States would be indispensable for the effective implementation of any such initiative.

The question of the reduction of military budgets has been on the Commission's agenda for many years now. A number of studies carried out within the United Nations have analysed the consequences of ever-increasing global military spending. Their conclusions and findings provide irrefutable proof of the negative impact of such expenditures on national economies, as well as on the world economy. While development assistance constitutes only about 4 per cent of total military expenditures, military outlays have soared to more than $980 billion worldwide during 1985, which is more than the combined income of the poorest half of
the world. That has had a profound impact on financial flows for development, on the terms of trade of the developing countries and on their rapidly mounting external debts. Military outlays have also been a major cause of depressed economic growth in the world economy in general.

It may be pertinent to note that the value of international trade in arms during 1984 for the first time exceeded trade in food grains by $US2 billion. The distorting effect of global militarization is also evident in the absorption of a disproportionate share of the world's scientific capacity in weapons research and development, far outstripping efforts in developing new energy technologies, improving health, raising agriculture and industrial production and controlling pollution.

My delegation has consistently emphasized in the Commission and other forums the need for a reliable data base on military expenditures. For its part, the General Assembly has repeated endorsed the principle of standarized reporting of military expenditures, and for a number of years a group of United Nations experts has been engaged in the task of improving comparability of statistics. While we are aware of the methodological and practical difficulties in using and interpreting those data, the utility of having this information base would greatly facilitate the analysis of global and regional magnitudes and trends. In our view, greater participation by States in this effort would not only lead to the standardization and clarification of various aspects but also make a significant contribution to confidence-building among nations.

On the question of confidence-building measures, discussions in the past in the Working Group under your guidance, Mr. Chairman, have yielded substantial areas of agreement. My delegation will continue to extend its co-operation to you in your endeavours to try to finalize this particular part of the Commission's work.
Here I should like to draw attention to those aspects of the draft guidelines which could contribute most, within the geopolitical context of our own region and those of other developing countries. In our view, a principal purpose of confidence-building measures is to help ensure that a particular region remains free from undue outside interference, thus providing the opportunity to regional States to decide their own destiny and to build regional cohesion. Another essential element should be mutual military restraint by non-regional Powers, especially in strategically important areas and waters. Finally, conditions of stability and mutual confidence can be ensured through joint regional endeavours in a spirit of common responsibility and amity. The inclusion of these elements in the drawing up of guidelines would, we believe, strengthen the confidence-building processes at both the global and regional levels.

In the context of non-proliferation and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, the question of South Africa's nuclear capability has become a matter of profound concern to the international community, particularly in view of the racist régime's persistent refusal to adhere to the non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to place all its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. Available information makes it clear that the Pretoria régime is intent upon going beyond the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and is engaged in developing a nuclear-weapon capability. Our apprehension is all the more heightened given that this inherently unstable régime has imposed on its oppressed majority population the universally condemned apartheid system, has maintained its illegal hold on Namibia, despite international censure, and has routinely engaged in acts of destabilization and blatant aggression against its neighbours.
(Mr. Alatas, Indonesia)

Notwithstanding various Security Council decisions on the prohibition of nuclear collaboration with South Africa, my delegation views with alarm the growing nuclear capability of the racist régime which poses a grave threat to the security of the African States, and provides it with the means for blackmail and intimidation. What is more, it stands as the only stumbling-block in the way of implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa proclaimed more than two decades ago. South Africa must therefore be compelled to accede to the existing non-proliferation régime and to respect the continent of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. To this end, the mandatory arms embargo against South Africa must be extended to include all materials and technology that have a nuclear application. All States should henceforth cease any assistance which would in any way augment the apartheid régime's nuclear-weapon capability. My delegation sincerely hopes that a long overdue consensus on this item can be reached during this session.

Objective factors of geography and geopolitics have helped shape Indonesia's maritime outlook and its particular sensitivity and concern over the competitive naval build-up among the major Powers and the rapid development of new naval arms systems, including nuclear-weapon systems. These developments have added a new and dangerous dimension to the arms race in general, have heightened the threat to regional and international security and can have a significantly adverse impact on international maritime commerce as well as the peaceful exploitation of marine resources.

Indonesia, therefore, is gratified that the Secretary-General's study on the naval arms race has enhanced international understanding of the multifarious implications of the naval arms race and has clarified issues of vital interest to many States. The study has drawn attention to certain particularly disturbing
aspects of present-day naval operations, *inter alia*, by identifying several technological innovations that have fundamentally altered the modes of naval warfare. Among these, the application of nuclear energy for ship propulsion, principally in submarines, and the deployment of nuclear warheads in sea-launched ballistic and cruise missiles, represent the most potent danger, especially considering that now a significant proportion of the world's strategic nuclear capability is to be found at sea. In addition, the numbers of tactical nuclear weapons deployed on the world's seas and oceans are growing at an alarming rate. Unlike strategic missiles, these weapons can be carried on board a wide variety of surface vessels, submarines, aircraft or helicopters.

The geographical proliferation of such weapons at sea is clearly at variance with the commitments undertaken in the NPT and will undoubtedly further complicate the negotiation of verifiable measures of arms reduction and disarmament. Moreover, the temptation to resort to the use of tactical nuclear weapons may be greater in the wide-open spaces of the ocean where such use may conceivably be contemplated without direct damage to civilian life or property.

The study has also highlighted the significant impact that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea will have on future maritime activities and naval operations and the corresponding need for much improved national and international ocean management policies if marine resources are indeed to be exploited in a rational and peaceful manner to the benefit of all mankind.

In view of these and other particular ramifications of the naval arms race, Indonesia believes that it has become urgently necessary for the international community to begin to address the specific problems of naval disarmament and confidence-building within the overall context of halting and reversing the arms race in general.
The Secretary-General's study has listed a wide range of possible measures and avenues for action. A number of Member States, in statements as well as written submissions, have likewise offered their views and concrete proposals on the subject. I believe that at this session of the Commission, we should try to identify those areas and measures that could be made the subject of subsequent negotiations and perhaps also consider the most appropriate forum or forums for such negotiations. This would provide us with a practical basis on which to build our further discussions and efforts in this field.

In concluding, let me say a few words on the status and work of our Commission. In his opening statement the Chairman has already pointed out the particular significance of this Commission and the specific contributions it could potentially make to the multilateral disarmament process as a deliberative body with universal participation. My delegation further believes that the importance of the Commission's work should also be seen in the context of a disturbing retreat towards unilateralism and a selective bilateralism leading to the progressive erosion of the multilateral approach and system in solving global problems.
There can be no doubt that it is through its selective agenda and programme of work that the specificity of the Commission's contribution is decisively expressed, as they indeed reflect the consensus goals and priorities of the international community and identify the key issues on which the Commission should focus at its sessions. Since its reconstitution in 1979 the Commission has performed a valuable service in clarifying and elaborating on a number of crucial issues of pre-eminent concern to the international community. But we should also admit that a number of items have languished far too long before the Commission and that our deliberations, which were supposed to be item-specific and action-oriented towards the formulation of concrete recommendations, have too often relapsed into a repetitive general debate covering the same grounds of contention over and over again.

My delegation shares the view, held by many in the Commission, that unless we can finalize our discussion on at least a few of our long-standing agenda items, and unless we can ensure that our programme of work remains directed towards substantive compromise and consensus, the Commission may soon be regarded as just another debating forum, however useful that in itself may be.

It is the conviction of my delegation that it is to that end that together we can and must mobilize the necessary political commitment so as to enhance the efficacy and preserve the unique utility of the Disarmament Commission within the multilateral disarmament process.

The CHAIRMAN: Before calling on the next speaker, I wish gratefully to acknowledge, on behalf of all members, as well as on my own behalf, the presence of our Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Martenson.
Mr. THOMPSON-FLORES (Brazil): Allow me, first, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the Commission. I am sure that under your able guidance we shall make progress in the discharge of the grave responsibilities with which we have all been entrusted. My congratulations are also extended to the other officers who will assist you during this session.

I was happy to learn, Mr. Chairman, that you wish to conduct our work on the basis of the guidelines set forth in resolution 37/78 H. More than ever before, in view of the financial crisis that has befallen the United Nations, it is necessary for deliberations in this forum to concentrate on recommendations for concrete action on specific items so that efforts are not dispersed, so that scarce resources are not wasted and, above all, so that we may devote the best of our energies to those issues that are central, rather than peripheral, to the process of disarmament.

My delegation would have preferred that the agenda before us contained fewer items than it does. Some of them have been carried over from previous sessions for a number of years now, without noticeable results. If it is true that necessity breeds efficiency, then let us hope that those very time and resource constraints with which we are confronted - now aggravated by the financial crisis - will force us to rationalize our proceedings, enabling the Commission, in the process, to finalize its work where that is required, and objectively and firmly to tackle the priority items, old and new, that remain to be dealt with.

First and foremost among those items is the range of issues under agenda item 4. My delegation wishes to re-emphasize the importance it attaches to those questions, particularly in regard to the nuclear-arms race and the need to identify ways and means to bring about its early and effective cessation.
My Government welcomed the resumption of bilateral negotiations between the two super-Powers, and noted with satisfaction the stated objectives of their leaders last November regarding the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the termination of the nuclear-arms race on earth. It did so for two main reasons. First, it has been the consensus of the international community that the advent of nuclear armaments brought with it, for the first time, the threat of the extinction of all life on earth. Thus it follows that it is ethically imperative, in the interests of mankind as a whole, that recourse to those weapons, even as a mere possibility, be definitely proscribed. Secondly, the nuclear-weapon Powers, especially the two most heavily-armed nations, bear a special responsibility in implementing those commitments to nuclear disarmament that they entered into under binding multilateral agreements. The renewal of the bilateral talks between the super-Powers would thus seem to indicate their awareness not only of the ethical principle that I have just referred to, but also of their juridical obligations towards the world at large.

It is therefore with dismay that one detects a resurgence of some of the confrontational trends that have characterized the relationship between the super-Powers in the recent past. As some delegations have already noted, the hopes raised in November are not being converted into concrete action. My delegation regards the continued failure by the super-Powers to honour the commitments to negotiate nuclear disarmament undertaken by them under international instruments as a violation of those instruments.

The vast majority of nations here represented, whose vital interests are at stake, cannot accept a situation in which their collective security is jeopardized by the narrow security perceptions of the leaders of the two military blocs. It is incumbent upon us all to devise the means to overcome the present unsatisfactory state of affairs.
As regards the Commission's responsibilities in this priority area, my delegation wishes to renew its proposal that those few recommendations that have already been agreed upon under item 4 should be conveyed to the General Assembly. Work should then proceed on the elaboration of those formulations on which it has not been possible to reach consensus. It goes without saying that such an approach should be conceived as being not to the detriment, but rather as a reinforcement, of the principles, goals and priorities established by the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

On previous occasions we have underlined the need to finalize consideration of item 5, concerning the drafting of principles on the reduction of military budgets. My delegation hopes that the differences of opinion which prevented progress in the past will finally subside, thus permitting conclusion of our work on this item, as recommended by resolution 40/91 A. Brazil understands that the reduction of military budgets is a goal to be pursued primarily by the nuclear-weapon Powers, which, as is well known, possess the largest arsenals of conventional armaments besides holding a monopoly on nuclear weapons. It is also within their geographical regions that existing tensions might escalate into a nuclear confrontation. Brazil feels at ease in making these comments, for within its own region, one of the less militarized areas of the world, my country ranks among the two or three least-armed countries, in which military expenditures account for roughly 0.5 per cent of their gross national product. If the stalemate on this item continues, my delegation suggests that the matter be referred to the General Assembly, which might request the opinions of Member States as to alternative courses of action.
A similar impasse has affected the Commission's work regarding the question of the nuclear capability of South Africa, under item 6 of the agenda. We share the frustration of the African Group at the continued lack of agreement on this issue and fear that, if the current stalemate is allowed to prevail, their cause, to which we subscribe, will be damaged rather than advanced. We urge the Commission to make every effort to defuse the emotional atmosphere surrounding the issue and to broaden the agreement that has already been achieved on most of the formulations of the existing text so that those differences that still remain may be overcome and a complete set of recommendations can be consensually adopted.

My delegation hopes that your commendable efforts in this area, Mr. Chairman, in conjunction with those of the African Group, will lead us to meaningful results and to a long-sought-after solution to the problems still facing us under this item of our agenda.

As for item 7, on the review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, Brazil considers that this item provides the opportunity for a collective reaffirmation of the political dimension of the disarmament process, along with a stock-taking of current ills and failures of our endeavours in this respect.

As my delegation has stated on previous occasions, the basic political commitment we undertook was the multilateral negotiation of the priority issues of disarmament. What we see today is deep-felt frustration at the non-fulfilment of such a commitment. The situation stems from the lack of political will on the part of those that bear special responsibilities because of their military might.

Thus, in considering this item, we should not lose sight of the fact that improvement of the institutional or administrative machinery, although important, cannot in itself take the place of the will of States to address themselves constructively to the substantive problems of disarmament.
Brazil will continue to play an active role in the discussion of this most important issue. My delegation feels that it takes on added significance as we approach the third special session on disarmament. A good basis for our efforts is provided by the programme of work adopted last year, which incorporates a number of suggestions made by my delegation.

Item 8 of the agenda deals with the naval arms race. As the representative of Sweden rightly pointed out in her statement, the danger of the early use of nuclear weapons, not excluding accident or miscalculation, is possibly nowhere greater than at sea. That is so because nuclear-weapon Powers, in particular the two most armed among them, have relentlessly pursued a vast geographical proliferation of their nuclear arsenals over and under the seas and oceans, in utter disregard not only for the security interests of the world at large, but also for their own juridical commitments regarding, first, the negotiation of the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and disarmament and, secondly, respect for the status of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

In this context my delegation wishes once again to underline the importance of the need for effective verification of the obligations assumed by the nuclear-weapon Powers towards non-nuclear-weapon countries located within denuclearized zones.

My country from the outset decided to ban nuclear weapons on its territory. In line with that stance, it subsequently signed and ratified the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which has as its goal the proscription of those weapons in the Latin American region.

We should now dedicate ourselves to the task of excluding nuclear weapons from the whole of the South Atlantic, where there is a real danger of an extension of the East-West confrontation. I quote from the message that was recently conveyed to the Conference on Disarmament by President José Sarney of Brazil:
"For our part, and in accordance with our possibilities, we shall not be found wanting in our endeavours and in our spirit of compromise which may contribute to understanding, in particular regarding the widening of the areas where nuclear weapons must be totally outlawed ... At the opening of the fortieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, on 23 September last, I had the occasion to propose that the prohibition be extended to the South Atlantic when I stated:

"Brazil will bend every effort within its power to ensure that the South Atlantic is preserved as an area of peace, shielded from the arms race, the presence of nuclear arms and any form of confrontation originating in other regions.""

The remaining substantive item on our agenda, item 9, addresses once again the question of the elaboration of guidelines for confidence-building measures. It is the hope of my delegation that consideration of the matter can be concluded during this session, according to the wishes of Member States as expressed in General Assembly resolution 39/63 E. My delegation appreciates your efforts, Mr. Chairman, towards the fulfilment of that goal, to which it lends its support.

I wish to reiterate, on the substance of confidence-building measures, that they are part and parcel of a larger process which encompasses a whole array of features of international relations not restricted solely, or even mainly, to military questions. Furthermore, confidence-building measures cannot be considered either as a substitute or as a pre-condition for disarmament. No conceivable measures of confidence-building can ever match concrete disarmament initiatives.

Mr. NYAMDOO (Mongolia) (interpretation from Russian): Allow me, on behalf of the Mongolian delegation, to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the post of Chairman of a very important General Assembly body, the Disarmament
Commission. I should like to express my confidence that the Commission, under your skilled leadership, will constructively discuss issues on its agenda and produce the recommendations needed by the General Assembly.

I should like to congratulate also the other officers of the Commission and to wish them every success in their tasks.

The Mongolian people, preparing for the Nineteenth Congress of the Mongolian People's Party, which will take place at the end of this month, is now discussing with great enthusiasm the draft of the fundamental areas of the country's economic and social development for the period 1986 to 1990. In order to carry out the enormous task laid out in the fundamental areas document, the Mongolian people needs conditions of peace. Therefore, the ensuring of peaceful conditions for the further constructive work of the Mongolian people towards building a socialist society in Mongolia is the major objective of our country's foreign policy. In present conditions this means, first and foremost, the struggle to prevent a nuclear catastrophe.

As everyone is well aware, by stepping up the arms race, in particular the nuclear-arms race, the forces of militarism and reaction are dangerously exacerbating the situation in the world and pushing mankind towards nuclear catastrophe.
Therefore, it is only natural that eliminating the nuclear threat and promoting nuclear disarmament have become central issues in the cause of ensuring peace and the security of peoples.

For the past few years now the Disarmament Commission has been considering those issues. The representatives of various States have emphasized in their statements the particular responsibility of the nuclear States - the two major Powers in particular to bring about a cessation of the nuclear arms race and promote nuclear disarmament. They place great hopes in the Geneva negotiations between the USSR and the United States, in particular in the light of the Soviet-American summit meeting last November in Geneva. And the Mongolian delegation has emphasized on numerous occasions the paramount importance of the Soviet-American talks. The Mongolian delegation welcomes the results of the meeting between Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan and expresses the hope that that meeting will give needed impetus to negotiations now under way.

As is well known, the leaders of the two States, declaring that nuclear war must never be unleashed and that in a nuclear war there can be no victor, have agreed to accelerate work on the Soviet-American negotiations in order to carry out the tasks set forth earlier, namely, to prevent an arms race in space and halt it on earth, to limit and reduce nuclear weapons, and to strengthen strategic stability.

The Soviet Union has given a compelling demonstration of its serious and responsible approach to those agreements in the far-reaching proposals put forward at the beginning of this year regarding the complete, universal elimination of nuclear, chemical and other types of weapons of mass destruction by the year 2000.

The Mongolian People's Republic fully supported those Soviet proposals. The statement of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and the Government of the Mongolian People's Republic of 20 January 1986 notes that those proposals:
"... are a carefully balanced and concrete programme of stage-by-stage reductions, and the ultimate elimination by the end of this century of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction is fully in keeping with the spirit of Geneva and the objective of implementing them. This opens up new opportunities for achieving mutually acceptable and strictly controlled disarmament measures."

Those proposals deserve serious and objective consideration by the nuclear Powers - above all the United States - and by the international community as a whole. In the context of its consideration of nuclear disarmament problems, the Disarmament Commission could discuss those proposals and work out appropriate recommendations for the forthcoming forty-first session of the General Assembly.

The cessation of all nuclear tests is important to the cause of curbing the arms race. The Mongolian People's Republic favours the early elaboration and conclusion of a treaty on a general and complete ban on nuclear-weapon tests. We fully support the proposals of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, as well as those of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Sweden, regarding the declaration of and compliance with a moratorium on all nuclear explosions until the conclusion of an appropriate treaty, or until the next meeting between the USSR and the United States at the highest level.

As is well known, on 6 August of last year the Soviet Union unilaterally declared and, until the explosion in Nevada on 10 April 1986, had observed a moratorium on nuclear explosions. Unfortunately, the continuation by the United States of nuclear tests, despite repeated appeals by the Soviet Union and insistent demands of the international community, dashed the chances of an early agreement on the cessation of nuclear tests. The relevant statement of the Government of the Mongolian People's Republic of 15 April of this year includes the following:
"The Mongolian People's Republic believes that, in conditions of the threat of nuclear self-destruction looming over mankind, what is needed is the most responsible and realistic approach possible to problems of war and peace by all States, without exception, first and foremost by the nuclear Powers. The Soviet Union is demonstrating precisely such an approach; it has expressed its constant readiness to return to the question of a mutual moratorium on nuclear explosions. The international community has the right to expect a positive answer from the United States."

The creation of zones of peace and non-nuclear zones in various regions of the world also would promote the cessation of the nuclear arms race. The Mongolian People's Republic supports the creation of such zones in various areas. In particular it welcomes the declaration of the south Pacific as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

In the Mongolian delegation's view, the creation of non-nuclear zones in Europe, proposed in April of this year by States parties to the Warsaw Treaty to the European States, the United States of America and Canada, would be not only an important step in promoting the strengthening of security in Europe but a practical solution to problems of nuclear disarmament.

As concerns military budgets, the Mongolian delegation has consistently favoured the adoption of urgent and effective measures for their reduction. We cannot fail to be concerned at the fact that very soon world military expenditures for a single year will reach the astronomical sum of $1 trillion - and that is taking place at a time when many States are lacking sufficient means for development and the payment of their foreign debts; at a time when millions of people are suffering from hunger and disease.
The delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic believes that the Commission will at this session achieve progress on the elaboration of concrete recommendations on this matter.

The question of the nuclear potential of South Africa has been attracting a great deal of attention among the international community, particularly in the light of the apartheid régime's stepped up acts of repression against the indigenous population and Pretoria's terrorist and aggressive actions against neighbouring States and occupied Namibia. We hope that at this session the Commission will be able to produce concrete recommendations regarding urgent measures to be taken on this matter.

The Mongolian People's Republic attaches great significance to the question of the limitation and reduction of naval weapons, the relevance of which continues to grow, particularly in view of the recent United States acts of aggression and piracy against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya with the involvement of major American naval forces. Those and other events clearly show the entire world that the United States and other imperialist States are making use of their naval forces to carry out a policy of interference, diktat, blackmail and aggression against independent States.

Bearing in mind that the concentration of major naval forces of the imperialist States in various regions of the world and the building up of their naval activity serves as a source of tension, the Mongolian People's Republic believes it necessary to take immediate measures to limit the naval activity and naval armaments of the major naval Powers and to extend confidence-building measures to the world's seas and oceans. Those measures should be aimed, inter alia, at both a qualitative and a quantitative freeze on the major types of warships, limitation and reduction of military manoeuvres designed to show force and to threaten, renunciation of the policy of naval blockades and elimination of naval bases in the territories of foreign States.
(Mr. Nyamdoo, Mongolia)

Regarding the study carried out by a group of United Nations experts on questions concerning the naval arms race, in our delegation's view it could be used, along with the proposals of various States, in the Commission's consideration of this question in order to work out concrete recommendations for the upcoming session of the General Assembly.

Turning to the question of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, my delegation would like to emphasize that United Nations efforts in this sphere should be concentrated on the elaboration and adoption of concrete measures to limit and eliminate nuclear weapons and other means of waging war. The United Nations could also promote the emergence of political will among States, in particular nuclear States and other major States, regarding the military attitude of States towards the adoption of such measures. Fuller use of existing United Nations machinery, structures and procedures is in our view of extreme importance in enhancing the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

The question of confidence-building measures rightfully occupies an important place among questions of peace, security and disarmament. In the past the Mongolian delegation has on numerous occasions stated its position on this extremely important issue. We believe it necessary to take confidence-building measures and adopt them on both a global and a regional level. Not only military but political measures should be taken. In particular, in the view of the Mongolian People's Republic, the conclusion of a treaty on the renunciation of the use of force and the peaceful settlement of complex problems on a multilateral or regional level could serve as an example.

In this connection I should like to refer to the proposal of the Mongolian People's Republic regarding the elaboration and conclusion of a convention on mutual non-aggression and renunciation of the use of force in relations among the States of Asia and the Pacific.
As is well known, the General Assembly has declared the year 1986 the International Year of Peace. The Disarmament Commission could make a real and important contribution to the implementation of the objectives of the Year by producing concrete recommendations that would help save mankind from the threat of nuclear catastrophe and foster creation of the foundations for a comprehensive system of international security. To achieve that, we must all work together and actively.

Mr. BRUCKNER (Denmark): Mr. Chairman, first of all I wish to extend to you and to the other members of the Bureau my sincere congratulations on your election. Your professional skill and your wide experience, not least in disarmament matters, are well known to all of us. Your election augurs well for the work of the Disarmament Commission.

Last Monday, 5 May, the representative of the Netherlands, on behalf of the member States of the European Community, expressed our views in his statement in the general debate. I would, however, like on this occasion to add a few supplementary comments on behalf of my Government relating to agenda item 4 (b), "Negotiations on nuclear and conventional disarmament".

Almost two years ago the group of qualified experts submitted to the Secretary-General a report on all aspects of the conventional arms race and on disarmament relating to conventional weapons and armed forces. The report, entitled "Study on Conventional Disarmament", discussed, for the first time in a United Nations context, the nature, causes and effects of the conventional arms race while addressing principles, approaches and measures for conventional arms limitation and disarmament.
As members will recall, the Secretary-General presented this study to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session. Having considered the study, the General Assembly adopted a resolution requesting Member countries to make available their views on the study. A number of countries have made comments on the study and it is hoped that other countries will do likewise. All the replies have been constructive and are important contributions to further deliberations relating to conventional disarmament.

In his foreword to the study, the Secretary-General noted that "as efforts are made towards achieving nuclear disarmament, the broad international community, both outside and within the United Nations, should focus additional efforts on the need to find effective measures of conventional disarmament in order to assist in diverting the sinews of war towards the better goal of social and economic progress". (A/39/348, p. 6)

My Government believes that the Disarmament Commission could assist in that process and that additional efforts to find effective measures of conventional disarmament should be considered by the Commission.

We are all aware that the study represents the first effort at a comprehensive consideration of the subject of conventional arms and armed forces since the creation of the United Nations. A follow-up to this effort is important and necessary. The Disarmament Commission, and perhaps at a later stage the Conference on Disarmament, could have an important role to play in the further consideration of the matter.

Consequently, my Government proposes that the question of conventional disarmament should be considered as a specific agenda item at the 1987 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. A proposal to that effect will be put forward by Denmark at the forty-first session of the General Assembly. It is hoped
that further discussions on the issue could take their point of departure from the conclusions and recommendations contained in chapter IV of the study.

During the debate in the First Committee at the thirty-ninth and fortieth sessions of the General Assembly, the problem of the conventional arms race was highlighted by many delegations. It is the hope of my Government that the growing concern about the conventional arms race, as demonstrated in the many statements made in the First Committee, may lead ultimately to a consensus that this important question should be dealt with by the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. SAIDU (Nigeria): I wish to compliment Ambassador Wegener on the efficient manner in which he has been conducting the affairs of this Commission. I share the warm sentiments expressed by earlier speakers concerning his wide experience and his profound knowledge of the subjects on our agenda. My delegation believes that under his chairmanship this Commission will be able to discharge its duties creditably in accordance with its mandate. I assure the Chairman of our co-operation and support.

It is now common knowledge that the nuclear arsenals of the two super-Powers alone have the explosive capacity to destroy the whole world many times over. More disturbing is the increased deployment of nuclear weapons and the continuation of research and tests in the nuclear field. This has resulted in stockpiles far exceeding the so-called required level for self-defence. Related to increased deployment is the concept of "parity", which is, without a doubt, a mirage. Indeed, it has been described as the central fallacy in nuclear weapons deployment. Parity cannot be achieved, given the strategy of negotiating from a position of strength. The goal of achieving parity has set in motion a vicious cycle of nuclear weapons deployment and counter-deployment, and we are thus faced with a threat to all humanity as a consequence of the current level of nuclear armaments.
The belief of my delegation, therefore, is that genuine negotiations to arrest the nuclear arms race are the surest alternative to the nuclear holocaust with which the world is now threatened. Unfortunately the deliberations in this forum on the subject have not yielded positive results. Similarly, the negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament are stalemated. The main obstacle to the speedy conclusion of ongoing negotiations is the lack of political will to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race. It is our hope that the nuclear-weapon States, in particular the two super-Powers, will narrow their differences on nuclear disarmament so that this body can make meaningful recommendations to the General Assembly with a view to expediting negotiations to facilitate the effective elimination of the dangers of nuclear weapons, including nuclear war.

Although less dangerous to the existence of the human race than nuclear weapons, conventional weapons take their toll in terms of the total global resources that would otherwise have been available for social and economic development. The death toll in some 150 wars between 1945 and 1982 has been put at 20 million, compared to 17 million during the Second World War. That figure has since increased considerably in the wake of increased regional conflicts in various parts of the world. This colossal loss in human resources is a serious setback to world social and economic development efforts.

Compared to 2.5 per cent between 1976 and 1980, world military expenditures rose by 3.5 per cent between 1980 and 1984, according to the 1985 yearbook of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. The two super-Powers and their alliances are at the core of the conventional arms race and forces. Their ideological differences account for conventional armed conflicts in various regions of the world. In the interest of all mankind, the two super-Powers should make efforts to end the conventional arms race. Their co-operation at this session of the Disarmament Commission would greatly facilitate successful deliberations in this forum and thus yield useful recommendations to the General Assembly.
In resolution 35/142 A of 12 December 1980, the General Assembly requested this body "to identify and elaborate on the principles which should govern further actions of States in the field of the freezing and reduction of military expenditures".

Since then, subsequent sessions of this Commission have not been able to arrive at consensus on concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. Reduction in military expenditures should start with the nuclear-weapon States and, in particular, the two super-Powers. We appeal to the two super-Powers to exercise self-restraint in their military budgets pending the conclusion of an internationally verifiable agreement on the reduction of military expenditures. In the same vein, it is hoped that other States would embark on voluntary reduction of military budgets. We appeal to Member States, and to the two super-Powers in particular, to be flexible in their positions so that this agenda item can be concluded at this session.

The United Nations has a central role in all disarmament matters. The review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament is therefore an important agenda item which this Commission should consider with the seriousness it deserves and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 40/94 of 12 December 1985. It is pertinent to note operative paragraph 1 of that resolution, which requires this Commission to consider the subject "as a matter of priority". Besides, that resolution was adopted by consensus. The consideration of the agenda item should therefore reflect the apparent desire to achieve disarmament, primarily by strengthening the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

Despite initial problems, progress was made on this subject during the 1985 substantive session of this Commission, when consensus was finally reached on
"topics for appropriate recommendations". Efforts are therefore required to achieve further meaningful progress, in the hope of accomplishing concrete results. By so doing, we would be living up to the expectations created by the common agreement reached on the subject last year.

South Africa's nuclear-weapon capability is of particular concern to my delegation. The acquisition of nuclear-weapon capability by apartheid South Africa constitutes a serious threat to the security interests of African States, as well as to world peace and stability. Over the years, African delegations to this body have called upon Member States to co-operate by bringing pressure to bear on apartheid South Africa to dismantle its nuclear-weapon facilities. Despite our appeal for that co-operation, there are some States that still collaborate with apartheid South Africa in the nuclear field. It should be clear to those States that they are encouraging apartheid South Africa to violate the common wishes and aspirations of African Heads of State and Government who, in July 1964, adopted the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa and called upon the international community to respect the Continent of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Similarly, their nuclear support for apartheid South Africa encourages that régime to violate the territorial integrity of neighbouring States in pursuit of its so-called policies of "offensive defence" and "total strategy".

The international community has a duty to liquidate apartheid. It is an escapable obligation to Africa and the world as a whole. The régime has long violated United Nations resolutions calling upon it place its nuclear installations under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. The world community should now discharge its obligations by ensuring that apartheid South Africa adheres to the provisions of various United Nations resolutions calling for Namibia's smooth transition to independence. Similarly, the international community has to ensure that there is majority rule in South Africa itself.
Apartheid South Africa should be forced to end its repressive policies and use of nuclear weapons as blackmail. My delegation looks forward to constructive and productive debates on this agenda item during the current session of the Commission. More important, we expect that concrete recommendations would be made to the General Assembly with a view to removing, once and for all, the threat posed to Africa's peace, security and stability by South Africa's nuclear-weapon capability.

Mr. SHAH NAWAZ (Pakistan): Sir, I should like to begin by expressing our happiness at your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and to convey our congratulations to the officers of the Commission elected to assist you in your difficult task. We feel confident that your great experience and well-known diplomatic skill, together with your deep knowledge of disarmament affairs, will ensure the success of our deliberations. You can count upon the full support and co-operation of my delegation.

Despite our dreams and the hopes and expectations embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, an effective system of collective security has remained an elusive goal. Mankind continues to live precariously in the shadow of super-Power rivalry and confrontation, with the spectre of a nuclear holocaust looming darkly on the horizon. The unbridled arms race in nuclear as well as in conventional weaponry has aggravated super-Power confrontation and added a dangerous dimension to the armed conflagrations ignited by regional disputes in which the super-Powers get involved. In those circumstances the issues of security and disarmament assume crucial significance for our present security and future survival.

It is primarily for that reason that my delegation attaches the utmost importance to item 4 of the agenda, which calls upon the Disarmament Commission to elaborate a general approach to negotiations on nuclear and conventional disarmament in accordance with the priorities established at the tenth special
session of the General Assembly, which was the first such session devoted exclusively to disarmament.

We believe that the Final Document adopted by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament appropriately sets out an international disarmament agenda and the priorities in this field. The international community’s failure to live up to the promise embodied in that Document and the progressive erosion of commitment to the Programme of Action set forth in it are ominous for the future of the world community.

In its work on agenda item 4, the Commission needs to build upon the consensus reached in the Final Document of the first special session by recommending meaningful and concrete measures within the context of the objective of general and complete disarmament.

In the nuclear field the Commission should call for such measures as a comprehensive nuclear test-ban, practical steps for the prevention of nuclear war, establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, extension of security guarantees to the non-nuclear-weapon States, a halt to the qualitative and quantitative development of nuclear weapons and a prohibition on the introduction of new weapons systems, whether on earth or in space. The Commission should also recognize the need for ensuring compliance with various disarmament agreements and preventing violations through appropriate verification measures.
The Commission has been deliberating for a number of years on the question of the reduction of military budgets on the valid assumption of its close linkage with the objectives of disarmament.

We fully subscribe to this assumption and believe that any disarmament measure must lead to a reduction in military expenditure. However, we should not underestimate the practical and technical difficulties which impede the formulation of generally acceptable guidelines for balanced reductions in military expenditures. It must be realized that the freezing and reduction of military budgets can only follow a prior consensus on the method by which military budgets may be equitably compared. This is a highly complicated issue and experience shows that it is not amenable to an easy solution. To arrive at such a consensus would need a great deal of patient and laborious effort and prolonged deliberations in a favourable political climate.

In these circumstances, my delegation is of the view that if the Commission once again remains unsuccessful in finalizing its recommendations, it may consider eliminating this item from the agenda, for the time being, so as to gain valuable time to focus on the most immediate concerns of the Commission.

South Africa's nuclear capability, added to its large military machine, poses a grave threat to its neighbours, that have to contend with its continuing belligerent military posture. My delegation fully understands the concerns of the African nations in this regard and strongly urges the Disarmament Commission to agree on an appropriate set of recommendations on this question during its session this year.

The current session of the Disarmament Commission is also expected to consider the question of the naval arms race and disarmament. Essentially, the naval forces of a country are part and parcel of its overall military posture. Also the factors
determining the size and character of navies may vary from State to State. It may, therefore, not be necessary to isolate naval arms from the overall military configurations of States. However, with the United Nations study on the naval arms race now available, it should be possible to undertake a discussion on the subject. In our opinion, the most destabilizing aspects of the naval arms race relate to the geographical proliferation of nuclear armaments in the seas and the oceans. The issue which requires immediate attention, in this context, pertains to the deployment of nuclear weapons on submarines and other naval vessels. The highly useful suggestions contained in the United Nations study also deserve the attention of the Commission.

This year the Commission will again consider the question of confidence-building measures. These measures can lead to the creation of conditions in which disarmament could be promoted. Hence, their basic objective should be the removal of the causes of mistrust or tension. In order to be useful these measures have to be verifiable. They cannot, however, be considered a substitute for actual negotiations on disarmament.

The apparent failure of the international community to achieve meaningful progress in the field of disarmament has, understandably, led to disenchantment with multilateral endeavours in this context. There is need, therefore, for making an in-depth examination of the malaise that afflicts the disarmament process. There is a tendency in some quarters to put a part of the blame on the multilateral disarmament machinery and, based on this premise, to seek results by recommending structural changes in the United Nations machinery for disarmament efforts. The problem, however, lies not in the disarmament machinery but with the Member States, which need to exercise genuine political will to bring about meaningful
disarmament. It is argued, however, that nations cannot be expected to disarm if they either feel threatened or, themselves, harbour hegemonic designs. This dilemma has to be resolved in order to give disarmament a real chance of success.

Some of the items before the Commission have been under consideration for a number of years. It is imperative that the Commission finalize its work on at least one or two items. What is required, in order to achieve the desired result, is a display of genuine flexibility and a sense of accommodation. The Commission is not a forum for public posturing and is expected to make a substantive contribution to the multilateral disarmament process. Continuing failure to do so undermines the prestige, not only of this Commission but also that of the entire United Nations process. I hope delegations will keep these considerations in view while engaging in substantive discussions on the various agenda items.

Mr. BUTLER (Australia): May I begin, Sir, by most heartily joining with others who have expressed their great pleasure at your election to the chairmanship of this Commission. The wisdom in electing you to that post I think has already been amply demonstrated this week by the very considerable progress that we have made, especially on organizational issues. I also offer the congratulations of my delegation to the other officers of the Commission on their election.

The responsibilities we bear in executing the work of the multilateral disarmament process, including in the Disarmament Commission, cannot be separated from the responsibilities that are accepted as a consequence of membership of the United Nations. One such primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security.

The United Nations Charter is explicit in committing each of us to the serious pursuit of disarmament measures as an essential means of achieving and maintaining international peace and security.
Successive decisions of the General Assembly, including those of the two special sessions on disarmament, have reiterated the indispensable importance of the process of multilateral disarmament.

The process of enhancing, promoting and maintaining international peace and security is an extremely complex one. What we have come to refer to as the multilateral disarmament machinery has accordingly been organized in a way that should enable us to deal effectively with that complexity.

The Disarmament Commission, as part of that machinery, should play an important role in formulating plans of action and measures for disarmament which would enhance international peace and security.

To date, unfortunately, our collective experience is that it has not done so, even though its agenda includes items of undoubted importance. I should like very briefly to touch on the more important of these items.

First, the proliferation of nuclear weapons must be prevented. The possibility that South Africa might possess such weapons is doubly intolerable. Unequivocal opposition to the abhorrent apartheid régime and the possession by such a State of nuclear weapons is shared by all of us. And there is surely, therefore, no substantive impediment to the Disarmament Commission agreeing at this session to a range of recommendations which reflect these common convictions.
Secondly, on the question of the reduction of military budgets, General
Assembly resolution 40/91 A, which was adopted by consensus, called on the
Commission at this session to finalize the principles that should govern the action
of States in the reduction of military budgets - an important confidence-building
measure. Australia fully supports the finalization of the consideration of this
item. Naturally, the elaboration of such principles depends heavily on the
availability of reliable and comparable information on global military
expenditure. It should be made available by all States, not just the few that
presently make it available.

Further, in order for the exercise to serve any practical purpose, such
principles should include principles of verification, comparability and
transparency.

We also have at our disposal a United Nations study on the subject which could
assist us in reaching a consensus for devising recommendations on this important
item.

In 1984 this body also managed to produce a relatively detailed text on a
package of guidelines for confidence-building measures. This package attracted
considerable support from delegations represented here, and would have provided a
good basis for further work on confidence-building measures.

Unfortunately, our report on the item in 1984 highlighted the differing
approaches to the issue rather than focusing on what consensus had already been
achieved. That is an example of the way in which we undermine one of the central
purposes of our work. By concentrating on that which divides us rather than that
which may bring us closer together, we make no valuable contribution to the
maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. In doing so, we
fail to fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to us.
(Mr. Butler, Australia)

My comments on several of the items on our agenda have, I hope, highlighted where we have failed consistently to achieve our objectives. Why has our record been so poor?

One of the principal ideas underlying the review of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, as reflected in the Cameroon paper (A/CN.10/71), is that the United Nations should focus in particular on initiatives which have the greatest chance of agreement by all States and which would create a climate of confidence and enhance the credibility and effectiveness of the United Nations.

No nation is expected to sacrifice the principles or the means which it believes best safeguard its security. However, certain elements of pragmatism and realism are essential. We cannot expect a total harmony of views on all subjects prior to making at least some helpful substantive recommendations.

The simple fact is that progress towards disarmament relies on incremental and concrete steps.

A proliferation of subjects of immense complexity on our agenda and the agendas of other multilateral disarmament forums often serves to construct barriers to their serious treatment, their satisfactory resolution and the subsequent required concrete steps.

Item 7 on our agenda raises some apposite and interesting questions. We should not shy away from a critical examination of the multilateral disarmament machinery, with the clear, common objective of making it more effective.

Australia has given full support to the United Nations declaration of 1986 as the International Year of Peace. The Australian Government is implementing within Australia one of the largest and most diverse national programmes for the observance of the International Year of Peace.
(Mr. Butler, Australia)

It may not be easy for many in this room to comprehend the depths of concern within Australia about achieving and maintaining international peace and security and the role played by the disarmament process. More specifically, let me tell members that many ordinary Australians know of the existence of the Commission and follow its deliberations carefully.

These are facts, just as it is a fact that people around the world continue to look to the United Nations as a unique source of order and decency in the conduct of international relations and as a strong foundation for the structure of peace. It is therefore seen as unedifying and wasteful if a body such as this enters into a sterile debate on who is to blame for what is going wrong or for our failure to fulfil the promise of the Charter. It is also unacceptable to us to see the machinery of the United Nations misused or - to put it bluntly - hijacked.

The machinery at our disposal has been carefully constructed and is not without positive features, but it is not working well. We need to look closely to find out why and, more important, to take the responsible course of changing it for the better.

A first step in the direction of improvement might be for the Commission to report to the forthcoming session of the General Assembly a powerful reaffirmation of the intrinsic importance of the multilateral disarmament effort, but its conviction that the machinery available for that effort is not working well and needs to be examined and improved.

We may be able to make some additional specific recommendations for such reform, but whether or not we can at this session, let us take the first step based on the initiative of Cameroon and in the terms I have just suggested.
Let us also make practical recommendations in the areas I covered earlier in this statement, particularly with regard to the question of the nuclear capability of South African and the reduction of military budgets.

If we can take those important and incremental steps, we shall have produced worthwhile practical results from this session. We shall have made this particular part of the multilateral machinery start to work again, and to work as it should. We shall have taken a step towards restoring the role of the United Nations in multilateral disarmament, and we shall have done those things in the International Year of Peace.

Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): My delegation is happy to congratulate you, Sir, on your unanimous election to chair the Commission. Knowing your enthusiasm, zeal and personal dedication to the cause of disarmament, my delegation is convinced that the goals you have set for the outcome of the deliberations of this United Nations disarmament body will be achieved. You may be assured, as usual, of my delegation’s co-operation.

At the very moment when the Commission is meeting the world is the victim of a regrowth of confrontation and the exacerbation of international tension, recourse to the threat or use of force, occupation and economic coercion.

Never in the history of mankind has the world accumulated so many advanced, sophisticated weapons, produced for the sole purpose of being used at an opportune time. The twentieth century may rightly be described as a century of violence, for the wars that have followed the two world conflicts seem to prove that major confrontations of that kind are no longer possible in the nuclear age. No doubt
there will, unfortunately, be further wars, but perhaps they will be localized, as in the case of the Korean War, the Viet Nam War, the Middle East conflicts and the civil war in South Africa.

However, the proliferation of new weapons and devices of mass destruction allows for every hypothesis. One war is never the same as another, and forecasts can always be overtaken by events. In a world that is always undergoing change, may we hope that the violence and upheaval will die down during the last decades of this tormented century?
May we lend credence to the declarations of intent made by the two super-Powers which seem to herald a new era of peace, détente and hope for all mankind? I refer to the meeting held last November in Geneva between the two giants, to the "moratorium" proposals, and especially to President Ronald Reagan's wise statement of 23 March 1983:

"I wish to recall to the scientific community which has given us nuclear weapons that it should place its talents at the service of mankind and world peace and provide us with the means to render them obsolete and useless".

Dare we expect a resurgence of the post-war spirit that gave birth to the United Nations?

That would be enticing, but just as the beginning of the twentieth century was marred by an abyss in world history, the year 1945 marked the start of stepped-up confrontation between the two super-Powers.

Indeed, after their common victory in 1945, the two major Powers, already rivals in an arms race began competing in the nuclear field, the latest stage of which is taking place in space.

The Russians, enjoying the advantage of having their armies close to their bases, have gained growing conventional-weapon superiority in Europe, while the Americans, who already possessed the atomic bomb, manufactured the hydrogen bomb and an aircraft capable of delivering it to Europe, namely the B-36. In response, the Russians exploded the first hydrogen bomb and developed the TU-16 bomber, which was capable of reaching the United States.

That "copy-cat" escalation - as President Mitterand calls it - continued unabated until 1957, when it acquired a new dimension.

With the Russian Sputnik and the American Titan, they replaced the strategic bomber with the intercontinental ballistic missile and were able to diversify their arsenals with tactical weapons in 1978-79 and cruise missiles in 1983.
Meanwhile, following the development of antiballistic systems, the super-Powers paused to sign, in 1972, SALT I and, in 1979, SALT II. That was when the Soviet SS-20 rivalled the Pershing II cruise missiles.

The two super-Powers increased their conventional forces and chemical weapons apace, and undertook research for the development and manufacture of new "saturation" and "intelligent" guided weapons, thus leading to "Star Wars".

The Commission should invite the super-armed Powers to bring the balance of forces down to a more reasonable level with respect for global and controlled parity, because at its current rate the arms race could lead to the manufacture and deployment of devices no longer susceptible to the standard "offensive" or "defensive" definition. Such weapons will be of extreme precision, and very long range and will have instantaneous effect. At that point confrontation will be possible.

The frenzied arms race, both nuclear and conventional, strengthened by the political will of States to achieve military superiority with the aim of deterrence or of guaranteeing their security, has promoted the accumulation of a whole array of sophisticated weapons ranging from time-bombs, with which terrorists experiment, to atomic, hydrogen and neutron bombs that take a toll of innocent lives and could even sow the seeds of extermination of the human race.

The possessors of such weapons can have only belligerent reasons for producing them for use against other States, if only to ensure that the weapons are in good working order.

This attitude explains the hesitation of some delegations in accepting the establishment of working groups within the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva which was to begin real negotiations on the first two agenda items of that Conference, namely, conclusion of a treaty banning nuclear tests and a halt to the nuclear-arms race and the promotion of nuclear disarmament.
The circle of violence characterizing the international situation is not the lot solely of those having nuclear or conventional weapons. That circle of violence strikes, massacres and decimates entire populations, which do not have any arms available to them to combat the oppressor, namely, the minority racist régime of South Africa.

In fact, the black people of South Africa, unarmed, are fighting with sticks, stones and even with bare hands against an over-equipped and overarmed adversary in order to recover their dignity, freedom and civil and political rights.

At this particularly crucial time in the history of the peoples of South Africa, the Disarmament Commission should show compassion for that oppressed, humiliated and ill-treated people and consideration for their cause.

My delegation will give its unconditional support to all measures undertaken to that end. It will also support the setting up a working group of the Commission to engage in an in-depth study of item 6 of our agenda.

The Disarmament Commission, meeting during the course of the International Year of Peace, should work for the adoption of measures likely to increase confidence, strengthen the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and promote the emergence of a lasting, universal and complete détente in which all States participate on an equal footing.

In this context, the reduction of military budgets should be considered exhaustively during the United Nations International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, which will soon take place in Paris. My delegation cannot overstress this matter, given the lack of any political will on the part of the nuclear Powers on this issue.

Regarding consideration of the question of the naval arms race and naval disarmament, my delegation considers this matter an integral part of the nuclear-arms race since a good number of nuclear tests often take place in the
oceans. Until nuclear tests are banned, it will be difficult to advocate naval disarmament; hence my delegation has carefully followed the recommendations made by our Commission's Chairman to hold consultations on this matter.

Mr. Chairman, the Disarmament Commission under your enlightened guidance should be able to give impetus to the work of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to put it in a position where it can propose to the General Assembly at its forty-first session the adoption of a comprehensive programme of disarmament and of a treaty banning the production, development, use and stockpiling of chemical weapons, as well as adoption of recommendations aimed at halting South Africa's nuclear research.

Mr. Fischer (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, my delegation is pleased to find in you the well proved qualities of aptitude, integrity and courtesy required in the conduct of these deliberations.

An accident which has in recent days shaken the international community casts a tragic light on the annihilating power of nuclear energy which, freed from the control of human will, goes beyond frontiers and affects the physical integrity, health and fate of peoples, with consequences that are very difficult to determine today.

The incident, regardless of the country in which it occurred, dramatically reminds small States in particular how much the present period of security depends on that extremely powerful external element that it does not control.

It is a dominant fact that in today's world there is not a single State whose external security does not ultimately depend on decisions adopted by the leaders of the nuclear Powers, in particular the super-Powers.
Small nations, in the words of the Secretary-General, thus live in interdependency and inequality. Paradoxically, as we continue to see in recent years the harsh rule of national interests prevailing in international relations, we once again undertake these deliberations stressing the existence of the vital interests of the international community—interests that go beyond those of individual nations. I am referring to the common survival of mankind.

In terms of specific collective action, this means that the States Members of the United Nations, especially those which have little power, must intensify their efforts to claim, encourage and obtain greater effective participation for themselves in a disarmament process that would ensure their own existence.

Against the backdrop of that overriding concern, I wish to make a few remarks on the Organization's role in the field of disarmament—an item that affects one of the most sensitive areas of Uruguay's foreign policy, for, despite its small size, Uruguay proudly confesses to a deep, longstanding commitment to universal peace through law, and to eradicating the violence of arms from international life.

First, by virtue of their form, decisions of United Nations organs in the field of disarmament suffer an immediate and evident disadvantage. Thus, the formulation and structure of adopted resolutions—I am referring specifically to General Assembly resolutions—vitiate the most basic and pressing aspirations of the international community. Similarly, the appeals to the nuclear Powers for the cessation of atomic testing, condemnations of the proliferation of conventional weapons, and demands for observance of agreements in the field of disarmament—in short, the urgent need to restrain the nuclear Powers through legally binding international instruments—are all diluted by the proliferation of whereases and operative paragraphs that form a series of texts which year after year amount to more than 60 to 70 resolutions at each session of the General Assembly. The ritual
repetition of their contents demonstrates the practical irrelevance of most of the actions decided on. Moreover, the accumulation and overlapping of these measures at times undermine their possible impact.

Obviously, therefore, statements by the international community must be more strongly and directly addressed to the Governments involved and to international opinion by resort to greater simplicity and effectiveness of expression.

It is important to recognize that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament represented a valuable effort at ordering and identifying major problems and the principles for disarmament, and at establishing a comprehensive programme based on priority areas and stages.

Secondly, given the aforementioned drawbacks relating to the style and format of resolutions, it is of decisive importance, if the international community's voice is to have an impact, to pay greater attention to the matter of substance. Weakness in that regard compounds the phenomenon. In matters of disarmament in particular, the Organization has become increasingly unable to influence the turn of international events.

This failing is most apparent in the realm of arms control, where the system of collective security is out of step with the forces which truly determine international events; hence, the effective importance attached to the various levels of negotiation on disarmament to which the major Powers, in particular the super-Powers, resort.

Aware of this decline in the Organization, the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, reaffirmed in 1978 the central role and primary responsibility of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, in accordance with the Charter; it also reiterated the primary responsibility of the major Powers in the field of nuclear disarmament and the cessation of the arms race. And, as affirmed by States in the final resolution to which I have referred,
bilateral negotiations in the field of disarmament are complementary to multilateral negotiations; they are not in competition with them nor do they exclude each other. We must renew the affirmation contained in the document that information in this field is essential if the United Nations is to be able effectively to fulfil that central role.

The fact is, the policies and decisions of the major Powers in the field of armaments are processed, negotiated, dealt with and settled in a way which increasingly disregards the United Nations framework. We need only review the development of disputes in recent years in documents and official statements to appreciate the truth of that assertion. Another factor is the absence of the will on the part of nuclear States to commit themselves to a process of global disarmament which is binding, comprehensive and in accordance with the aspirations as collectively defined by the States Members of the Organization.

At the United Nations the major Powers proclaim the need for disarmament and the urgency to create an international context inspiring confidence and security and at the same time embark on an enormous arms race. Yet, we know that debates, the promotion of drafts and the voting on them provide opportunity for underlying confrontation, since both parties are called upon to comply with the same principles and disarmament measures.

Those conditions must be viewed with realism and taken into account when speaking about the overriding role of the United Nations as a central forum.

Thirdly, it is important to recognize that, despite the prevailing adverse situation, the system has offered a good environment for the development of new ideas, new formulas for action and for harmonizing the will of Member States based on unprecedented international legal instruments, such as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the Antarctic Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to
mention but a few. Those instruments have their limitations, but they have consolidated unprecedented progress in the field of disarmament in certain areas; they have reduced uncertainty and continue to have a stabilizing effect on what could be an even more dangerous international climate.
(Mr. Fischer, Uruguay)

Uruguay reaffirms its continued willingness to promote and support and to participate in the strengthening of the role of that disarmament machinery.

We do so in the conviction that legal security is one of the corner-stones of our own security. As was stated 20 years ago by our representative Carlos Maria Velazquez, we small countries need the certainty and security provided by international law for reasons of true national interest. In a world where the will of the strong prevails, we need to know how far we can go and how far we may be taken.

Fourthly, the diplomatic efforts at disarmament are complemented by the studies undertaken by independent commissions of experts and statesmen under United Nations auspices. Those studies should be distributed as widely as possible. The report of the Palme Commission is a model that merits frequent review. We should also emphasize the value of recent studies on the relationship between disarmament and development.

We should emphasize also that the organs of the United Nations continue to open up new areas conducive to agreement and the consolidation of initiatives pertaining to matters of growing regional importance and bearing on current needs and aspirations.

In particular we recognize the significance of the resolution on conventional disarmament at the regional level submitted by the delegation of Peru with the active support of my country and sponsored by States from within and outside our region.

Given the specific situation of our region, which led to this draft of world-wide significance, the initiative also contributes to consolidating a trend in the armaments field based on parallel unilateral policies resulting from the advent of democratic Governments in Latin America.
The CHAIRMAN: We have thus concluded the general exchange of views. Delegations that have not spoken and have exercised the desired degree of restraint will of course have an opportunity to make known their views on the work of the Commission in the final stages of our work.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.