



General Assembly

UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS
REFERENCE LIBRARY

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CN.10/PV.133
9 May 1989

ENGLISH

DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 8 May 1989, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire)

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

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages, preferably in the same language as the text to which they refer. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also, if possible, incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room A-3550, 866 United Nations Plaza.

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

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

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I declare open the 133rd meeting, the first of the 1989 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

At the outset I wish to extend a warm welcome to all delegations attending this substantive session for 1989. I feel deeply beholden to them for the honour and privilege they have generously conferred upon my country, Zaire, by electing me to the chairmanship of the Commission.

I also wish to offer my most sincere congratulations to my predecessor, the Ambassador of Bahamas, Mr. Davidson Hepburn, on his outstanding performance as Chairman of the Commission at its 1988 session. His work as Chairman made it possible to make tangible progress in the various aspects of that session's work.

I also wish to pay a well deserved tribute to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, for the praiseworthy efforts he has constantly made towards acceleration of the process of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. The holding in Kyoto, from 19 to 22 April of this year, of a conference on disarmament, which was clearly a great success, is indisputable proof of the commitment of the Department for Disarmament Affairs under his guidance to the quest for ways and means of advancing this process.

I am sure I can rely on the constructive co-operation and assistance of all delegations, including all the members of the Commission's Bureau, whether elected or not yet elected, as well as the secretariat of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, in carrying out to the best of my ability the functions that have been entrusted to me.

(The Chairman)

I shall naturally count on the valuable assistance of Mr. Kuo-chung Lin, the Commission's Secretary, who I am certain will contribute to the success of our work in the light of his long experience and his expertise in this field.

I wish to refer to the presence of Ambassador Komatina, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, and to commend him for the hard work he has done to achieve even further progress in this field. I welcome him here.

For my part, I undertake to devote all my energy to the task on which we are about to embark together. The representatives can be sure that with their help and advice I will do my utmost to ensure that the work of the Commission proceeds in a business-like and efficient manner so that on the basis of consensus we shall at the end of the session be able to be proud of the work we have done.

Before taking up the various items on our agenda, I wish to give a brief personal and general assessment of the international situation at the present time in the context of disarmament.

The entire international community is aware of the unlimited devastation a nuclear war would inflict upon mankind, and consequently it is aware of the urgent need to spare no effort to avert the dangers of such a war by acting to safeguard the security of the peoples.

The ultimate objective of the efforts of States in the disarmament process is to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective international control. Effective measures for nuclear disarmament must be aimed, above all, at preventing nuclear war, which is of the highest priority.

Towards that end, it is necessary to eliminate the threat of the use of nuclear weapons, to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race until we have achieved the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems and have prevented the proliferation of such weapons.

(The Chairman)

The danger of that proliferation has steadily grown since the entry into force, on 5 March 1970, of the Treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Treaty, whose implementation is to be assessed next year at the Fourth Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty, has unfortunately not proved capable of persuading certain Member States of the United Nations to adhere to it and to refrain from engaging in the nuclear arms race - so much so that since 5 March 1970 the number of nuclear-weapon States has increased, thus negatively affecting the terms of the Treaty, although a certain number of Member States have acceded to it.

At the present time, in all continents, there are States equipped with weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons, the most recent being located in Asia, despite the efforts made through the United Nations in disarmament matters.

When we look back to 1948, we find that the Commission on Conventional Armaments saw the possibility of the emergence of new weapons of mass destruction, including explosive atomic weapons, weapons functioning through radioactive materials and biological and chemical weapons that in terms of their destructive effect would be comparable to atomic weapons.

The production of weapons of mass destruction at relatively low cost is capable of accelerating the proliferation of this type of weapon throughout the world. In this context the latest Conference on Chemical Weapons, held in Paris, deplored that chemical weapons had recently been used in certain regional conflicts in flagrant violation of international law.

The Geneva Protocol of 7 June 1925, which prohibited the use of chemical and biological weapons in time of war, had its origin in the heavy losses caused by the large-scale use of chemical weapons in the First World War. But the Protocol does not prohibit any State from possessing, developing or manufacturing such weapons. That omission accounts for the objective of the negotiations that have been going on in Geneva since 1982.

(The Chairman)

The Paris Conference, with 149 participating States, therefore emphasized the need to conclude in the near future a convention prohibiting the development, manufacturing, stockpiling and use of all chemical weapons and their destruction.

Now that the international community is increasingly aware of the real danger posed by the proliferation of this new generation of weapons and their use, it is essential to heighten that awareness by accelerating the negotiating process on those weapons in Geneva.

The principle of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons should be extended to other types of weapons, be they chemical weapons or radiological weapons of mass destruction. It is in that spirit that we should approach the positive effect of the Treaty signed in Washington on 8 December 1987 by the two super-Powers on negotiations dealing with the limitation and elimination of other types of weapons. That Treaty is not only the first instrument to regulate nuclear weapons; it is also the first agreement in history providing for the substantial reduction of nuclear weapons - in other words, the destruction over a three-year period of 859 American missiles and 1,752 Soviet missiles.

After the global elimination of American and Soviet land-based systems of INF missiles having a range of between 500 and 5,500 kilometres, as stipulated by the Washington Treaty of 8 December 1987, the other objectives to be pursued in the bilateral negotiations should essentially be focused on the main issues, as follows: a 50 per cent reduction of the strategic offensive forces of the United States and the Soviet Union; the global elimination of chemical weapons; elimination of the existing disparities in terms of conventional forces from the Atlantic to the Urals; and, lastly, the reduction of so-called tactical American and Soviet nuclear weapons having a range of less than 500 kilometres.

(The Chairman)

We welcome the adoption on 19 September 1986 in Stockholm of confidence- and security-building measures in Europe - the first disarmament agreement concluded since the SALT II negotiations. We must at the same time emphasize the positive results achieved at the Conference to evaluate those measures held in Vienna within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

To the extent that these confidence- and security-building measures in Europe combine the elements of verification among the States of the region by providing for compulsory notification and observation and inspection of military manoeuvres and concentrations in Europe, the measures would certainly lower the risks of confrontation that result from miscalculation or misunderstanding and would therefore minimize the possibilities of surprise attack.

The beneficial effect of these confidence-building measures could conceivably give rise to a climate of confidence not only in Europe but also in Asia, Africa and Latin America, where the conclusion of such agreements might be encouraged by the international community through the competent United Nations disarmament bodies.

The sweeping prospects opened up by man's conquest of space have induced certain States to engage in an arms race in space, thus heightening the danger to mankind that such an arms race could pose. Accordingly, the General Assembly, in resolution 43/70 of 7 December 1988, requests all States, especially those with major space capabilities, to refrain, in their activities relating to outer space, from actions contrary to the observance of the relevant existing treaties or to the objective of preventing an arms race in outer space.

Space, like the oceans and the seas, is the common heritage of mankind and should be explored solely for peaceful and economic purposes.

General Assembly resolution 38/188 G, of 20 December 1983, requested the Secretary-General to carry out, with the assistance of qualified governmental

(The Chairman)

experts, a comprehensive study on the naval arms race and on naval forces and naval arms systems, including maritime nuclear-weapons systems. The objective was to analyse the possible implications of these systems for international security, for freedom of the high seas, for international shipping routes and for exploitation of marine resources.

The findings of those studies, conducted under the chairmanship of our former colleague Ambassador Ali Alatas - now Foreign Minister of Indonesia - have shown that the seas and the oceans cover 71 per cent of the surface of the earth and that more than two thirds of the world's inhabitants live within 300 kilometres of a coast. The seas and the oceans, while providing an important source of protein and energy, have already played an important role in the exploration and development of the planet. The future will certainly bring an even greater role for the seas and the oceans.

With those factors in mind, the General Assembly instructed the Disarmament Commission to proceed to a substantive consideration of the naval arms race and naval disarmament and to report thereon to the Assembly. At this session members of the Commission must spare no effort to ensure progress in this field.

If there is one issue that continues to be of concern to the Commission, it is certainly that of South Africa's nuclear capability. Showing outright disregard for the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa, adopted in Cairo in 1964 by the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, the racist minority régime of South Africa continues to bolster its nuclear capability, has done nothing to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and does not allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to monitor its facilities at all. This situation continues to threaten peace and security in Africa and to jeopardize chances for the immediate denuclearization of the continent.

(The Chairman)

Accordingly, the Commission is called upon, under General Assembly resolution 43/71 A and B, to consider once again as a matter of priority during its 1989 session South Africa's nuclear capability, taking into account, inter alia, the findings of the report on this subject by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

The same is true of the reduction of military budgets. In that regard, the principles which should govern further actions of States in the field of freezing and reduction of military budgets were adopted on 18 May 1988 by the ad hoc consultative group, but they did not gain the consent of all the members because of the language in paragraph 7 of the principles that remains in brackets.

Since the reduction of military budgets is connected to the relationship between development and disarmament, it is clear that the arms race makes a large contribution to the diversion of resources that could be devoted to social well being and economic development.

At this substantive session the Commission must therefore work to eliminate the obstacles remaining in paragraph 7 of those principles, in order to make possible the adoption of all the principles.

It must proceed in the same way in respect of conventional disarmament, as well as in respect of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade - two items on which the Commission will be focusing and on which it should adopt proper and fitting recommendations.

The role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament will thereby be strengthened and enhanced, as we can see from the conclusions reached by the disarmament conference held in Kyoto from 19 to 22 April 1989, which acknowledged the complementarity between multilateral and bilateral approaches to disarmament within the framework of the United Nations system.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS (A/CN.10/L.24)

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): Delegations will recall that at our organizational meeting held on 1 December 1988 we elected a Chairman and three Vice-Chairmen. We still need, however, to elect five other Vice-Chairmen - two from the Group of Asian States, two from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and one from the Group of Western European and Other States. Also, we need to elect a Rapporteur, from the Group of Western European and Other States. I am happy to report that Bahrain and Sri Lanka, Costa Rica and Haiti, and Austria have been nominated by, respectively, the Group of Asian States, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, and the Group of Western European and Other States for the posts of Vice-Chairman. May I take it that the Disarmament Commission wishes to elect those countries to the vice-chairmanship of the Commission by acclamation?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I extend my warmest congratulations to the Vice-Chairmen who have just been elected. I am sure they will join the other officers of the Commission in making substantive contributions to the Commission's work at this session.

We turn now to the election of the Rapporteur.

The Group of Western European and other States has nominated Mr. André Querton of Belgium for the post of Rapporteur. May I take it that it is the Commission's wish to elect Mr. Querton to that post by acclamation?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I extend my warm congratulations to Mr. Querton on his election as Rapporteur of the Commission. I believe that the Commission has made a wise choice, and I invite Mr. Querton to come to the podium and take the place reserved for the Rapporteur.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the agenda as contained in document A/CN.10/L.24.

The agenda was adopted.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I should now like to come to the organization of work for the session. In this connection, I wish to recall that I have conducted extensive consultations with a large number of delegations in mid-April in Geneva and early May in New York, in the hope that a general understanding regarding the organization of work for the session would be reached. As a result, I wish now to put the following ideas to the Commission for its consideration.

With regard to the general exchange of views, given the limited time available to the Commission it was the general feeling that there should be a limited general exchange of views, allowing delegations to make statements on any or all agenda items. In this regard, four meetings could be allocated for the purpose, and I should like to urge those delegations wishing to make general statements to contact the Secretariat and to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible. The four meetings would then be scheduled for today - this morning and this afternoon - and tomorrow, also in the morning and in the afternoon. The deadline for such inscriptions is 1 p.m. today. In addition, 25 copies of statements should be provided to the Secretariat.

(The Chairman)

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

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): We come now to the establishment of subsidiary bodies.

As members may recall, the General Assembly at its forty-third session requested the Disarmament Commission to consider various questions in its resolutions 43/73, 43/71 B, 43/75 R, 43/75 L, 43/75 D and F, and 43/78 L, respectively regarding the reduction of military budgets, item 5; nuclear capability of South Africa, item 6; review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, item 7; naval armaments and disarmament, item 8; conventional disarmament, item 9; the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade, item 10. Furthermore, with regard to the question concerning various aspects of the arms race particularly the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, as contained in item 4 (a) and (b), the Commission at its last session agreed to continue consideration of this item.

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

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

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

(The Chairman)

(c) Working Group I would deal with item 6, on the nuclear capability of South Africa;

(d) Working Group II would deal with item 7, regarding the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament;

(e) A consultation group would deal with item 8, regarding the question of naval armaments and disarmament;

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

(g) Working Group IV would deal with item 10, regarding the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade.

As can be seen, we would have four Working Groups and three consultation groups.

(The Chairman)

The third point is the equitable distribution of chairmanship among subsidiary bodies. In that regard, in accordance with my consultations with delegations, I wish to propose the following arrangements, taking into account equitable geographical distribution of the chairmanship of the subsidiary bodies:

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

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

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

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

(e) Working Group III on item 9, regarding conventional disarmament, will be chaired by the representative of Denmark, Ambassador Skjold Mellbin.

(f) Working Group IV on item 10, regarding the Third Disarmament Decade, will be chaired by the representative of Haiti, Ambassador Roger Ravix, who will be co-operating closely with the delegation of Nigeria, which introduced this item.

Regarding the chairmanship of the Committee of the Whole, I understand that, as has been the case in previous years, the Chairman of the Commission will himself take that chairmanship. In this connection, I wish to designate a friend of mine, Mr. Sergei Martynov of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, to chair the Contact Group to deal with item 4 (a) and (b). I wish to point out that during the

(The Chairman)

consultations, both in Geneva and in New York, there has been general agreement on such arrangements.

Are there any comments on the arrangements?

Mr. AKALOVSKY (United States of America): Mr. Chairman, my delegation has no objections in principle to the arrangements that you have outlined. We do, however, have a problem regarding the handling of item 8. You kindly referred to consultations, in which my delegation also participated, regarding this item. As I said, in general your arrangements reflect the outcome of those consultations. Nevertheless, I want to point out that in the past it was the Chairman's own decision to conduct consultations under his own responsibility on item 8, and he then personally designated someone to co-ordinate those consultations. On that basis, Mr. Chairman, I think it would be more appropriate if you did not place this arrangement for decision by the Commission and left it to yourself to make such a decision. As I said, it was done that way in the past. As far as my delegation is concerned, it will not participate in any decision regarding the handling of this item.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): The Chair takes note of the comment of the representative of the United States.

We shall now proceed to the adoption of these arrangements, taking into account, of course, the position taken by the representative of the United States.

If I hear no objection, those will be adopted.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): As to the allocation of time for each agenda item, the principle of equal footing and flexibility for practical purposes will be observed and the Secretariat will issue a weekly timetable on the programme of work during the session, taking into account the needs of each subsidiary body through consultations with the Chairmen of the various working groups - the needs of those groups not just for time but also for meeting rooms. However, a general programme of work (A/CN.10/1989/CRP.1) for the entire session has been prepared and circulated as an indicative timetable for the work of the Commission, subject to further adjustment whenever necessary. It is also understood that no more than two simultaneous meetings of formal subsidiary bodies will be held, except for the informal consultation groups.

The fourth point relates to documentation for the current session. I wish to point out that last year's report of the Disarmament Commission to the fifteenth special session devoted to disarmament and the forty-third regular session of the General Assembly, namely, documents A/S-15/3 and A/43/42, will serve as the basic documents for consideration. Those documents contain a number of major proposals on the subjects to be considered this year. Previous reports of the Commission will, of course, be useful for reference. In addition, document A/CN.10/115 contains replies from Governments regarding the declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade - agenda item 10 - pursuant to General Assembly resolution 43/78 L. Also, the Commission will have before it a number of working papers submitted by delegations on various agenda items. I should like to urge those delegations to submit their papers to the Secretariat as soon as possible for processing.

(The Chairman)

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

Are there any comments?

Mrs. GAZEAU-SECRET (France) (interpretation from French): My delegation has one comment to make with respect to document A/CN.10/1989/CRP.1, concerning the allocation of meeting rooms. I have noted that, with regard to the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, four rooms have been provided, namely, rooms 1, 4, A and B.

(Mrs. Gazeau-Secret, France)

Perhaps we should reconsider, particularly for the small consultation and negotiating groups, the possibility of using conference rooms with interpretation services - Rooms 5, 6, 7 or even 8, if they are available - instead of Rooms A and B.

You will recall, Mr. Chairman, that last year the Secretariat was able to make available to contact groups, consultation groups and working groups a certain number of small rooms with interpretation services, making it possible for there to be productive consultations and, later, drafting work.

In its special report to the General Assembly at its third special session devoted to disarmament, the Disarmament Commission recommended:

"In future it would be desirable to ensure that translation and interpretation services made available to the Commission should be fully utilized." (A/S-15/3, para 15)

I think that the best way fully to utilize those services is to try to organize meetings in those small rooms with interpretation services.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I call upon the Secretary to respond to that comment.

Mr. LIN (Secretary of the Disarmament Commission): In response to the question raised by the representative of France, I recall that last year, in a situation similar to this year's, we also had only the two teams of interpreters. Providing more teams of interpreters would have financial implications.

I also wish to recall statistics provided by the Department of Conference Services, which showed that last year in the period from 2 May to 20 May the utilization of conference services was 45 per cent; in other words, a great deal of conference service facilities went unused.

(Mr. Lin)

In this connection, I also point out that this year we would do better fully to utilize our meetings services by starting and ending on time.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I thank the Secretary for his comments and the steps he will take to respond to the request made by the French delegation regarding interpretation services in the course of the work of the subsidiary bodies, which has been carefully noted.

Mr. AKALOVSKY (United States): Last year and in previous years an effort was made to limit the number of meetings of subsidiary bodies to two at the same time. Are you planning, Mr. Chairman, to follow the same practice this year? According to the provisional programme of work, four rooms are assigned from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesday, 10 May, which would suggest that four subsidiary bodies will meet at the same time.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): When I referred to this matter a few moments ago I said clearly that there would be no more than two simultaneous meetings of official subsidiary bodies. I call upon the Secretary to give us further clarification with regard to informal bodies.

Mr. LIN (Secretary of the Disarmament Commission): In response to the question raised by the representative of the United States, I wish to point out that this year we shall follow a pattern similar to last year's. Two formal subsidiary bodies, with full meetings services, will meet at the same time as a consultation group; in other words, as last year, we shall have three simultaneous meetings in the morning and the afternoon.

Mr. ADAM (Sudan): As this is the first time my delegation has spoken in the Commission this year, Sir, I wish to congratulate you on assuming the office of Chairman for this year. I also congratulate the Chairmen of the various bodies of our Commission, especially the Chairmen of all the subsidiary bodies.

(Mr. Adam, Sudan)

I am sorry to take you back to the question of the rooms for meetings, Mr. Chairman. As I understand it, the meetings of the subsidiary bodies are official meetings, and if there were no interpretation in certain rooms, such as Room A and Room B, representatives would not be able to use languages other than English, which perhaps some do not speak or in which they cannot express themselves fluently. Therefore, Sir, I urge you, with the help of the Secretariat, to explore further possibilities of finding rooms where we may have full interpretation in all the working languages of the United Nations in the subsidiary bodies.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): The Chairmen and the Secretariat will do their utmost to respond to the request made by the representative of Sudan, particularly with regard to the allocation of rooms equipped for interpretation.

Mr. FAHMY (Egypt): I should like again at the beginning of this year's session to appeal to the Secretariat, and through you, Sir, to the Chairmen of the various groups, to follow a consistent pattern when meetings are held simultaneously, in order to allow delegations that have to divide their representation to cover more than one working group to follow all the meetings, instead of the sequence changing from one day or one week to another. That is a matter of particular concern to small delegations, but I believe it is also relevant to larger delegations, because we all have limited staff.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I assure the representative of Egypt that the Secretariat, with the help of the Chairmen of all the working groups, will try to provide an appropriate schedule, taking into consideration the availability of rooms and the needs of the Chairmen to expedite the work of their respective groups. We take due note of that comment.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Mr. YAMADA (Japan): Let me say first of all, Sir, how happy my delegation is to see you in the Chair. I pledge the full co-operation of my delegation.

In recent years, the international environment for arms control and disarmament has improved, and some tangible results have been achieved. In that regard it is important to stress that bilateral, regional and multilateral deliberations and negotiations are complementary to one another. Steady efforts should be made in each of those processes further to promote international peace and security through arms control and disarmament.

In the relationship between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the practice of constant dialogue has firmly taken root. It is hoped that under the new United States Administration that dialogue will be further deepened and that steady progress will be made towards the solution of long-standing issues, including the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks.

We also witnessed the opening, last March, of parallel negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures and conventional disarmament in Europe. Further, there have been favourable developments towards the solution of such regional conflicts as those in Afghanistan, the Gulf, Namibia and, we hope, in Kampuchea. I sincerely hope that those encouraging developments will give an impetus to multilateral deliberations and negotiations on major disarmament issues.

In the area of multilateral disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament has been redoubling its efforts towards an early conclusion of the negotiations on a chemical weapons convention, taking into account in particular the appeal made at the Paris Conference last January. I hope the favourable international situation, which is continuing to evolve, will lead to fruitful multilateral negotiations on disarmament in the United Nations as well.

(Mr. Yamada, Japan)

At last year's session of the Disarmament Commission, which preceded the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, I stressed that to provide the special session with specific input we should take a practical approach by taking up efficiently those issues on which we could reach consensus. I indicated that such items as confidence-building measures, the reduction of military budgets and verification could be discussed as priority issues, on the basis of what we had built until then. Though we met with some difficulties we succeeded in finding consensus language on confidence-building measures and verification which provided a sound basis for deliberations in such forums as the third special session devoted to disarmament and, later, the First Committee of the General Assembly.

With regard to this year's session of the Disarmament Commission we think it is necessary while discussing specific items to ponder what we should expect from our deliberations in the Commission. Though some progress was made last year, we must take into account the fact that the Commission has so far not attracted much interest from delegations. The Disarmament Commission provides a good forum in which not only members of the Conference on Disarmament but all United Nations Members may deepen their common understanding of disarmament issues by deliberating fully on a limited number of clearly defined items. The Commission could also help create a climate more conducive to the implementation of actual disarmament measures by carrying out joint exercises under the consensus rule or using a procedure different from that followed in the First Committee of the General Assembly. Through those deliberations, I believe, the Commission could formulate useful input to bilateral and regional negotiations, as well as to discussions in the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Yamada, Japan)

As regards items to be discussed this year, we should first finalize our work on the item "Reduction of military budgets" by solving problems related to the transparency and comparability of military budgets. The fair calculation and comparison of military budgets are prerequisites for addressing disarmament issues.

With respect to the items on various aspects of the arms race and on conventional disarmament, my delegation believes it is imperative that we continue steady efforts towards complete and comprehensive disarmament, taking into account such elements as the interrelationship of nuclear and conventional disarmament and the characteristics of the regions concerned.

Issues related to nuclear weapons continue to be of high priority for Japan. The preparatory process is now under way for the Fourth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in 1990. A conference of the parties to the Treaty is scheduled for 1995, at which it is to be determined whether the Treaty should continue in force indefinitely or should be extended for an additional fixed period or periods. In that context it is important to consider comprehensively the interrelated issues of nuclear disarmament, a nuclear-test ban and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The parties to the non-proliferation Treaty renewed their commitment in the preamble of the Treaty to seek to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time and to continue negotiations to this end. I hope that, in accordance with the joint statement of the United States and the Soviet Union of 17 September 1987, the first phase of their full-scale stage-by-stage negotiations will soon be concluded with the ratification of the threshold test-ban Treaty of 1974 and the peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty of 1976. The two sides should then proceed without delay to the second phase, namely negotiations on further intermediate limitations on nuclear testing.

(Mr. Yamada, Japan)

In the multilateral sphere, the Conference on Disarmament has failed for the past several years to establish an ad hoc committee on a nuclear-test ban and to engage itself in substantive work on the testing issue. This year we have seen an emerging convergence of views towards a possible solution to the question of the mandate for establishing such a committee. There exists a strong wish among the States members of the Conference on Disarmament to start substantive work on a nuclear-test ban. It is my hope that we will indeed have a committee in the Conference on Disarmament during the summer session. I am firmly convinced that in view of the review process of the non-proliferation Treaty it is now imperative for the Conference on Disarmament to initiate work on nuclear testing.

(Mr. Yamada, Japan)

We should maintain that momentum on both the bilateral and multilateral fronts to make steady progress towards a nuclear test ban. Japan, for its part, will continue to participate positively in such efforts.

I am grateful to the Chairman for having made reference in his opening statement to the Kyoto International Conference on Disarmament Issues, which was held pursuant to the invitation extended by my Prime Minister at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and accepted by the General Assembly. At that Conference, policy-makers, disarmament ambassadors, scientific experts, journalists and the representatives of non-governmental organizations from more than 30 countries freely exchanged views on various disarmament issues. Along with many colleagues present here today, I participated in that Conference, and I found it useful in deepening interest in and understanding of bilateral, regional and multilateral deliberations and negotiations on disarmament issues. One of the items discussed at the Conference was "Bilateral and multilateral approaches to disarmament", and many participants emphasized that the two approaches should be promoted in a complementary manner.

I believe that the Disarmament Commission could make an important contribution to bilateral, regional and multilateral efforts towards a more peaceful and safer world. To that end, it is imperative that we build an international consensus on disarmament through realistic and constructive discussions in the Commission, bearing in mind the deliberations and negotiations that are continuing in other relevant forums.

Ms. URIBE de LOZANO (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): We are happy to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, upon your election to preside over this session of the Disarmament Commission. We are convinced that your experience in disarmament questions and your well-known diplomatic skills will ensure the success of the Commission's work.

(Ms. Uribe de Lozano, Colombia)

In its resolution 43/75 I the General Assembly requested that the question of international arms transfers be considered by the Disarmament Commission. In view of my delegation's interest in that subject, I shall therefore begin my statement today by requesting that that resolution be given a speedy follow-up. We are convinced that the problem of arms transfers, in all its aspects, deserves serious consideration in the United Nations because it is a problem that is exacerbated and maintained through a complex network of international, trade and political relations involving the responsibility of all States.

The Secretary-General's studies have given us a vivid picture of the huge amounts being expended on the arms race, of the catastrophic destruction that can be caused by modern weapons and of the harmful consequences of the illegal armaments traffic on international peace and security.

The active race to stockpile increasingly sophisticated and destructive weapons, through either manufacture or import, has a most dangerous effect on all aspects of international relations and constitutes one of the major obstacles to the establishment of a peaceful system of international relations based on justice, equality, independence and co-operation.

The arms race, which involves the most militarily and economically powerful States, the major political-military alliances and, indeed, the entire world, either directly or indirectly, has far-reaching political, economic, social and psychological repercussions on mankind.

International arms transfers occupy a pre-eminent place in the arms race, particularly with regard to conventional weapons, and they promote a climate of armed confrontation by preparing the world for conflict rather than building for peace. Moreover, arms transfers contribute to the vicious circle of suspicion and fear that feeds the arms race and impedes efforts to guarantee international

(Ms. Uribe de Lozano, Colombia)

security, particularly the system laid down in the United Nations Charter for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Although arms transfers are not the major cause of conflicts and although control over such transfers is not their sole solution, recent history has shown that arms transfers increase the possibility of armed confrontation and that they extend and heighten conflicts and interfere in their peaceful solution.

The transfer of conventional weapons, which fans the regional conflicts that some refer to as "low-intensity wars", enables the major Powers to intervene politically in other States at minimal risk to themselves and yet at an immeasurable cost in destruction and death to the countries in conflict. In addition, arms transfers, which feed great-Power rivalries, can mean that a critical situation in a given region of the world may develop into direct confrontation between them. Thus, the pressures created by arms transfers that are used as an economic and political tool reduce the autonomy of the parties to the conflict for solving it.

Throughout the 1980s the trade in armaments has been carried out freely all over the world. The few restrictions some States had established in the past have been significantly relaxed to favour political and economic strategies, to the detriment of international peace and security. Nor did the 1980s see any slackening of efforts to develop new kinds of weapons, which have contributed to maintaining the dynamism of the arms race. Moreover, a larger number of countries are now designing, producing and deploying new and even more lethal weapons, many of which are being transferred to third-world countries.

Similarly, a lack of control over military technology has enabled certain highly militarized countries - some of which are located in areas of tension and conflict - to acquire the technology to produce weapons with an even higher

(Ms. Uribe de Lozano, Colombia)

destructive potential. Some countries have also acquired launching systems capable of transporting nuclear weapons, chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction over great distances.

That dangerous situation created by the transfer of all kinds of armaments, the consequent proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons and the capability of a growing number of countries to launch them are all deserving of priority attention on the part of the international community and, specifically, of the Disarmament Commission.

(Ms. Uribe de Lozano, Colombia)

The Third World has been the theatre of the wars unleashed since the Second World War, and conflicts and wars continue. Those conflicts have generated a continual demand for various kinds of weapons and military equipment that very few supplying countries have been able to resist, given the potential for profit.

The Third World has provided a theatre for action in which new technologies have been tested in real conditions rather than simulated ones, and this situation has been aggravated by the application of new technology to transferred weapons, which increases their range and strength and the risk to the civilian population that arises from their indiscriminate effects.

Countries having border or racial conflicts or domestic strife, given the imperatives of security, which require weapons for their defence, become easy captives of arms producers and distributors and middle-men who are governed by the inexorable laws of business rather than humanitarian reasoning. What is more, such countries may be tempted to use those weapons, since their use is sometimes considered more attractive than peaceful means to settle disputes.

Even with the limited available data, it is calculated that approximately 75 per cent of all exported weapons go to developing countries. Given the volume and the value-added increment of export weapons, this represents a large flow of wealth from poor countries to rich countries. This is particularly damaging, implying a massive loss of hard currency, shortage of which is one of the most serious obstacles to the Third World's economic growth and development.

There can be no doubt that the arms race in conventional weapons is absorbing many resources that otherwise would be devoted to the social well-being and economic development of countries, nationally and internationally. The magnitude of the resources necessary to support, expand and innovate current arms arsenals in both producing and importing countries constitutes the most obvious of the negative

(Ms. Uribe de Lozano, Colombia)

repercussions of the arms race on the world's prospects of economic growth, which in turn has serious consequences for economic and social development, in developing countries in particular.

Conventional weapons and their transfer are responsible for the militarization of our societies. They are very much responsible for the high moral, social and human costs that are added to the economic burden of conflicts and wars and preparations for them.

A growing number of scientists and technical experts are being attracted to research on and the production of conventional weapons, and they then have a specific interest in continuing their specialized work. Thus is established a hierarchy that can interfere with the efforts of those seeking the restriction of weapons-producing programmes. Expenditures on conventional weapons are several times higher than those on nuclear weapons. Measured in terms of cost and manpower, and the scientific and technological resources immobilized for their production and maintenance, conventional weapons constitute a tremendous financial burden and seepage of the resources of the producing countries, which henceforth depend on the continuous export of weapons to compensate for production costs and the balance of payments. The simple fact that countries producing weapons have a surplus to sell is itself a factor in the promotion of weapons transfers, and encourages the existence of a surplus to meet the demand or to create it.

The importation of weapons creates a dependency in the receiving countries. The suppliers generally sell their weapons by means of loans granted for that purpose, thereby creating financial and even political obligations for the receiving countries. In addition military aid creates obligations and political dependency. In both cases receiving countries are bound to the suppliers, usually for long periods, by their debts and their need for spare parts and continuous supplies.

(Ms. Uribe de Lozano, Colombia)

While the justification used for the importation of armaments is the strengthening of security in the name of national defence, the supplying countries have no such justification. Their security is not increased by the trade, nor are the economic benefits flowing from the sales sufficient at the present time to compensate for or justify military costs, save marginally. Nor does the procurement of weapons seem to increase the security of receiving countries, particularly since received weapons have contributed to the wars and conflicts that have afflicted the world in recent decades. What is more, the removal of resources from work on economic and social development increases non-military threats to security.

The military industries now being developed in several developing countries is a specific response to the security problems confronting them in international and regional relations. However, while those industries can result in the saving of hard currency and their products can substitute for imported war matériel, they compromise the future of a large part of fiscal resources. They do not provide the proper response, given the current international situation. The possible medium- and long-term effects of such allocation of fiscal resources run counter to the peaceful process that will lead to economic and social development and compromise resources that might be used to meet national requirements.

Military equipment is paid for twice, in any case, save in the industrialized countries. It is paid for by ordinary people who are not consulted regarding their loss of health services, education opportunities, unpolluted water, better food, adequate housing, industrial development, and so on.

It is the trend in developing countries to emulate the developed countries as regards military equipment rather than economic growth and living standards. However, to a large extent the developing countries depend upon such imports, while the developed countries not only are relatively independent at this time, as they

(Ms. Uribe de Lozano, Colombia)

increase their arsenals, but also derive political and material advantage from the sale or donating of weapons.

The growing illegal traffic in arms is an integral part of arms transfers, in which there is a dangerous interaction between war, terrorism, subversion, delinquency, crime and drug trafficking and the thirst for power and money, and ideologies, propaganda and beliefs that cross seas and continents and adjust themselves to the most widely varied situations.

(Ms. Uribe de Lozano, Colombia)

Colombia has repeatedly warned the international community about the consequences of the illicit arms traffic - a phenomenon that further increases tensions, threatens the internal security of States as well as regional security, and strengthens the position of those who oppose the disarmament process. We have also drawn attention to the unbridled competition prompted by the arms race and the alarming indifference of States in which the sale, transit and supply of weapons take place openly, thereby strengthening a market where criminals, terrorists and drug traffickers with unlimited economic resources are able to acquire everything they need to carry out their evil purposes.

Many countries have been the victims of the consequences of the illicit arms traffic, but we know much more about its impact on our societies than about the way in which it is carried out. In view of the secrecy surrounding this traffic, in order to understand its nature better we must base ourselves on the consideration of cases in which these transactions have come to the knowledge of the public or of Governments.

Illicit traffic includes those transactions that are carried out in violation of laws or procedures that provide, on the national or international level, for penalties or sanctions against Governments or individuals participating in the transactions.

Illicit traffic is, by definition, a shady business. It generally involves weapons or military equipment obtained illegally, and supplied illegally as well.

Various ways and means involved in this illicit traffic are usually called the "grey weapons trade", depending on the nature of the weapon or military equipment transferred or the type of transaction. For example, a product that has been transferred falls within this grey zone when it has civilian as well as military applications and when it is supplied to countries subjected to embargoes or to

(Ms. Uribe de Lozano, Colombia)

groups or individuals that know or suspect that the weapon or equipment is to be used for violent purposes.

Studying of the problem of the illicit arms traffic and of its origins and assessing its consequences for international, regional and national peace and security, and thus for the exercise of human rights, are fundamental, urgent tasks.

Colombia believes that the United Nations, whose very essence and purpose are peace, security and the social and economic progress of States, as well as the exercise of human rights, can make a positive contribution to consideration of the problem of the illicit arms traffic and to the elimination of a threat that knows no ideological, territorial or legal borders and can constitute an underhanded form of intervention.

Consideration of the principles that should govern measures to make possible the regulation and control of international arms transfers must be based on the premise that weapons are tools of war designed and produced to kill and destroy. Hence, their use is a breach of the right that every human being has to life itself. Arms transfers impede the full enjoyment by all human beings of the right to exist and to a dignified life. Arms transfers distort the right of every human being to integral development. Arms transfers impede the exercise of the right to the self-determination of peoples. Moreover, there is a fundamental principle of the responsibility of States vis-à-vis international law which flows, as a corollary, from the well-protected right to sovereignty - that is, the duty of all States to respect international norms within their own borders. Hence, no State can be an accomplice to or disregard breaches of such norms and fail to shoulder its responsibilities. International arms transfers play a major role in the basic problem of security confronting many countries. Thus, they must safeguard their

(Ms. Uribe de Lozano, Colombia)

processes of economic, political and social development from both internal and external threats - that is, those inherent in the process of national reconstruction and those that originate in an international climate where recourse to the use of force and intimidation continues to be a part of diplomacy by pressure - particularly in those countries that parade their economic, technological and military power.

Measures to solve the problems inherent in international arms transfers must be considered in the broad context of international security. This includes the peaceful settlement of regional disputes, negotiations on nuclear disarmament, a strict interpretation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the adoption of a convention on chemical weapons, negotiations to reduce the level of conventional weapons and, above all, respect for the international norms enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Consideration of measures to deal with the problem of international arms transfers must include the following elements:

First, the measures must contribute to the process of conventional disarmament; to the reduction of threats to security, both military and non-military; to confidence-building; and, particularly, to the reversal of the trend towards making arms transfers an instrument of violence and a profitable business.

Second, because of the particularly dangerous nature of the illicit arms traffic, the measures to eliminate it and the breaches of human rights it involves deserve attention as a matter of priority.

Third, the production and supply of and trading in weapons of mass destruction and their launching systems, as well as the transfer of such technology, must be prohibited, as an initial step towards their total elimination.

(Ms. Uribe de Lozano, Colombia)

Fourth, the arms trade, while one of the most profitable in the world, is much more than a commercial proposition. Hence, we must assess its serious effects on world, regional and national policies, as well as on international trade relations.

Fifth, we must study the interaction between arms transfers and civilian-military relations, in general, and relations between Governments and armed forces, in particular.

Sixth, arms transfers create an interdependence between suppliers and receivers, which discourages efforts to reduce the level of armaments and deprives the parties to conflicts of their autonomy in settling their disputes peacefully. Hence, we must examine the reasons for this interdependency and its effects on possible measures to regulate and control arms transfers.

Seventh, arms transfers involve suppliers and receivers - whether by means of sales, gifts, barter or any other element in the range of transactions, legitimate or not, in which Governments, military industries, agents or middlemen participate. The regulation and control of arms transfers must take into account the role that everyone involved in such transactions plays.

Eighth, in order to control arms transfers, and particularly in order to prevent illicit trafficking, countries must adopt strict regulations or tighten existing ones in regard to the production, supply, procurement and transport of weapons and military equipment.

Ninth, States must study the ways and means to restrict the procurement of weapons that exceed legitimate security needs. Regional machinery could facilitate agreements to that end.

Tenth, in the search for ways and means of ensuring greater openness and transparency and encouraging confidence-building in respect of arms transfers at

(Ms. Uribe de Lozano, Colombia)

the world level, procedures must be drawn up to gather the necessary information on military expenditures, the production of weapons and military equipment, and all weapons transactions, including those involving equipment with a dual use. That information should be supplemented by a register of statements on ultimate use, which should be obligatory for all transactions.

(Ms. Uribe de Lozano, Colombia)

In arriving at the principles and norms governing international arms transfers, Member States will have to agree on the sanctions to be imposed on States that violate them. One such sanction could be, for example, payment to a United Nations fund on disarmament and development of an amount equal to the value of the arms involved in an illegal transaction by the country or countries supplying the arms. Colombia believes that machinery must be set up to receive information on illicit arms transfers the illegality of which has already been established.

The group of experts working under the auspices of the United Nations, in keeping with resolution 43/75 I, must in its report recommend a programme of action and a schedule for its stage-by-stage implementation.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): Since there are no further speakers, I shall adjourn the meeting.

Before doing so, I should like to inform all the members of the Bureau and all the Chairmen of the Working Groups and the consultation groups that following upon the general exchange of views this afternoon there will be a meeting of the extended Bureau in Conference Room A, during which we shall review all questions relating to the organization of work for our session, especially with regard to the Working Groups.

The next plenary meeting will be held this afternoon at 3 p.m., when we shall hear the representatives of Spain, speaking on behalf of the 12 States Members of the European Community, Poland, Italy and Czechoslovakia. I should like to request all members to be on time.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.