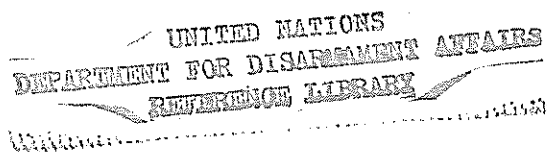




General Assembly



Distr.
GENERAL

A/CN.10/PV.135
10 May 1989

ENGLISH

DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 9 May 1989, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire)

- General exchange of views (continued)

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 DC2-750, 2 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 10.15 a.m.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued)

Mr. KIBIDI NGOVUKA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): It is, to be sure, not out of a desire to follow an empty ritual that my delegation is speaking at this session of the Disarmament Commission dealing with substantive questions. We are speaking because Zaire shares the concern of all States Members of the United Nations for a better world, a world in which fear of annihilation on a planetary scale will have been banished from men's minds and spirits.

At the outset, however, allow me to join preceding speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the office of Chairman. We are convinced that you will place your varied talents at the disposal of this important Commission. My delegation has no doubt whatsoever with regard to your determination to guide our discussions to a positive outcome. We also believe that, even more than in the past, you will not fail to employ your diplomatic skills to achieve compromise when discussions become complex so as to harmonize the often very different positions of the various parties involved in the arms race in an attempt to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

While congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, I also wish to congratulate the other officers of the Commission and the members of the Secretariat who will be working with you and whose competence and dedication to the cause of disarmament are well known to all of us.

At a time when mankind is nearing the second millenium of our era, it is indeed a source of satisfaction to note that contacts among States are becoming frequent thanks to bilateral or multilateral conferences and to summit conferences at the super-Power level, among the countries members of the Movement of

(Mr. Kibidi Ngovuka, Zaire)

Non-Aligned Countries and among the countries of the South and North. Even if such meetings do not always achieve immediately profitable results, they attest to the international community's great interest in the fate of mankind as a whole.

Clearly, questions of military security and of general and complete disarmament are at the core of all the problems debated here, for it is on behalf of that security that States, from the most powerful to the most disadvantaged, arm themselves and spend enormous sums to deter other Powers that might be tempted to engage in military adventures to resolve conflicts, and that the States of the third world, whose financial resources are limited, allow themselves to be dragged into the spiralling arms race.

That leads me to the issue of the reduction of military budgets, a question that is a part of our considerations. In fact, Zaire believes that that question is one of those key issues that determine the solution to many of the problems confronting mankind in the field of security.

My delegation believes that if it is legitimate for each State concerned to defend the security of its territory and to have at its disposal arms and, therefore, a reasonable military budget, it is also most desirable, given the disparity between military budgets and the needs of development and social well-being, that States should arrive at a modus vivendi with regard to the minimum level that such expenditures should not exceed. According to figures made available to world public opinion, such expenditures exceed a trillion dollars annually, and we can only dream of what mankind could become if only half that vast sum were devoted to development and to the well-being of peoples in no matter what country.

(Mr. Kibidi Ngovuka, Zaire)

Military security is not and should not be an end in itself. For even if a State has a powerful army, it is sometimes faced with other problems, such as unemployment, drugs, prostitution, racism, all kinds of violations of human rights, illiteracy and various types of violence such as child abuse, famine and so on. This clearly demonstrates that military power does not always provide social or moral security to a given population, even in developed countries where the needs of education, health and culture are not always covered as fully as they should be.

(Mr. Kibidi Ngovuka, Zaire)

Having said that, my delegation is gratified at the Treaty concluded in 1987 between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the elimination of their intermediate- and shorter-range missiles. That Treaty should be followed by a 50 per cent reduction in strategic weapons.

Europe, where a considerable number of armed forces have been assembled, has recently moved towards a dialogue between the two European blocs - the communist and the capitalist - through the aegis of the Helsinki and Stockholm Conferences, which have made a contribution to lessening political tension in that important region of the world and to promoting confidence- and security-building measures and disarmament measures. Those measures have, in turn, made a positive contribution to the strengthening of co-operation and stability in Europe.

My delegation is, moreover, gratified at the decision by the Soviet Government to withdraw a large part of its forces based in Europe. We hope that the countries members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will take significant steps on the path leading to the reduction of tensions in Europe.

The question of a reduction of military budgets is, in our view, of great importance in so far as such a reduction will contribute to freeing resources for the advancement and strengthening of international economic co-operation. The confidence- and security-building measures that are beginning to make headway in Europe should logically lead to a reduction and minimization of the military budgets of States enjoying a climate of confidence and security.

South Africa - a country that is ruled with an iron hand by the partisans of apartheid - has acquired a nuclear capability in order to exert constant blackmail against the rest of the African continent. That is clear evidence which certain States do not wish to see, because of a sneaking sympathy for racist South Africa. But there is abundant proof of this, and objective sources of information on the

(Mr. Kibidi Ngovuka, Zaire)

question cannot be challenged, since they come from the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. Thus, we are dealing here with facts that emerge from studies by that Institute, as well as reports by the International Atomic Energy Agency in this field.

Any impartial observer of the facts concerning South Africa knows that that country, which is concerned with safeguarding its military security, receives scientific and military assistance from its foreign allies. They have aided South Africa in developing the SAFARI research reactor, the Koeberg nuclear station and the Valindaba hot-cell laboratory. Need we add that the South African semi-commercial plant for the enrichment of uranium is still not covered by the guarantees of the International Atomic Energy Agency? Given those facts, no serious and objective observer could be misled; they establish categorically that South Africa is developing a nuclear programme for military use and, therefore, a nuclear capability.

Zaire condemns that South African nuclear capability, which is a fact of life, and we request States which, cunningly, are extending direct or indirect co-operation to South Africa in the development of its nuclear programmes for military use to put an end to that co-operation, in the name of the greater interests of mankind and in order to make possible the implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa, adopted by the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in 1964.

Zaire counts on the goodwill of all States represented here to achieve a unanimous condemnation of South Africa for its efforts to acquire nuclear weapons. Zaire advocates the adoption of concrete measures against South Africa to make it halt its nuclear programme.

(Mr. Kibidi Ngovuka, Zaire)

Zaire adhered to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as long ago as 1970. That was an act of faith, a commitment to work for international peace, ruling out any attempt to acquire nuclear or chemical weapons for mass destruction.

But the instrument to which we acceded is functioning with difficulty, for many militarily powerful States, because they do not respect the obligations they freely undertook, are the leaders in hampering the Treaty's normal operation. Thus, many nuclear-weapon States are pursuing, as the international community well knows, nuclear tests on the sea bed and the ocean floor, thereby endangering the security of non-nuclear-weapon States.

Moreover, the militarily powerful States have developed the thesis of nuclear deterrence - a theory that supports their positions of carrying out nuclear test explosions. Thus, we see clear discrimination by the States that possess nuclear weapons - their war-horse, since they are convinced that it will ensure their political and military supremacy - against the non-nuclear-weapon States, which do not have the means to protect themselves from the effects of these tests.

This is certainly not the appropriate forum for recriminations or for calling into question the motives of any side. A nuclear-test ban appears to the universal conscience of mankind as the sole way to avoid the destruction of mankind. The hope that we must express is that during the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, special attention will be devoted to specific measures to give the Treaty credibility and strengthen its legal bases so that all States, nuclear and non-nuclear, can in so far as possible abide by it strictly.

(Mr. Kibidi Ngovuka, Zaire)

The work of our Commission on substantive questions is at a decisive turning point. Must the conclusion of our work suffer for that, because of political interests? I do not think so.

My delegation wants to maintain the hope that our discussions will open up positive prospects - that is, that something positive will emerge or, still better, that we shall reach a consensus on all the problems before us. Fortunately, we have a life raft in the form of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which specifically advocates the establishment of a comprehensive programme based on a timetable for the progressive and balanced reduction and elimination of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles.

Mrs. THEORIN (Sweden): I wish first of all to convey to you, Sir, our sincere congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of the 1989 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The diplomatic skills you have demonstrated in the past make us confident that the work during this year's session of the Commission will advance considerably.

The late United States President Woodrow Wilson once stated that there must be not a balance of power, but a community of power; not organized rivalries, but an organized common peace. Those words are as valid today as they were when first spoken - if not more so.

In today's world, nations cannot attain security at each other's expense. In today's world, security is indivisible. In today's world, security must be sought in common.

Humanity is today faced with a multitude of global threats - the arms race, degradation of the physical environment, stark contrasts between rich and poor.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

No lasting solution can be ensured unless the legitimate security interests of all States are taken into account. No lasting solution is possible without international co-operation. Arms limitation and disarmament are crucial to the achievement of international peace and security.

The United Nations continues to have a central role and primary responsibility in these fields. The United Nations provides the peoples of all States - whether big or small, rich or poor and regardless of what social and political system they may espouse - with the means needed in our common quest for peace, disarmament and security.

The United Nations machinery for disarmament is a vital instrument. The Organization should continue to encourage and facilitate all disarmament efforts - be they bilateral, regional or global. It should continue to provide the non-nuclear-weapon States with a platform for expressing their concerns, making their demands heard and putting forward their proposals. The United Nations Disarmament Commission is an essential forum for the global dialogue on peace and security matters.

The recently initiated studies on nuclear weapons and on verification are practical illustrations of how the United Nations can contribute to the process of disarmament. I am confident that these studies will enhance our knowledge in these crucial fields and provide the international community with a good basis for future negotiations.

Notwithstanding the collapse of the special session on disarmament, the international climate has continued to improve since last year's session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. In disarmament, tangible results have recently been achieved and prospects for further progress are good. The INF agreement is an epoch-making breakthrough. The super-Powers are involved in negotiations to cut by half their strategic nuclear arsenals. The super-Powers

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

have made a joint commitment to prevent an arms race in space, to terminate it on Earth and, ultimately, to eliminate all nuclear weapons everywhere.

Full advantage must be taken of these favourable circumstances. This political opportunity must not be missed. No time must be wasted. The twin processes of building confidence and negotiating disarmament agreements must then be pursued together; they complement and reinforce each other. I recall the motto of the late President of the United States, John F. Kennedy:

"Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate."

Last year the Disarmament Commission adopted by consensus a set of guidelines for confidence-building measures. These guidelines establish that a major objective of confidence-building measures is to reduce, or even eliminate, the causes of mistrust, fear, misunderstanding and miscalculation with regard to relevant military activities and intentions of other States - factors which may generate the perception of an impaired security.

I should like to recall, furthermore, that in adopting the resolution on "Objective information on military matters" the General Assembly last year also made a provision for the consideration of this subject by the next session of the Disarmament Commission. This resolution, which commanded an overwhelming majority in the General Assembly, including favourable votes by all the five nuclear-weapon States, expresses the belief that the adoption of confidence-building measures to promote openness and transparency would contribute to the prevention of misperceptions of military capabilities and intentions.

The General Assembly, furthermore, therein expresses the belief that balanced and objective information on all military matters, in particular of nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States, would contribute to the building of confidence among States.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

My Government takes it for granted that in particular the nuclear-weapon States - all of which voted in favour of that resolution - will abide by this recommendation and consistently display openness and transparency in all areas of military activity.

Not least in the area of naval affairs is there a dire need for further openness, transparency and confidence building. The naval arms race is of great concern to the world community. The fact that the United Nations resolution concerning the naval arms race came within one vote of consensus in the General Assembly last year speaks for itself.

The widespread naval activities by nuclear-weapon Powers are a reminder that, while land-based intermediate-range nuclear missiles are now in the process of being scrapped, naval disarmament has not yet begun. This is most disconcerting because the mobility of naval forces allows for flexible and unpredictable deployment. More than every fourth nuclear weapon is earmarked for maritime use. Large numbers of tactical nuclear weapons are deployed on naval vessels crossing the oceans back and forth on routine patrol even now in times of peace and détente.

While the case can be made that sea-borne strategic nuclear weapons may contribute to super-Power stability, this does not apply to these tactical nuclear weapons. On the contrary, such nuclear weapons arouse distrust and fear; they are perceived as destabilizing; and their military utility is questionable.

It is against this background that my Government demands that, as a confidence-building measure, tactical nuclear weapons be brought ashore. As an interim confidence-building measure, it may be useful to explore geographical restraints on navigation for vessels carrying nuclear weapons on board.

I welcome the recent reports that the United States Navy is phasing out some types of short-range nuclear missiles. I take this to be a logical conclusion of

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

the realization that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. This timely measure should be followed by further steps towards nuclear disarmament at sea.

In its final statement issued in Stockholm on 14 April this year the Palme Commission argued that nations which deploy tactical nuclear weapons at sea begin discussing means of abolishing them. This is, of course, the best solution.

Sweden demands, however, that the disarmament negotiations cover not only tactical but all naval nuclear weapons. An urgent objective is a ban on long-range cruise missiles.

It is absolutely essential that initiatives to reduce military forces on land be accompanied by efforts to reach corresponding limitations in the maritime domain. Otherwise, there is a risk that one type of weapon will only be replaced by another kind deployed in a different environment, making the whole effort self-defeating.

Public concern about nuclear weapons on board naval vessels is closely linked to the issue of peacetime port calls of warships. Naval visits have been conceived as a confidence-building measure. But naval visits shrouded in secrecy undermine rather than build confidence among nations.

The current practice of nuclear-weapon States of neither confirming nor denying the presence or absence of nuclear weapons on board does not inspire confidence. Quite the opposite - it stands in the way of confidence building. Whatever its justification might have been, it creates legitimate and increased public concern in many countries. This practice should be abandoned, not least in the interest of confidence building.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

As was stated by the Swedish Prime Minister at the third special session on disarmament last summer, Sweden does not allow visiting naval units to carry nuclear weapons on board. Each time permission for a naval visit to a Swedish port is granted, the respective Government is informed of the Swedish policy in this regard, formulated as follows:

"There is a general prohibition against foreign naval vessels carrying nuclear weapons when visiting Sweden. The Swedish Government takes it for granted that this prohibition will be strictly observed."

There can thus be no doubt about my Government's policy in this regard. In line with their endorsement of the General Assembly resolution recommending openness and transparency in all areas of military activity, the nuclear-weapon States ought now to reconsider the practice of neither confirming nor denying the presence or absence of nuclear weapons on board.

There is a need also for other confidence-building measures. Some of the nuclear and naval Powers have concluded bilateral agreements for the prevention of incidents at sea. These agreements are important confidence- and security-building measures, which reduce the risk of naval confrontations that could escalate to a large-scale conflict.

However, security on the high seas is a function of the interaction of all navies. The positive results of bilateral agreements in this area suggest that security at sea could be further improved through the multilateral application of principles embodied in existing bilateral agreements.

A multilateral agreement for the prevention of incidents at sea would be an important complement to existing and future bilateral agreements for the same purpose. A multilateral agreement would thus not replace or supersede existing bilateral agreements. This is why Sweden has proposed that the Conference on

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

Disarmament should add the issue of a multilateral treaty for the prevention of incidents at sea to its agenda.

My delegation will circulate an informal document outlining reasons for and elements in such a multilateral agreement during this session. We are keen to elicit the comments of other delegations on it.

The 1985 United Nations study on the naval arms race, which recommended a multilateral agreement for the prevention of incidents at sea, also recommended a modernization of the laws of naval warfare. The 1907 Hague Convention relative to the Laying of Automatic Submarine Contact Mines is an example of a treaty on naval warfare that needs to be updated. Sweden has proposed that a protocol on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of naval mines should be added to the existing international law of naval warfare.

Turning now to conventional disarmament, this is an area where I think I dare say, without appearing too optimistic, that there are signs of a positive trend. I need only refer to the announced unilateral cutbacks in Europe, the most heavily armed continent. These commitments must be interpreted as signs of constructive political thinking. They dramatize the fact that there is ample room for unilateral disarmament measures by the major Powers. They represent a welcome modernization of approach to disarmament.

As far as conventional disarmament in Europe is concerned, our attention is, of course, focused on the current two-track negotiations in Vienna. The incipient military negotiations within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe constitute a new and important step in the right direction. The degree of activity already at the outset is promising. During the initial phase of the negotiation on conventional force reductions in Europe, both East and West have introduced elaborate proposals for real arms reductions. The continued

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures are equally vital. It is of utmost importance to strengthen the link between these two parallel negotiations with a view to merging them into one integral whole.

The international arms trade constitutes a part of the conventional arms race in which the international dialogue has been sorely inadequate, where confidence-building is now urgent. It is significant, therefore, that in 1988 the General Assembly adopted for the first time a resolution authorizing a United Nations study of international arms transfers, a resolution sponsored by both developing and industrialized countries. This, of course, is only a first small step, but it is none the less a promising beginning. The process is starting at an auspicious time. I welcome the fact that the subject has been included in the agenda of the Disarmament Commission.

The trade in major weapons systems remains the core element of the international arms trade. The main part of the transfers takes place on a Government-to-Government basis.

But we must be mindful of the fact that small arms transactions are also significant. The grey and black markets are of considerable importance. The trade in technology and parts is no longer a minor sideshow. Rising production costs have, in fact, compelled even major industrialized States to initiate large-scale co-operative ventures. While most countries have imposed certain political restrictions on arms exports, these joint ventures may be used to escape national legislation by locating the final stage of production in a country with less restrictive export rules.

New aspects give rise to new difficulties, require study and dialogue. Yet certain features remain the same. The export of military items continues to be highly concentrated. A handful of exporters still account for more than four

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

fifths of all deliveries. Arms imports are also unevenly distributed. It must be remembered that trade is a distinctly two-way affair. It is necessary, therefore, that the international dialogue on arms transfers involve both suppliers and recipients. I find it gratifying that the international community has reached the point where this sensitive matter may be examined in an even-handed way.

All States have a responsibility to build - not undermine - confidence between States in all spheres. Yet, confidence-building is not a substitute for, but an integral part of, the process of disarmament. We must not negotiate out of fear, but never fear to negotiate.

Mr. FAN (China) (interpretation from Chinese): Mr. Chairman, the Chinese delegation is very pleased to see you, an eminent envoy of a friendly African State, in the Chair of the current session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We are convinced that, with your rich diplomatic experience and skill, you will guide this session to achieve positive results. I should also like to take this opportunity to express my warm congratulations to the other members of the Bureau on their election. At the same time, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Ambassador Davidson L. Hepburn for presiding with distinction over the Commission's work last year.

Changes that have taken place in the past year show that the international situation is at a turning point, going from confrontation to dialogue and from tension to relaxation, forming a powerful trend in the world today. This is the result of the joint efforts of all countries, which reflect the ardent aspiration of the world's people for peace and development. Today, we see a more encouraging prospect for world peace, but the factors causing a tense and turbulent international situation remain. Lasting peace and stability cannot be ensured unless the peoples of all countries make persistent efforts.

(Mr. Fan Guoxiang, China)

In the field of disarmament, the United States and the Soviet Union have signed the Treaty on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - and are ready to continue talks on a 50 per cent reduction of their strategic nuclear weapons. After years of hard work, fresh headway has finally been achieved in the talks on conventional armed forces in Europe, with the two major military blocs as the principal participants. A number of countries have taken steps to reduce their armaments unilaterally or have advanced various proposals for disarmament. The Final Declaration adopted by the Paris Conference on the prohibition of chemical weapons, held earlier this year, received widespread support, and the Geneva negotiations on the chemical weapons convention are developing in greater depth. We welcome these developments.

Nevertheless, the international community cannot but be concerned about the other aspect of the question. The arms race between the super-Powers is still going on, and is showing a tendency towards qualitative improvement and extension into outer space. If it is not stopped immediately, not only will the limited gains in the quantitative reduction of arms be cancelled out, but it will also pose a greater threat to international peace and security. Therefore, as the Secretary-General pointed out in his report to the General Assembly at its forty-third session,

"The qualitative aspect of the arms race needs to be addressed along with its quantitative aspect". (A/43/1, p. 13)

The Chinese delegation is of the view that the international community should seize the present favourable opportunity, adopt concrete measures and energetically promote disarmament so as to ensure international peace, security and stability. In this respect, the countries possessing the largest arsenals bear a special responsibility.

(Mr. Fan Guoxiang, China)

The work of the Disarmament Commission is of great significance. Although it is hard to reach agreement at the moment on questions which involve the basic positions of many countries on a series of disarmament issues, certain results may still be achieved as long as all parties make serious efforts. After years of repeated discussions, the Disarmament Commission reached consensus last year on the Working Group documents entitled "Verification in all its aspects" and "Guidelines for confidence-building measures", which were adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-third session. It is our hope that progress will be made this year in the consideration of the other items by the Commission.

In order to save time, the Chinese delegation will not comment on all the other items before the Commission. We shall state our position in the various working groups.

Bilateral and multilateral disarmament efforts should complement each other. We should now pay greater attention to the important role of the United Nations in this regard. It is China's consistent stand that all countries, big or small, strong or weak, should enjoy an equal right to participate in the consideration and solution of questions relating to disarmament.

The Chinese delegation will continue to take an active part in the consideration of all the items before the Commission. We hereby pledge our close co-operation with you, Mr. Chairman, and with the chairmen of the various working groups, and our commitment to making contributions to the success of the session.

Mr. KUTSCHAN (German Democratic Republic): At the outset, Sir, I congratulate you on behalf of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for this year's session and wish you every success in the discharge of your important duties. I also assure you and the other officers of the Commission, to whom we also express our

(Mr. Kutschan, German
Democratic Republic)

felicitations, that the delegation of the German Democratic Republic will support you in the forthcoming activities.

This year will see the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War. The lessons learnt from that conflagration made it clear that there is no task more important than the safeguarding of peace. The appeal made at the recent session of the Warsaw Treaty's Committee of Foreign Ministers, held in Berlin, which calls for an intensification of efforts to continue the process of disarmament at all levels, fully meets this concern. What matters today above all is to achieve a 50 per cent reduction of the strategic offensive weapons of the Soviet Union and the United States; a comprehensive nuclear-test ban; the prohibition of chemical weapons; and drastic conventional disarmament from the Atlantic to the Urals. The Ministers stressed the need to pursue further the dialogue on key issues of world development. This dialogue is based on a comprehensive approach to the strengthening of international peace and security pursuant to the United Nations Charter, with the role and effectiveness of this universal Organization constantly increasing.

In this effort great importance attaches to the Disarmament Commission. Being an organ in which all Member States are represented, it offers good opportunities to contribute to consolidating the process of disarmament and giving it the required global dimension. The progress achieved in our time in the process of the strengthening of peace and on the road to genuine disarmament, as well as in the reduction of military confrontation, provides a favourable environment for it.

The Warsaw Treaty States, in the disarmament programme they reaffirmed in Berlin and through unilateral reductions in their armed forces and armaments, have

(Mr. Kutschan, German
Democratic Republic)

shown the way towards a general improvement of the situation in Europe and in the world as a whole.

As is known, the National Defence Council of the German Democratic Republic has decided to reduce, unilaterally and independent of negotiations, the German Democratic Republic's National People's Army by 10,000 troops, 600 tanks and 50 fighter aircraft by the end of 1990. Similarly, spending on national defence will be cut by 10 per cent. Six tank regiments and one air force wing will be disbanded in order to give the National People's Army an even stricter defensive character. This process is now being initiated.

Another measure as an expression of the German Democratic Republic's good will was the decision to employ 11,500 troops, after short military instruction, in major sectors of the national economy over a period of 15 months of their active service.

We now expect the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) States to display the required sense of realism and to respond in a constructive way to the proposals submitted and the unilateral action taken by the socialist States.

From Berlin the proposal was made to the member States of NATO to open talks on the phased reduction and eventual elimination of tactical nuclear arms in Europe, including the nuclear component of their dual-capable systems. Specific consultations would serve the preparation of such talks. All sides would have the opportunity to express their ideas on the subject. Participants in the consultations could be the nuclear-weapon Powers of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty, respectively, as well as other interested members of these alliances - in particular, those possessing nuclear-capable tactical systems and those having tactical nuclear-arms deployed in their territory.

(Mr. Kutschen, German
Democratic Republic)

The negotiations would, inter alia, have to consider measures of effective international verification and confidence- and security-building measures with respect to such systems. The possibility of establishing an appropriately empowered international control commission could also be examined.

It is obvious that disarmament in the field of tactical nuclear weapons is in the interest of the peoples of Europe and the world as a whole. The reduction and elimination of those weapons is, as was recently underlined by the Head of State of the German Democratic Republic, Erich Honecker, of vital significance to the two German States. In that context, regional solutions such as the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free corridor and a zone of confidence and security in central Europe are gaining importance.

The modernization and further build-up of tactical nuclear arms would endanger the negotiations on conventional forces in Europe, which began only recently. By contrast, the early elimination of those weapons would promote world-wide nuclear disarmament.

In spite of all this, certain circles have of late been making increasing efforts to push through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) decisions on upgrading that category of weapons. The course is obviously set to transfer those arms from the drawing-board to production. Their manufacture and deployment would lead to a destabilization of the military and political situation in Europe and undermine what has been achieved so far, in particular the Treaty on intermediate-range and shorter-range nuclear missiles - the INF Treaty.

Once again, it has become clear that thinking based on deterrence is conducive to creating ever more sophisticated and dangerous weapons and to fuelling the arms race. Such thinking often precludes relevant disarmament steps - sometimes even

(Mr. Kutschan, German
Democratic Republic)

the beginning of negotiations. That goes not only for tactical nuclear weapons but also for a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, the limitation of naval armaments and other issues.

The Warsaw Treaty States have proposed renouncing the modernization of tactical nuclear weapons. That would be a confidence-building measure and would serve to improve the climate for negotiations. The sides would, for example, neither perfect nor increase the number of nuclear-capable ground-launched tactical missiles, air-force missiles and artillery, including the nuclear components of those systems.

We note with interest that, on the basis of a realistic assessment of the situation and a recognition of the risks posed by tactical nuclear arms, voices in Western Europe and elsewhere are growing louder in favour of negotiations on the reduction of those arms.

Out of a concern for regional and international security, the 14 April 1989 final statement of the Palme Commission, for instance, drew the conclusion that short-range nuclear weapons must not be omitted from arms-control negotiations and urged the two alliances to develop a framework and schedule for including them in negotiations.

Concrete proposals have been submitted by the Warsaw Treaty States. In that context I wish to draw attention to the documents of the Berlin session of the Warsaw Treaty's Foreign Ministers, which are contained in document A/44/228 of 14 April 1989.

Questions related to nuclear disarmament will be of great importance also at this year's session of the Disarmament Commission. Through appropriate recommendations the Commission could give impetus to disarmament activities at

(Mr. Kutschan, German
Democratic Republic)

various levels. It should focus its work on major issues. I refer in particular to the Soviet-United States negotiations, regional efforts towards eliminating tactical nuclear weapons and the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as the preparation of multilateral talks on nuclear disarmament. In his statement before the Geneva Conference on Disarmament on 18 April last, the Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic, Oskar Fischer, suggested the formulation of principles to govern nuclear disarmament. All relevant issues, including military doctrines, verification and the relationship between nuclear and conventional disarmament, should be covered.

Finally, the Disarmament Commission's recommendations should provide for steps towards the speedy conclusion of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests and for ensuring the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. My delegation, together with those of other socialist countries, will in the days to come make detailed proposals on all those issues.

At their Berlin session the Warsaw Treaty States paid great attention also to the reduction of military expenditures. They spoke up in favour of continuing efforts to formulate criteria for the comparison of military budgets, making use of the international system for the standardized reporting of military expenditure as adopted by the United Nations. We believe that in general the conditions are good this year for putting the finishing touches on the recommendations on cuts in military budgets and referring them to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. That would create favourable conditions for negotiations on the reduction of military spending. My delegation expects all delegations to work with determination towards achieving that aim, rather than thwarting the prospects for such negotiations through delaying tactics.

(Mr. Kutschan, German
Democratic Republic)

As regards the nuclear capability of South Africa, the German Democratic Republic continues to hold that the Disarmament Commission should call for an end to all co-operation with that country in the military and nuclear fields. It would be in the interest of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and of security in Africa if South Africa immediately placed all its nuclear activities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and adhered to the non-proliferation Treaty. We also expect the pertinent Vienna consultations between the three non-proliferation Treaty depositaries and South Africa to yield early and substantive results.

Modern naval forces and armaments constitute a large and dangerous weapons potential, which could be used for surprise attacks and wide-ranging offensive operations. The dangers emanating, for instance, from sea-launched nuclear cruise missiles are becoming ever more evident. Naval forces and armaments must, therefore, not be excluded from the process of disarmament. Together with the other socialist States, and many more, the German Democratic Republic advocates agreement on measures for confidence-building, including the limitation and reduction of naval armaments. The first important step in that direction would be the conclusion of a multilateral agreement on the prevention of incidents on the high seas. In that field too the Disarmament Commission could make a weighty contribution towards promoting relevant activities.

The German Democratic Republic supports the proposal made by Mikhail Gorbachev in London on the opening of negotiations on naval forces and armaments between the Soviet Union and the United States, the Warsaw Treaty and NATO.

(Mr. Kutschan, German
Democratic Republic)

There is a growing awareness world-wide that measures of conventional disarmament are urgently needed to strengthen international security and release means for economic and social development. Taking that road will not be easy, but there is no reasonable alternative.

The start of the Vienna negotiations on conventional armed forces was a first step in that direction taken in Europe. In Berlin, the Warsaw Treaty States reaffirmed their firm resolve to conduct those negotiations in a constructive spirit and to seek concrete results in a short time. Convincing proof of that resolve are unilateral moves towards the reduction of their armed forces, armaments and military budgets.

(Mr. Kutschan, German
Democratic Republic)

In this field too the multilateral dialogue within the United Nations can be helpful. Recommendations by the Disarmament Commission could give momentum to the efforts made in all regions for conventional disarmament. Such efforts should proceed from a defensive character of military doctrines which includes the principle of the reasonable sufficiency of armed forces.

The German Democratic Republic is in favour of declaring the 1990s the Third United Nations Disarmament Decade. The document to be prepared by the Disarmament Commission could identify the main directions of disarmament and related measures and give a political impetus to the respective negotiations. The aim should be liquidation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and a considerable reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments while strengthening the political security guarantees. That aim could be served by unilateral steps and by making full use of the potential of bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

The delegation of the German Democratic Republic will work towards the preparation by the Disarmament Commission of action-oriented recommendations on this issue and the other issues on its agenda.

Mr. HOULLEZ (Belgium) (interpretation from French): Allow me at the outset to fulfil what is much more than a duty for me - a real pleasure - and that is to offer you, the Ambassador of Zaire, my most sincere congratulations on your election to the eminent post of Chairman of this Commission.

My delegation finds it particularly gratifying to see a diplomat of your experience, the representative of a country with which Belgium has special ties, holding such a post. It goes without saying that my delegation, which has been honoured this year by being chosen as Rapporteur, will do its utmost to help you as you discharge your important responsibilities.

(Mr. Houlliez, Belgium)

I also wish to convey my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

The Ambassador of Spain, speaking on behalf of the 12 member States of the European Community, has made a statement which my delegation of course wholly endorses.

Notwithstanding the appeal for the limitation of the general debate, allow me to dwell briefly on a number of points that we feel deserve special emphasis.

This year the Commission's agenda again comprises a substantial number of items each of which is important in its own way. However, the need for the Disarmament Commission to focus more particularly on subjects on which rapid progress seems possible prompts me to hope that we shall all agree to make a special effort when an agreement appears attainable. In this regard I wish to emphasize the item related to conventional disarmament, concerning which, thanks to the sustained efforts that have been made for years now by all members of the Commission, substantial progress has been made towards the elaboration of concrete recommendations.

For several years now an increasingly broad consensus has emerged on the need to adopt measures for arms control and disarmament that would apply to a category of weapons now disseminated throughout the world and which represents a growing potential for destruction. The conflicts with which we are all so familiar show how deadly conventional weapons can be.

Belgium has always emphasized the importance it attaches to the regional dimension in approaching this problem. We confirmed this special interest by introducing at the forty-second session of the General Assembly a draft resolution on regional disarmament that won consensus support. Our interest in the matter was again much in evidence at the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

(Mr. Houlliez, Belgium)

Besides its interest in the regional dimension of disarmament and in confidence-building measures as matters of principle, Belgium has just joined 34 other countries in Vienna in the negotiations that form part of the now long-standing process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. With its partners in the Atlantic Alliance, it has entered into negotiations with the member countries of the Warsaw Treaty with particular reference to conventional forces and armaments in Europe.

Belgium is well aware that there could be no question of any particular region in the world claiming to be an absolute model for all others. It is also well aware of the need to take account of the features peculiar to each region. However, it seems to us it would be very beneficial to all the countries of the world to take steps within the framework of their specific regional situations leading to the reduction of conventional weapons. The accumulating build-up of stockpiles of such weapons by many countries, particularly countries grappling with development problems, inevitably creates situations fraught with dangers and burdens for the States concerned, which they must themselves assess.

The question of the reduction of military budgets, if considered within an appropriate framework, and given a desire for real efficiency, also seems ready for new developments. Here I wish to emphasize the need for transparency of data and concrete follow-up in actual deeds on any declaration of intent, these being two indispensable elements.

Those are some thoughts we wished to elaborate on before the beginning of our substantive work, which we hope will be fruitful. Of course, our remarks should not be construed as implying any lack of interest in the chance of progress being made on other items of our agenda.

Mr. CHOHAN (Pakistan): May I begin by extending to you, Sir, our sincere felicitations on your assumption of the office of Chairman of the Disarmament Commission and assuring you of my delegation's full co-operation and support in the discharge of your onerous responsibilities. We are sure that with your able guidance our deliberations will be marked with success.

We come to the present session of the Disarmament Commission with renewed hope. Developments have taken place around us in the global arena as well as in the regional context which encourage optimism. The two super-Powers, which between them possess the capability of making life extinct on our planet, have been engaged for some time now in a meaningful dialogue to arrest the headlong rush towards the nuclear abyss and to begin a new experiment in co-operation for restraint. We are witnessing an intensified debate on disarmament issues which gives reason for sanguine expectations and concrete possibilities.

The present arms race, particularly in its nuclear dimensions, seems to have been propelled by a volition of its own. The continuing accumulation of even more destructive and accurate weapons defies comprehension even in the context of mutual deterrence, with which the great Powers threaten not only to obliterate each other but also life as we know it on this planet. Therefore the declaration issued at the conclusion of the United States-Soviet Summit in Geneva in 1985, which said a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, should serve as the basis of all our efforts to banish the threat of a nuclear conflict because the concept of nuclear-war fighting is neither rational nor practical.

(Mr. Chohan, Pakistan)

Agenda item 4, which has been before the Disarmament Commission for a long time, addresses a vital concern of the international community. In its work on that agenda item the Disarmament Commission needs to build upon the consensus reached in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and upon the gains that resulted from the second and third special sessions, by recommending meaningful and concrete measures within the context of the objectives of general and complete disarmament.

In the nuclear field there is the pressing need for such measures as a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, practical steps for the prevention of nuclear war, establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, extension of security guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States, a halt to the qualitative and quantitative development of nuclear weapons and the prohibition on the introduction of new weapons systems, either on Earth or in space. Equally, there is a need to ensure compliance with various disarmament agreements and to prevent violations through appropriate verification arrangements.

Pakistan fully shares the desire of the international community to accord priority to nuclear disarmament, especially by the super-Powers, to prevent the further escalation of the arms race, including its extension to outer space, and to achieve general and complete disarmament. It is to be hoped that the international community, and in particular the two super-Powers, will maintain the momentum generated by the signing, in December 1987, of 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, take further necessary measures to avert the danger of a nuclear war and achieve early agreements for genuine nuclear disarmament. More specifically, it is our hope that the two super-Powers will finalize, at an early date, the strategic arms reduction

(Mr. Chohan, Pakistan)

talks, which seek reduction of their strategic nuclear arsenals by 50 per cent, and that they will continue to abide by their obligations under the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, the partial test-ban Treaty and, in particular, the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems and its provisions against the development, testing and deployment of anti-ballistic missiles.

In the meanwhile, in order to reduce the dangers of nuclear confrontation the nuclear Powers should undertake other related measures, including an agreement not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, an agreement ultimately to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons, an extension of credible and legally binding assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and the conclusion, as a matter of priority, of a treaty banning all nuclear testing.

Pakistan is committed to nuclear non-proliferation. In an interview in March of this year, the Prime Minister of Pakistan reiterated Pakistan's commitment not to build or test a nuclear weapon. We believe that the spread of nuclear weapons to more than the present five nuclear-weapon States will only make our world more insecure. It is therefore important to preserve and to strengthen the existing non-proliferation régime and to supplement it with other measures at the global and regional levels, such as the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace to allay the security concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States.

We are firm in our resolve to keep our region free from nuclear weapons. Pakistan does not possess nuclear weapons nor does it have any intention to do so. In South Asia, nuclear-proliferation concerns reflect a history of past tensions and mistrust. To allay misunderstanding or suspicions the effective solution lies in a regional approach with each State accepting equal and non-discriminatory

(Mr. Chohan, Pakistan)

obligations. We see merit in such a regional approach, which holds increasing promise the world over.

All the States of South Asia have declared, at the highest level, that they will not acquire or develop nuclear weapons. We welcome those statements and hope that others will see the wisdom of converting unilateral professions into treaty obligations. In fact, Pakistan has made several proposals in that regard.

We are prepared to accept any equitable and non-discriminatory agreement, with effective verification arrangements ensuring openness and transparency, that would commit the countries of the region in a legally binding manner not to acquire or produce nuclear weapons. Conscious of the important role the United Nations has to play in the disarmament process, we have even proposed that in order to explore the possibility of such an agreement a conference on nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia be convened under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of regional and other interested States.

The need to limit and reduce conventional weapons, armed forces and military budgets is increasingly being felt across the world. The attention those issues merit and are now receiving is to be welcomed. The concern over the escalation of global expenditures on conventional armed forces and weapons, which account for four fifths of the total amount spent on armaments, is legitimate.

In the area of conventional disarmament, perhaps even more than in the case of nuclear disarmament, it is the regional approach that offers the most realistic prospects for success.

The impulse for high military spending in a given region derives in large part from local factors, from unresolved territorial disputes, the denial of the right of self-determination, ambitions for regional hegemony, foreign occupation or military intervention. The aim of a regional disarmament process should be to

(Mr. Chohan, Pakistan)

establish a mutually acceptable military equilibrium among the regional States and to exclude foreign military presence.

In determining such a balance the capacity of each State for indigenous production of armaments, acquisition from external sources and the level of sophistication of arms should all be taken into account. Measures to create a regional balance could include the renunciation of certain types of advanced weapons, agreed ceilings on armed forces, elimination of the capability to launch surprise attacks and large-scale military manoeuvres and geographical restrictions on the deployment of armed forces.

The arms race is fuelled in many regions by the efforts of the militarily most powerful State to attain a position of unchallenged superiority. This can only exacerbate tensions, increase the dangers of conflict and thereby condemn the States of the region to a vicious circle of ever-increasing levels of forces and armaments and diminished security. States that are in a preponderant military position in a particular region therefore bear a special responsibility to promote and initiate arms limitations and reductions.

It is our conviction that the edifice of global peace and security can be reinforced if countries in various regions of the world undertake to formalize their commitment to restrain the arms race and to promote their own security at the lowest possible level of armaments through solemn regional commitments.

The Disarmament Commission has examined the question of military budgets since 1979. Efforts have been made over the past years to elaborate a set of principles that would govern actions by States in the field of the freezing and reduction of military budgets. In our view, the adoption of arbitrary criteria to freeze or cut military spending without addressing the security concerns of the States in question is not realistic. In particular, the recommendations evolved by the

(Mr. Chohan, Pakistan)

Disarmament Commission must give due consideration to the security concerns of small, developing and non-aligned States and their regional-security perspectives.

The wide disparity between the armaments expenditures of militarily significant States and the other countries is beyond question. Reduction in military budgets therefore should be initiated by those States that possess the largest military arsenals.

The world has been witnessing an unrestrained escalation in the naval arms race in both its quantitative and its qualitative aspects. The expansion and modernization of naval forces by the major naval Powers, combined with the increased sophistication of naval-based arms systems, the deployment at sea of nuclear weapons, both strategic and tactical, and the introduction of nuclear-powered submarines have given the navies of a few States an awesome capability.

(Mr. Chohan, Pakistan)

As a result, the security of the small and medium-sized coastal States is now threatened from the sea on an unprecedented scale. The question of naval disarmament and the placing of limits on the military uses of the high seas therefore deserves to be addressed without delay.

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

The Disarmament Commission has been asked by the General Assembly to prepare this year elements of a draft resolution to be entitled "Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade", and to submit them to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. At a time when the international situation is increasingly amenable to the promotion of disarmament measures, and at a time when the ongoing political processes in various parts of the world are contributing to a lessening of international tensions, the declaration of a third disarmament decade will undoubtedly reinforce global efforts for a more secure but less-armed world. We

(Mr. Chohan, Pakistan)

hope that the Disarmament Commission will be successful in preparing the necessary elements.

The disarmament process can make progress in an improved international security situation. The resolution of the underlying political problems and conflicts and the removal of mistrust are essential for the creation of the necessary international climate in which disarmament efforts can proceed meaningfully and achieve the desired results. That can best be done by strict adherence to the universally recognized principles enjoining respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs, non-use of force in inter-State relations and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Mr. JAYASINGHE (Sri Lanka): Mr. Chairman, my delegation takes this opportunity to congratulate you and the other members elected to the Bureau of the Commission. We have no doubt that with your wide experience and expertise in diplomacy and in the field of disarmament you will provide the necessary leadership and direction during the course of our discussions. We look forward to engaging in a fruitful discussion that will bring us closer to our common goal - making this planet a better place for us to live in, by establishing peace and security through disarmament.

Towards that end the Commission is mandated to consider and make recommendations on various problems in the field of disarmament. The agenda of the Commission consists of almost all the leading issues the international community has undertaken to consider under disarmament. With slight modifications to meet specific requirements before the Commission each year, this agenda has remained constant from 1983. This year my delegation observes that in comparison to 1988 the items on the question of verification in all its aspects and confidence-building

(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

measures have been deleted. That deletion reflects our ability to reach agreements in these two important areas. This year we have a new item - consideration of the declaration of the 1990s as the third disarmament decade.

When we look at the overall progress we have made so far, it is not wrong to observe that the Commission has failed to address itself in a more positive manner to the core issues concerning disarmament. The progress we have made in certain areas remains somewhat insignificant in comparison to areas of disagreement. For instance, the text based on our discussions on the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament contains many brackets, demonstrating our inability to reach agreement on this important subject. The parties that are likely to be affected by the desired changes seem to continue to resist agreement in these areas.

In making these comments my delegation is fully aware that disarmament is one of the most complex and difficult tasks we have undertaken. The inability to reach agreement concerning nuclear armament and disarmament and on connected issues remains of grave concern to the overwhelming majority of the international community. As long as this category of arms poses a threat to mankind - in fact to its very existence - and affects the welfare of humankind in many respects, disarmament ceases to be a proprietary of a few. For those very reasons, those who possess nuclear arms and the attendant capabilities have a greater responsibility to rid this planet of the threat of a nuclear war. This is a collective responsibility, and that is why we are gathering in various forums such as this Commission to reach agreement collectively. We should attempt to avoid making such gatherings cosmetic operations to which we pay lip service. We should take our responsibilities seriously. The question of self-interest or national interest should be brought in line with the global interest, which embraces the interest of the entire international community.

(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

At this session we are equipped to do so. The international environment has changed. The two super-Powers have demonstrated their desire to address the issues of disarmament in a much more realistic way. The signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - is testimony to the progress that can be made when the super-Powers are ready to move forward. This co-operation not only brought about such an unprecedented achievement in their arms control negotiations but also facilitated the resolution of many regional issues. Both super-Powers should be congratulated for setting the disarmament process on this positive path and should be encouraged to build on it.

My delegation has had a careful look at many important issues that the Commission has been considering for the last five or six years. The most important among them is the item on the consideration of nuclear armament and disarmament. The Commission has been able to compile a set of proposals for recommendation to the General Assembly. A general survey of these proposals reveals that we have been able to agree only on basic principles dealing with the subject, but not in the area of actions that are imperative to the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and to nuclear disarmament. These principles do not confront us with any problems, as we have agreed to them elsewhere. For instance, the United Nations Charter and other Declarations governing the fundamentals in the conduct of foreign relations deal with them. In other words, in practical terms we have made very little progress in this area during our past discussions. For my delegation it appears that the lack of progress emanates not necessarily from the complexity of issues but also from external factors such as the lack of confidence and mutual distrust.

(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

The continued desire for dominance is another factor which ignites competition and feeds its continuance. The time has come for us to realize that, in the pursuit of this unhealthy and unwarranted competition, we have devoted all our valuable resources and energies to ensuring a global system which threatens our own existence.

In an attempt to set the correct tone for our discussions at the current session, my delegation would like to remind the Commission of another positive development we have been observing for some time - that is, our increasing and continued desire not to engage in rhetoric but in a meaningful dialogue. It had for some time been the fashion to engage in verbal warfare - even to the extent of self-glorification. At times, such attitudes were prompted by historical factors. However, such policies failed over the years to usher in positive results. The realization of the futility of this policy and its abandonment has created a very healthy atmosphere in which delegations are able to address each other on issues in a sober, frank and businesslike manner. My delegation hopes that we will follow this course of action during the current discussions. However, it is important and healthy to comment on what is before us without fear or favour.

My delegation will not shy away from this responsibility. As suggested in the Commission, in the nuclear field we should continue to press for negotiations on a comprehensive, phased programme based on a time frame that would provide for progressive and balanced reductions of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery leading to their ultimate and complete elimination. It should aim at the complete elimination of nuclear weapons throughout the world by agreed stages according to a set target. In this connection, my delegation agrees with the course of action suggested in recommendation six, dealing with the various aspects of the arms race, particularly the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

In the area of reduction of military budgets, my delegation is happy to observe that, except for one paragraph, the Commission has been successful in reaching consensus on the balance of the text. It is my delegation's earnest hope that the Commission will during this session be able to reach agreement on this paragraph. My delegation attaches immense importance to the finalization of this aspect of our work, as agreement in this very important area has a direct bearing on the general welfare of the international community and in particular the welfare of the developing countries.

The reduction in military budgets will generate direct or indirect transfers of additional resources to those countries, providing scarce resources for their economic and social development. Any progress in this area too will have a direct bearing on another subject the Commission has been dealing with - that is, the relationship between disarmament and development.

Any agreement on reduction of military budgets will also have a direct effect on the developing world in another fashion. As members know, owing to reasons within and beyond their control some members of the developing world incur heavy expenditures on purchases of arms, particularly conventional arms. This has become a notable negative factor in their national budgets, at times very much to their dislike but without escape. Any international agreement or other regulatory measures would therefore be welcomed by this group of countries.

My delegation had the honour of chairing the Working Group on the substantive consideration of the question of South Africa's nuclear capability last year and contributing to making some advancement in the text before us. This year too my delegation is being requested to chair this Group. All of us are aware and in agreement with the inherent danger of nuclear proliferation. We are also in agreement with the usefulness of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and the necessity to pursue such development strictly in accordance with the safeguards of

(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

the International Atomic Energy Agency. At the current session my delegation will do its utmost to facilitate agreement on this important issue.

No progress has been made in the field of naval armament and disarmament. The time has come for all of us to address this subject with seriousness. As members are aware, naval disarmament is closely linked to other aspects of disarmament. For instance, we cannot talk of nuclear disarmament without taking into account its naval dimension. Naval disarmament is also closely linked to the establishment of regional peace and security. Most importantly, it forms an integral and important part of the continued power rivalry which leads to the escalation of the arms build-up.

My delegation attaches particular importance to conventional disarmament. While the developed countries by and large remain the sources of supply of this category of weapons, the consumers are in the developing world. Easy access to these weapons has encouraged not only conflicts at regional and sub-regional levels but also internal rifts, in particular terrorism. Trading in these weapons through both legal and illegal means engenders tremendous political, economic and social burdens to many developing countries. This situation has to be remedied.

It is my delegation's view that multilateralism has an important role to play in disarmament and nothing should be done to diminish its importance. Multilateralism and bilateralism in this field should be complementary. As has been observed, there is a marked tendency to consider many issues connected with disarmament as a responsibility of bilateral arrangements. Undoubtedly, on the strength of their military capabilities and stockpiles some countries have a greater responsibility in negotiating agreements which lead to disarmament measures. We are happy to welcome and encourage bilateral acts which contribute to the stabilization of the international order. However, like most delegations, we

(Mr. Jayasinghe, Sri Lanka)

cannot subscribe to the view that multilateralism should play a passive role and be at the mercy of bilateralism. Both these "isms" have distinct and important roles to play.

Finally, we are also expected to take up the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade. My delegation considers that it is extremely important to continue reaffirming our commitment to disarmament, particularly the attainment of the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. It is also important to ensure the taking of concrete and practical measures for preventing the outbreak of war, particularly nuclear war. We should also take appropriate measures to halt and reverse the nuclear-arms race, with a view to improving the international climate as well as enhancing the efficacy of disarmament negotiations, and exert greater effort in the implementation of the World Disarmament Campaign. Hence the proposal to declare the 1990s the Third Disarmament Decade has my delegation's full blessing.

Mr. ROCHE (Canada): Mr. Chairman, Canada welcomes your assumption of the leadership of this Commission and will give you and the other members of the Bureau every co-operation.

I wish also to commend the Department for Disarmament Affairs for having organized the recent United Nations conference on disarmament issues held in Japan and to thank the Government of Japan for hosting this important event. The conference in Kyoto advanced international understanding, and the visit to Hiroshima was especially moving and, I believe, instructive to all arms control and disarmament diplomats and officials who go to that centre for instruction to the world.

(Mr. Roche, Canada)

A new mood of compromise can be felt today, one which must be exploited now if global peace and security is to be achieved. It is imperative that we meet the threat to the peace and security of all the inhabitants of our small global village. Canada welcomes the opportunity provided by the United Nations Disarmament Commission to exchange ideas and seek consensus in the critical realm of arms control and disarmament.

The climate of relaxation in international affairs is characterized by the present extraordinary moment. The cold war that has so poisoned relations between East and West since the Second World War is ending just as a recognition is taking hold that global problems of the environment, arms build-ups, world poverty and staggering debt can only be solved by a strengthening of international institutions.

The recognition of the dramatic change in the East and the positive effects that change has had on the world dynamic have created new hopes for peace in people everywhere. Last week, in his speech to the World Affairs Council, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney noted that nowhere is the world changing more profoundly than in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The Prime Minister said:

"We are genuinely impressed by the innovative and daring leadership of General-Secretary Gorbachev. Few international leaders in modern times have signalled such profound change in their societies and in their approach to the world and evinced such important resolve to sustain it. Such a will to reform should not go unanswered."

In a similar vein, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, recently observed that Mr. Gorbachev is embarked upon a journey of almost unprecedented risk, challenge and promise. He said:

"It is one of the most significant, intriguing, and hopeful trends in the world today. We must act with prudence and imagination, conscious of the probability that we are at a genuine watershed in modern history."

(Mr. Roche, Canada)

The progress we have observed in international relations can be measured by many examples of advancement in the field of arms control and disarmament. In the bilateral area, the Treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces signed by the United States and the Soviet Union, ratified in June 1988, has been implemented. The INF Treaty, as many have noted, is an historic agreement because it is the first in recent history to reduce rather than simply limit existing stocks of weapons. It is also important because the intrusive verification measures establish a precedent for future reductions in nuclear weapons.

Negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union directed towards securing ratification of the threshold test ban and the peaceful nuclear explosions treaties have begun. We should like both treaties to be ratified and then attention given to focusing on numbers of tests allowed, on a lower threshold and the lowering of tests en route to a comprehensive test ban treaty.

Following completion of the United States foreign policy review, we expect a resumption of discussions on strategic arms reductions, the START talks, which have the stated goal of a 50 per cent reduction in the strategic arsenals of the two super-Powers. Although the successful completion of START requires the resolution of a number of serious issues, the conclusion of such an agreement would be a disarmament achievement of great importance.

Within the realm of multilateral disarmament, there have also been significant advances. The high-level Paris Conference on Chemical Weapons gave support and impetus to the Geneva Conference on Disarmament in its efforts to negotiate an effective and universal chemical weapons convention that would ban the production, storage and use of that heinous means of warfare.

Another important development has been the commencement, just two months ago in Vienna, of new negotiations on conventional arms in Europe. Initial proposals

(Mr. Roche, Canada)

on military reductions and confidence-building measures have been presented by both the Eastern and the Western Groups. In the negotiation on conventional armed forces in Europe, the 23 participating countries, including Canada, will endeavour to establish a secure and stable balance of conventional forces in Europe at lower levels. Within the purview of the 35-member Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, negotiations have resumed on confidence- and security-building measures. The purpose of this latter negotiation is to establish procedures to ensure greater transparency, or openness, about military activities, an objective long endorsed by the United Nations.

We must emphasize, as well, the prominent role which the United Nations has played in recent months in helping to defuse incipient and actual conflict situations in some of the world's most dangerous trouble spots, both through mediation and offers to contribute peace-keeping forces. The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations Peace-keeping Forces last September understandably met with universal acclaim. Canada took special pride in this award, since over 80,000 Canadians have served in United Nations peace-keeping contingents.

Also, within the United Nations, a trend towards a more pragmatic and productive approach to disarmament has become increasingly evident. This trend may result, to some extent, from positive developments in other areas. However, it also suggests an increasing awareness of, and sophistication towards, the complexity of the issues involved.

This welcome trend was amply demonstrated during Canada's tenure as Chairman of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-third session. We were particularly gratified by the degree of support for measures to streamline the work and enhance the efficiency of the First Committee's

(Mr. Roche, Canada)

deliberations. The persistent problem of competing resolutions on similar subjects was effectively dealt with throughout the session by means of an increased willingness to negotiate, compromise and work towards the merging of differing texts. In addition, the First Committee's agenda was revised to increase the time allotted for informal consultations, and attempts were made to rationalize its substance. Further, a record number of United Nations disarmament studies were authorized during the session, on issues as varied as the role of the United Nations in verification and the important issue of arms transfers. I particularly wish to emphasize the latter, the issue of arms transfers. This reflected the generally increased confidence of Member States in the involvement of the United Nations in these fields. Finally, as Chairman, I was especially pleased that an unprecedented 27 resolutions - 40.8 per cent - were adopted in the First Committee by consensus. It is self-evident that the extent to which the United Nations can speak with a united voice, the greater its impact.

(Mr. Roche, Canada)

Out of everything we have learned in the decade of the 1980s - a decade of great human suffering sharply contrasted to new processes of enlightenment - one over-arching fact stands out: peace is a multi-agenda process involving economic and social development as well as arms control measures, the protection of human rights as well as environmental security. The agenda for the twenty-first century, now only 127 months away, is already claiming our full attention: the danger of nuclear annihilation, regional wars using conventional weapons, the gap between North and South, the danger of over-population, the despoliation of the global environment.

Although these problems are enormous, we have acquired the power to protect and sustain life. But to sustain life in its many-splendoured forms on this planet requires that we build a bridge to a future of common security. And the name of that bridge is international co-operation; it is co-operation, not confrontation, that will bring us a peace inseparable from sustainable living.

Canada does not believe that the bridge can be built by the two super-Powers alone. Many of the pillars can be supplied only by the multilateral community. But neither can the multilateral Powers build the bridge unless both super-Powers vigorously assist in the construction. In short, the bilateral and multilateral processes need each other. They ought to reinforce, sustain and inspire each other. Unless they do, the progress towards improved global security cannot be maintained. We perceive the agenda of the Disarmament Commission as a key component of that bridge.

We are optimistic that this year's session under your leadership, Mr. Chairman, will operate in the effective manner of previous years and will build upon the progress we have made. As Chairman of the 1988 Disarmament Commission Working Group on verification in all its aspects, Canada was pleased that this item

(Mr. Roche, Canada)

was brought to a conclusion and reported out after two sessions of deliberation. The 16 principles of verification are useful instruments for future arms control and disarmament agreements. Another highlight of the 1988 session was the completion of consideration of guidelines for confidence-building measures. The former Chairman, Ambassador Hepburn, deserves much praise for his handling of this item and for the attitude of positive co-operation that pervaded most of the session.

This year the Disarmament Commission will again consider several items of outstanding importance for global security. Among those items for consideration are four in which we expect to achieve particularly noteworthy progress.

The first is the reduction of military budgets. Important questions remain, concerning comparability, transparency and data exchange, that are essential for a successful agreement on the reduction of military budgets. Canada is again submitting the standardized reporting instrument on military spending, which indicates the seriousness of our intent. Use of this standardized reporting instrument must become universally accepted practice before real progress on the item can occur. We implore all States that have not yet done so to complete the reporting instrument and submit it to the United Nations. We welcome the indication by the Soviet Union, given during recent bilateral consultations with us and in other public statements, of its intent to complete the reporting instrument in 1990.

The second item is the review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. We expect that the results of the efforts of the working group last year will form the basis for this year's work. Canada attaches particular importance to the role that the United Nations can play in promoting and encouraging realistic arms control measures. This role can be significantly strengthened through reforms which should produce greater efficiency and

(Mr. Roche, Canada)

effectiveness, with the bonus of additional reductions in expenditures. The ability of the United Nations to provide constructive support for disarmament negotiations elsewhere and to build on progress already achieved can, however, be severely constrained by the degree to which its members pursue positive and realistic approaches. For example, resolutions adopted by a majority of Member States which favour approaches that the minority, which are directly concerned with the issue, do not support do little to move the disarmament process ahead. On the other hand, the super-Powers must not reject out of hand the voice and aspirations of the international community when they are manifested in realistic ways.

The third item is conventional disarmament. Discussions on the issue of conventional disarmament are particularly important at this juncture. It is estimated that 80 per cent of global spending on arms is directed to conventional armaments; since 1945 in conflicts fought with conventional weapons more than 20 million people have been killed. Canada strongly supports an increased focus of international attention on this aspect of arms reduction and disarmament.

Fourthly, I highlight now the new item on our agenda - consideration of the declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade. To reaffirm the responsibility of the United Nations in the attainment of disarmament, as the Second Disarmament Decade nears its end with the new expectations that I have been speaking about, Canada advocates the declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade. We are confident that the determination of all nations to establish a more peaceful and secure world will truly make the final decade of this century a time of peace and disarmament.

In closing, I would note that at this year's meeting of the Commission we face a heavy workload of contentious issues for our consideration. However, I am

(Mr. Roche, Canada)

convinced that the spirit of co-operation and compromise will enable us to make substantial progress on the agenda. This session should strive to enhance the global commitment to pursue a world order where international problems are addressed through peaceful political solutions. Through the efforts of the United Nations, which for some years has been conducting international conferences on global problems ranging from environment questions to world poverty, the world now has a clear understanding that security must be measured in non-military as well as military terms and that no nation can provide security for itself unless all nations feel secure. The linkages between disarmament, development, the environment and human rights issues are now evident. And so, too, are the linkages between nations, great and small. Our planet is now seen as holistic, requiring integrated actions to ensure global security with sustainable development. Our course is clearly set. Now the international community must summon up the wisdom and resolve to stay the course.

Mr. ADEYEMI (Nigeria): It is my pleasure, on behalf of the Nigerian delegation, to join earlier speakers in congratulating you, Sir, a distinguished son of Africa, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for this session. Your impressive credentials, ability and diplomatic skill in the service of your great country, Zaire, will no doubt guide the Commission in its deliberations and ensure the successful conclusion of the programme ahead of it. My congratulations and best wishes go also to the other officers of the Commission.

At this session we are again confronted with virtually all the agenda items deliberated upon during the 1988 session, some of which have been on the Commission's agenda for many years without concrete results. The cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament, reduction of military budgets, South Africa's nuclear capability, the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, conventional disarmament and naval disarmament have been recurrent issues on this Commission's agenda, but there has been little or no success. Rather than going away, the problem of effectively safeguarding international peace and security continues to confront us as we approach the 1990s and the end of the century. Rapid technological trends in weapons innovations, research and development continue to outpace disarmament negotiations. That factor more than anything else broadly indicates that this body will be faced with an increased burden in the years ahead unless we are able to match our rhetoric with concrete deeds.

One of the Commission's agenda items at this session concerning the declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade, could not have come at a more opportune time. Considering the failure of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in New York in 1988, nearly a year ago, my delegation feels that the successful conclusion at the present session of

(Mr. Adeyemi, Nigeria)

the draft elements for the Third Disarmament Decade should lend impetus to the confidence-building measures of the international community, which will reinforce multilateral commitment to disarmament efforts under strict and effective international control. That this forum should be the catalyst for such initiatives needs no further emphasis. As a creation of the 1978 first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, re-validated during the 1982 second special session on disarmament, the Disarmament Commission is an important deliberative platform in the discharge of equally significant responsibilities and functions in the disarmament field in between special sessions. Secondly, as a main subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, encompassing all Member States, with the role of making recommendations to the General Assembly on the priority issues in the area of disarmament, the Commission can justify its continuing relevance only if success attends its deliberations. That is why we must do our utmost to make a success of our endeavours here.

Nuclear weapons in all their manifestations remain the single most potent danger challenging the very survival of humanity. It was clearly stated in the 1978 Final Document that nuclear weapons were the category of weapons whose elimination from the arsenals of nations was the highest priority in the disarmament sphere. We do not lose sight of the enormous destruction that other categories of weapons could unleash on human lives and property, but we must recall that a single nuclear blast could generate greater explosive force than all the energy released by conventional weapons in all previous wars in history since the advent of gunpowder; this should send shivers down the spine of all peace-loving countries. We all realize that in spite of the 1987 Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union on intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles - the INF Treaty - there are still an estimated 50,000 nuclear weapons in the hands of a

(Mr. Adeyemi, Nigeria)

few powerful countries, amounting to about three kilotons of power for each living human being; from this it is clear that the threat of global nuclear annihilation is far from being an academic one. As a result, the threat to global peace and security is accelerating daily with increased nuclear stockpiles, the preponderance of which are traceable to the two super-Powers. Since those two super-Powers bear special responsibility for safeguarding international peace and security, they have the moral duty and obligation to lead the rest of the world in agreeing on genuine and lasting nuclear disarmament.

It is the fervent belief of my delegation that the curtailment and eventual elimination of vertical nuclear acquisitions under effective international control are intrinsically linked to the desirability of discouraging horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons as set out in the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty, which today has the largest number of signatories of all multilateral disarmament agreements. Having come into being in 1968, at the height of the cold war and at a time when many nation-States emerged into sovereign independence, the non-proliferation Treaty has been hailed by developing countries as a forerunner of other agreements that would halt both the vertical and the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons and promote global peace and security. With respect to Africa, the member States of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which at its 1964 Cairo summit issued a declaration calling for the denuclearization of the African continent, saw the emergence of the non-proliferation Treaty four years later as further evidence of the wisdom of ridding the entire continent of Africa, and indeed the world, of nuclear arms.

My delegation therefore views with serious concern the flagrant and reckless pursuit of a nuclear weapons option by the apartheid South African State. That apartheid South Africa remains the polecat of the international community because

(Mr. Adeyemi, Nigeria)

of its racist policies is a fact. That the South African régime oppresses and subjugates its majority population through the world's only institutionalized white supremacist apartheid ideology is well known. That South Africa exports terror and destabilization to neighbouring independent African countries opposed to its apartheid policies is very evident.

Time and again we have been told in this Commission by a few delegations that while they agreed that South Africa possessed a nuclear capability as a technical means, they claimed not to believe that South Africa had acquired nuclear weapons in the military sense. It is better to imagine than to say why they choose to ignore their own vast intelligence reports, other well-informed sources and reputable research confirmations, including those by the United Nations, concerning the racist régime's nuclear weapons acquisitions, evidenced over the years by satellite verification of nuclear blasts in the South Atlantic since 1979.

Incidentally, ~~it is~~ those doubting countries that have extended the greatest bilateral and multilateral assistance to apartheid South Africa. It is their multinationals that engage in the most dubious investments and in commercial activities with the racist régime out of a misguided ambition to achieve short-term gains. It is those same multinationals that continue with reckless abandon to feed on the sweat and suffering of the South African black majority. But it is their Governments that over the years have assisted the racist régime in acquiring its nuclear weapons capability in brazen violation of their own contractual obligations under the non-proliferation Treaty. It is that collaboration with the racists that today constitutes the gravest threat to Africa's security and stability.

(Mr. Adeyemi, Nigeria)

Therefore, my delegation can only hope that those that are indifferent to South Africa's defiance of the United Nations, to which all of us belong as Member States, those States that continue to be insensitive to South Africa's repression of its black majority population and its military destabilization of its neighbours, and above all those States that provide political cover and technical support for South Africa's clandestine nuclear weapons programme will always remember that they have their conscience to contend with, particularly in the context of their self-proclaimed devotion to democratic values and civilized behaviour.

(Mr. Adeyemi, Nigeria)

That is why it behoves this year's session of the Disarmament Commission to find a solution that will facilitate an appropriate recommendation to the General Assembly on the nagging question of South Africa's nuclear-weapon capability. We must urgently do so when we reflect on the fact that the racist régime in Pretoria remains a flash-point of tension on the continent, raising a spectre of grave concern to all lovers of human dignity, freedom, peace and security in our interdependent world.

My delegation considers the question of the reduction of military expenditures as having some linkage with the level of conventional armament, which represents about two thirds of global military budgets. As part of the developing countries, where many wars have been and are still being fought with a horrendous level of casualties, my country cannot but feel concerned about the frightening developments in conventional weaponry and the use to which they are increasingly being put as the first weapons of major conflicts.

Equally disturbing are the new technological developments and qualitative refinement of these weapons, which have led to the emergence of new systems such as tactical nuclear warheads to enhance conventional warfare, the precision-guided munitions, laser beam and particle weapons, as well as dual-purpose conventional artillery that could fire nuclear shells. Thus the constant refinement of conventional arms creates greater demand and supply of these new weapon systems, with attendant huge military outlays which are not only responsible for fanning regional rivalry and tension but also diminish the pace of socio-economic development because of the competition of military civilian allocations for limited resources at both national and international levels. That the background to these regional rivalries, tensions and conflicts is traceable to the very arms suppliers to contending parties illustrates that profit-motivation and political advantages are the principal reasons for transfers of conventional weapons to areas of conflict and confrontation.

(Mr. Adeyemi, Nigeria)

The United Nations expert study on conventional weapons in document A/39/348 is an eloquent testimony to the fact that the developing countries, whose debt burden has now reached about \$950 billion, roughly the equivalent of the current annual global military expenditures, are indirectly financing the arms race. They are, ironically, doing so through a combination of several factors, including spending their hard-earned resources to purchase obsolete military hardware at the prodding of major military Powers. The same weapons are, regrettably, being used to destroy the socio-economic infrastructures that were themselves financed from these same hard-earned and dwindling resources. It is a vicious circle of arms transfers to trouble-spots, unleashing frightening destruction but still leaving the developing countries, recipients of these arms, rather worse off.

The two super-Powers and their military alliances as well as the militarily significant States, which between them account for over 93 per cent of global conventional acquisitions, stockpiles and transfers, bear a special responsibility to proceed to conventional disarmament in tune with the sole requirements of legitimate national defence. Giving the question of conventional weapons the attention it deserves is thus a vital priority of this important session.

Turning to another aspect of our agenda, my delegation looks forward to the early establishment of the necessary working group to handle our consideration of naval armaments and disarmament in view of the serious security risks posed by sophisticated naval weapon systems in the maritime domain, especially to the security of coastal States. While it is acknowledged that both the 1987 and 1988 sessions of this body made substantial progress on this issue, which led to the consensus adoption of the report of the Consultation Group, it is essential that we move forward this year to give concrete support to the objectives contained in that report. In this connection we appeal to the United States to co-operate with the Commission in this regard. We have already witnessed considerable agreement or

(Mr. Adeyemi, Nigeria)

common ground in such vital areas as the extension of confidence-building measures to seas and oceans to facilitate greater transparency in military matters, advance notification of naval exercises, the prevention of incidents at sea, maritime aspects of existing proposals for zones of peace in littoral regions, updating the existing laws of sea warfare, maintenance of freedom of international navigation, and limitations or possible withdrawals of current naval deployments at sea. Since naval armaments are an integral part of the general global military equation, further concrete results in this regard will stimulate negotiations on other disarmament issues at both the bilateral and the multilateral levels.

The Second Development Decade, which we initiated from this forum in 1979, is coming to a close. Looking back at the objectives of the Decade in the disarmament sphere, it is clear that most of them have remained unfulfilled - that in spite of the 1985 mid-term review, in which renewed commitments were undertaken to accelerate the pace of disarmament efforts. Thus, at this session, the Commission is mandated by General Assembly resolution 43/78 L of 7 December 1988 to elaborate draft elements for the Third Disarmament Decade, the 1990s.

My delegation therefore attaches great importance to the successful conclusion of this agenda item for various reasons. It is going to be the last Decade before the turn of the century. This century is unique in history for its two catastrophic World Wars and the history of two world bodies, the League of Nations and the United Nations. This century is equally unique for having witnessed the first acquisition and use of nuclear weapons and the emergence of two super-Powers with the military capacity not only to eliminate each other but also, in the process, to destroy the rest of humanity.

Thus the pertinent question we should ask ourselves is this: what do we want the 21st century to be, one of global peace and security, or one of a legacy of nuclear apocalypse for our children?

(Mr. Adeyemi, Nigeria)

First, the trend must emerge from the foundations laid in this sphere as from the 1990s. Secondly, the Third Decade will obviously have relevant linkages with other multilateral initiatives as we prepare for the amendment conference to convert the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty into a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, as well as the Fourth Review Conference to the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty. Our achievement of agreeing on the elements of the Decade can thus be salutary for the subsequent initiatives in the 1990s and beyond. Thirdly, the improving international climate, super-Power bilateral relations and the attendant INF Treaty, strategic and other negotiations should all spur us to redouble our efforts to avert the failures of the earlier two Decades as we march into the 1990s and towards the end of this century.

As a delegation that played an important role in the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade, Nigeria hopes that the goals and objectives of that Decade will be more achievable in the 1990s. We are convinced that peace and security are indivisible in our interdependent world, which is today more than ever before facing the crucial challenges of ever dwindling resources amid poverty, ignorance, disease and socio-economic deprivations. The Declaration of the 1990s should therefore, among other things, address these key issues because it is our firm belief that disarmament proceeds from the realization that these factors are part and parcel of genuine global peace and lasting security.

In conclusion I wish to pledge my delegation's good will and co-operation on the various issues on the agenda before this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. If we can demonstrate the requisite political will, it should be possible to attain conclusive understanding in the key areas of our deliberations in the larger interests of humanity.

Mr. PEERTHUM (Mauritius): Let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. With you presiding we have the assurance that the deliberations of our Commission are in good hands. May I also extend the congratulations of my delegation to the other members of the bureau.

More than 40 years ago, at the dawn of the nuclear age, the great scientist Albert Einstein said that nuclear weapons had changed everything except our ways of thinking. Today, if we are to believe certain statements by a number of world leaders, we seem once more to be condemned to fulfil Einstein's prophecy.

In the recent past we have witnessed a number of positive changes in the international climate of peace and security. The leaders of the two super-Powers have declared that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. A historic arms-reduction treaty was signed to eliminate all intermediate-range and shorter-range weapons in Europe, and its implementation is proceeding smoothly. Cuts in conventional forces in the European theatre have been announced. A political consensus has emerged to bring an end to protracted regional conflicts and has found concrete translation through the means made available by the United Nations. The forces of democracy and freedom are finding increased, though still tentative, forms of expression world wide. All those previous developments should be cause for encouragement to make a new, albeit cautious, departure from the traditional modes of cold-war thinking. They are harbingers of an emerging world order in which nuclear weapons are called upon to play a constantly diminishing role. This new order offers tantalizing glimpses of a world rid of weapons of mass destruction, of enhanced security at lower levels of armaments and reductions of military budgets and of an increasing United Nations role in the field of disarmament and collective security - a vision of a world fraught with new risks

(Mr. Peerthum, Mauritius)

but also full of new hopes and possibilities. We therefore urge the two super-Powers and the militarily significant Powers to seize on those hopes and possibilities, which, we feel, far outweigh the attendant risks.

We urge the early convening of a conference to negotiate a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty in an attempt to help stop the development of new weapons of mass destruction and the spiralling arms race. It would be impossible to attain the goal of general and complete disarmament if each step in arms control and arms reduction were matched by another step in the development of new arms. We hope that the recent International Conference on Chemical Weapons held at Paris will generate strong momentum for the early conclusion at Geneva of an international convention on the banning of such weapons.

We cannot overstate the danger of the spread of weapons of mass destruction around the world. We therefore consider universal adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be among the highest of priorities. As previous speakers have mentioned, the important issues of the interrelationship between a comprehensive test-ban treaty and the NPT should be examined in order to address the real concerns of non-adherents to the NPT.

The nuclear capability of South Africa, which has been repeatedly denounced by the General Assembly, is a cause of very grave concern to Africa, especially to southern Africa. We must continue to examine measures for exerting the utmost vigilance over countries that collaborate with South Africa in the nuclear field.

Disarmament, as we all know, is a matter for all countries, developed and developing, although we also know that the former have a greater responsibility in the matter, since they are by far the major producers of armaments. It is with utter dismay that we note that about 70 per cent of the total imports of major weapons is consumed by third-world countries. An average of 30 billion dollars'

(Mr. Peerthum, Mauritius)

worth of armaments is sold annually by the major weapon-exporting countries. Those figures stand in stark contrast with the dire social and economic needs of third-world arms-purchasing countries. The developed countries hold a great measure of responsibility in this sad state of affairs because of lack of control over exports. We call for a group similar to the one established informally at Paris to monitor the sale of chemicals for possible use in weapons in order to help stop the flow of death to developing countries. Developed countries need strong political leadership in this matter, for tremendous revenues are generated by foreign arms sales.

Mr. BELONOGOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. Chairman, the Soviet delegation is pleased to see you in your responsible post and wishes you great success.

The Disarmament Commission is regarded in the Soviet Union as a major United Nations body whose annual sessions provide us with an opportunity to hold a review, as it were, to broaden the horizon of the entire range of disarmament problems and, in so doing, to compare the positions of States and to analyse new elements they may contain and their possible bearing on the solution of disarmament problems, as well as to single out key elements of particular importance for further progress in disarmament. That is how we understand the meaning and the main thrust of the general discussion that is currently taking place in the Commission and, similarly, the upcoming debate on other items on the Commission's agenda with a view to producing specific recommendations.

We hope that the process that has already begun - and is intended to produce a new model for security, as proposed by Mikhail Gorbachev in his statement to the United Nations General Assembly - will be reflected in the Commission's work. Such a model implies stability and predictability in international relations,

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

elimination of the danger of a nuclear conflict, the ever-diminishing role of the entire element of military strength and the simultaneous strengthening of the mechanism of political and legal restraint, with effective control over compliance with the generally recognized rules of international law becoming its major element.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The new political thinking, the overcoming of confrontational stereotypes, and the orientation towards seeking a balance of interests have made it possible in the past few years to achieve greater confidence and to make a breakthrough in strengthening comprehensive security in its most important aspect - that is, in the field of disarmament. As a result, we are witnessing the emergence of a new historical reality - a shift from overarmament to reasonable sufficiency, to making military doctrines of States defensive in nature, to an appropriate limitation of their armed forces and military build-up to strictly defensive requirements. This implies a switch to a non-offensive structure for the armed forces, maximum limitation of attack weapons in their composition, a change to their deployment in a defensive mode, and reduction of military production. We are convinced that the widely acclaimed principle of defensive sufficiency could become a universal norm in the future.

Consistently matching its words by its deeds, the Soviet Union has taken a number of major unilateral steps aimed at revising its military doctrine in an unequivocally defensive spirit. During 1989 and 1990 the armed forces of the USSR will be cut by 500,000 men, or 12 per cent of their total strength. As for Europe, Soviet troops will be cut in the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, and also in the European part of the Soviet Union itself - totalling 240,000 men, 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery systems and 820 combat aircraft.

Out of 10,000 tanks, 5,000 will be physically destroyed and the rest will be converted into tow trucks for civilian purposes and training vehicles. Along with large-scale reductions of the armed forces, there will be a change in their structure as well. In particular, the number of army divisions will be cut by half, and the balance between offensive and defensive means is under review.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

Six Soviet tank divisions to be withdrawn from the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and Hungary will be dismantled. Army divisions that remain on the territory of our allies are being converted to fit a defensive structure as the number of tanks they have is considerably reduced - by 40 per cent in motorized infantry divisions and by 20 per cent in tank divisions. This process is well under way. Suffice it to say that by the end of April more than 700 tanks had already been withdrawn to the territory of the Soviet Union. A number of attack aircraft, assault-landing, assault-crossing and other units, with their weapons and combat equipment, will be withdrawn as well. By 1 January 1991 the contingent of the Soviet armed forces in Eastern Europe will be purely defensive in nature.

Our defence budget will be cut by 14.2 per cent, and production of weapons and combat equipment will be reduced by 19.5 per cent. Conversion of the defence industry has just begun in the USSR; some parts of it are now working for civilian purposes. Armed forces and armaments, as well as defence expenditures, of the USSR's Warsaw Treaty allies will also be considerably reduced.

All those measures will give an impetus to the disarmament process and open up enormous possibilities for further ridding world politics of the shackles of suspicion and confrontation, for a transition from the economy of armament to the economy of disarmament. We hope that the Western States also will adopt practical measures aimed at ensuring the defensive nature of their military doctrines, and that they will follow our example and also start reducing those military components where the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has a considerable advantage over the Warsaw Treaty.

As for the Asian-Pacific region, the most urgent task here as well is to give an impetus to the processes that could at last lead to a reduction of the arms race and a relaxation of military confrontation. A series of major initiatives put

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

forward by Mikhail Gorbachev in Vladivostok and Krasnoyarsk, together with impressive unilateral measures on the part of the USSR, are aimed at achieving a practical solution to this problem. Thus, 200,000 troops out of the total number of 500,000 being reduced are stationed in the Eastern part of the country. Moreover, we are withdrawing 75 per cent of the Soviet military contingent from Mongolia and are eliminating our aircraft group there. All this, including the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, contributes to a practical solution to the long-standing question of reducing armed forces and armaments in the Asian-Pacific region.

Complete confidence between States in their relations, establishment of an atmosphere of openness and transparency and renunciation of excessive secrecy and a confrontational approach are undoubtedly of crucial importance for the effectiveness of a new model of security. The statement (A/44/114) of the Committee of the Ministers of Defence of the Warsaw Treaty member States on the relative strength of the armed forces and armaments of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO in Europe and adjacent water areas was an important step in that direction. In the near future, the Soviet Union will also publish data on its defensive potential in the Far East. We believe that the publishing of data on the military capabilities of States and their military programmes facilitates negotiations on the reduction thereof.

Unilateral reductions of Soviet armed forces will also be carried out in conditions of maximum openness and transparency, with representatives of the public and mass media, including foreigners, invited as observers.

The main direction for forming the new model of security is the phased elimination of nuclear weapons. The question of the 50 per cent reduction in the Soviet and United States strategic offensive weapons arsenals in conditions of the

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

preservation of the anti-ballistic missile Treaty is still in the forefront of the international agenda. Certainly, new intensive efforts on both sides will be required during the negotiations to complete preparations for the signing of the texts of the relevant treaty and the accompanying documents. For our part, we shall continue to negotiate in a constructive spirit and to seek solutions that serve the goal of maintaining and strengthening strategic stability with decreasing levels of strategic armaments.

There is a proposal of the Warsaw Treaty member States that goes in the same direction. It envisages the beginning as soon as possible of separate negotiations on tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, including the nuclear component of dual-purpose weapons, with the aim of their phased reduction and, at a later stage, their complete elimination. If both sides renounce the modernization of their tactical nuclear missiles, that will contribute to creating a favourable atmosphere for such talks. The USSR, for its part, is not modernizing its tactical nuclear missiles.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

In addition to measures aimed at steadily reducing nuclear armaments, there is a need to block the channels of their accumulation and improvement. The Soviet Union has taken a major step towards full cessation of the production of fissionable materials for weapons. Speaking in London, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev announced the decision of the USSR to stop in 1989 the production of highly enriched uranium for military purposes. In addition to the industrial reactor which had been producing plutonium for weapons and which was shut down in 1987, the Soviet Union plans this year and next year to shut down two more similar reactors without putting any new reactors into operation. We favour the conclusion of a separate international agreement on the cessation and, at a later stage, complete prohibition of the production of fissionable materials for nuclear weapons. For obvious reasons, our appeal to conclude such an agreement is addressed primarily to the United States Administration.

We believe that it is particularly important to consolidate the consensus reached in the United Nations concerning the idea that the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament negotiations is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The Conference on Disarmament can make a major contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament. We believe that there is now a need to intensify the multilateral exchange of views on these questions between all nuclear Powers in the framework of the forum in Geneva. We are also deeply convinced that all States will benefit from the reduction of nuclear arsenals, and that all countries have the right to participate in this process and to make a contribution of their own and to propose their own solutions to the problems.

In the same context, an immediate solution to the nuclear-test-ban problem is of paramount importance. The Soviet Union favours an immediate and complete ban on all nuclear explosions and supports the use of any measures - unilateral, bilateral

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

or multilateral - to achieve this goal. Our unilateral moratorium on all nuclear explosions had been in force for 18 months, and we are prepared at any time to declare a new moratorium jointly with the United States and to make it of indefinite duration.

There has been some progress at the Soviet-American talks on the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. Joint experiments on verification clearly proved the possibility of reliable monitoring of compliance with the so-called threshold treaties of 1974 and 1976. Their ratification would make it possible to proceed to further interim limitations on the number and yield of nuclear tests with a view to their complete cessation.

We are aware that the Soviet-American dialogue - notwithstanding its exceptional importance - cannot, owing to its bilateral nature, provide a final solution to the problem of a complete and universal prohibition of nuclear testing. Bilateral efforts should be complemented by multilateral negotiations within the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, starting with discussions on the question of establishing an appropriate system of verification of compliance with the future comprehensive agreement.

Reduction of conventional arms together with the elimination of nuclear weapons is of major significance for the formulation of the new model of security. Negotiations among the 23 States on conventional armed forces in Europe, as well as negotiations among the 35 States on confidence- and security-building measures in Europe, play a unique role in this process. The Warsaw Treaty and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will seek to remove imbalances and reduce armaments in Europe and to eliminate surprise-attack and offensive capabilities there. Confidence-building measures have been successfully implemented on European

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

soil. They should be expanded to cover naval and air forces and should also include limitations on all other types of military activities.

The current improvement of the international climate and the unblocking of conflict situations open up new possibilities for limiting and reducing armed forces and armaments in various regions. Practical steps in this direction could be taken with due regard for the specific conditions of each region and in keeping with the further development of the overall process of radical reductions in conventional arms.

A related issue which is also ripe for practical consideration is the limitation of international arms transfers. Of particular significance here, as we see it, will be the establishment of a registry of transfers and sales of arms and, subsequently, of international control over the weapons market.

At the same time, our forum must give tangible impetus to the consideration of a particularly urgent problem, namely, the limitation and reduction of naval forces. Naval forces should be included in the disarmament process and a meaningful dialogue should begin on reducing the level of military confrontation in the world's oceans. Should this major channel of the arms race remain open, it will be fraught with the risk of a new spiral in military competition which could undermine efforts in other areas of arms limitation and disarmament. Naval forces are a component part of the overall military balance between the Soviet Union and the United States, the Warsaw Treaty and NATO. We believe and have repeatedly stated that naval arms represent a major question which should be dealt with in separate negotiations.

It is our considered opinion that it would be reasonable to adopt a stage-by-stage approach to the problem of curbing the naval arms race, beginning with confidence- and stability-building measures in the naval field. It is

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

important to build on existing results in this area and to prepare recommendations which should be included in the agenda of relevant negotiating mechanisms. We welcomed the adoption at the forty-third session of the General Assembly of the document prepared on the initiative of the Federal Republic of Germany concerning guidelines for confidence-building measures. It is imperative to ensure that those guidelines be adopted in all areas of military security and to expand confidence-building measures to cover naval activities.

In order to put naval issues on a practical track, we feel that it would be useful to prepare an updated United Nations study on naval problems which would take into account new data and provide comprehensive coverage of extending confidence-building measures to the sea and ocean waters and of limiting and reducing naval forces and activities. The USSR is ready to contribute to such a study.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The Soviet Union reaffirms its support for the idea that the States concerned should collectively work out the technical means of verifying the absence of nuclear weapons on naval ships. These questions could be discussed at a United Nations multilateral expert meeting or in some other forum. As is well known, the Soviet Union applies, through diplomatic channels, for permission for its naval ships to enter foreign ports. We are ready to provide information, on the basis of reciprocity with the United States and other nuclear Powers, on whether our ships entering foreign ports carry nuclear weapons.

Reduction and, in the long run, elimination of military presence abroad is leading to a safer world. This process has already begun with the very active participation of the Soviet Union, which has decided, unilaterally, to reduce its military presence beyond its national borders. Detailed considerations in this regard are contained in the document submitted by the Soviet delegation at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, entitled "Elimination of foreign military presence and of military bases on the territory of other States".

The Soviet Union is beginning to reduce its military spending in connection with the unilateral reduction of its military forces. We favour limiting military budgets to the level of reasonable sufficiency and we are convinced that real and comparable reductions of military budgets must take place in conditions of openness and transparency. Moreover, measures to ensure transparency with regard to military budgets could be taken first by all major military Powers, primarily the nuclear Powers. An important factor in ensuring openness and transparency in respect of military budgets is their discussion and adoption by the supreme legislative bodies of States. As for our country, military development plans and spending on defence will be subject to approval by the new Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The Soviet Union will shortly publish data on its defence budget. The Soviet delegation is authorized to announce that the Soviet Union intends to present to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, in 1990, data on our military budget in conformity with the United Nations standardized reporting system. We hope that the current session of the Commission will allow for completion of the preparation of the document concerning the principles of freezing and reducing the military budgets of States.

The United Nations is called upon to play a key role in establishing a new model of international security and, eventually, in ensuring its normal functioning. The contribution of the United Nations to disarmament should be increased and all United Nations mechanisms in this field should be improved, together with their methods and means. It is necessary to continue to move on in the search for universally acceptable solutions based on the balance of interests of States. In this regard, we think the proposal to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Security Council deserves attention. We consider it important to undertake practical preparations for the convening of a meeting of the Security Council at the level of ministers for foreign affairs early in the forty-fourth or the forty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly to discuss ways to improve the international situation, including the military aspect of security.

We fully support the activities of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. The Soviet delegation has been instructed to announce our readiness to organize a conference in Moscow from 5 to 7 June 1990 jointly with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) on strategic stability and mutual security in the year 2000 and the role of the United Nations. This conference will be financed from the Soviet Union's voluntary contribution to the

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

UNIDIR budget for 1990. We are announcing that this contribution will amount to 250,000 roubles and \$US 20,000.

Determined action by all States on the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels will contribute to the formation of the new model of security. The declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade, together with the adoption of an appropriate document, will be an integral part of efforts in this regard. Our views on this question are contained in the letter from the Permanent Representative of the Soviet Union to the United Nations Secretary-General dated 7 April 1989.

There is an urgent need for South Africa to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to place its activities in the nuclear field under IAEA safeguards. It is important for the Commission, pursuant to discussions on the agenda item entitled, "South Africa's nuclear capability", to be in a position to draw up effective recommendations.

This session of the Commission is beginning at an important time, a time when mankind has a real opportunity to enter into a new and peaceful period of its history. There is increasing understanding in the international community - and here in the United Nations it is particularly strongly felt - of the need for a peaceful era and a new model of security appropriate to that era. To strengthen this important trend, it is necessary first to develop and intensify political dialogue aimed at seeking solutions to problems, rather than at confrontation, and at exchanging constructive arguments, rather than at recriminations. This dialogue requires constant and active participation on the part of all countries and regions of the world. The Disarmament Commission, in which the entire world community is represented, can make an important contribution to the internationalization of dialogue as well as to the process of negotiations in the political-military sphere.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

Disarmament is one of the elements of a comprehensive approach to the building of a qualitatively new world, one in which security would be based on international legal, rather than military, deterrence. The disarmament process could be an effective contribution to restructuring the system of international relations precisely on this new conceptual basis.

We believe that at this session of the Commission we should make use of the opportunity to broaden the area of agreement among States and to bridge the gaps between the positions of different countries so that we can travel together on a significant part of the road that lies ahead.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.