General Assembly

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 2 May 1988, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. HEPBURN (Bahamas)

- Opening of the session
- Election of officers
- Adoption of the agenda
- Organization of work
- General exchange of views

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: I declare open the 123rd meeting, the first of the 1988 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

Omar Khayyam, in his poem called The Rubaiyat, had these words to say:

"The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.
Yesterday this day's madness did prepare
Silence, Triumph or Despair.

Drink! for you know not whence you came, nor why:
Drink! for you know not why you go, nor where."

In other words, for us here in the United Nations Disarmament Commission the die has been cast, for immediately after the conclusion of this substantive session, which is mandated to follow up the relevant decisions and recommendations of the special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, we begin deliberations on the third special session devoted to disarmament.

The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament emphasized that the United Nations had a central role and primary responsibility in the field of disarmament. Yet we know that the specific measures outlined in the Final Document remain largely unimplemented. The second special session devoted to disarmament, held during an inauspicious period, did not succeed in lessening international tensions, and it is fair to say that the call for a third special session devoted to disarmament was an appropriate face-saving device. The proposal of the 1988 time frame left no alternative short of reversing that decision.
The question I wish to pose is: Are we doomed to make important decisions on an ad hoc basis, or are we going to operate on an action-oriented plane? Despite the fact that this year there are still pockets of conflicts in the world, there have been glimmers of hope through the recent United States-Soviet Union initiative on medium- and shorter-range nuclear missiles, as well as the resolution of the question of Afghanistan and the favourable signs of movement towards agreement on chemical weapons.

It is often said that opportunity knocks but once, and at this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission we have that option to clear away those misapprehensions about the wisdom of a disarmed world, thereby removing doubts surrounding the programme of work on the agenda of the third special session devoted to disarmament, by successfully concluding several of the items on the agenda of the Commission which, in effect, are linked to the special session. In this way we would be able to take those decisions that would help to make the concept of general and complete disarmament less rhetorical and more practical.

In the four decades since the adoption of the United Nations Charter the world has changed at a staggering rate. The number of independent countries in the Organization has more than tripled as over 700 million people have opted for separation from colonial domination. The population of the world has more than doubled, and the global economy has grown faster than ever before in history. Science and technology have transformed the ways human beings feed, house and clothe themselves and work, travel and communicate.

Yet with all of these changes the principles of the United Nations as outlined in the Charter have remained invariable. Its efforts to secure peace, justice and progress for all have been remarkably consistent. We have a chance to enhance that process at this session.
(The Chairman)

If, therefore, one considers the immensity of the task the United Nations faces in its efforts to achieve the purposes previously mentioned, the following words of former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld take on new meaning:

"The increasing danger of destruction will sooner or later force us out of a system of balance of power into a system of true and universal international co-operation."
(The Chairman)

With the advent of the atomic age and the threat of the complete annihilation of mankind, it can be generally agreed that the period to which Dag Hammarskjold referred is upon us. The United Nations was born after history's most disastrous war, which took the lives of over 30 million people. The leaders who witnessed this tragedy were determined to prevent a recurrence. They sought to do this by creating an Organization based on international endorsement. It is expected that this spirit of agreement will seep into every pore of our deliberations, thereby defusing confrontation and promoting communication. The results of my informal consultations attest to this idea. This does not mean that there have not been differences; what it means, rather, is that we were able to make the differences work in our favour rather than allow them to divide us. I am most grateful to all members for that co-operation.

Let me admonish you as did a commando leader in addressing his men - I take the liberty of including women as well - on their devotion to duty:

"Men - and women - tomorrow's raid will be the toughest and bloodiest we've ever tackled. The enemy already know we're coming and they are reinforced by tanks and paratroopers. It'll be 200 of them to each of us. The planes may not have enough fuel to get back if there are any survivors. We leave at 0700 hours sharp. Anybody who's late doesn't get to go."

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The CHAIRMAN: Delegations may recall that at our organizational session, held on 1 December 1987, we elected a Chairman and three Vice-Chairmen. However, we still need to elect an additional five Vice-Chairmen - two from the Group of African States, two from the Group of Asian States and one from the Group of Western European and Other States. We also need to elect a Rapporteur from the Group of Eastern European States. Today I am happy to report that Cameroon and
(The Chairman)

Togo, Jordan, and Australia have been nominated by the African Group, the Asian Group and the Western European and Other States Group respectively for the posts of Vice-Chairmen.

May I take it that the Commission wishes to elect the aforementioned countries to the vice-chairmanship of the Commission by acclamation?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to take this opportunity to extend my personal congratulations to the additional Vice-Chairmen that have just been elected, and indeed to all the Vice-Chairmen of the Commission, and to express the view that with these elections we should now be able to expedite our work.

Secondly, we come to the election of the Rapporteur. The Eastern European Group has nominated Mr. Istvan Sipos of Hungary for the post.

May I take it that it is the Commission's wish to elect Mr. Sipos to the post of Rapporteur by acclamation?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I should also like to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to Mr. Sipos on his election as Rapporteur of the Commission. I invite him to come to the podium and take the place reserved for the Rapporteur.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The CHAIRMAN: As members may recall, at our organizational session last year one delegation expressed its strong view on item 8, regarding naval armaments and disarmament. However, after consultations with the delegation concerned I am convinced that following the manner of consideration of this subject last year by the Commission could be a good policy for this year.

If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the agenda as contained in document A/CN.10/L.22.

The agenda was adopted.
ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: I should now like to come to the organization of work for the session and to deal with the substantive items. In this connection, I wish to recall that I have conducted consultations with a large number of delegations, during the week of 14 to 18 March in Geneva and the last week of April in New York, hoping that a general understanding regarding the organization of work for the session would be reached. Now I wish to put those ideas to the Commission for its consideration.

I begin with the general exchange of views. In view of the limited time available to the Commission, it was the general feeling that there should be a limited general exchange of views, allowing delegations to make statements on any or all agenda items. In this regard, I would urge those delegations that wish to make general statements to inscribe their names on the list of speakers with the Secretariat. The deadline for such inscriptions is 1 p.m. today. In addition, 25 copies of statements should be provided to the Secretariat.

If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to proceed in this manner.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: Secondly, we come to the establishment of subsidiary bodies.

As members may recall, the General Assembly at its forty-second session requested the Disarmament Commission to consider various questions. It did so in its resolutions 42/36, 42/34 B, 42/38 O, 42/38 K, 42/38 E, 42/38 G, 42/42 F and 42/39 F, respectively, regarding the reduction of military budgets, item 5; South Africa's nuclear capability, item 6; review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, item 7; verification in all its aspects, item 10; and
(The Chairman)

guidelines for confidence-building measures, item 11. Furthermore, the Commission at its last session agreed to continue consideration of the question concerning various aspects of the arms race, particularly the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament, as contained in agenda item 4 (a) and (b).

As a result of the consultations, the following subsidiary bodies of the Commission, both formal and informal groups, could be established to deal with various substantive agenda items, with the flexibility of allocating time to groups during the course of their deliberations:

(a) The Committee of the Whole would at its initial stage deal with item 4 (a) and (b), regarding the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament, and a contact group would be set up on this subject. The Committee would also consider reports of the Disarmament Commission, as appropriate, as well as other business deemed necessary;

(b) A consultation group would deal with item 5, regarding the reduction of military budgets;

(c) Working Group I would deal with item 6, on the nuclear capability of South Africa;
(d) Working Group II would deal with item 7, regarding the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

(e) A consultation group would be set up to deal with item 8, regarding the question of naval armaments and disarmament.

(f) Working Group III would deal with item 9, regarding the question of conventional disarmament.

(g) Working Group IV would deal with item 10, regarding the question of verification in all its aspects.

(h) And a consultation group would deal with item 11, regarding the question of confidence-building measures.

The third point is the equitable distribution of chairmanship among subsidiary bodies. With regard to the chairmanship of these subsidiary bodies, I should like to announce that, according to my consultations with delegations, the following arrangements could be made, taking into account equitable geographical distribution of the chairmanship of the subsidiary bodies:

(a) Consultation Group on item 5, regarding reduction of military budgets, will be chaired by the representative of Romania, Mr. Teodor Melescanu.

(b) Working Group I on item 6, regarding South Africa's nuclear capability, will be chaired by the representative of Sri Lanka, Ambassador Daya Perera.

(c) Working Group II on item 7, regarding the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, will be chaired by the representative of Cameroon, Ambassador Paul Enco.

(d) Consultation Group on item 8, regarding naval armaments and disarmament, will be co-ordinated by the representative of Sweden, Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, under the responsibility of the Chairman of the Commission.

(e) Working Group III on item 9, regarding conventional disarmament, will be chaired by the representative of Denmark, Ambassador Skjold Mellbin.
(f) Working Group IV on item 10, regarding verification in all its aspects, will be chaired by the representative of Canada, Ambassador Douglas Roche.

(g) Consultation Group on item 11, regarding confidence-building measures, will be under the auspices of the Chairman of the Commission.

With regard to the chairmanship of the Committee of the Whole, I understand that, as was the case in previous years, the Chairman of the Commission will take that role. In this connection, I wish to designate Mr. Sergei Martynov of the Byelorussian SSR, to chair the Contact Group to deal with item 4 (a) and (b).

Moreover, I wish to point out in particular that in the course of consultations it was the general understanding that the arrangement I have just mentioned would be an exception for this year only and should not be considered a precedent for the future.

I should like to point out that the appeal I have made, which is worded as follows, will be included in the record:

The Chairmen of the working groups should do all in their power to conclude their work, since it is the Commission's expressed wish that at next year's session the policy of rotation on the basis of equitable geographical distribution must be applied. Member States are also urged to give their co-operation to the Chairmen of the working groups so that we may reach the goal that we have in mind.

If I hear no objection to this arrangement, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: As to the allocation of time for each agenda item, the principle of equal footing and flexibility for practical purposes will be observed and the Secretariat will issue a weekly timetable on the programme of work during the session, taking into account the needs of each subsidiary body through consultations with the Chairmen of the various groups. However, a general programme of work (A/CN.10/1988/CRP.1) for the entire session has been prepared and
circulated as an indicative timetable for the work of the Commission, subject to further adjustment whenever necessary. It is also understood that no more than two simultaneous meetings of subsidiary bodies will be held, except for the informal consultation groups.

The fourth point relates to documentation for the session. Regarding documentation for the current session, I wish to point out that last year's report of the Disarmament Commission (A/42/42) to the General Assembly will serve as the basic document for consideration, since it contains a number of major proposals on the subjects to be considered this year. Previous reports of the Commission will, of course, be useful for reference. In addition, document A/CN.10/106 has been issued. It contains replies from Governments regarding the question of verification in all its aspects (agenda item 10), pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/42 F. Also, the Commission will have before it a number of working papers submitted by delegations on various agenda items. I should like to urge those delegations to submit their papers to the Secretariat as soon as possible for processing.

The fifth point is the status of non-governmental organizations. As was the case in previous years, non-governmental organizations are welcome to participate in the work of the Disarmament Commission as observers in the plenary meetings and the meetings of the Committee of the Whole.

Are there any questions about the aforementioned arrangements?

**Miss SOLESBY** (United Kingdom): Mr. Chairman, my question is about an aspect on which, I think, you did not in fact comment, and relates to documentation. Would you inform us what the arrangements are as regards records of our proceedings? I recall that last year we decided that records were not necessary and we relied on the overall report on our meetings. I wonder whether the arrangements will be the same this year.
The CHAIRMAN: I call on the Secretary of the Commission to reply.

Mr. LIN (Secretary, Disarmament Commission): In answer to the question raised by the representative of the United Kingdom, I wish to say the following.

On 7 January 1988 our Department received a memorandum from the Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments the third paragraph of which reads:

"For the first time since 1985, the General Assembly has approved no economy measures to restrict the duration of sessions or the servicing entitlements of United Nations organs during the coming year. Therefore, meeting records will be restored to all organs entitled to receive them, and sessions will resume their normal length..."

Following that, I received a memorandum from the Interpretation and Meetings Division of the Department of Conference Services, dated 25 April 1988, indicating that the following meeting services would be available for the 1988 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission:

"(a) duration: 2-20 May 1988;

(b) number of meetings: 4 meetings per day (2 in the morning and 2 in the afternoon); a total of 60 meetings for the session;

(c) allocation of conference room: 3, 4, A and B;

(d) simultaneous interpretation: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish;

(e) verbatim records: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish (for plenary meetings only);

(f) sound recording: yes"
Miss SOLESBY (United Kingdom): I am grateful for that information, but could I ask how this is related to an earlier resolution of the General Assembly - I refer to one of 1986, resolution 41/177 D, which came from the Fifth Committee. By it, the General Assembly decided to extend for a further three years, up to the end of 1989, the experimental period during which no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly should be entitled to summary records, with certain exceptions which were set out and did not include the Disarmament Commission.

At first hearing the memorandum appears inconsistent with that ruling. I should be grateful for comments in that regard.

The CHAIRMAN: I thought that that was the general trend of the question of the representative of the United Kingdom. I can get the necessary information from the Secretary and have it ready for the Commission tomorrow morning, rather than dealing with the matter now. I think that that would help us expedite our work.

Before going on to the next point I should like to make a personal comment, which I do not want members to think of as setting a precedent in any way. As all the members of this Committee, and probably all in the United Nations, know very well, Ambassador Ali Alatas, who worked very hard as Chairman of the Commission and also on item 8, has been appointed Foreign Minister of his country, a post of which I think he is quite deserving, and that speaks well of the wisdom of his Government. As far as item 8 is concerned, we had looked forward to his participation - and not only his participation, but that of his delegation as well. But that was not possible. I am therefore very grateful to the Ambassador of Sweden, who has been working with this as well, who will work under my chairmanship on this very important item. I know members will agree with me when I say we extend to him congratulations and best wishes for the very onerous task ahead of him.
Mr. McDowell (New Zealand): Mr. Chairman, on the organization of work, I noticed that in relation to the meeting of subsidiary bodies you said that there would on occasion be two working groups and contact groups meeting concurrently. I would draw your attention to the debate we had on the subject last year in the Commission, in which I think was expressed the hope and expectation that no more than two bodies would meet concurrently.

Small delegations find it very difficult indeed to be able to be present in more than two bodies, and we all wish to contribute. I know it is perhaps impossible to cut the number down to two, but I hope that in scheduling meetings the Bureau will take account of the problems of small delegations and will endeavour where possible to keep to a minimum the number of subsidiary bodies meeting concurrently.

The Chairman: I am sure that we will take that into consideration. It is good that the representative of New Zealand has raised a question that most delegations would normally raise. As I said earlier, the only way in which we can proceed more effectively is to conclude the work on our agenda and reduce the number of agenda items in the future, which would meet the interest of most delegations in following all of the items. We will do everything in our power to see that that is done.

General Exchange of Views

The Chairman: I shall now call on those delegations wishing to make general statements at this time. The first speaker is Ambassador von Stulpnagel, who will speak on behalf of the twelve member States of the European Community.

Mr. von Stulpnagel (Federal Republic of Germany): Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the twelve member States of the European Community I have the honour to convey to you our sincere congratulations on your election. I should like to add our best wishes for successful work at this year's session of the United Nations.
Disarmament Commission. The Twelve are very much in agreement with you that we
should make every effort to keep the general debate to a minimum and then get down
to work right away.

With only one month left until the opening of the third special session on
disarmament, this work will be of specific importance. At the special session we
will be expected to draw up a number of concrete recommendations, thus contributing
to an intensified dialogue. Concentrated and result-oriented deliberations will
therefore be necessary. What we can achieve this year will at the same time be
proof of the degree of efficiency that the United Nations Disarmament Commission is
able to provide. The twelve member States of the European Community are prepared
to commit themselves to active and constructive participation in this work.

I should like to comment briefly on some of the substantive items on our draft
agenda.

In the vast field covered by the comprehensive disarmament topic of item 4,
practically no progress could be achieved last year. Although we are fully aware
of the difficulties existing in this area, we feel it should be our ambition to
produce at least a limited number of recommendations. Since we are meeting in an
international climate that should inspire and influence our work in an increasingly
positive manner, such progress should be possible.

As to agenda item 5, on the reduction of military budgets, the Twelve welcome
the progress made last year. It should now be possible to finalize those parts of
the draft on principles which are still under consideration. In this context we
wish to reiterate the importance we attach to the application of the standardized
international reporting system by the broadest number of States. That reporting
system provides a universal framework whereby States with different social and
economic systems can supply information about their military spending in a
comparable and non-prejudicial form. It is unfortunate that there are still many States within the United Nations which have not yet been able to participate in this useful exercise. Willingness to publish data about force levels and expenditure is a litmus test of a country's commitment to increased openness and transparency in military matters.

South Africa's nuclear capability is another item on our agenda on which further progress should be possible.

So far as the review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament is concerned, considerable progress could be achieved this year. The Twelve attach particular importance to this agenda item, especially with regard to the disarmament machinery. We should like to urge all participants to contribute actively to the finalization of proposals.

Our delegations engaged in a substantive consideration of the question of conventional disarmament at last year's session of the Disarmament Commission. The interest and active involvement of the Twelve, particularly in matters of conventional disarmament, are well known. It is conventional weapons that have been the cause of many millions of lost lives and grave suffering in different parts of the world, and it is expenditure on conventional armament and forces that absorbs the overwhelming part of all the military budgets of the world. The process of conventional disarmament is therefore essential for all States of the world and should be pursued on the global and regional levels. We look forward to the continued consideration of this issue by the Disarmament Commission and its working group chaired by one of our members. Last year that working group made considerable progress towards agreeing on a substantive report concerning conventional disarmament. We are confident that this task can be completed during the current session of the Disarmament Commission.
With regard to verification, the Twelve should like to stress again the overall importance they attach to this agenda item. They believe that verification is a basic requirement of any particular agreement on arms limitation or disarmament. Considerable progress was achieved during last year's session of the Disarmament Commission. We are therefore optimistic that it will be possible to finalize a catalogue of concrete recommendations and proposals regarding verification in all its aspects, including principles, provisions and techniques to promote the inclusion of adequate verification provisions in arms limitation and disarmament agreements.

Since the adoption of the Final Document in 1978, significant progress towards more confidence-building among nations has been achieved. The concept of confidence-building as an important instrument for the strengthening of international peace and security meets with growing acceptance among States. However, further steps towards establishing a firm network of confidence-building measures are still needed. The United Nations as a whole has a particular responsibility in this field, as do the individual Member States. In this context, special emphasis should be given to reaching final consensus on the draft guidelines for confidence-building measures. We are confident that we will succeed in reaching agreement on still outstanding parts of these draft guidelines. It is for this purpose that the draft guidelines reappear on our agenda.

The twelve Member States of the European Community continue to be convinced of the role the Disarmament Commission has to play as the specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. The Disarmament Commission is the place where, with the participation of all United Nations Member
States, consensus on the necessity and modalities of disarmament and arms control measures can be reached. In that regard, the Disarmament Commission is an indispensable link in the multilateral disarmament process. This does not exclude the fact that it needs to step up its efficiency. It is up to us to do better and to help the Commission use its full potential. The Twelve are prepared to contribute to this goal.

Mr. Zapotocky (Czechoslovakia): Mr. Chairman, I should like first of all to express my joy at seeing you in the chair of the current session of the Disarmament Commission and the conviction that under your guidance we will be able to produce such results as may rightly be expected from this session. I would like to use this opportunity also to express our appreciation of your excellent work in preparation of this session. I can assure you that the Czechoslovak delegation will do its best for the success of our deliberations - and that also in its capacity as Vice-Chairman of the Commission.

The current session is all the more significant since it is being held directly prior to the main event of this year in the field of multilateral disarmament efforts: the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament. This time the Commission's work will be even more demanding and extensive due to the fact that the concrete results and recommendations to be worked out at the session may also contribute to the successful progress of the third special session and to the adoption of a meaningful final document at its conclusion.
Our deliberations on individual questions are inevitably influenced by the general international political climate. This year we definitely have much to build on in this direction. The signature of the Soviet Union-United States Treaty on the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear missiles represents a historic first step in the field of genuine disarmament and provides a strong impetus for subsequent negotiations. For the first time in history an entire class of the most destructive weapons is to be eliminated.

In the long-term perspective, a real process of nuclear disarmament has been initiated, and its essential next step aimed at a 50-per-cent reduction of the strategic nuclear stockpiles of the two major Powers, on condition of strict observance of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972, is under intensive negotiation at present. This next step should be one of the central issues of the Moscow summit meeting between General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan scheduled for May of this year.

All of us are aware of the implications of the relationship of the two Powers for the international climate and for the process of disarmament in particular. However, these relations cannot be the only ones upon which to focus. It is essential that these bilateral negotiations also find due reflection in the multilateral fora and, in turn, that bilateral and multilateral negotiations complement one another. In particular, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva should fulfil its irreplaceable role as the only negotiating forum on disarmament. The Disarmament Commission, as a deliberative body, should contribute effectively to this process by discussing certain specific questions in such a way as to make the outcome of this discussion an impetus towards all existing forms of arms control negotiations.
(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

Such mutual linkage of the work of these two most significant fora would undoubtedly be an important contribution to making more effective the process of nuclear disarmament and also of other relevant spheres of disarmament on a global scale. Nevertheless, however flawless the organization of work and however high the effectiveness of the negotiating mechanism may be, they cannot substitute for the political will of States, a lack of which we have witnessed all too often thus far, and for a genuine will of States to contribute to the elimination primarily of nuclear as well as other kinds of weapons of mass destruction. Unfortunately, a similar situation could also be noted in the work of this Commission, specifically in the discussion of the questions under agenda item 4. It is the hope of the Czechoslovak delegation that the positive development of relations between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America will find its reflection in the work of the Commission and that the other nuclear-weapon States will follow suit.

With regard to security, obviously, only an overall solution of all fundamental disarmament questions can be regarded as final. This ultimate goal is achievable through a step-by-step solution of the crucial issues of disarmament, which presupposes the readiness of all parties in negotiations to undertake ever new commitments. This also requires new approaches to the perception of the world in general, and with respect to the question of security, including the implicit role of disarmament in particular. In this direction an important advancement can be noticed lately. In particular the results of the Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, as well as those of the forty-second session of the General Assembly, have shed new light on these essential problems and have drawn the attention of all delegations and of the world community to them.
Every region of the world has its military specifics and is thus differently affected by the various disarmament issues. This is specifically the case with Europe, where such a high concentration of armed forces and all types of armaments exist that a solution requires a truly comprehensive approach. That is also why the Warsaw Treaty member States, at the session of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, held on 29-30 March 1988 in Sofia, adopted an appeal to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member States and to all countries participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), in which they address, in quite specific terms, all aspects of disarmament and security in that continent and worldwide.
The materials of the Sofia session have been issued in an official document of the United Nations and are available to all interested delegations.

It is quite evident that concrete disarmament negotiations in both the world-wide and regional frameworks require the elaboration of associated measures designed to enhance confidence. Inseparably linked with such efforts are endeavours to create zones of increased co-operation and diminished confrontation. The recent Czechoslovak proposal to establish a zone of confidence, co-operation and good-neighbourly relations along the NATO-Warsaw Treaty line of contact put forward by Milos Jakes, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, on 24 February this year is aimed precisely in this direction. In an interview with correspondents of Time magazine, Milos Jakes commented:

"We proceed from the premise that at the present time reliable peace and security cannot be safeguarded through measures in the military sphere only. Therefore, we propose to achieve also a new level of political, economic, cultural and human contacts. Mistrust cannot be overcome only by means of political declarations but, rather, through thousands of ties of good-neighbourly relations which will enable also a better knowledge of one another and guarantee that no side will be able to persuade its citizens about a diehard animosity of the other side."

Hence, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic proposes a comprehensive approach to be applied to the strengthening of regional security which envisages in an equal measure the solution of questions in the military, political, economic, ecological and humanitarian spheres. The significance of implementation of this proposal would exceed by far the framework of the participating countries and even of the European continent.
In the military sphere, the gradual forming of a "diluted" zone is proposed where the level of military confrontation would be reduced and where the most formidable types of offensive weapons would be eliminated. The adoption of meaningful measures of confidence building is envisaged. This approach embraces also the previous proposals to establish a zone free of nuclear and chemical weapons in the relevant part of Europe.

In the other spheres, increased activity is envisioned in the pursuit of political dialogue, all-round and mutually beneficial co-operation and elimination of obstacles and persisting long-term problems, including ecological. It is necessary to do away with distorted ideas of one another's objectives and intentions, to expand contacts and encourage better mutual knowledge.

The convening at a certain stage of a meeting of representatives of the countries in the region and of other interested States at the political level has been suggested to discuss all these questions.

The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic believes that similar steps can also be implemented in other parts of the world, naturally in conformity with the specific regional conditions.

There are a number of questions on the agenda of the current session of the Commission on Disarmament where there exists a real possibility of bringing them to a conclusion and of submitting concrete results to the third special session. In the framework of the Commission's sessions held so far a sound basis in the form of the already agreed elements, sometimes even of complete texts with the exception of one or a few paragraphs, has been created for our further work. Therefore, we should follow up on these results and finish the work already begun. I do not think we should re-open the already agreed texts, since it could jeopardize our ability to present concrete results. Such questions include verification, where
the Czechoslovak delegation will try again to take an active part. The follow-up period after our session last year and the recent symposium held in Dagomys, in the Soviet Union, have undoubtedly contributed to a better understanding of this issue. We should like to express the hope that all delegations in the respective working group will start discussing it with a view to concluding their work at this session. There are real prospects for this to be achieved. Moreover, it is obvious that this question can occupy a significant place also in the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in disarmament. In this connection I should like to express my delegation's view that the creation of an all-embracing mechanism of international verification in the framework of the United Nations would contribute to strengthening the role of our Organization in disarmament.

The Czechoslovak delegation assumes that the spirit of realistic compromise will also prevail in the discussion of the questions of reducing military budgets and of confidence-building measures. Again, these are spheres where the Commission could and should present concrete results to the third special session.

An important component of the Commission's work at its current session will be further consideration of conventional disarmament. This is one of the new subjects that have been addressed only since last year. Here also we believe that, in spite of some divergence of views, a possibility exists to complete and adopt a concrete document if expectations as to the possible outcome are reasonable and if the specific conditions of the different regions are duly kept in mind.

On the eve of the third special session of the General Assembly on disarmament the question of the role of the United Nations in disarmament is undoubtedly gaining in significance. A broad and detailed discussion on this score reflecting some new ideas and suggestions took place during the forty-second session of the General Assembly. We feel that it has been helpful in setting the framework for
consideration of this issue and that it has re-emphasized the irreplaceable role of
the United Nations and of its mechanism in the field of disarmament. Accordingly,
the relevant working group should take this into account and seek the adoption of
specific recommendations.

Czechoslovakia is convinced that the working group on the question of South
Africa's nuclear capability has not fully used its potential so far. Obviously,
this fact corresponds to the political reality. Yet it does not mean that the
solution of this question is becoming less urgent. Quite the opposite is true.
The growing aggressiveness of the apartheid régime of South Africa against
neighbouring States, and even against its own population, gives rise to new
apprehensions as to the possible consequences of a situation that has thereby been
exacerbated.

At the last session of the Commission further in-depth consideration was given
to the issue of armament and disarmament in the naval sphere. The current session
should continue to engage in an active discussion of all aspects of this subject.
The naval force is becoming one of the most important branches of armed forces, and
a large quantity of nuclear combat equipment is deployed on ships and submarines.
Moreover, some States are using precisely this branch of armed forces to an ever
greater degree to assert their interests. A considerable role in this sphere could
be played by an extension of confidence-building measures to the seas and oceans.

We are aware that we are facing difficult tasks indeed. However, the
Czechoslovak delegation believes that a solution of these tasks is possible. We
should seize the opportunity of the existing momentum and finalize the questions at
hand in order to be able to submit concrete results of our work to the third
special session. This would also undoubtedly help increase the prestige of this
important organ and of the United Nations in general.
The CHAIRMAN: I should like to remind representatives once more that the list of speakers will be closed at 1 o'clock today.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.