DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
On Monday, 8 May 1989, at 3.00 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire)

- General exchange of views (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued)

Mr. IBAÑEZ (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): It is my honour and pleasure to speak today on behalf of the twelve States members of the European Community.

First, allow me to convey to you, Sir, our sincere congratulations on your election to chair the Commission for its 1989 session. We are confident that under your wise and experienced guidance we shall be able to advance our work.

We, the Twelve, consider that the work done within the First Committee has produced encouraging results. Particularly noteworthy is the consensus reached on a number of complex issues - chemical weapons, conventional disarmament and guidelines for confidence-building measures, among others. We hope that this climate of co-operation and will to compromise, which permitted us to advance at the General Assembly, will continue during the work that we are just about to start.

Since the last meeting of the Disarmament Commission there has been a continued improvement in the international political atmosphere. This should allow us to deal positively and constructively with the items on our agenda and to make progress. The Twelve attach great importance to all the major items on the Commission's agenda. As has been made clear by the Twelve in successive statements in the Assembly, we believe that the need for progress in nuclear-arms control and disarmament demands that special attention continue to be paid to such issues. Conventional arms control and disarmament is another matter that calls for particular attention by the Commission.

Therefore, I should like to express the views of the Twelve regarding the substantive items on our draft agenda.
One of the major items for the Twelve is without doubt item 9, on conventional disarmament. In the Secretary-General's foreword to the United Nations study on conventional disarmament, submitted to the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly, he affirmed that "the situation relating to conventional arms is a source of increasing concern." (A/39/348, p. 6)

However, we believe that the consensus reached during the forty-third session on draft resolutions relating to conventional disarmament, including resolution 43/75 P, entitled "Confidence- and security-building measures and conventional disarmament in Europe", and the beginning of negotiations, last March, on conventional armed forces and on further confidence- and security-building measures in Europe ought to contribute to the possible conclusion this year, with a substantial result satisfactory to all, of the work that we have been carrying out for several years in the Commission under the chairmanship of one of our partners.

In this context, the Twelve believe that consideration should be given to the issue of international arms transfers, on the basis of the substantive progress made in resolution 43/75 I.

The Twelve consider item 4, on nuclear and conventional disarmament, to be of particular importance. We hope that some of the obstacles still existing can be overcome within the Commission, given the substantial improvement of the international climate, an improvement reflected in the conclusion of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - which is now being successfully implemented, in the agreement in principle between the two super-Powers on a 50 per cent reduction of their strategic nuclear arsenals and in the beginning of negotiations in Vienna on conventional armed forces and on further confidence- and security-building measures in Europe.
We consider that progress can also be made on "Reduction of Military Budgets", item 5 on the draft agenda. We are optimistic about the forthcoming conclusion of our work, even though at the last session of the Commission consensus was not reached on the principles. We consider that we have a good basis to continue our discussions, although undoubtedly renewed efforts by all participants will be necessary during the session in order to achieve success.

In that connection, I wish to recall once more how useful it would be for our work if, without further delay, all countries presented their data on military expenditures, in accordance with the standardized reporting system. This system provides a universal framework whereby States with different social and economic systems can supply data in a comparable way. Furthermore, it would be a proof of transparency that would go beyond declarations and thus contribute to increased international confidence and stability.

On item 7, "Review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament", it is necessary to continue our efforts at organizing the work of the United Nations more efficiently with a view to streamlining and rationalizing United Nations machinery and thus strengthening the role of the Organization in the field of disarmament, consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter. The Twelve are convinced that periodic reviews of the United Nations machinery and the prospects of improving it would be both desirable and useful.

Some progress was achieved last year on item 6, concerning South Africa's nuclear capability, and we believe that all participants should continue their efforts to resolve the remaining difficulties.
(Mr. Ibañez, Spain)

As for item 8, dealing with naval armaments and disarmament, we believe that it is not possible to consider that issue separately from overall efforts to achieve nuclear and conventional disarmament. Sustained efforts should be continued in order to make progress on this issue.
Finally, I wish to refer to the new item on our provisional agenda: item 10, "Consideration of the declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade". The Twelve hope a third Disarmament Decade will play its part in promoting the disarmament process and that it will be possible to make progress in that direction. Our work should be based on the consensus reached during the last session of the General Assembly on resolution 43/78 L, by which the Disarmament Commission was directed to prepare elements of a draft resolution on that subject.

On the basis of past experience, the Twelve consider we should make every effort to limit the general debate to a minimum, then get right to work. The success of last year, when three substantive items were concluded, proves that the Disarmament Commission plays an important role in the international disarmament process. The Twelve are convinced that the Commission should continue to play its role in that field as a forum for debate and in-depth study. The Twelve are ready to contribute constructively to success in that work.

Mr. NOWORYTA (Poland): Let me first of all, Sir, congratulate you sincerely on your election as Chairman of this prestigious and highly respected body, the Disarmament Commission. Your outstanding experience, perseverance and diplomatic skill are indispensable for the successful outcome of the Commission's present session. My delegation is fully prepared to do its utmost to help achieve that common objective.

The period that has elapsed since our last session was full of important events that created an atmosphere more propitious for the work of the Disarmament Commission. Above all, the policy of a new political thinking is steadily gaining momentum. Mr. Gorbachev's statement at last year's session of the General Assembly is rightly considered by many delegations as a milestone on the road to a less violent, less armed and, therefore, more secure world.
(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

The process of eliminating the intermediate-range and shorter-range nuclear missiles of the Soviet Union and the United States has thus far been carried out without a hitch. We believe the agreement on that process to be the first step leading to the liquidation of nuclear weapons as a means of conducting international affairs. We earnestly hope that the current year will invigorate the dynamics of disarmament in such other key questions as the 50 per cent reduction in Soviet and United States strategic offensive weapons, while consolidating the anti-ballistic missile Treaty régime and promoting the formulation of a convention on the elimination of chemical weapons.

In that regard, the question of tactical nuclear arms should be raised as well. The declaration of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty on tactical nuclear arms in Europe, issued in Berlin at the session of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty, contains specific proposals on that issue. The elimination of tactical nuclear weapons would be conducive to maintaining military equilibrium at a lower level. It would help in adhering to the principle of rational sufficiency.

Tactical nuclear weapons and conventional forces are the direct concern of all European States, but especially those located in central Europe. That is why Poland put forward its plan, known as the Jaruzelski Plan, pertaining to both nuclear and conventional arms. For Poland and other central European States, nuclear weapons are the main threat, but we understand the apprehension of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) about conventional forces. The nuclear and conventional situations are closely intertwined, and sooner or later the negotiations will have to cover nuclear weapons as well.

Without going into detail, I should like to dwell briefly on the question of the evolution of military doctrines so they may be reciprocally recognized as
strictly defensive. That concept is an important element of the Jaruzelski Plan. At the moment, we are in the process of conducting consultations with the Federal Republic of Germany on the holding of a meeting of experts on military doctrines, strategies and concepts.

Returning to the problem of conventional weapons, I wish to recall that on 29 January the Committee of Defence Ministers of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty published a statement on the numerical proportion of armed forces and armament of the Warsaw Treaty and NATO in Europe and the adjoining seas, thus confirming in practice the policy of openness and transparency in the military area. The States parties to the Warsaw Treaty have reduced their military potential unilaterally, thus facilitating the Vienna negotiations among the 23 and the 35 States. In that connection I should like to mention that Poland intends by 1991 to reduce its armed forces by 40,000 soldiers, 850 main battle tanks, 900 artillery pieces, 7,000 armoured vehicles, 80 combat aircraft and many other items of military technical equipment. Of course, those are regional arrangements, but they have some universal merits. We shall allocate part of the resources thus released to development of the civilian sector of the economy. Our precise stand on that matter is set out in document A/44/165.

While we consider the various aspects of nuclear disarmament, and having in mind the effective elimination of the danger of nuclear war, it would be useful to ponder the question of a nuclear-test ban. An important idea was presented by the Soviet Union: to prepare as soon as possible practical proposals on a system to monitor the non-conduct of nuclear tests. Cessation of nuclear tests on the eve of the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the non-proliferation Treaty would be conducive to strengthening that Treaty and the non-proliferation system. We are
firmly convinced that the world is undergoing deep changes, and it would be reasonable to react to them properly without endangering the security equation.

In the context of nuclear non-proliferation, I should like to touch upon the issue of South Africa's nuclear capabilities. This is the third year in a row that South Africa has deceived the States members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) at the Agency's General Conference. Its Government has been giving vague promises that it would take certain steps towards accepting IAEA safeguards, but so far those gestures have proved to be empty. The time is now ripe for inducing South Africa to take a more co-operative posture.

Last year, my delegation presented its detailed views on the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, in document A/S-15/AC.1/2. We intend along with other socialist States to update them this year.

Looking into the future and at the same time being realistic, we keep in mind that the United Nations role is a result of interaction among its Members. Every effort can support or counteract the United Nations. We are in favour of support and co-operation.
My delegation will present its opinion on this question later in one of the working bodies. My country's approach to the question of naval armaments and disarmament is dictated by the idea that the world ocean is a common heritage of mankind and should be an arena of peaceful development, trade and rapprochement for all peoples. Poland therefore considers that the adoption of suitable disarmament measures in that domain would represent a significant contribution to the strengthening of world peace and security.

We think that, while declaring the 1990s the third Disarmament Decade, we should keep in mind the creation of a secure and democratic world free of violence and of the presence of nuclear weapons. Our common goal should also be the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, by the year 2000. The detailed views of my delegation on these subjects will also be presented in the working group.

Mr. MIGLIUOLO (Italy): This session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission is taking place against the background of an improved international situation. Powerful winds of change have been blowing in Moscow for the past four years and have brought encouraging developments in East-West relations. Perestroika, glasnost, democratization, the emphasis put on the rule of law - in a word, the new political thinking in the USSR - have provided new hope and a historic opportunity for a significant positive evolution and for a prospective softening of the focus on the military aspects of East-West relations, in conditions of undiminished security for all, while regional conflicts long thought to be intractable are moving towards solution.

As Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti stated in the Conference on Disarmament on 2 March:

"We may wonder whether that disturbing state of international relations, hovering between impossible peace and improbable war, which dominated the
(Mr. Migliuolo, Italy)

post-war period, is now drawing to an end. Some of the constraints, including psychological ones, which have been weighing heavily on our destinies and creating a world in which vast political and economic resources have been squandered by rivalry and mutual suspicion, are beginning to fade. The United Nations is the workshop where a new form of coexistence is being fashioned."

There are indeed new bases for hope and the potential for many accomplishments, notably in the field of disarmament. Seldom in the past has there been a more favourable time than now for the reversal of the arms race. In the field of nuclear weapons we cannot but welcome the progress made in the dialogue between the two leading Powers. We consider the Treaty between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - to be only a first step, but it indeed marks a historic new departure, and its implications for future agreements are already before our eyes.

The same can be said of the historic announcement made from the rostrum of the General Assembly last December by President Mikhail Sergeivich Gorbachev of a series of unilateral and important disarmament measures. Those measures are being punctually implemented and are having a great impact on European public opinion.

In that respect, may I stress that I am speaking here today in the wake of two earlier statements in which the Italian Government has once more reiterated its full commitment to arms-control and disarmament negotiations. I have in mind the statements in which, following deliberations in Parliament and in the Italian Cabinet, and with an awareness of the synergistic interreaction between negotiations on different aspects of disarmament, Foreign Minister Andreotti and Prime Minister De Mita a few days ago voiced support for President Kohl's position on negotiations on nuclear tactical weapons. I am sure that Rome, with the same
interest and approval, will welcome the latest statement in favour of a quick resumption of the strategic-armaments talks that was issued by Richard Burt, one of the finest American diplomats and an expert on disarmament matters.

My country has always rightly valued the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and we remain convinced that its effectiveness would be greatly enhanced through a substantial reduction in the nuclear arsenals of the two leading Powers, in observance of the obligations subscribed to by them. Such an approach is even more important in the perspective of the approaching Fourth Review Conference on the NPT and of the even more important 1995 conference at which the renewal of the 1968 Treaty will be decided. In that context we sincerely hope that the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union will soon resume and that they will rapidly proceed towards a positive conclusion, with a view to achieving drastic reductions in their respective strategic arsenals and in a framework of enhanced general stability.

The negotiations on nuclear tests, which the United States and the Soviet Union began in November 1987, also seem to be taking advantage of the favourable atmosphere in the relations between those two countries. A process has been set in motion whose final outcome, although still not in the near future, should be the total cessation of all nuclear tests as an element of effective disarmament. In the Conference on Disarmament we support all initiatives aimed at reaching agreement on the establishment of a subsidiary body to be charged with starting substantive work on this issue. We therefore feel encouraged by recent developments that have taken place at Geneva, and we hope that they will be conducive to a positive result as early as at this summer's session of the Conference on Disarmament.
We would urge that everything be done to ensure that the momentum of nuclear disarmament actually be sustained. Similarly, this should be supported by overall progress in the reduction of conventional weapons and the elimination of destabilizing military imbalances such as capabilities for surprise attack and large offensive actions. In Europe we have just embarked on new negotiations on conventional armed forces and on further confidence- and security-building measures in the hope that we can strengthen stability and security on the continent that has historically seen more bloodshed than any other part of the world.

The Italian Government is actively engaged in this process with a view to achieving lower levels of armaments in conditions of stability and equal security and to favour positive changes in the international climate. In fact, the field of conventional armaments is one in which the leading Powers do not carry the burden alone. Small and medium-sized countries have a responsibility and can therefore make a substantial contribution as well. We are all aware of the enormous destructive consequences of the use of ever more sophisticated conventional weapons in regional conflicts. Vast resources are spent world-wide on conventional armaments. Reversing that trend is an important challenge for our Commission. We hope that the Disarmament Commission will be able to agree at this session on a substantive report on the subject.

In this context attention should also be focused on those inordinate amounts of resources that in too many national budgets are devoted to armaments purchases. Indeed there are very few countries in the world that could not benefit from redirecting at least part of their expenditures from arms to the expansion of their health and anti-poverty programmes. Italy was among the sponsors of resolution 43/75 I, on international arms transfers, which elaborates upon concerns that are shared by many countries, and of course we appreciated and were much encouraged by the very large support for the resolution in the General Assembly.
Indeed, no State is immune from the potential damage of destabilizing arms transfers.

Let me stress once more that Italy attaches great importance to the need to seek together appropriate measures to provide increased transparency and monitoring in the transfer of conventional weapons as well as the prevention of illicit trafficking in this area. The vested interests and the number of those involved in these activities, the lack of reliable data, the current extent of these transactions and their often destabilizing impact on areas of conflict or international tension - all are further arguments in favour of the need for all Member States of the United Nations to shoulder their responsibility on a problem of great importance to ensuring greater stability and security in international relations. We certainly understand the complexity of many aspects encompassing the areas of security, economics and technological development. However, we think there must be a bold awareness of this problem on the part of the international community. This is a task also for our Commission, which in resolution 43/75 I is requested to take into account the issue of international arms transfers in its deliberations on conventional disarmament.

Sessions of the Disarmament Commission are not side-shows, since each one of them represents an important opportunity to contribute to a more decisive role for the United Nations in the disarmament process, notably by giving directions for further arms-control and disarmament efforts and by promoting positive trends in the relevant bodies and forums, including those outside the world Organization.

By so doing, the essential and fundamental purposes of the United Nations are strengthened. Greater confidence and trust between nations at all levels can only be built by adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter and the open examination and exploration of factors that lie at the heart of conflicts.
(Mr. Migliuolo, Italy)

On the issues of peace, disarmament, security and development - which are common concerns of all - the multilateral process must involve universal participation and permit articulation of the concerns of all.

The impulses for peace and for negotiations that have been set in motion are, I believe, being kindled less out of fear, more out of hope. We should seize that hope. This 1989 session of our Commission will be judged by the extent to which it creates a consensus and a commitment for the pursuit of disarmament in the areas included in our agenda.

I want to assure you, Mr. Chairman, of my delegation's readiness fully to co-operate with you and to contribute actively in the work of the Commission.

Mr. ZAPOTOCKY (Czechoslovakia): Mr. Chairman, allow me first of all to express the pleasure of the Czechoslovak delegation that the current session of the Disarmament Commission is being chaired by you, a very experienced diplomat and expert who has already proved his excellent abilities when presiding over the First Committee at the forty-second session of the General Assembly. I should like to assure you that the Czechoslovak delegation will help you to the full extent of its possibilities as you direct your efforts towards the successful conduct and conclusion of this session of the Commission.

The atmosphere in which this session of the Disarmament Commission is being held is favourable. It emanates from an unusual dynamic of our times, when positive tendencies become ever more visible. Constructive co-operation replaces confrontation in a number of spheres. Mutual trust and confidence is increasing in East-West relations. The Soviet-United States dialogue is expanding. A momentum of utmost importance is surely constituted by the process of genuine disarmament that has been initiated. The present world development is influenced positively also by the fact that progress has been achieved in the search for ways to settle
some regional conflicts. At the same time States are co-operating more closely in
the solution of global problems. Given all this, the authority of the United
Nations is growing. Hence the new political thinking, which is increasingly
finding its way in the world of today, is bringing genuine results in efforts aimed
at the peaceful reconstruction of international relations.
However, the positive processes in the world have not become irreversible yet. Negative elements persist in some key areas. In spite of all efforts and hopeful signs, it has not been possible to halt the arms race. Attempts continue to be made to force on others the convictions and views of some. Only with great difficulty can progress be made in the solution of regional conflicts. The threat to the environment looms larger and larger. Various forms of economic discrimination still exist.

Recently my country, along with its allies, has been actively pushing for enhanced confidence and for disarmament. In doing so, it has proceeded from the need to guarantee equal security to all and has adhered to the principle of reasonable defence sufficiency. Czechoslovakia is one of the nine States directly engaged in the implementation of the historic Soviet-United States treaty on the elimination of intermediate-range missiles. Accordingly, it has enabled the respective verification measures to be carried out on its territory and has provided all the conditions required for the first United States inspection team. At the same time, it is consequently putting into effect the conclusions of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and on Disarmament in Europe.

From a global viewpoint Czechoslovakia regards the following as priority steps in the follow-up period: the conclusion of a treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive weapons on condition that the anti-ballistic missile Treaty of 1972 is complied with; the termination of all nuclear-weapon tests as the first step towards the building of a non-violent world, without nuclear weapons; the speedy completion of a convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical
weapons and on their destruction, in the spirit of the conclusions of the Paris Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in January 1989; and disarmament in the conventional field.

Those questions should receive due attention also in the framework of the third disarmament decade. Parallel with that, an effective barrier should be erected against new channels of the arms race. In this respect, guaranteeing the exclusively peaceful uses of outer space deserves increased attention. Besides, the elimination of the danger of compensation for the dismantled types of weapons by the use of other weapons and the modernization of the existing weapon systems still constitutes an urgent global as well as regional problem.

Czechoslovakia has been actively engaged in the work of the Vienna forum on conventional disarmament and on confidence- and security-building measures in Europe. A significant impetus has been given to those negotiations by the decisions on a unilateral reduction of armed forces, armaments and defence expenditures adopted by the socialist countries, including Czechoslovakia. One of these decisions is to withdraw a portion of Soviet forces temporarily stationed on Czechoslovak territory. These far-reaching steps once again prove the unambiguously defensive character of the Warsaw Treaty military doctrine and a genuine interest in the elaboration and realization of other concrete treaties on disarmament.

The European continent, particularly its central part, remains of primary interest to Czechoslovakia. That is exactly why a proposal was put forward by Milos Jakes, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, to establish a zone of confidence, co-operation and good-neighbourly relations along the line of contact of the Warsaw Treaty countries and the States members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). That is a
concrete contribution to the implementation of the idea of a common European home, to the development of the Helsinki process in all its aspects. As to its military factor, my country has agreed with the NATO States that the initiative must be placed in the context of an overall arrangement of the balance of forces in Europe.

A new element is constituted also by the Czechoslovak proposal to the Government of the United Kingdom to co-sponsor a joint Czechoslovak-British initiative in the United Nations designed to prompt negotiations on the conclusion of a convention on the control of plastic explosives.

Our joint proposals with the German Democratic Republic to set up a nuclear-weapon-free corridor and a zone without chemical weapons in Central Europe remain valid.

The present positive tendencies in the world — which, as I have already mentioned, have not become irreversible yet — must be constantly strengthened to extend also to the spheres of multilateral disarmament efforts. That is the only way to ensure the irreversibility of the process which has been initiated and which should become universal. A comprehensive approach to the solution of the questions of peace and security which would be fully in harmony with the Charter could considerably facilitate these efforts. Only cardinal progress in the field of disarmament can be a reliable prerequisite to and a guarantee of the strengthening of international peace and security and stability, as well as increased mutual confidence.

The Disarmament Commission, although a deliberative body, has an irreplaceable role in this process. At its current session the Commission should therefore continue its practice of last year and adopt new concrete recommendations, this time in the field of the reduction of military budgets. That would undoubtedly contribute to the further strengthening of its prestige. The Commission should
also try to make some distinct movement towards the solution of all other questions. It is natural that its work should reflect the realities of the present world. However, that should serve rather to inspire delegations to seek solutions and specific recommendations.

The agenda of the current Commission session contains a new item - the third disarmament decade. The Czechoslovak delegation fully supports the Declaration of the 1990s as the third disarmament decade and is ready to consider all proposals and ideas concerning the concrete contents of the declaration. It has spelled out its position on this score in its reply to General Assembly resolution 43/78 L. The text of the reply is available to all members of the Commission.

Recently the States members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization gathered in Berlin and adopted very important documents, which have been reproduced in an official document of the United Nations issued under the symbol A/44/228. I shall not, therefore, elaborate on them, but I should like to stress that they are not merely political declarations: they are of a very concrete nature and accordingly deserve serious consideration by all States, especially the European countries.

The new political thinking is the driving force of the further development of mankind at present. One of the most urgent tasks of the present time, which has arisen in the light of this new thinking, is the demilitarization of international relations. However, this goal will be attainable only on condition that there is an active contribution by all States on the basis of political goodwill and international co-operation.
Mr. AZAMBUJA (Brazil): Mr. Chairman, please accept the Brazilian delegation's best wishes for success in your work, as well as assurances of our fullest co-operation. Your firm commitment to the cause of disarmament is a valuable asset we are all counting upon to bring the 1989 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to a fruitful outcome. I also extend our congratulations to all the other members of the Bureau.

The Brazilian Government attaches high importance to the work of the Disarmament Commission; and it has always done its best to ensure the effective fulfilment of this body's mandate which was entrusted to it by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Brazil is aware that the Commission has been convened this year at an important juncture in contemporary international relations. Benefiting from the favourable climate that has pervaded contacts between the super-Powers over the last years, some long-standing regional conflicts have been subdued recently on the strength of agreements concluded and implemented under the aegis of the United Nations. A renewal of trust in the importance of multilateralism, particularly of the United Nations in its role in the maintenance of international peace and security, seems to be prevailing over world views based primarily on arguments of power.

Yet, such a promising trend has so far fallen short of encompassing the crucial area of disarmament and arms reduction, which is still considered by the major Powers as a sort of chasse gardée, access to which is to be allowed but to a chosen few endowed with the prerogative of deciding over issues intimately related to the interests of us all.

A year ago in this forum we cherished in vain the expectation that the momentum engendered by the conclusion of the Treaty between the USSR and the United States on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles -
the INF Treaty - would somehow affect positively the work of the third special session devoted to disarmament. Like the vast majority of Member States, Brazil was disappointed over the failure of that session; it has ever since pondered over ways and means capable of broadening the room left for multilateralism in disarmament affairs. We have drawn some conclusions from this effort, as follows:

First, my Government is firmly convinced that the United Nations is entitled to provide the necessary impetus to the implementation of a comprehensive programme of disarmament along the lines set forth in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Instead of favouring the mushrooming of ad hoc conferences for the pursuit of selective disarmament measures - meritorious though they might be - we had better concentrate our efforts on exploring to the fullest possible extent the diplomatic potentialities of the United Nations system, particularly of its sole, permanent negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament.

Secondly, the Brazilian Government expects multilateral disarmament forums to set their agendas strictly in line with prevailing universal concerns and interests. Surely, no time should be wasted in the consideration of fallacious concepts that place the legitimate exercise of developing countries' rights to economic and technological development as a threat to international peace and security while ignoring the growing risk posed to world stability by the vertical proliferation and geographical dissemination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction by the most heavily armed States.

On the other hand, it is high time that multilateralism gave special attention to the fact underlined in the Brundtland report on environment and development that among the dangers facing the environment,
"the possibility of nuclear war, or military conflict of a lesser scale involving weapons of mass destruction, is undoubtedly the gravest" (A/42/427, Part III, chap. 11, para. 1)

Aware of the problem, the participants of the Sixth Latin American and Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on the Environment, held in Brasilia last March, agreed that

"the countries which have nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction should immediately cease all tests and experiments in all spheres with these weapons and actively promote their elimination. Only in this manner will it be possible to guarantee protection of the environment against the risk of contamination and ecological destruction".

I am pleased to recall here the announcement made by my Foreign Minister, Mr. de Abreu Sodré, at the previous session of the General Assembly that the new Brazilian Constitution established the rule that

"all nuclear activities in our national territory shall be permitted exclusively for peaceful purposes and with the approval of the National Congress".

The sovereign decision of the National Constitutional Assembly reaffirmed not only our traditional policy of opposing all forms of proliferation of nuclear weapons but also the solemn commitment undertaken by Brazil late in the 1960s upon signing and ratifying the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

At the recent session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), Brazil had the opportunity to reiterate its support for the objective of the pioneering and exemplary non-proliferation régime established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco and to express our view that the strengthening of this instrument depends to a large
extent on the strict observance by the nuclear Powers of the commitments they undertook in the Additional Protocols to the Treaty.

We also acknowledged with satisfaction the general recognition by the States Parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco of the complementarity of purposes between this agreement and the Zone of Peace and Co-operation of the South Atlantic - to which, as members know, Brazil is deeply attached. Indeed, the experience of Tlatelolco constituted a major source of reference and inspiration for the definition by the South Atlantic States of the basic elements of their initiative, among which is the request to the States of other regions, particularly the militarily significant ones, not to introduce nuclear weapons into the region.

At the end of last year's session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the Brazilian delegation stated, for the sake of taking stock of our three-week deliberations, that

"While acknowledging the relevance of progress in all areas that could diminish tension between military blocs and help build confidence where necessary, we still hope that at the next substantive session of this body" - and I meant then this current session - "focus, thought and progress will be concentrated on the areas of major importance for the future of mankind."

(PV.131, p. 21)

We have come to this year's session imbued with the same state of mind. However meaningful the so-called horizontal themes might be for specific geographical contexts, the United Nations Disarmament Commission will not live up to its responsibility as a universal forum unless it addresses on a priority basis the nuclear items on its agenda, which are deemed by countless official documents and resolutions of the General Assembly as of direct interest to the entire international community.
Brazil has always accorded the utmost importance to item 4 of the agenda, where Member States are given the opportunity to set, within the framework established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, a general approach to effective negotiations aimed at the elimination of the danger of nuclear war. We firmly expect that the obstacles that have so far hampered progress on this item will be eventually overcome.

As for the consideration of item 5, Brazil believes that the sooner we arrive at a consensus text on the nuclear capability of South Africa the more consistent will be the role of the United Nations in the overall effort to eliminate the inhumane and oppressive régime of apartheid. Brazil urges those delegations that are still reluctant to assess fully the importance of this issue to adopt a flexible and compromising attitude during our 1989 session.
(Mr. Azambuja, Brazil)

My delegation would also appeal to the single delegation which has been absent from the deliberations on the important question of naval armaments and disarmament to join the other Member States in the endeavour to build upon the recommendations carefully worked out last year by the pertinent Consultation Group. The Brazilian delegation is of the view that any effort to develop the elements contained in document A/CN.10/113 should take due account of the nuclear dimensions of the naval arms race as well as of the benefits to be derived from the establishment of the zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic for the improvement of international peace and security.

For the third consecutive year, the Disarmament Commission will deal, under a separate item, with the question of conventional disarmament. Its treatment by a specific subsidiary body should continue to be pursued, in the view of my delegation, fully in accordance with the guidelines unanimously approved in this respect by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament.

The Brazilian Government welcomes the initiative of the General Assembly to declare the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade and notes with satisfaction the inclusion of this theme in the agenda of the Disarmament Commission. In view of the request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/78 L and as an indicator of my country's support for this idea, the Brazilian Government submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations some suggestions for possible elements to be discussed within the framework of the Third Disarmament Decade, such as: the close relationship between the questions of disarmament, development and environmental protection; the notion that the concerns regarding the security of one State are just as valid, just as important, and just as relevant as those regarding any other State; the importance of addressing the objective of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its dimensions; and, finally, the
relevance of the setting-up of zones of peace and co-operation in various regions of the world as a global confidence-building measure.

Finally, the Brazilian delegation would like to register its firm expectation that the 1989 substantive session will follow, over the next weeks, the rational and objective line suggested by resolution 37/78 H of the General Assembly, for the benefit of our deliberations and for the enforcement and greater effectiveness of the United Nations disarmament machinery as a whole.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): We have heard the last speaker for this afternoon. I should like to remind all members that we have 13 speakers for tomorrow morning's meeting. In order to allow all speakers to be heard before 1 p.m. - we are supposed to conclude our meeting by 1 p.m. - I urge all delegations to be present at 10 a.m. sharp. I also wish to remind members that at the afternoon meeting, which is the last plenary meeting planned for the exchange of views, we shall also have 13 speakers. Consequently, it will not be possible to hear in the afternoon some of the speakers scheduled for the morning meeting.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.