DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 3 May 1988, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. INZKO (Austria) (Vice-Chairman)

later: Mr. HEPBURN (Bahamas) (Chairman)

- General exchange of views (continued)

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Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.
In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Inzko (Austria), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued)

Mr. COVARRUBIAS (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation is deeply satisfied to see Ambassador Hepburn presiding over the work of the Disarmament Commission. We are aware of his ability, experience and great negotiating skills, which will unquestionably make this a most productive session. I assure the Chairman of my full co-operation and that of my delegation in the tasks that lie before us.

For more than 40 years, disarmament has been the central point around which the majority of global issues debated in the United Nations have revolved. Yet despite our efforts, we all know full well that progress has been minimal; rather, we have witnessed an intensified arms race and the development of ever more effective, sophisticated and costly weapons.

As members know, current assessments indicate that world-wide military expenditures are approaching a trillion dollars a year and more; this easily exceeds the sums spent on health, education and social and economic development. We know that the world's economic prospects for this decade are closely linked to real efforts in the field of disarmament. Yet we are discouraged to note that, for complex reasons which I shall not go into here, international trade in weapons, equipment and services has grown alarmingly in that period, and already exceeds $150 billion. Unfortunately, two thirds of this trade is directed towards developing countries.

This untrammeled arms race not only affects national economies, but also tends to make international politics more rigid and unyielding to change, thus bringing about dependence leading ultimately to a kind of alignment.
Obviously, spending on weapons has a deeply negative impact on the economic and social development of peoples. The budgetary burden of military spending on new and sophisticated weapons grows increasingly heavy in terms of a percentage of overall world production. This is combined with an irrational consumption of the world's finite resources which would otherwise be available for social and economic development.

We are discouraged to note the lack of results achieved by efforts in this Organization and outside it: The large-scale competition to amass conventional and nuclear weapons, especially by the great Powers, has not merely continued but has even been stepped up qualitatively and in terms of destructive capacity.

It is clear that substantial and excessive spending on weapons does not create greater stability in international relations but, on the contrary, tends to exacerbate feelings of mistrust and ramified mutual recriminations, and ultimately to create a climate charged with threats to international peace and security, at clear variance with the United Nations Charter principles and international law.

Hundreds of millions suffer from hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy and disease, yet world spending on weapons is expected to continue escalating.
(Mr. Covarrubias, Chile)

These facts are well known by all. The world is caught between exorbitant arms expenditures on the one hand and hunger and poverty on the other hand.

More than 40 years of studies, analyses, meetings, commissions, conferences and speeches, are behind us and little or nothing has been achieved. Great emphasis has been placed on the effects of the arms race and very little on the causes. An illusory attempt has been made now to eliminate nuclear and conventional weapons, to achieve general and complete disarmament, restricting, in passing, military forces.

It has been forgotten that armed forces and arms are merely the reflection of past and present political hostility. It has been forgotten that weapons themselves are not dangerous but rather those who use them. Weapons do not fire them. Armed forces and weapons are not the source or root of tensions among nations, but their consequence.

We therefore feel it is futile to attempt to regulate or reduce armed forces and military expenditures without correcting the underlying political causes behind them.

To try to control this mad arms race without first trying to reach the root of the situation is as is often said, "putting the cart before the horse" and this leads us nowhere.

It is well known that all disarmament initiatives can prosper only on the basis of effective, real, true and credible mutual trust, that first disarms hearts and minds. We must consequently take advantage of this opportunity to intensify the search for forums that can extend trust and consolidate the trust for the parties in the future. As practical instruments to this end, we may mention among many others, treaties of peace and friendship, non-aggression agreements as well as
the faithful fulfilment of the principles of peaceful settlement of disputes, the non-use or threat of force, full respect for treaties, the principle of non-intervention in the affairs of other nations and so forth. However, when these principles are seen to be violated not infrequently by the big Powers and other nations, then fear, mistrust and suspicion prevail, thus generating the ills of the arms race that we are now discussing.

We should once again recognize that the question of disarmament is first and foremost a political problem, that to a greater or lesser extent affects virtually all nations. Moreover, the conclusion of agreements for mutual co-operation in the economic, research and development, tourist and cultural fields also generates a favourable climate for peace and confidence.

We believe that reducing the number of topics to be considered under the heading of disarmament is an urgent task that we must carry out for the good of this Organization, and in order to achieve concrete results. We must make serious efforts to focus upon such matters as confidence-building measures without dismissing other topics, but setting up priorities.

After having made these general comments, I wish to refer specifically to some of the agenda items of great importance to my country.

No area of disarmament has been the subject of such great concern, study and negotiation internationally as the ban on nuclear tests. This concern made it possible to achieve such important advances as the partial nuclear-test-ban Treaty in the atmosphere and outer space and under water in 1963, subscribed to by the nuclear Powers of that time, assuming responsibility for the atmospheric pollution resulting from such tests. Subsequently, in 1974, France also became a party to that agreement. In this way we eliminated the problem of radioactive fall-out, one of the major concerns of those years.
Despite all the appeals of international organizations, despite all the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly calling for the cessation of all nuclear-weapons tests, and calling it a question of the highest priority, we remain unable to achieve a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Nevertheless, the major nuclear Powers continue to reiterate their intention to achieve an agreement to halt these tests, although they are unable to fix the moment when the tests should end. What is even more discouraging is that they have not agreed either on the degree of verification required or the indispensable on-site inspection. These two questions have become the subject of unending debates, prolonging the negotiations to such an extent that they cast doubts upon the existence of a real political will to end these tests and thus demonstrate the firm resolve of the parties to halt the nuclear-arms race.

For these reasons we believe it is a duty of the international community to encourage and support any initiative that may emerge from the great Powers to negotiate a complete ban.

Chile, located in a region that is protected by the Treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons in Latin America, the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which is the first treaty of this kind to have been implemented, finds itself continually obliged to reiterate the position it shares with the other members of the permanent South Pacific Commission, that is, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Chile, a position of vigorous rejection of nuclear explosions in the region, since we are aware that they constitute a grave risk of radiation and endanger the marine environment and its natural resources.

We urge the Power concerned to show its goodwill and commitment to international agreements by putting a definitive halt to the tests it is conducting.
(Mr. Covarrubias, Chile)

Finally, very briefly, we wish to state that my country supported from the outset the principles enshrined in the Charter, and since its birth as an independent republic has been a zealous defender of international law and coexistence. We favour the strengthening of all legal norms that may make of our community a society of peace where peaceful and binding solutions to disputes may prevail.

For these reasons, it is not difficult to explain why we unreservedly support the need to strengthen the powers of the United Nations and of the Secretary-General, especially in the work of disarmament and peace, the fruitful results of which we have seen exemplified recently in the case of Afghanistan.

Mr. KIBIDI N'DOWUKA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): I feel I must, as I speak now on behalf of the delegation of Zaire at this session of the Disarmament Commission, wish the Chairman every success in his position. He may rest assured that he can rely on our feelings of friendship and our appreciation of his many qualities, which certainly are the best guarantees of the successful conduct of our discussions, and indeed the success of the discussions we will hold through the next three weeks.

Beyond the statements expressing the unanimous will of the international community to make a better world, beyond the pressing appeals from the whole world and all countries to build a new future for the world without nuclear weapons, humanity shudders to realize the mortal dangers confronting civilization, dangers which could precipitate an unprecedented nuclear cataclysm for all of mankind.
Indeed, in this overly armed world there is no security for any State or
continent, and the weapons of nuclear deterrence, notwithstanding their advantages
so much vaunted by certain nuclear States, will be of only marginal use in any
world-wide nuclear conflagration. For, in the final analysis, the world will be
wiped out and, with it, all cultural values and all economies, along with billions
of human beings – in fact, with everything of which contemporary civilization is
constituted.

It is because people, anxious for the survival of the human species and
jealous of the values of civilization, do not want that annihilation to occur that
efforts are being made at every level, bilateral and multilateral, to build a new
world that would exclude any use of such terrifying and deadly weapons.

The Republic of Zaire attaches high priority to disarmament questions and to
peace and friendship among peoples. It is with great hope that we are
participating in this substantive session, particularly since it precedes the third
special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to be held here at
the United Nations from 31 May to 25 June 1988, a session that should have a great
impact, given the importance of the issues that will be dealt with and the stature
of the participants.

At this juncture, the delegation of Zaire should like to express its interest
in all of the items on the agenda devoted to substantive issues, among which I
would note, inter alia, the consideration of various aspects of the arms race,
particularly the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament; the reduction of military
budgets, the substantive consideration of the question of South Africa's nuclear
capability; the review of the role of the United Nations in the field of
disarmament; naval armaments and disarmament; the substantive consideration of
issues related to conventional disarmament, including the recommendations and
conclusions contained in the study on conventional disarmament; the consideration
of the question of verification in all its aspects, including principles, provisions and techniques to promote the inclusion of adequate verification in arms limitation and disarmament agreements and the role of the United Nations and its Member States in the field of verification, and so on.

Those are old questions that have often recurred in our debates but that have not, unfortunately, always been analysed in such a manner as to achieve a consensus that could reconcile the positions of all the Member States.

The Republic of Zaire would like once again to express its alarm at a kind of intellectual short-sightedness that affects some States with regard to the subject of South Africa's nuclear capability.

The State of South Africa, which has institutionalized racism - or, to be more precise, negrophobia - and made it a system of government, has for years been stockpiling enriched uranium for military purposes. Those facts have been corroborated by impartial United Nations studies. In various debates the African States have provided every imaginable kind of evidence to convince the international community of the existence of racist South Africa's nuclear capability, a capability that the racist South African State is strengthening thanks to the collaboration of certain countries Members of the United Nations.

Notwithstanding that evidence, for years now we have been witnessing a real dialogue of the deaf that has resulted in an inability to achieve an unambiguous condemnation of the act of genocide being prepared by South Africa.

My delegation sincerely hopes that there will be greater objectivity in our consideration of this question in order to unmask South Africa's criminal designs, about which there can be no doubt.

I should like to say a few words about the reduction of military budgets. My delegation believes that this matter should be given very serious consideration, because the less money spent on weaponry, the greater the prospects for peace and
the greater the financial resources available for development in the third world. With that in mind, my delegation is of the opinion that it is of the greatest importance that some progress be made on this question so that concrete and dynamic solutions can be achieved.

As for the substantive consideration of issues related to conventional disarmament, including the recommendations and conclusions contained in the study on conventional disarmament, my delegation hopes that that question can be reconsidered with greater commitment and in a less biased manner. There are too many interests at stake, beginning with those of the industrialized countries, whose armaments industries depend heavily on the business they do with third world countries. The delegation of Zaire completely shares the opinion of many countries that the majority of the armed conflicts in many third world countries have been settled with conventional weapons which, since the end of the last world war, have caused massive destruction in both human lives and in economic, cultural and social infrastructures.

In conclusion my delegation would like to express its faith in the United Nations, whose Charter is the last resort for oppressed peoples, for countries threatened by sabotage, invasion and domination by militaristic States that are pursuing goals of recolonization and imperialist domination.

We would therefore like to express our hope that the discussion of the question of the United Nations role in the field of disarmament will go beyond the banal.

Mr. AYENI (Nigeria): It is my pleasure to join preceding speakers in extending warm congratulations to the Chairman, on behalf of the Nigerian delegation, on his unanimous election. His acknowledged impeccable credentials, sterling qualities and great diplomatic skill will no doubt guide the deliberations
of the Commission and ensure the successful conclusion of the programme ahead of it. My congratulations and best wishes also go to other officers of the Commission.

At this session we are again confronted with virtually all the agenda items deliberated upon at the last session in 1987. Some of them have been on the Commission's agenda for some years running without concrete outcome. The questions of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament, reduction of military budgets, South Africa's nuclear capability, the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, conventional disarmament and verification have been recurrent issues on the Commission's agenda, but with little or no success in most instances. The problems of safeguarding international peace and security have continued to preoccupy the attention of the international community. Rapid technological trends in weapons innovations and research and development that outpace disarmament negotiations dictate that this body will be faced with an increased, rather than a diminished, burden in the years ahead unless it matches its rhetoric with concrete deeds.

This year, when the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is scheduled to convene, my delegation considers this session of the Disarmament Commission as very significant for shaping its results.
First, as a creation of the 1978 first special session (SSOD-I), revalidated during the 1982 second special session (SSOD-II), the Disarmament Commission will naturally be subject to close scrutiny and appraisal during SSOD-III over the discharge of its disarmament responsibilities and functions, as outlined in the 1978 Final Document. Secondly, as the main deliberative organ of the United Nations comprising all Member States, with a recommendatory role to the General Assembly on top-priority questions of disarmament, the Commission will be expected to justify its continued utility and the confidence reposed in it. Consequently, the Commission is at a crossroads of history as we prepare for SSOD-III.

It is in this vein that my delegation attaches great importance to our deliberations at this session and the resulting report. It is with this sense of responsibility that my delegation appeals to other delegations, whatever their different political, ideological and social persuasions, to demonstrate sufficient flexibility and political will to ensure the successful completion of the various agenda items before our Commission at this session, for the sake of posterity.

My delegation regrets the apparent lack of meaningful progress on the question of nuclear disarmament, which has been on our agenda for over half a decade. It will be recalled that the General Assembly requested the Disarmament Commission to deliberate on a set of proposals to form the basis of recommendations which, when adopted, are expected to facilitate progress in various disarmament negotiations, both at multilateral and bilateral forums. The seemingly static situation in our consideration of the various proposals for recommendations is therefore discouraging. My delegation is unable to understand why super-Power ideological differences and ambitions for nuclear superiority should continue to stall negotiations on nuclear-arms limitation and disarmament agreements.
Although not a negotiating body, the Disarmament Commission should be able to facilitate the work of the Conference on Disarmament by examining the various proposals and making consensus recommendations to the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament principles or guidelines. Theories or concepts should now be relegated to the background and given less recognition, paving the way for progress on disarmament agreements. While accepting some merit in such concepts as balance, whether quantitative or qualitative, reciprocal limitation, gradual reduction, equal security or balanced reduction, we cannot be blind to their demerits, which constitute obstacles to progress in arms limitation and disarmament agreement negotiations. They should, therefore, not be seen as pre-conditions for the conclusion of disarmament agreements.

Developments in conventional weapons are becoming frightening. My delegation is not only concerned about the development of tactical nuclear weapons to enhance conventional warfare, but is also disturbed by the refinement of conventional weapons, particularly such weapons as precision-guided munitions. More disturbing is the refinement of each category, giving rise to constant demand for and supply of new systems in conventional weaponry. Needless to say, the third-world countries have ended up the losers, both in human and material resources. They spend a substantial part of their budgets on defence, encouraged by the major producers of armaments. The United Nations study on conventional disarmament was explicit in stating that

"massive arms supplies, the perpetuation of conflicts" (A/39/348, annex, para. 51)
were among the major causes of conventional warfare. The same study stated:

"The developing world has been the stage, and indeed the victim, of almost all of these armed conflicts ..." (Ibid., para. 55)

We in the developing world therefore find ourselves spending our hard-earned resources purchasing obsolete military equipment to destroy the social and economic infrastructures that were financed from the same hard-earned resources.

Consideration of those and other matters confirms the wisdom of giving conventional weapons the attention they deserve in the Disarmament Commission, by having them as a separate agenda item. The deliberations last year were fruitful, although exploratory. The problems are the concerns of all delegations. We hope that more progress will be made on the subject at this session. The unanimous support for the enabling resolution, 41/59 C, was indicative of the collective desire of the international community on the whole question of conventional disarmament.

The General Assembly in its resolution 35/142 A, of 12 December 1980, requested the Commission

"... to identify and elaborate on the principles which should govern further actions of States in the field of freezing and reduction of military expenditures ..." (resolution 35/142 A, para. 3)

My delegation welcomes the progress the Commission has made, demonstrating the desire of the international community to see a reduction of military budgets as a disarmament measure. We hope that the momentum will not be reduced as we gradually approach the complete execution of the mandate given by the General Assembly on the subject.
The remaining paragraph seems to be fundamental in content. It is gratifying to note that there are no major divergences of view in principle, but there are divergences as to whether there should be pre-conditions or acceptance of principles in a vacuum. My delegation hopes that the gaps in the proposals will at least be narrowed at this session, if the subject cannot be concluded and removed from the Commission's agenda. Pending such a conclusion, we appeal to all Member States to exercise restraint in military expenditures, paving the way for a voluntary reduction of military budgets.

The United Nations has a central role to play in disarmament. This is the underlying principle that gave priority attention to the review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, when the review was proposed in 1984. In view of the recognized paramount role the United Nations is expected to play, and the fact that the review was put on the agenda as a result of a consensus resolution - 39/151 G, of 17 December 1984 - consideration of the subject should now be given the significance it enjoyed initially. It should reflect the initial apparent desire to achieve disarmament by strengthening the role of the world body in the field of disarmament. Agreement having been reached on the preambular paragraphs, there is much need for flexibility to narrow the difference between divergent viewpoints on the substantive parts of our deliberations on this subject.

Our task on confidence-building measures has almost been completed. It is on record that the progress made on this agenda item in 1986 was satisfactory to all delegations. It would be correct to believe that the 1986 achievement on the subject had salutary effects on the Stockholm Conference on the same subject, which was successfully concluded in September of that year. There is no need to catalogue the positive ripples generated, but the improved security of hitherto volatile Europe is a major outcome that can be traced to increased confidence, in compliance with disarmament agreements.
By General Assembly resolution 39/63 E of 12 December 1984, the Commission was requested to continue and conclude, at the 1986 substantive session, consideration of this subject and make appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly for implementation on a global or regional level. Although the text of the guidelines was not entirely agreed owing to differing views on a paragraph, it was felt that such less fundamental differences should not delay transmission of the text to the General Assembly. Having significantly executed the General Assembly's mandate, we seem in duty bound to adopt flexibility and reach consensus on the unconcluded aspects of our work on the subject in order to discharge completely the mandate from the General Assembly.

The question of South Africa's nuclear capability has been on our agenda for about a decade now. With regard to its long history as part of the Commission's responsibility, the progress thus far has been unrealistically slow. The reasons for the lack of progress are connected with the economic interests of those countries which still prefer relations with the apartheid regime to majority rule and the democratic process in South Africa. Some of those countries maintain military collaboration with apartheid South Africa, particularly in the field of nuclear technology. They also supply South Africa with the necessary computer software to enhance the development of a nuclear-weapon capability, in defiance of the expressed wishes of the international community.

Several efforts have been made in the Commission with a view to achieving progress on this vital subject. The Group of African States has been very flexible in its approach, hoping that that would be reciprocated by those who help to strengthen the apartheid regime's nuclear capability. Similarly, other members of the Commission's Bureau have, at one time or another in the past, made efforts in
the same direction of ensuring progress on the subject. Unfortunately, the enemies of the democratic process in South Africa have been negative in their approach to the subject.

During the 1986 substantive session of the Commission, the Chairman, in his closing remarks on 23 May 1986, was explicit on the issue when he said, inter alia, that the "helping hand" he lent could not be seized - referring to the text he had prepared and his approach - and that he himself would handle the deliberations on this important subject. He continued:

"...this rejection, in the last analysis, is not due to the colleagues from the African Group who must have a solution to the burning problems of South Africa most immediately at heart, but from delegations which defend interests of a different kind."

It will be observed from the aforementioned quotation that the Chairman's predecessor-but-one - a seasoned diplomat and versed in issues of disarmament - chose his words carefully and clearly brought out three aspects of the South African question: first, the urgent need to have a solution to the problems posed by South Africa and its desire to acquire a nuclear-weapon capability; secondly, the fact that the question of the nuclear capability of South Africa went directly to the hearts of Africans; and, thirdly, the unpardonable defence of interests of a different kind by the enemies of much-sought-after democracy for South Africa, and the termination of collaboration with the racist régime in the nuclear field.

History will not fail to record the double-standards in the dealings of those countries which uphold democratic process and parliamentary rule at the same time as they collaborate to perpetuate the military strength of apartheid South Africa, particularly in the nuclear field.
There is a close similarity between the concerted efforts of the international community regarding the objectives of the establishment of the Atomic Energy Commission by the United Nations and the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa by African Heads of State or Government at the first summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Cairo, in July 1964. It is pertinent to recall that the Declaration came after the atomic test in the Sahara which represented a challenge to African States leading to their proposals in the General Assembly to rid the continent of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, their consensus desire has been continuously frustrated by South Africa's nuclear programmes, made possible by the collaborating States.

Apart from the various United Nations studies on this subject, eminent scholars have very well documented South Africa's nuclear programmes and capability. It is no longer a secret that the enrichment plant at Valindaba, the semi-commercial plant at Calindaba, and the fuel fabrication plant at Pelindaba are being utilized by the apartheid régime in Pretoria to enhance its nuclear-weapon programmes. Similarly, their development of "tactical nuclear weapons" is common knowledge. These are designed to enhance South Africa's conventional warfare capability and as weapons of last resort. They have now inherited the nuclear-weapon option that used to be known only among the two major military alliances. The latest in South Africa's nuclear scheme are enhanced radiation weapons, atomic projectiles that could be fired from artillery, rocket torpedoes for naval uses, and the spread of short-lived radio-isotopes to prevent enemy access to desired areas for several days in those areas where the radioactivity is spread without long-term contamination. Apparently, South Africa is preparing a protective shield against enemy ground forces.

Fortunately, with perseverance, demonstration of kind gestures and goodwill, as well as profound flexibility on the part of the Group of African States, the
Commission was able to make progress on this subject during its last substantive session. Again we are faced with the situation described by the Chairman of the Commission in 1986, to which I alluded earlier in my statement. It remains to be seen whether that same group of States will reject the African Group's hand of compromise and flexibility. The logical expectation is reciprocity.

Mr. ST.-PHARD (Haiti) (interpretation from French): Since this is my first statement in this important body, allow to convey to Ambassador Hepburn my delegation's heartfelt congratulations on his unanimous election. My delegation wishes to include the other officers of the Commission in this tribute. Thanks to his great knowledge of disarmament issues and undisputed diplomatic qualities, we are sure that the Commission's work will be conducted very well. His election to this responsible post does great honour to the Bahamas and the other countries of the region. We assure him of our full co-operation in making his important task a success.

At the outset the delegation of Haiti would like to state its approach to participation in the important discussions that will take place during this session of the Commission.

The year 1987 saw an increase in the level of military expenditures and a reduction in the extent to which economic and social needs were met. That fact reminds us that, despite the modest increase in the prospects for peace, the thick ominous clouds of over-armament continue to darken the grim skies of humanity.

In the developing countries alone, more than 40,000 children will die this year, as happened last year; about 250,000 will fall victim to blindness for lack of vitamin A; and even more will be paralysed for life by poliomyelitis.
No less than a million will fall victim to malaria, and 130 million school-age children will be locked in the prison of illiteracy.

This gloomy picture is incomplete, even if the following figures are added: half a billion victims of hunger and malnutrition; half a billion victims of endemic unemployment and underemployment, people who cannot meet basic day-to-day needs; a quarter of a billion homeless people, human wrecks that swell the already unbearably crowded city slums; 1.2 billion people without drinking water; and a billion who cannot read or write.

During this session alone, more than $50 billion will be spent for military purposes, to provide a security the search for which could become even more elusive since it persistently fails to take account of the human factors, the socio-economic factors that should to a large extent provide the basis for and even inspire any lucid efforts to promote firm and lasting peace and international security.

Allow me to quote part of Mrs. Inga Thorsson's 1987 report in a Swedish study, The Search for Disarmament, in which she concludes:

"... weapons imports represent about 25 per cent of the debt burden of the countries of the South. Another estimate, noted in the 1985 report of the United Nations on the world social situation, indicates that in at least four of the 20 countries with the largest foreign debt, the amount spent on imported weapons was 40 per cent or more of the increase in debt between 1976 and 1980."

Furthermore she issues a warning to those that

"tend to separate the arms race from related problems - other scourges that beset today's world: the world economic crisis, with all its effects, the debt burden, inflation, massive unemployment, the problems of international
trade, commodity prices, monetary instability as well as the depletion of resources, the degradation of the environment and the polarization of the rich and the poor within and between States.

"A better understanding of the gravity of these global problems and their interdependence prompts us to realize that if these problems are not resolved they will get worse, and we must realize the need to redefine the concept of security, including the security of the most powerful nations of the world."

The terrifying challenge facing us is as horrendous as ever. The progress in the dialogue between the super-Powers, which Haiti welcomes with satisfaction, is not enough to eliminate the perpetual risk of nuclear catastrophe, particularly when some seem bent on introducing their super-sophisticated weapons into the black holes of intergalactic space. There is still time to learn from the wisdom of our contemporary Gabriel Garcia Marquez: "The preservation of peace on earth is cheaper than a nuclear holocaust".

The primum movens that maintains the arms business seems to be paralleled by the horrific and complicated rationale of drug trafficking. This parallel means that we must ask questions about the comparison between the harmful social and human effects of the over-production of weapons of all kinds and the over-production of drugs.

Perhaps we can still put a brake on the mind-boggling dynamics of the arms trade and promote disarmament - not in the manner of those who pay mere lip-service to it but with clarity so as actively to serve the cause of peace, international security and development.

Accordingly we attach the highest importance to the work of this Commission, and particularly to agenda item 7, dealing with the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, and agenda item 5, concerning concrete steps to be
undertaken by States regarding a gradual reduction of military budgets and the reallocation of resources now being used for military purposes to economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries, noting the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

Mr. CHDAN (Pakistan): The delegation of Pakistan welcomes the Chairman's resumption of the office of Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and assures him of its full co-operation and support in the fulfilment of his important tasks. We are confident that under his able guidance and wise leadership the work of the Commission will be conducted in a most efficient and skilful manner.

The Disarmament Commission is meeting at a time of intensified debate on global disarmament, of expectations and of concrete possibilities. The leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union have jointly proclaimed that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. They have agreed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to outer space and to eliminate them on earth. The two super-Powers have concluded an unprecedented agreement to eliminate an entire class of intermediate and shorter-range nuclear missiles. They are working on an agreement to cut their strategic nuclear arsenals by 50 per cent. We are encouraged by these salutary developments because we believe that as long as nations possess nuclear weapons the fate of mankind will continue to rest on a razor's edge.

We are meeting on the eve of SSOD-III, which we hope will provide the necessary inputs and impetus for a new era of genuine international dialogue and co-operation among States on disarmament issues. Therefore our discussions in the coming weeks will assume special importance. It devolves upon us to ensure that the results of our deliberations will make a constructive contribution to a
successful outcome of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Agenda item 4 reflects a vital concern of the international community. In its work on that agenda item 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 objectives of general and complete disarmament.
In the nuclear field, there is the pressing need for measures such 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 prohibition on the introduction of new weapons systems either on earth or in space. Equally, there is the need to ensure compliance with various disarmament agreements and to prevent violations through appropriate verification measures.

Pakistan fully shares the desire of the international community to accord priority to nuclear disarmament, especially by the super-Powers, to prevent the further escalation of the arms race, including its extension to outer space, and to achieve general and complete disarmament. It is to be hoped that the international community, in particular the two super-Powers, will take the necessary measures to avert the danger of a nuclear war and achieve early agreements on genuine nuclear disarmament. More specifically, it is our hope that the two super-Powers will continue to abide by their obligations under the outer space Treaty, the partial test-ban Treaty and, in particular, the anti-ballistic missile Treaty against the development, testing and deployment of anti-ballistic missiles.

At the same time, the nuclear Powers should undertake other related measures, including an agreement not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, an agreement ultimately to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons, an extension of credible and legally binding assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and the conclusion, as a matter of priority, of a treaty banning all nuclear testing.
In recent years, regional disarmament has gained increasing currency and attention. It will be recalled that the United Nations Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization last year, pointed out that the regional dimension of disarmament merited much attention "since it is in regional conflicts that weapons are actually being used for purposes of war" (A/42/1, p. 9). We share the Secretary-General's concern at the build-up in conventional armaments in various regions of the world, resulting in arms imbalance and insecurity. These concerns are accentuated by the growing tendency on the part of certain Powers to use their conventional weapons not only to dominate or overawe their neighbours, but also to employ them as an instrument for their aggressive policies against smaller States, under the guise of intervention through invitation.

Unlike major Powers, small countries acquire armaments in response to threats emanating from neighbouring countries within their region. Therefore, in a regional approach, the diverse problems and perspectives of States in different regions could be given appropriate consideration. Such an approach could facilitate the evolution of remedial measures which are suitable for specific regional situations. It could take into account the interaction among the regional countries, as well as between them and external Powers, so that solutions could be found for the legitimate security concerns of all. A regional approach to disarmament could substantially strengthen the security of the non-aligned and developing countries. It is the most feasible course of promoting nuclear non-proliferation objectives and could significantly contribute to international peace and security.

Unless the growing global and regional arms imbalances are redressed through arms control and disarmament, they are likely to lead to conflicts and use of force in the coming decade, particularly in the third world. Reduction in conventional
weapons should be achieved on the basis of the principles of sovereign equality, balanced security, and so on, which have previously been endorsed by the General Assembly, including at SSOD-I.

The accumulation of armaments by the non-aligned countries will not enhance their security, nor will it end the economic deprivation of their peoples. When non-aligned States secure vast arsenals for potential use against each other, they are surely pursuing a regrettable policy. We believe that a collective endeavour by the non-aligned countries to restrain the arms race and to promote their security, at the lowest possible level of armaments, is an indispensable corollary to their principled advocacy of global disarmament.*

In the context of the South Asian region, Pakistan seeks to promote a regional framework of security-building and disarmament measures. Our proposals for the conclusion of a "non-aggression" pact with India, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia, mutual inspection of nuclear facilities, simultaneous accession by Pakistan and India to the non-proliferation Treaty, joint declaration of non-acquisition or development of nuclear weapons, acceptance of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, conclusion of a bilateral agreement with India or a regional agreement on a nuclear-test ban, and the convening, under the auspices of the United Nations, of a conference on nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia, are designed to promote confidence-building and regional security.

*The Chairman took the Chair.
The chances of promoting regional security and arms control can be significantly increased by the simultaneous pursuit of regional co-operation in the economic, social and other fields, which can engender a propitious political climate and create a common stake in the preservation of regional peace and prosperity. We believe that the regional approach to disarmament can substantially reinforce the security of the non-aligned and developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America and thus contribute to international peace and security. It could help to restrain the involvement of these States in the global nuclear and conventional arms race and thus reduce the extent to which they are vulnerable to external influence and interference.

For nearly a decade the question of military budgets has been before the Disarmament Commission. Efforts have been geared to elaborating a set of principles which would govern actions by States in the field of freezing and reduction of military budgets. In our view, adoption of arbitrary criteria to freeze or cut military spending without addressing the security concerns of States is not realistic. The recommendations evolved by the Disarmament Commission must, in particular, recognize the security concerns of small, developing and non-aligned States and the regional security perspective.

The wide disparity between the armaments expenditure of the two super-Powers, as well as the militarily significant States and the other countries is beyond question. Reduction in military budgets, therefore, should be initiated by those Powers which possess the largest military arsenals.

The concept of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world was endorsed, in principle, at the first special session devoted to disarmament. Pakistan supports the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones as the most feasible means to control nuclear proliferation. In this
context, we are for the denuclearization of Africa, where South Africa's nuclear capability poses an ever-increasing threat to the security of the African nations. The non-aligned countries have condemned the continuing economic, military and nuclear co-operation of certain countries with the South African racist régime. Such collusion would only frustrate the objective of the denuclearization of Africa. Pakistan's proposal for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia is complementary to the proposal of the African States for an Africa free from the scourge of nuclear weapons.

The question of the naval arms race and disarmament is also before us. Traditionally, the build-up of naval power, beyond the strict confines of coastal defence, has been a prelude to policies of external aggression and intervention. The acquisition of aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines are indication of ambitions and plans which give rise to legitimate concern. Such vessels can serve as platforms for nuclear delivery vehicles, as well as instruments of coercion and blackmail against smaller and weaker States. Pakistan believes that naval disarmament measures should be taken by the major naval Powers, both at the global and regional levels.
Verification, we are happy to note, has come to be appreciated in its true dimensions. We believe that verification measures must be evaluated in a balanced manner. Verification is a useful tool to supplement the prior political presumption that the parties to an agreement have a mutual interest in complying with the obligations involved. Verification cannot be a substitute for this mutual presumption, nor can it replace the political trust and confidence required to conclude the agreements in the first place. Thus, to ensure the optimum contribution of verification procedures to the disarmament process, it is essential that they should be conceived and constructed in the spirit of mutual political trust and confidence and that they should build upon and reinforce this. The normalization of international relations, especially among major Powers, can not only provide impetus to disarmament agreements but can also ease the level of verification considered adequate. Therefore, the process of mutual confidence and trust should be pursued steadily at the global, regional and sub-regional levels.

The disarmament process can make progress in an improved international security situation. The resolution of the underlying political problems and conflicts and the removal of mistrust are essential for the creation of the necessary international climate, one in which disarmament efforts can proceed meaningfully and achieve the desired results. This can best be done by strict adherence to the universally recognized principles enjoining respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs, non-use of force in inter-State relations between States, and peaceful settlement of disputes.
Mr. PABON GARCIA (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): At the outset permit me, Mr. Chairman, to congratulate you and the other Commission officers on your election. We are confident that your ability, skill and diplomatic experience will ensure that this session is substantive and productive.

This session of the Disarmament Commission is taking place at an auspicious and encouraging time. In recent months we have seen the results achieved in the context of East-West relations, both in the sphere of disarmament and on other important matters of interest to the two super-Powers.

Pessimism prevailed until mid-1987, when doubts remained that those two countries could agree on the elimination of a category of nuclear weapons, but ultimately political will prevailed and gave rise to a new situation manifested in the signing of the Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union on the elimination of their intermediate- and shorter-range missiles.

That Treaty may be viewed as a first step in the area of disarmament; it could subsequently lead to an agreement on the gradual reduction of strategic nuclear weapons, thus opening the way to their total elimination. Therefore, we sincerely hope that these two countries will complete their internal legislative procedures so that the Treaty may be ratified and enter into force as soon as possible, thus contributing to achieving the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament.

Similarly, with respect to the current talks between the United States Secretary of State, Mr. George Shultz, and the Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, on the possible signing of a treaty on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic nuclear weapons, we hope that those negotiations will not be affected by technical differences, especially on verification, or by any other development. We know it is difficult to reach an agreement on the question of verification, but we hope that the political will of the two parties will prevail.
(Mr. Pabon García, Venezuela)

The agreement on the elimination of shorter- and intermediate-range nuclear forces and any future agreements will not, of course, constitute a solution to the problem of disarmament. They will represent only an advance which ought to have an impact on other disarmament areas and forums.

Venezuela believes that bilateral progress should be reflected in multilateral negotiations, especially those concerning the cessation of nuclear tests, the prohibition and elimination of all chemical weapons, and space weapons. With respect to space weapons, the two super-Powers must intensify their efforts to adopt measures to avert the development of strategic defence space systems and and to guarantee compliance with the 1972 anti-ballistic missile Treaty, while the Conference on Disarmament agrees on effective formulas to prevent an arms race in outer space.

All these circumstances make this a propitious time for the international community, and can have a positive influence on the work of United Nations bodies charged with consideration of all these questions related to disarmament and international security, including, of course, the work of this Commission, a deliberative body with a mandate to formulate recommendations in the sphere of disarmament.

With regard to the Disarmament Commission, my delegation wishes to comment briefly on the items on its agenda.

With respect to agenda item 4, I note that all the recent events in the sphere of nuclear disarmament could overcome the obstacles and bring about progress in elaborating, within the framework of priorities established in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament, a general approach to negotiations on nuclear and conventional disarmament. That general approach should lay special stress on nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war as the question of highest priority.
It has often been reiterated that nuclear weapons and the conventional-arms race pose a continuing threat to peace. It is therefore necessary to halt and reverse that race, since today the possession of large arsenals does not contribute to strengthening the security of States but rather makes States more vulnerable, leading them to develop new technologies in this area, thus creating greater mistrust and absorbing an excessive share of the world's human, financial, natural and technological resources. This places a heavy burden on the economies of all countries, developed and developing alike.

With respect to the reduction of military budgets, we stress the need for the Governments of both developed and developing countries to demonstrate their determination to act to reduce their military spending. This would strengthen negotiations on arms limitation and disarmament in the context of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

Nuclear-weapon and militarily important States bear the major responsibility for reducing military budgets. The adoption of measures in this area would help guarantee international peace and security and blaze a valuable trail towards disarmament; it would also make it possible to allocate additional resources to the economic and social development of all countries, especially the developing countries. That was among the elements recognized in the preamble of the Final Document of last year's International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development.
The reduction of military budgets must take into account the principle of security for all States, that is to say, that all disarmament measures in this context should be carried out in an equitable and balanced way to reach the lowest possible level of arms and military forces guaranteeing the right of every State to national defence.

Along these lines, my country will extend all possible co-operation in reaching agreement on the drafting of paragraph 7, which is still under discussion in this Commission, in order to secure approval of the "Principles which should govern further actions of States in the field of the freezing and reduction of military budgets".

With respect to item 6, on South Africa's nuclear capability, Venezuela has repeatedly rejected the policy of apartheid practised by the South African Government and supported all restrictions and measures against that régime. Hence we support the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The possession of nuclear weapons by South Africa would pose a threat to peace and security in Africa and consequently to international security. The entire world has witnessed the constant acts of aggression committed by the racist South African régime against its neighbours.

The new climate that is emerging in relations between the two super-Powers could significantly influence the disarmament role of the United Nations, in fully supporting the bilateral negotiations. Thus, when the Commission comes to drafting and preparing specific recommendations on agenda item 7, it should take into account that, as has been demonstrated, the decisive factor for the adoption of genuine disarmament measures is the political will of States, particularly those with the largest arsenals.
Within this context, it is necessary to consolidate the function of multilateral organs, specifically the role of the United Nations in disarmament, placing special emphasis upon the responsibility of each of its organs, both negotiating and deliberative.

With respect to item 9, we believe that, while we should not neglect aspects relating to the conventional arms race, consideration of these issues cannot in any way undermine the priority accorded to nuclear disarmament. The adoption of effective measures in negotiations on nuclear disarmament would promote an international climate with fewer focal points of tension and conflict, thereby leading to a reduction in the traffic in conventional weapons.

The militarily significant States - which, generally speaking, possess the largest nuclear armaments - bear a special responsibility in the limitation and reduction of conventional weapons, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Approaches geared to conventional disarmament, within the framework of international or regional machinery, should be based on the fundamental principles in the 1978 Final Document, especially those in paragraph 29, to the effect that disarmament measures should take place in such an equitable and balanced manner as to ensure the right of each State to security and to ensure that no individual State or group of States may obtain advantages over others at any stage. At each stage, the objective should be undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces.

To obtain positive results in this aspect of disarmament, States will have to review their security concepts and insist on greater international co-operation. This would make it possible to move towards comprehensive plans for integration and disarmament.
Similarly, all conventional disarmament initiatives should take account of the following elements: the goal or objective, the scope and character of the instruments to be adopted, and the international political characteristics and circumstances in general, and those of each region or subregion in particular.

Undoubtedly, one of the indispensable aspects in disarmament negotiations relates to the verification régime, which is covered in item 10 of our agenda. The disarmament agreements to be concluded must include effective provisions guaranteeing their implementation and preventing violations.

We recognize that adequate and effective verification is an essential element in all disarmament measures. But, for such verification to be adequate and effective, it is necessary to make use of various means and procedures, including national and international technical means, as well as on-site and challenge inspections. Similarly, any modalities for verification provided in any particular agreement should depend on the purposes, scope and nature of that agreement.

The 1987 treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union on the elimination of their intermediate and shorter-range missiles is an innovative example in that it includes verification provisions based not only on previously established verification aspects but also on all those principles applicable to a reasonably reliable verification system, that is, on-site inspection, challenge inspection, and the use of satellites. This establishes an important precedent for all other spheres of disarmament negotiations and arms limitation, both bilaterally and multilaterally.

We support the initiative of the Group of Six in proposing the establishment of an integrated multilateral verification system within the United Nations. Accordingly, we would wish this Commission's working group on this item to overcome current obstacles so as to reach consensus on the principles governing verification in all its aspects.
With respect to item 11, Venezuela supports all initiatives aimed at preventing conflicts and strengthening international peace and security.

Confidence-building measures cannot replace concrete disarmament measures, nor can they be viewed as prerequisites to disarmament. The signing of agreements on disarmament and the inclusion of strict verification measures, specifically as regards nuclear weapons, would enhance and greatly strengthen international trust. Consequently, it is imperative that we make every effort to reduce the risk of conflicts and initiate an ongoing process of building confidence and co-operation among nations in this field of fundamental importance to the future and the very survival of mankind.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that at the forthcoming third special session devoted to disarmament we should step up our efforts towards the full realization of the principles and objectives set forth in the 1978 Final Document, instead of attempting to revise them.
Mr. Tun (Burma): Sir, the delegation of Burma welcomes your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission for this important session. Meeting as we do on the eve of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, you shoulder high responsibilities. We place high expectations on the positive outcome of our work under your able direction.

My delegation hopes that this year's session of the Disarmament Commission will be marked by progress in the specific tasks that are assigned to it. It has often been said that disarmament and a propitious international climate have a favourable effect on each other. Progress in one can lead to progress in the other, and this may be seen in the recent developments that are taking place as a result of the agreement reached between the two militarily most significant States.

For the first time, and after many years of efforts on nuclear disarmament, a significant step has been made. The momentum generated by the agreement on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) gives the international community much hope for further radical measures in the reduction of nuclear weapons in their strategic dimensions. At the same time it is hoped that the impetus provided by the bilateral process will have a positive effect on the multilateral disarmament process, in which the United Nations should continue to play the central role. The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament enunciated the principles of a programme of action, and provided disarmament machinery for international co-operation in the multilateral field. It thus defined the goals to be achieved in disarmament that would ultimately lead to the final and complete stages.

However, in the years following SSOD-I little has been achieved by way of progress, while the arms race continues without respite in both its nuclear and conventional dimensions. My delegation hopes that the recent developments will lead to substantial progress in the multilateral process of disarmament. It is
often said that multilateral and bilateral efforts are complementary and should have a positive effect on each other. We are particularly encouraged by the more positive and constructive atmosphere that prevailed in the work of the First Committee at the forty-second session of the General Assembly, and that should have a favourable effect on the work of the Disarmament Commission.

In our consideration of the various items on the agenda the item dealing with the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament has remained on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission for almost a decade without any progress being registered, notwithstanding the priority accorded it. The item mentions that such measures of nuclear disarmament should be aimed at effective elimination of the danger of nuclear war. Nuclear disarmament can be dealt with in its proper perspective if it is seen as a matter of high importance for the prevention of nuclear war, which is the concern of all nations and peoples. While the task of halting the spread of and eliminating nuclear arsenals is the major responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States, the international community can also play a useful role and contribute much to the process of nuclear disarmament by dealing with the issue in its multilateral context in accordance with paragraph 50 of the Final Document of SSOD-I.

Of particular concern with regard to nuclear disarmament is the achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, which should be dealt with in its multilateral dimension. That calls for multilateral negotiations parallel to the efforts being made at the bilateral level. We believe that a comprehensive test-ban treaty is essential not only to consolidate the gains made in nuclear-disarmament measures but also as a measure that could contribute substantially to curbing the qualitative aspect of the nuclear-arms race.

In recent years much consideration has been given to conventional disarmament measures. The world today is saturated with conventional weapons that go beyond
the legitimate security needs of nations, and the technological development of such weapons has reached a stage at which their destructive capacity is such that they can be used to mass-destructive effect. It must be recognized that conventional disarmament should be considered parallel to nuclear disarmament, in which the major armed Powers should play a significant role. At the same time the General Assembly has given due importance to enhancing the security of States through reduction of armaments at the regional level.

The Commission will be dealing with the item on the question of verification, including the role of the United Nations and its Member States in this field. Throughout negotiations on disarmament verification has been accepted in principle as an essential requirement for ensuring compliance with agreements. For decades, however, there has been a wide divergency of views with regard to the principles of verification, as well as with regard to its practical requirements in specific disarmament measures. The past year has seen a meeting of minds of the various aspects of verification, and this should facilitate the work of the Commission and the role of the United Nations with regard to an international system of verification.

Mutual trust and confidence among States are essential for enhancing the prospects for disarmament and for the strengthening of international peace and security. It can be said that the Disarmament Commission has been able to achieve consensus in substantial areas on confidence-building measures, and it is hoped that further efforts will make it possible to reach consensus on the full text of the draft guidelines.

SSOD-III will be examining the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. In dealing with the subject the Commission has an important contribution to make as it considers the revitalizing of the deliberative machinery
of the United Nations. It is important to note that the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs provide forums in which all Members can participate, and the proposals and views submitted and the consensus reached are essential to the disarmament process. The work of the Disarmament Commission should therefore provide SSOD-III with positive recommendations on the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

We would therefore like to express the hope that the deliberations of the Disarmament Commission at this important session will be marked by broadly converging views on the items under consideration and will be able to make a positive contribution to the work of SSOD-III.

Mr. Nguyen Duc Hung (Viet Nam): Since this is the first time I am speaking in the Disarmament Commission, I should like to join other representatives who have spoken before me in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission. I am convinced that your well-known diplomatic skill, as well as your important experience on disarmament matters, will assist us in guiding the work of the current substantive session of the Commission to successful results. My congratulations also go to the other officers of the Commission.
Of late people throughout the world have witnessed new, positive changes in international life favouring the trend of dialogue and an improvement of the world climate. Of great importance are the achievements recorded in arms control and disarmament. In the early 1980s no one could have imagined that the Soviet Union and the United States would one day arrive at a treaty on the worldwide elimination of medium- and shorter-range missiles. But that has happened and it has opened up great prospects for the cause of peace and disarmament.

In the future this era of nuclear energy and cosmic exploration will see even greater, deeper and faster changes. Further efforts should be made to reach new agreements on reducing strategic nuclear arms by half, banning nuclear tests, curbing the militarization of outer space, eventually abolishing all nuclear weapons and achieving a convention on banning and dismantling chemical weapons and all other weapons of mass extermination.

Today international relationships have changed, and big and small countries have become interdependent. The whole world has become a boat, in which people are bound together by a common fate. The accumulation of weapons, especially nuclear weapons, constitutes much more of a threat than protection for the future of mankind. Therefore, the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament rightly pointed out:

"The ending of the arms race and the achievement of real disarmament are tasks of primary importance and urgency. To meet this historic challenge is in the political and economic interests of all the nations and peoples of the world as well as in the interests of ensuring their genuine security and peaceful future." (resolution 5-10/2, para. 1)
Among the imperative disarmament measures, the highest priority goes to effective measures of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war. Nuclear weapons occupy a distinctive place among modern armaments, having an unprecedented destructive power. Diverse researches, conducted in many countries, have proved that the consequences of the use of the available nuclear arsenals would be immediate, total and global, leading to global annihilation. The recent findings on a nuclear winter further reinforce the view that the disastrous effects of a nuclear war are unforeseeable.

Shortly after the end of the Second World War the question of preventing a nuclear catastrophe was raised, and it has ever since been the paramount goal of forces of peace in their struggle for disarmament, peace and international security. The very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly in 1946 called for "the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons".

Since its inception the Non-Aligned Movement has taken a definite stance on this matter. The Political Declaration of the Eighth Summit of Non-Aligned countries, held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in September 1986 considered that "the greatest peril facing the world is the threat to the survival of humanity posed by the existence of nuclear weapons. Since annihilation needs to happen only once, removing the threat of nuclear catastrophe is not one issue among many, but the most acute and urgent task of the present day." (A/41/697, annex, pp. 25-26)

Now, more than ever, the international community should do everything possible to reduce and then eliminate the threat of nuclear war. This task urgently requires the creation of certain political and moral factors inhibiting attempts to
unleash a nuclear war and requires the destruction of all material bases for such attempts. The plan aimed at preventing a nuclear war should also foresee those factors that can cause destabilization in the future. Prevention of nuclear war is organically linked with the principle of the non-use of force in international relations. In this context, we deem it necessary to lay emphasis on measures assuring the security of non-nuclear-weapon States. To this end, we are of the view that all States, primarily nuclear-weapon States, should make every effort to create conditions favouring agreements on a code of peaceful conduct among nations and assume the most serious responsibilities for the destiny of mankind.

I turn to the question of the naval arms race and disarmament. We hold that for a long time now the naval arms race has adversely affected the peace and security of the entire world and of each individual country. Steps to curb it and limit naval activities must include measures directed at reducing naval armaments and establishing an atmosphere of mutual trust and security at sea, priority being given to those vessels with nuclear weapons on board or which have highly destabilizing effects.

In this regard, the establishment of zones of peace or zones free of nuclear weapons is of practical meaning and great significance. The disarmament measures at regional or subregional level should take into account the characteristics of each region or subregion and be based on the agreement of all States concerned. The discussion of this matter in our Commission could help prepare concrete recommendations on specific steps to limit naval activities and armaments and on modalities for the holding of negotiations to elaborate those steps.
For more than 40 years preventing the arms race and disarmament has always secured increased attention at the United Nations. The General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, considered that the United Nations,

"In accordance with the Charter ... has a central role and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament." (resolution S-10/2, para. 27)

The achievements made so far at the United Nations have played a considerable part in promoting a process conducive to the attainment of general and complete disarmament. Those achievements are closely associated with the cause of international peace and security and disarmament outside the United Nations, which creates favourable conditions for Member States to record success at the United Nations.

We believe that the United Nations should continue to concentrate its efforts to attain the objectives and priorities enshrined in the Charter and numerous resolutions, and promptly come to grips with any new dangerous developments in the arms race. At present the United Nations has an appropriately constructed machinery for disarmament, with negotiating and deliberative bodies and also bodies established on an ad hoc basis. The existing machinery should be more effectively utilized. But Viet Nam shares the view of many other countries that progress in disarmament, whatever the machinery used, depends first and foremost on the political will and policies of the States involved. In this spirit, one may hope that the forthcoming third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-III) will focus on drafting - within the framework of the
United Nations - and implementing a complete programme on disarmament, centred on
the phase-by-phase elimination of all nuclear arms. The adoption of such a
programme at SSOD-III will open wide prospects for talks and other international
activities aimed at curbing the arms race and achieving disarmament, thus giving an
impulse to the present healthy trend in world politics.
Mr. STREZOVI (Bulgaria): I should like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, and the other officers of the Commission and wishing you success in your responsible task of guiding the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

This session of the UNDC is taking place at a very important time. We are convinced that the new political thinking as a set of realistic views and approaches regarding peace, security and international co-operation is the very basis for promoting a promising and constructive dialogue among States.

The outcome of the Washington summit between General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan is a historic step. In our view, the Soviet-American Treaty on the elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles is but a beginning. What is most important now is to intensify efforts in a consistent manner for the purpose of rendering the process of disarmament continuous and irreversible. We expect the forthcoming summit in Moscow between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States of America to promote and strengthen the favourable trends in international affairs and to inaugurate a new, important stage in delivering mankind from the burden of nuclear weapons.

The significance of the Commission's present session is also determined by the fact that it is being held on the eve of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, to which we attach particular importance.

At its session in Sofia, held on 29-30 March 1988, the Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty formulated a set of specific measures aimed at achieving real disarmament and strengthening security. Since my country served as host to that session, I should like to draw attention to document A/43/276, which sets out in detail those measures. Basically, they focus on finding ways and means to solve the following priority issues:
The entry into force and implementation of the INF Treaty;

The conclusion of a treaty between the USSR and the United States of America on a 50 per cent reduction of strategic offensive weapons while strictly complying with the anti-ballistic missile Treaty as signed in 1972 and without withdrawing from it for an agreed period;

The complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests and acceleration of progress towards this goal in the Soviet-American negotiations;

Intensification of the practical and purposeful work at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva with a view to adopting effective measures that will lead to a complete and general nuclear-test ban, nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, in such a way that bilateral and multilateral negotiations on these matters could complement each other and lead to a common goal;

The reduction of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, including the nuclear components of dual-capability systems, and the subsequent elimination of such weapons;

The completion in 1988 of the drafting of a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons and elimination of the stockpiles of such weapons; and

The creation of zones free from nuclear and chemical weapons in the Balkans and in central and northern Europe, the reduction of armaments and enhancement of confidence in central Europe, the establishment of a nuclear-free corridor and a zone of confidence and reduced level of armaments along the line of contact between the States members of the Warsaw Treaty and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the commencement of a process of restricting military activities and lowering the level of military confrontation in northern and southern Europe, and the transformation of the Mediterranean into a zone of peace and co-operation.
As the representative of a Balkan country, I should also like to underline that the Committee assessed favourably the outcome of the meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Balkan States in Belgrade as a contribution to reducing tension and creating an atmosphere of good-neighbourliness and mutual understanding in the Balkans.

The whole range of nuclear disarmament issues continues to be a matter of priority for us. For that reason we cannot be satisfied with the consideration of this issue in the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Not only have we been marking time over the past few years but — and this is of particular concern to us — there has been a reverse momentum as some States are now questioning what has been already agreed upon.

The People's Republic of Bulgaria deems it of particular importance for all States to refrain from any action that might allow a situation to occur where disarmament proceeds in one direction while the arms race is fuelled in another. At their Sofia session, the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty proposed the speedy completion, at the consultations in the context of the Vienna meeting of the the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), of the process of co-ordinating the mandate for negotiations on reducing armed forces and conventional weapons in Europe. In our view, such negotiations should begin in the course of 1988. These goals would be facilitated by the exchange of data as soon as possible on the armed forces and conventional weapons in Europe of the Warsaw Treaty and NATO member States. We stand ready in the course of these negotiations to identify and eliminate, on a reciprocal basis, existing asymmetries and imbalances.

The Commission's session last year was a good start in fostering a multilateral dialogue on the issue of conventional disarmament. By reiterating our interest in adopting the most radical measures in this field, in both the regional
and the global contexts, we expect this dialogue to be continued at this session so that it can lead to convergence of the positions of all States.

Another question to which Bulgaria attaches major importance is the limitation and reduction of naval armaments and the extension of confidence-building measures to seas and oceans. In our opinion, this question is becoming ever more urgent and topical.

While taking into account that the naval arms race is but one aspect of the overall complex of the arms race, we are nevertheless of the view that certain measures could be discussed and undertaken at this stage, irrespective of the strategic complexity of the problem. An appropriate first step to reduce tensions in this field would be the speedy identification of confidence-building measures which are to be extended especially to areas with the busiest sea-lanes or where a great risk of conflict exists. In particular, this refers to such confidence-building measures as prior notification of naval exercises, transfers and manoeuvres, the invitation of observers to them, and limitation of the number or scale of naval exercises, including amphibious forces, and so on.

It is also very important to ensure the security of maritime communications by politico-legal and military technological confidence-building measures and by the non-use of force at sea. The elaboration of security guarantees relating to the Pacific, Indian and Atlantic Oceans, the Persian Gulf and the international straits should be the subject of early negotiations. The question of combating terrorism and piracy on the seas could also be considered within the framework of developing such guarantees.

Equally interesting is the idea of negotiating a multilateral agreement concerning the prevention of incidents on the seas.
Bulgaria supports all proposals with regard to the non-deployment of nuclear weapons in seas and oceans and their withdrawal from certain ocean and sea areas. The reliable functioning of existing and future nuclear-weapon-free zones, which would include sea and ocean areas, would be greatly facilitated if the nuclear-weapon Powers would undertake the practice of notifying the absence of nuclear weapons on board their naval vessels which are stationed in such agreed zones.
(Mr. Strezov, Bulgaria)

As regards the limitation and reduction of nuclear naval armaments, it is our view that this component of the naval power of States could be considered both within the context of measures for its limitation and at the relevant talks on nuclear weapons.

Last year the consideration of this item in the Disarmament Commission made significant progress and achieved a more concrete orientation. The current discussion serves as a good basis for further development of the issue both within and eventually, at a later stage, outside the framework of the United Nations, including in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament.

We support the proposal made this morning by the Soviet delegation that these issues be discussed at an ad hoc international conference or at a meeting of the Security Council.

I should now like to turn to another key item of our agenda. My country has a keen interest in the issues of verification, compliance, mutual trust and openness in the military sphere. We stand ready to co-operate actively and constructively with all parties concerned in tackling these issues. We highly appreciate the work done last year by the Disarmament Commission under the able guidance of Ambassador Douglas Roche. We hope that at the Commission's current session we will expand the area of agreement in order to be able to submit meaningful recommendations on this issue to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

One of the conditions for arriving at and successfully implementing agreements in all areas of disarmament is to ensure greater openness and predictability in the military sphere, to have an exchange of the necessary information and to establish a stringent and effective system of monitoring and verification of the commitments undertaken by all parties.
One of the areas in which, in our view, there are good prospects for constructive co-operation and progress is the establishment of a broad international verification mechanism under the auspices of the United Nations. Bulgaria is of the opinion that the active participation of an ever growing number of States in disarmament negotiations and agreements requires intensified multilateral verification of existing and future agreements within a more clear-cut organizational framework. This mechanism could be established in stages by gradually expanding the role of the United Nations in this field. A number of States have already put forward valuable ideas and proposals in this respect. As a very positive example I should like mention the initiative of the New Delhi Six and the proposal made this morning by Ambassador Theorin that as a first step this matter be explored by the Secretary-General, as well as the ideas expressed by the Ambassador of Canada. The delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria is prepared to make a constructive contribution in this field.

In our opinion the role of the United Nations in the process of bringing about a nuclear-free and non-violent world should be further strengthened. It is necessary to make better use of the enormous potential of this unique international Organization in co-ordinating and uniting the efforts of States for the establishment of a comprehensive system of international peace and security. In our view the document the Commission is considering under agenda item 7 constitutes a good basis for finalizing our work on this issue as early as at this session.

In our view the Disarmament Commission is on the threshold of elaborating substantive recommendations relating to confidence-building measures and the reduction of military budgets. The States parties to the Warsaw Treaty proposed that the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe develop and expand the confidence-building measures adopted at the first stage of its work and elaborate a new generation of such measures that would
include the activities of naval and air forces. They also proposed the declaration of a moratorium for one or two years on any increase in military expenditure by the Warsaw Treaty and NATO member States with a view to their further effective reduction.

Sharing the concern over the threat to peace in Africa and in the world generated by the nuclear ambitions of Pretoria, the Bulgarian delegation regrets the fact that last year the Disarmament Commission was once again unable to make headway on the question of South Africa's nuclear capability. We expect that this year our efforts will be more successful.

In conclusion, may I express the hope that this session of the Disarmament Commission will proceed in a businesslike and constructive atmosphere in order to achieve tangible results on all the issues that will be under consideration for the next three weeks.

Mrs. NAVCHAA (Mongolia) (interpretation from Russian): Allow me on behalf of the Mongolian delegation sincerely to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the important post of Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. We all know you well, and we value you as an experienced and able diplomat. We are sure that under your guidance the Commission will successfully tackle the tasks entrusted to it.

I should also like sincerely to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and to wish them every success.

In just a few weeks the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament will take place. The People's Republic of Mongolia attaches great importance to it and expects it to reaffirm the concept of security through disarmament, to define the basic tasks in the field of disarmament and to lend a positive impetus to all disarmament negotiations, bilateral and multilateral.
Mongolia believes that the present international situation is favourable for the success of the special session. Previous speakers have stated that the conclusion of the Soviet-American treaty on the elimination of their intermediate and shorter-range missiles and the recent conclusion of agreements on resolving the situation around Afghanistan are having a positive overall impact on the international situation.
My delegation fully shares that view. This session of the Disarmament Commission can and should make a contribution to the success of the third special session. The conclusion of work on the appropriate recommendation regarding items discussed in the Commission would doubtless be a contribution of this kind.

My delegation attaches particular importance to problems of nuclear disarmament. Averting the danger of nuclear war is a priority facing mankind today. The agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States of America, to eliminate intermediate and short-range missiles is the first effective step towards nuclear disarmament. It should be followed by other measures aimed at reducing, and then eliminating strategic offensive weapons, preventing an arms race in outer space, a complete comprehensive ban on nuclear testing, and the elimination of other types of nuclear weapons, so as to completely eliminate nuclear weapons from the military arsenals of States.

At the present time, when the first real steps are being taken toward nuclear disarmament, we must prevent any attempts to make up for the weapons that have been eliminated in any way.

The discussion on item 4 of the agenda should be geared towards promoting a solution to these problems. My delegation favours speeding up the work on developing recommendations on this question. As the Commission knows, at the last session of the Commission, the Mongolian delegation, together with certain other delegations, introduced a working paper on item 4. The co-sponsors of that paper, in the light of new developments, intend to introduce a working paper on that agenda item during this session of the Commission. We are doing so out of a desire to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament and to create a nuclear-free non-violent world.
Alongside nuclear disarmament, and the question of the limitation and reduction of conventional weapons is gaining in importance. The Mongolian delegation believes that a serious reduction in the armed forces and conventional weapons of all States, reducing them to a level of reasonable sufficiency, and making the military reduction of States exclusively defensive in nature, the elimination of foreign military bases and the withdrawal of all forces to within national boundaries, would help to reduce the danger of a surprise attack and would strengthen trust between States. These measures could also be implemented at the regional level. It is precisely the regional disarmament measures that we believe to be most promising.

As for the question of reducing military budgets, the Mongolian delegation expresses the hope that at this session agreement will be reached on this remaining item and that work can be concluded on principles relating to the freezing and reduction of military budgets.

My delegation is also sure that given goodwill by the appropriate States, we will at this session complete the work on the guidelines for confidence-building measures.

The problem of verification and monitoring is an important question for disarmament and strengthening trust between States. Not for nothing is this item central to all disarmament negotiations. There is increasing recognition of the idea of the internationalization of efforts in the field of verification and monitoring, and the establishment of a unified multilateral system for verification in the United Nations. Here, great interest has been aroused by the Stockholm Declaration adopted by the leaders of six States. We hope that during this session we will manage to complete our work on specific recommendations and principles relating to verification and control in all their aspects.
Consideration by the Commission of the question of South Africa's nuclear potential has been unduly protracted. This situation arouses concern for my delegation. We favour the speedy working out of specific recommendations on this extremely important item.

The delegation of Mongolia welcomes the progress made at the last session of the Commission in considering the matter of naval weapons and disarmament, and we hope that this session will be marked by further progress in drafting appropriate principles on this issue.

As for the role of the United Nations on disarmament questions, the position of my delegation is reflected in Working Paper A/CN.10/94, which we co-sponsored at the last session of the Disarmament Commission. We have consistently advocated an enhancement of the effectiveness of the multilateral role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. It is imperative to maximize the full potential of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, in order to produce concrete practical results and real progress in limiting the arms race and furthering disarmament. The Working Group, basing itself on the results of work done at the last session, and bearing in mind the specific ideas and proposals offered by various States, should at this session work out the necessary practical recommendations on this item.

In conclusion, the Mongolian delegation wishes to express the hope that the results of this session of the Commission will have a positive impact on the forthcoming third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.
MR. MARTYNOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. Chairman, my delegation is pleased to congratulate you on your election to that lofty post. I have worked under your leadership in the First Committee of the General Assembly many times and I am sure that you will guide this session of the Commission in your usual effective manner.

Our delegation also wishes to congratulate other Bureau members, the Vice-Chairman and the Rapporteur.

The period of time that has elapsed since the 1987 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, must be regarded as having a special character. It is clearly different from many previous years, since the burgeoning of new ways of thinking has brightened a landscape - that of international relations - which had previously been darkened by an atmosphere of confrontation.
There is a growing recognition in the international community of collective responsibility for resolving global problems, naturally including those of disarmament, and an understanding of the need for joint efforts to make progress in achieving strengthened, genuine security. All those factors have, we think, made possible a number of positive changes in the area of disarmament.

Genuine possibilities emerged at the Conference on Disarmament for completing work on a convention banning chemical weapons. Obstacles remain, but they can be overcome if due responsibility is shown by all participants in the negotiations.

The International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development succeeded in adopting by consensus a Final Document setting out a positive programme of action. This opened up an important new area for international efforts to achieve comprehensive guarantees of security.

At the forty-second session of the General Assembly a number of new positive trends emerged in work on disarmament issues. There was a change in the very atmosphere in which the work was conducted. The number of consensus resolutions increased, including resolutions on very important problems. The number of competing resolutions on the same problem was reduced. There was a certain narrowing of positions set out in the resolutions, and growing co-operation among groups of States in working on the texts of draft resolutions.

Finally, December 1987 was marked by the signing of the Soviet-United States Treaty on the elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles. The acknowledged historic significance of the Treaty is that it should serve as a first step towards genuine nuclear disarmament. Intensive Soviet-United States talks are under way on a 50 per cent reduction in the strategic offensive weapons of the two sides, with compliance with the anti-ballistic missile Treaty as it was signed in 1972 and with non-withdrawal from that Treaty for an agreed period of time.
Full-scale stage-by-stage negotiations have begun between the USSR and the United States on problems relating to nuclear testing.

New standards are being set for openness and trust in the military area and for the scale and thoroughness of monitoring obligations.

To be sure, our delegation does not want to take a rosy view of everything or to turn a blind eye to the serious technical and political difficulties that remain to be overcome. The world community is only at the very beginning of a hard but vital path.

This session of the Disarmament Commission is taking place at a turning-point in history, characterized by the serious responsibilities facing the Commission. These involve issues of obvious importance in the context of the international community's disarmament efforts, as can be seen in our agenda.

On all items there remains much work that has been accumulating over past sessions. We feel that consideration of a number of items has attained the degree of maturity requiring a final effort to achieve tangible results. We consider that the consideration of the question of verification in all its aspects has reached that stage, along with the consideration of guidelines for confidence-building measures, the reduction of military budgets and review of the United Nations role in the field of disarmament.

On other items we feel success is possible if a constructive attitude is shown, defined not by narrow interests but by the priorities of universal human interests.

There is another factor that makes this session of the Commission special: It is taking place just before the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and, as has been pointed out by a number of delegations, will make a direct, serious contribution to the results of the special session.
Since the Commission has very little time, it ought to get right down to practical work on reaching agreement on the documents entrusted to it by the General Assembly at its forty-second session, and to do so in a spirit that will enable the Commission to take advantage of the impetus lent by the positive events of the past year, as mentioned by my delegation.

The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR, as at previous sessions, stands ready to promote these goals in any way it can, and to co-operate with other States.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Meeting as we are on the eve of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the timing of this session of the Commission could not have been more appropriate. This will certainly add significance to our deliberations.

It therefore gives us immense pleasure and much confidence, Sir, to have a diplomat of your ability, experience, diligence and dedication in the Chair to provide us with guidance and help us prepare our report to the General Assembly at its special session. It is reassuring for us to see that the chairman of the working groups have been wisely chosen. The Bangladesh delegation felicitates them as well, and assures them, and you, Sir, of our fullest co-operation.

While the duration of the substantive session this year has been shortened by a week, it was heartening to hear you affirm that this would not constitute a precedent. Sufficient time must be given to this deliberative body, where all Member States are represented and whose universal character can provide the political support and moral matrix for the work of other, negotiating, forums such as the Conference on Disarmament.

There is a discernible silver lining in the gathering clouds of the arms race. In the past we had succeeded only — and that on rare occasions — in proscribing certain particular developments in weaponry. Today, substantial reductions in weapon systems appear to have become a distinct possibility. We draw
hope and inspiration from the burgeoning super-Power understanding that led to the
Treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces and that has also brightened the
prospects for deeper cuts in strategic arsenals. The peoples of the world are
solidly behind the super-Powers in their efforts to arrive at the necessary
agreements.

The easing of relations and the reaching of understandings at more central
levels must not blind us to the great dangers of the potential and real conflicts
that make the threat to mankind in our generation much greater than what it was
during the first million years of history. Today, over three dozen armed conflicts
are being waged. Weapons are becoming more sophisticated, more accurate and
deadlier. Space is filling up with microscopic man-made debris. While annually
$1 trillion is being spent on armaments, an overwhelming majority of the global
populace remains undernourished, illiterate and disease-stricken. I make this
point to prevent any complacency on our part.

That is the backdrop against which all deliberations on disarmament must take
place. The agenda we have adopted provides excellent parameters for such
discussions. Item 4, the first substantive item, focuses on a very basic issue,
the arms race and expeditious negotiations on its elimination. The final document
of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament
(SSOD I) was quite right to point out that

"all States, in particular nuclear-weapon States, should consider... various
proposals designed to secure the avoidance of the use of nuclear weapons,
[and] the prevention of nuclear war". (resolution S-10/2, para. 58)

Proliferation, both vertical and horizontal, increases the likelihood of such war.
However, while seeking to avoid the big bang leading to Armageddon, we must not overlook the smaller fires that, if ignored, might engulf us in a mighty conflagration of equal magnitude. While indeed nuclear weapons pose the greatest threat to world peace, other elements identified in the programme of action contained in the Final Document of SSOD I must also be addressed with due seriousness. That is why we stress the importance of conventional disarmament, and item 9 of our agenda. Together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament, which has doubtless the foremost priority, measures for the limitation of armed forces and conventional weapons must be pursued resolutely within the framework of progress towards general and complete disarmament. After all, 20 million people have died in conventional wars since the Second World War.

It is our belief that the acquisition and maintenance of conventional capabilities in excess of the perceived legitimate security needs of a State can have destabilizing ramifications for the region and the globe. Where such excess capabilities exist, there must be reductions, in a balanced and equitable manner, so as not to affect adversely its genuine security requirements, and so that stability is enhanced at lower military levels. Due recognition must be given to the need for weightage in additional capabilities for weaker States.

One reason why major conventional wars are still being fought on African and Asian soils is the continued supply of weaponry to the afflicted regions. It is unethical to make money from death and destruction of others, however distantly located. It is abominable to use someone else's soil as a testing ground for the sophistication and kill-probability of one's weapons. In this respect we should like to stress the need for strict universal conformity to the ban on the transfer of arms to South Africa, given the aggressive and irrational character of its
Government. The deadly G-6 artillery system, recently used by South Africa in Angola, was reportedly developed with external assistance, mainly from Israel.

This brings me to item 6 on our agenda, which deals with consideration of South Africa's nuclear capability. South Africa, whose policies have made it a regional outcast, sees a military need for a "clean", low-yield nuclear weapon that could be used tactically in a regional war of survival. This has reportedly led to the development of a nuclear shell fired from 155 mm howitzer. There is also a growing fear that the airstrip Pretoria is building on Marion Island, half-way between South Africa and Antarctica, could facilitate testing of nuclear missiles.

There is much to be said for the inclusion of naval armaments and disarmament, as we have done under item 8 of our agenda, in our deliberations. This matter is important enough, in our perception, to be subjected to multilateral scrutiny. We hope that it will soon be possible for us to set up a formal subsidiary body, like a working group, in this respect.

For Bangladesh, with its 110 million people confined to only 54,000 square miles, the Bay of Bengal is a major outlet to the world. We are, therefore, keenly interested in the peaceful uses of the sea, and the peaceful development and utilization of its resources. I should like to reiterate my country's deep commitment to the Law of the Sea Convention and to converting the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace, and as a corollary, the Bay of Bengal into a pocket of peace in a zone of peace. We believe that the widened national responsibilities that flow from the Law of the Sea Convention will increase the need for improved and more effective internationally accepted ocean management principles.

A naval arms race certainly thwarts the concept of the peaceful uses of the sea. Stealthy submarines are on drawing boards, the accuracy of whose weaponry
vests them with first-strike capability - a destabilizing development. The United Nations study on naval arms (A/40/535), and the result of our deliberations in this session last year, contain commendable principles that merit serious study with a view to application and conformity. The criteria for legitimate security needs for naval build-up should be carefully formulated. Should there be apprehension among others flowing from a country's increased naval capabilities, requisite confidence-building measures must be undertaken, or it would have destabilizing potentials for the region and the globe.

There exists, of course, a need for a multilateral agreement on the prevention of naval accidents, akin to the United States and Soviet agreement on the subject. The laws of sea warfare need to be updated. Above all there must be transparency and restraint with regard to naval activities. Procedures for verification should be set up which should be appropriate, universal and non-discriminatory. The seas must be made safe for all to use peacefully.

It is recognition of the crucial importance of verification in all its aspects in the field of disarmament that it has found for itself a place in our agenda for the second successive year. My delegation commends the significant contribution made by Canada in this sphere and hopes that in this session under the astute leadership of Ambassador Roche, the relevant group can build upon last year's achievements.

Another important item deserving of our attention would be the review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. My delegation believes that the United Nations provides the appropriate forum for deliberations on disarmament and must be used effectively for that purpose. Both the Organization and its Chief Executive, the Secretary-General, should have expanded roles.
We shall not agree on everything. We are not meant to. But where we do not have agreement, we should have understanding. Where we are not ourselves converted, we should be able to appreciate the differing views. If common opinion cannot be achieved, our aim should be the harmonious existence of divergences.

This is one forum where all can participate on the basis of equality. We can, each of us, give vent here to our aspirations and apprehensions, desires and despairs. We can and we must help develop a framework of values where the security of each is the concern of all.

**Mr. TARMIDZI (Indonesia):** Allow me at the outset to join previous speakers in extending my delegation's congratulations on your election as Chairman of the Commission. We are confident that under your guidance, we shall achieve conclusive results in our work. As to your predecessor, Ambassador Kostov of Bulgaria, we wish to convey our appreciation for the efficient job done in presiding over our deliberations during last year's session.

In deference to your appeal, and in view of the limited time at our disposal, my statement on some aspects of the agenda items will be brief.

I should like first of all to place on record our support for your observation that this year's arrangement concerning equitable regional distribution of chairmanships among subsidiary bodies is an exception rather than a precedent for the future.

The current session of the Commission assumes pivotal importance due to the convening of the third special session devoted to disarmament (SSOD III) soon after its conclusion. Its definitive work on at least some of the long-pending items will, we believe, have a positive bearing on the successful outcome of SSOD III. It is also taking place against the backdrop of guarded optimism over the ongoing multilateral, regional and bilateral disarmament negotiations, whose
complementarity and mutuality has been widely acknowledged. These contexts provide us with an opportunity to reaffirm and fulfil the role assigned to the Commission by the Final Document of SSOD I, to which we are all committed.

During our previous substantive sessions my delegation comprehensively set forth its views on the agenda items. Those views remain valid. During this session, however, we should like to comment briefly on questions concerning agenda items 4, 7 and 8.

Indonesia believes that the questions dealing with the cessation of the nuclear-arms race, nuclear disarmament and the elimination of the danger of nuclear war must be viewed not only as a priority, but also with a heightened sense of urgency given the continued emphasis and reliance on strategic doctrines.
Those postures have led to a further and even more ominous spiral in the arms race, including the arms race in outer space. Indeed, the continued acceleration of weapons systems and their growing sophistication, and the increased likelihood of nuclear war owing to technical malfunction or political misjudgement, with all the attendant consequences, have become more apparent than ever before. We are therefore in duty bound to identify ways and means by which to confront these critical issues facing the international community.

While certain measures of a transitional nature are indeed necessary, we find in the proposals that have long been advanced by the countries members of the non-aligned movement specific courses of action that warrant serious consideration. My delegation is convinced that it is only through the adoption and implementation of those proposals that we can go to the heart of the problems posed by the nuclear menace in all its ramifications.

My delegation has welcomed the progress made so far in the consultations on the question of naval armaments. It was not until 1986 that the Commission began a substantive consideration of the naval dimension of the global arms race in all its aspects, thanks to the Secretary-General's study on the subject in document A/40/535. It has clarified a number of issues of vital interest to many States and has served as the basis for work in the Commission.

Because of the steady refinements in weaponry and strategy, the world's nuclear-armed navies now represent one of the most unstable and volatile components of the increasingly tense global military stand-off. Defence analysts contend that, based on developments in weapons technology and on the naval strategies of the super-Powers, the prospects are that the initiation of yet another global war is likely to be in the oceans, with nuclear-armed navies.

Given its geographic setting and strategic location astride waterways that interconnect two continents and two oceans, Indonesia has legitimate concerns about
the increasing, global naval-arms race in both its nuclear and conventional aspects. The geographic proliferation of such armaments represents the most potent danger to many other States, especially since a significant proportion of the world's strategic nuclear capability is to be found at sea. In view of these and other ramifications of the naval arms race, we should identify those areas and measures that could form the basis of subsequent negotiations.

In this connection we wish to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your kind words addressed to Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, our former ambassador here, who, as the Chairman's friend, co-ordinated the work of the Consultation Group on naval armaments. I should like to assure the new co-ordinator, Ambassador Rolf Ekeus of Sweden, of my delegation's full support and co-operation in the discharge of his work.

Finally, in reviewing the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament it is gratifying to note that the Disarmament Commission has achieved a modicum of progress on various issues since its reconstitution nearly a decade ago. However, a number of items have languished for too long before the Commission. We should therefore ensure that our work will continue to be item specific and geared to the formulation of recommendations. Admittedly, all of these efforts will require the explicit recognition by all States of the central role of the United Nations in disarmament issues. Of no less importance is the right of States to participate in all negotiations that have a bearing on their security. If concrete progress is to be made in genuine arms limitation and disarmament, then multilateral negotiations under the aegis of the Organization should be the rule rather than the exception. We must therefore strengthen and not diminish the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.
Mr. ALZAMORA (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, upon your election to the chairmanship of this important forum. Your election is a confirmation of your well-known abilities as a diplomat and your great competence in these delicate matters, as well as a demonstration of the permanent dedication of the Latin American and Caribbean countries to peace and their permanent effort to achieve an increasingly secure and just world. I should also like to congratulate the other officers of the Commission, whose broad experience in this area augurs well for the success of our work.

The international scene has recently shown encouraging signs with regard to disarmament and international security. The atmosphere that now prevails should enable us to make important progress in our deliberations here. The United States-Soviet agreement on the complete elimination of intermediate range and shorter-range missiles, the culmination of negotiations on Afghanistan, the happy corollary of the Esquipulas II Agreement for peace in Central America, the important achievements of the Conference on Disarmament with regard to chemical weapons and the convening of the Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development all unequivocally show us what can be done when the intelligence of nations and their determination to recognize interdependence among States manage to set aside the fallacious concepts of security that have brought mankind to the brink of its own destruction.

We are very close to the convening of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which will guide future disarmament efforts to contribute to freeing mankind from the threats posed by the continuing arms race. Among those threats, nuclear weapons continue to expose mankind as a whole to the greatest dangers. The international community therefore has a legitimate right to participate in negotiations that may lead to the total elimination of nuclear
weapons. We cannot agree with the notion that all of mankind should be endangered because of the ill-conceived security requirements of a handful of States. My delegation firmly believes that the multilateral forum, which is often underestimated in this sphere, is an effective approach to negotiations that should be taken into consideration if the agreements to be reached are to be lasting in time and space.

The resolution adopted at the last session of the General Assembly on the extension of the provisions of the 1963 Moscow Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water demonstrates the refusal of the international community to continue to participate in maintaining a balance of terror. The Commission has been given the responsibility of reconciling views and proposing mechanisms to accelerate the process towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Commission has made important progress in questions relating to the reduction of military budgets. We trust that agreement will be reached on the remaining points for discussion, which concern the exchanges of information on military budgets and that it will be possible for the Commission to submit a report on the subject to the third special session. To that end, the general and regular system for the international reporting of military expenditures adopted by the General Assembly in 1980 may be clarified in such a way that the exchange of such indispensable information may be possible. It is urgent for us to reach agreement on this matter since the spiral of military expenditure in the third world is reducing to undignified levels of existence human beings whose standards of living could clearly improve if States made wiser use of their resources.

This is the view Peru has taken. We would prefer to accumulate indebtedness for the well-being of our people rather than fuel a sterile and fratricidal arms race. Tomorrow in Lima, we begin a meeting of experts invited in their individual
capacities and organized by the regional United Nations Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, to seek an initial formulation of regional criteria on this set of problems that so seriously affects the fate of our peoples.
Another matter of great concern is the continued refusal by the racist Pretoria régime to submit its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards system, thus endangering the security of the African continent and flouting the Cairo Declaration of 1964. We cannot continue to permit a State that uses methods violating the most elementary human rights to enjoy the co-operation of other States, in violation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, and threaten the territorial integrity and independence of other African States.

My delegation is particularly interested in the question of the United Nations role in disarmament, which is very important. The machinery created has actively assisted in the resolution of difficult situations. The best functioning of that machinery will be achieved not through administrative or procedural reforms alone but by a reaffirmation of political will. Otherwise, through administrative reforms supposedly making for greater efficiency we should run the risk of emptying the multilateral disarmament machinery of all political content.

We cannot stand idly by as mere spectators watching the activities of the super-Powers. We must establish a fluid interaction between the multilateral and bilateral disarmament spheres to achieve a constructive balance between the political will of the super-Powers and the right of all States to address problems that know no borders.

The delegation of Peru hopes that at this substantive session important advances will be made on the problem of naval arms and disarmament. The versatility and mobility of naval armaments, their unrestricted technological refinement and the ceaseless spiral of arms on the seas are sufficient reasons for the problem to be addressed specifically. However, there is further justification for giving the matter a special place in the disarmament programme. I refer to the
destructive effects of naval weapons on the delicate marine ecosystem. Recent events in the Persian Gulf give only a small example of the grave consequences. Confidence-building measures must be applied to the naval sphere in order to ensure that security prevails on the seas. The negotiation of a multilateral instrument to prevent incidents on high seas, enabling us to universalize principles contained in the bilateral agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union may be an effective approach to consideration of this issue.

Peru shares the grave concern of other member States about the accumulation of conventional weapons in all regions of the world. While nuclear weapons threaten all mankind with extinction, it is conventional weapons that have taken the lives of millions of human beings since the Second World War and that are the immediate threat to international peace and security.

My delegation believes that it is extremely urgent for us successfully to conclude our consideration of all aspects of conventional disarmament, not only because of the geo-strategic implications of conventional weapons, including such important matters as the danger of an area of conventional conflict being transformed into a nuclear theatre, but also because of the extremely harmful social and economic consequences of the arms race spiral for developing countries.

We must bear in mind that it is the developed States that possess the largest conventional arsenals and constantly apply new technologies in the large-scale production of such weapons. Therefore, they have a special political and moral responsibility for conventional disarmament. We must be aware that if the developing countries acquire conventional weapons, making their own socio-economic development process more difficult, the sums they waste are insignificant compared to the astronomical amounts set aside by the developed countries to improve and deploy conventional weapons, especially high-technology weapons.
In this context, there are regional processes and unilateral initiatives taking place, which, without undermining the more global principles of general and complete disarmament, the Commission should encourage. An important aspect to be considered here is the negative effect of the arms trade on the precarious stability of some regions, as well as the existence of illegal avenues of acquisition, which promote and foster the continuation of the bloodiest regional conflicts and lead to the supply of arms to groups lacking legitimacy in the use of force, exacerbating internal conflicts within States. For those reasons, general guidelines on the eventual elaboration of a code of conduct for the transfer of arms should be a substantive item in our work on conventional disarmament.

The processes of verification are an important element in confidence-building measures, and contribute to guaranteeing fulfilment of undertakings made by States. We should consider in detail the establishment of a data base to enable all countries to have appropriate information on the procedures applicable to each agreement.

This year the Commission’s programme is enriched with the question relating to guidelines for confidence-building, which was addressed during the 1986 session. We trust that this year we shall achieve a consensus on such an important question, since there remain only a few differences of view on some characteristics of confidence-building measures, differences which we feel sure will be overcome in the light of progress on this matter, such as the results of the Stockholm Conference and the renewed impetus in the negotiations between the two super-Powers.

This is an especially important session, since, as is evident, there exist the necessary elements to give the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament a solid foundation on which to build the future of the disarmament process. For that reason my delegation, aware of the vital importance
of the responsibilities we are now assuming, wishes to express to you, Sir, our firm determination to co-operate actively in the Commission's work and thus contribute to the successful conclusion of our task.

Mr. ORAMAS OLIVA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on presiding over the work of the Disarmament Commission during the current session. We are certain that under your skilful, wise and experienced guidance we shall successfully conclude our work by 20 May. In recent weeks your actions with regard to organization have been particularly important. I assure you that you will have my delegation's full support on the substantive aspects of our work.

The Commission is this year meeting in a promising atmosphere. Although the nuclear danger has not been eliminated and there persist some focal points of tension in certain regions, the present international climate is propitious for advances on specific disarmament measures.

Such measures are even more urgently needed because the resources released by their adoption could contribute to eliminating the sombre picture that the world economy continues to present. Although the close link between disarmament and development is not a separate item on our agenda, the Commission cannot close its eyes to that reality. On the contrary, it must direct its efforts at promoting disarmament measures for socio-economic development - of the developing countries in particular.

It is undeniable that the highest priority in our work goes to considerations of nuclear disarmament. The danger of a nuclear holocaust bears no comparison to any other danger, and it is the Commission's duty to confirm that priority and to work to give an impetus to bilateral and multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament.
The signing by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America last December of a Treaty prohibiting intermediate-range and shorter-range nuclear missiles should be viewed as a first step towards the achievement of broader disarmament measures in the nuclear field. My delegation supports the prompt ratification of that agreement and urges accelerated negotiations with a view to eliminating 50 per cent of the strategic missiles of both States as soon as possible.

The priority that attaches to nuclear disarmament and the urgency of adopting concrete and practical measures to avoid the outbreak of a nuclear war admit of no comparisons or alternatives. The Disarmament Commission should focus its efforts on those areas, consistent with the aspirations of the international community.

Within this context, we attach special importance in our work to banning nuclear-weapon tests, the cessation of the arms race, and the prohibition of the extension of the arms race to outer space. Those aspects cannot be overlooked by the Disarmament Commission, and it is our duty as a deliberative body to foster and promote the work of the Conference on Disarmament in those important areas.

Another urgent item on our agenda relates to the nuclear capability of South Africa, which has been touched on by several previous speakers. The danger implicit in the acquisition of all kinds of arms by the racist régime was very clearly set forth by the General Assembly in 1978, when it held the first special session devoted to disarmament.

Nevertheless, South Africa has continued to receive all kinds of military assistance, including nuclear assistance, which have enabled it to maintain the odious régime of apartheid, to continue its illegal occupation of Namibia, and to commit aggression against its neighbours, in violation of the relevant General Assembly resolutions. It is important that the Disarmament Commission once again
confirm the necessity to end all types of collaboration with South Africa, particularly in the nuclear field. The importance of this matter should not be underestimated and the Commission should accelerate its work in this specific area.

The item on conventional disarmament is once again on our agenda. Here, too, we must emphasize the necessity of eliminating collaboration with racist régimes. Moreover, in considering this item the Commission cannot lose sight of the necessity that States protect their security, the importance of respecting the right of self-defence, and the obligation to respect the right of peoples to self-determination.

In speaking of conventional disarmament, it is necessary that we highlight and recognize the priority that attaches to nuclear disarmament and realize that the chief responsibility in this area falls on the States which possess the largest nuclear and conventional arsenals, since it is they which are responsible for three-fourths of world military expenditures. And above all, as pointed out yesterday morning by the representative of Czechoslovakia, it is important for us to bear in mind the realities and characteristics that prevail in each region, in some of which - Europe, for example - there is a high concentration of nuclear and conventional weapons.

An item that we must particularly emphasize in our discussion is naval disarmament. Here, again, we should stress how the developing countries are suffering the consequences of the use of the most sophisticated naval means to promote tensions in the seas and oceans. Here, again, it is necessary to speak specifically of the arms that have been used to commit aggression against developing countries, and we must recognize the major role that falls to the big Powers in this respect.
Another agenda item to which we must give due attention is that on the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Naturally, we are all in favour of rationalizing our Organization's work in this area; however, that should not be to the detriment of the important work being done by multilateralism in fostering disarmament agreements. The machinery set up in 1978 for the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is valid and should be maintained and strengthened. The important point here - and this must be said - is that we should also strengthen our political will to recognize the importance of multilateralism and to accept and give impetus to negotiations in the disarmament field.

Mr. JAYASINGHE (Sri Lanka): It gives me great pleasure to see you, Mr. Chairman, presiding over this session of the Commission. My delegation has no doubt that under your able leadership and guidance the Commission will be able to make a positive contribution to the fulfilment of our mandate.

My delegation also takes this opportunity to congratulate the other officers who have been elected to the Commission's Bureau.

We are meeting at a time when the international community is endowed with hope that the developments in international relations will encourage at least some positive action to minimize the threat to mankind's existence. Our concerted efforts in this direction become timely as we shall meet again in a special session of the General Assembly to discuss disarmament with a view to adopting concrete measures to this end.

The Commission is entrusted with the task of considering various aspects of the arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, in order to avert the danger of nuclear war which is capable of annihilating all of human civilization. In approaching this subject, particularly bearing in mind the
forthcoming special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Commission should attempt to give its deliberations a balanced, realistic and practical character so that the outcome of SSOD-III will contribute further to the achievement of disarmament. There is no disagreement amongst us that a nuclear war would be unimaginably and irreparably devastating and should not be waged for any reason. However, disagreements with regard to the handling of this subject have remained an obstacle to any meaningful progress. The international community’s attempts over the past decade to overcome these obstacles have been trapped in ideological differences, East-West confrontation, the policy of nuclear deterrence, distrust and lack of confidence and political will. In negotiating nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, we are compelled to live with those limitations and find our way through to possible agreements.

On the other hand, those who deter desired progress in this field should be willing to re-examine their policies and attitudes with some flexibility, so that a give-and-take, businesslike approach could help us make specific recommendations to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament on matters entrusted to us, including nuclear disarmament.
In our preoccupation with nuclear war, in the past we have tended to overlook the incalculable devastation caused by conventional weapons. The time has come for us to be equally mindful of this aspect of disarmament. Numerous reports on conventional disarmament have established the severity and gravity of the conventional armed conflicts which have been a phenomenon of the post-war period, when more people have died than during the First World War. The increase in conventional armaments and their free availability in the international market have contributed to instability at the national and regional levels; in particular, this phenomenon has had devastating effects on the Third World. It is pertinent here to recall that all wars since 1945 have been fought in the Third World, using conventional weapons supplied by the main industrialized and some other arms-producing countries. With technological advancement and newly acquired sophistication, the devastating effects of this category of arms have been increased manifold. Therefore my delegation feels that the Commission should not lose sight of the importance of this aspect of disarmament while considering items such as nuclear disarmament.

This session is also required to consider issues concerning the reduction of military budgets, which include the harmonization of views and concrete steps to be taken by States regarding a gradual, agreed reduction of military budgets and the reallocation of resources now being used for military purposes to economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries. It is reported that the arms race since the 1960s has absorbed over $15 trillion and that in 1984 the world's military expenditure was about 2.5 times the 1960 level. By the end of the 1980s, it is estimated, this expenditure will be nearing $1,000 billion. Linked to this development is a story of millions of men, women and children dying of malnutrition and starvation. More than half the population of the world has no access to proper shelter, clothing, drinking water, health
services and education. Since the 1960s 81 major wars have been fought, killing 12,555,000 men, women and children. More wars have been fought in the 1980s than in previous decades of history. The question before us is whether we should continue to invest in this dreadful destruction or pull ourselves out of this insanity and take a realistic look at our own affairs and have the courage to work towards the building of a reasonable and secure world for all.

Naval armament and disarmament is another item this Commission has to consider. As in the case of conventional armament and disarmament, the international community has also paid less attention in multilateral forums to naval armament and disarmament. The development of naval forces and naval arms systems has imposed increasing threats to the maintenance of peace and security at the regional and global levels. Developments during the last 50 years have made possible the revolutionizing of navies, particularly with the developments in nuclear-weapon systems and electronics. It is said that 25 per cent of nuclear-weapon systems is in naval deployment. Apart from armoured missiles, over 550 nuclear-power-reactor armaments are installed mostly in submarines, which have now become formidable weapons of naval warfare. When we examine the competitive, accumulative and collective development of systems taking place in the oceans and seas, we are compelled to come to the conclusion that naval armament and disarmament should occupy a prominent place in our deliberations and that we should direct our discussions to identifying meaningful measures to curb naval armament.

Confidence-building measures and the question of verification in all its aspects are two other matters the Commission is required to consider at this session. Those two elements are in some respects the corner-stone on which positive developments towards disarmament must be founded. Lack of confidence and dependable verification measures has prevented progress in disarmament negotiations and on other measures aimed at arresting the arms race. The signing of
the INF Treaty between the super-Powers has proved that with the required will the barriers of lack of confidence and verification measures could be overcome. It is my delegation's belief that this Commission is meeting at a time when the temperament of the international community is more conducive to making headway in our deliberations.

The Commission is also required to consider the question of South Africa's nuclear capability. Sri Lanka is happy to chair the working group on this item, and it is the hope of my delegation that during this session the Commission will be able to harmonize the differing views on this matter and adopt recommendations to the General Assembly.

We are also required to review the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. It is the view of my delegation that the advancement on the bilateral front should not in any fashion diminish the importance of multilateral diplomacy. All of us are aware that from time to time bilateral efforts figure prominently, particularly when the two super-Powers are in a frame of mind to work together. We are witnessing a similar development at present. As has been seen in the past, when such a development takes place there is a tendency to push multilateral diplomacy to the periphery. It is my delegation's view that bilateral and multilateral diplomacy should be complementary and that advancement on the bilateral front should not diminish the importance of multilateral diplomacy in any manner.

My delegation supports the view that the effectiveness of the United Nations in the field of disarmament should be improved. For instance, the work of the First Committee should be revamped with a view to reducing the mushrooming of resolutions and avoiding repetition and overlapping. The Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral negotiating body on disarmament matters, should be strengthened. The Disarmament Commission should continue to play its important deliberative role. The Advisory Board on Disarmament has made significant
contributions. As members are aware, the Commission has agreed that United Nations disarmament studies play a useful role as a means of facilitating the consideration of issues in the field of disarmament. The mandate of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research should be widened. Its important contributions should be complement the studies carried out by the experts appointed by the Secretary-General. That Institute should be placed on a sound footing by bringing it under the regular budget of the United Nations, without having to depend on voluntary contributions.

The disarmament campaign serves a useful purpose in promoting the awareness of the international community on matters connected with disarmament. In this connection my delegation wishes to congratulate the Secretariat's Department for Disarmament Affairs on its valuable contribution.

Those are some of the general views my delegation wished to express at this session. When specific matters are being considered by the consultative and working groups, my delegation hopes to participate in those deliberations in a constructive manner.

Mr. KAPAMBWE (Zambia): Since this is the first time my delegation has spoken since your election as Chairman of the Commission, permit me to express to you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau my delegation's sincere congratulations. We are confident that the Commission will be steered firmly and clear of the many potholes that litter the road towards disarmament. I wish to assure you of my delegation's full co-operation in the discharge of the mandate we have entrusted to you and your team.

There is no doubt that the signing late last year of the INF Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union did breathe into the disarmament process some much needed fresh air which has recharged the entire process and restored optimism and confidence in humanity's ability to save itself from self-annihilation, to which the arms race inevitably leads.
(Mr. Kapambwe, Zambia)

Ever since the beginning of the cold war period, the two super-Powers have been running at full throttle on a narrow single-lane track from opposite directions, never stopping at the numerous red lights that bedeck this lane to apocalypse. Instead of using the benefits of scientific and technological progress to improve the quality of life of humankind, a significant, if not larger, portion of this scientific and technological process is channelled towards perfecting weapons for human annihilation.
(Mr. Kapambwe, Zambia)

If humanity does not see anything wrong in this, then something is definitely wrong with humanity itself, and we should start to consider seriously whether we should not stop flattering ourselves with such adjectives as "intelligent", "civilized", "different" or "superior" to other animal species. It appears that humanity on the one hand, and science and technology on the other, have reversed their roles as far as the arms race is concerned. Science and technology have become master, ever-compelling, driving, an irresistible accelerator pedal of the arms race which we appear unable to stop pressing. We are overwhelmed by it, fascinated by it, as are our children by toys.

Against such a background, it is understandable that almost all of us have on several occasions commended the United States and the Soviet Union over the signing of the INF treaty. Indeed, we would wish to encourage the two super-Powers to build upon this significant first step by concluding further treaties on all aspects of the arms race, taking into account the wealth of ideas generated in the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations. For, as an old adage from my country goes: "When two elephants fight, it is the grass which suffers the most."

The signing of treaties is not an end in itself. Our relief could very easily turn to grief if one of the parties to the INF treaty fails to ratify it.

The fact that the INF treaty was concluded within a bilateral framework should not give us the notion that the multilateral process is any less important. My delegation firmly believes that the two are complementary.

We have viewed with alarm attempts in the past to marginalize multilateral efforts at disarmament. Some major delegations have, on occasion, even refused to participate in important multilateral meetings dealing with some aspects of disarmament. Through deliberate procrastination and contempt for multilateralism
some major delegations have made it almost impossible for the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating forum, to make any meaningful progress, reducing this important forum to little more than a talk shop. These delegations have then pointed to the inertia of the Conference on Disarmament, which was created by them, as evidence of the impotence of multilateralism as it relates to disarmament. My delegation hopes that the signing of the INF treaty will not be used as a weapon to denigrate multilateralism. Inasmuch as the entire human race is under the threat of extinction by nuclear weapons, every human being, every country, has an equal right to participate in efforts aimed at disarmament.

I know that my delegation will have ample opportunity to speak to each of the items on our agenda during the course of the current session. However, let me at this point address items 5 and 6.

The nuclear capability of South Africa has now been established beyond any doubt. This has added a new and deadly dimension to an already awesome military arsenal under the control of one of the most virulent régimes ever - the racist minority régime of South Africa. In order to maintain its diabolical system of apartheid - a task which has been greatly facilitated by the inability of the Security Council to adopt any meaningful, decisive and effective measures to force the South African régime to abandon this evil system, thanks to the vetoes of some permanent members of the Security Council - the racist Pretoria régime has brought the full might of its military to bear upon its victims both in South Africa and the neighbouring countries.

We in the southern African region are under no illusion that we can, individually, if not even collectively, match South Africa's military strength.
(Mr. Kapambwe, Zambia)

However, in the absence of a better security alternative, our military arsenals, small as they are, are our only source of whatever little security we have left in the face of the ever-present threat to our sovereignty posed by the existence of apartheid in South Africa.

I have no doubt that most of the countries in southern Africa would not find any difficulty with the principle of reduction of military budgets in itself. If our reaction to this principle appears less than enthusiastic, it should not be misunderstood to imply our rejection of it. We in the region are eager to devote ourselves completely to the task of developing ourselves and improving the quality of life of our people. This is a huge and challenging task which will require every ounce of our energy, every penny and every iota of our resources. We are, therefore, fully aware of the necessity of maintaining only a minimum military arsenal. However, we must always set our priorities right. As long as apartheid continues to exist, anybody will have a hard time trying to convince the countries of the region, sworn enemies of apartheid and victims of its aggression, to put their military on a diet.

There is only one key to the total security of the southern African region and that is the complete eradication of apartheid and the independence of Namibia. Therefore, no serious person can support the continued sustenance of apartheid through any means and expect the countries in the region to cut their military budgets. The problem is compounded further by South Africa's refusal to open its nuclear programme to international inspection and putting it under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.
Unless the international community creates an effective alternative security arrangement for the region, beginning with the extension of international safeguards to South Africa's nuclear facilities, countries of southern Africa may find it difficult to contribute fully to the realization of the principle of reduction of military budgets. The only lasting solution to the security problem of the region is, of course, the complete eradication of the system of apartheid and the independence of Namibia.

The CHAIRMAN: We have heard the last speaker for this afternoon in our exchange of views. But before adjourning the meeting, I should like to call on Mr. Akalovsky of the United States delegation, who has asked to speak on a point of order.

Mr. AKALOVSKY (United States of America): Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to you for calling on me at this late hour, and I promise to be very brief.

My delegation interprets this morning's consideration of the question of whether or not this Commission should be provided with verbatim records as indicating the absence of consensus on the suggestion for eliminating such records. We regret this because we thought the suggestion was reasonable and consistent with continued efforts aimed at utilizing United Nations resources in the most economical and effective manner.

At the same time, my delegation has long believed that an essential aspect of the Disarmament Commission's proceedings has been the long-established practice of decision-making by consensus, on both substantive and procedural matters. Any departure from this traditional practice in United Nations Disarmament Commission proceedings would, in our view, call into question the role and viability of the Disarmament Commission as a distinct deliberative body for in-depth consideration of multilateral disarmament issues.
The CHAIRMAN: I shall make one brief comment with respect to what the representative of the United States has just said, and it is simply this: The Chair took the position of calling for a vote on the question that was posed this morning for clarification by the representative of the United Kingdom, and supported by the United States. I took that decision simply because, as I mentioned in my statement yesterday, we have a shortened session and I saw no need for us to enter into any discussion on a matter of procedure that had been discussed so many times before. I was further encouraged by what was decided in the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament that as far as possible the Disarmament Commission should take decisions on the basis of consensus on substantive matters - and that was emphasized. Since the matter we were dealing with was a procedural matter, and in order to avoid a situation of unnecessary debate, the Chair took that decision.

I am pleased that the representative of the United States has expressed his views, which are now on record, and I would also like to go on record as saying that in the best interest of the work of this Commission the Chair took a decision that it hopes will not lead to any further discussions. A precedent is not being set, but we have certain rules and procedures within our jurisdiction and we try to use them whenever possible. That is what I have done.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.