



General Assembly

RECEIVED
SECRETARY GENERAL
29 APRIL 1992

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CN.10/PV.164
29 April 1992

ENGLISH

DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 20 April 1992, at 3 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. ERDOS

(Hungary)

- Statement by the Chairman
- Organization of work
- General exchange of views (continued)
- Programme of work

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

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to appeal to representatives to arrive for meetings more or less on time. I know that I shall not be able to change the world here, but I shall try as much as I can to ensure that the meetings start more or less at the scheduled hour and minute.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: As representatives will recall, at the Disarmament Commission's organizational meeting held on 3 December last year, the Commission established four working groups, on the four substantive agenda items, and appointed the respective chairmen of those groups.

As I mentioned this morning, the Chairman elected for Working Group IV, on agenda item 7, regarding the role of science and technology, will not be able to assume that chairmanship for this session, owing to certain unexpected circumstances. As a result of consultations among members of the Group of African States, I am pleased to report that that Group has decided to nominate Ambassador Emeka Ayo Azikiwe of Nigeria to the post of Chairman of Working Group IV.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that it is the wish of the Disarmament Commission to appoint Ambassador Azikiwe of Nigeria as Chairman of Working Group IV of the Commission for the 1992 session.

It was so decided.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued)

Mr. REINO (Portugal): Speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, I have the honour to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the important office of Chairman of the 1992 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. This election shows that the Commission recognized your remarkable work and excellent results in chairing last year's Working Group I, thus contributing to ensuring a positive result of the Commission's work as a whole and to enhancing its functioning. In this respect the Twelve would like also to recall the role played by last year's Chairman of the Commission in the implementation, for the first time, of an agenda reduced rationally to four items.

(Mr. Reino, Portugal)

This new pattern permitted a good and workmanlike mood, and now the agenda can be dealt with in a more constructive way. The Twelve will strive for a positive discussion and for the efficient accomplishment of our work within the timeframe and agenda specified in the reform programme.

A new positive atmosphere and attitude towards arms control and disarmament have emerged, owing to the new climate prevailing in international relations. This change enabled the work of the First Committee of the most recent General Assembly session to be very fruitful, with some resolutions of major importance being adopted. Events since last year's session of the Disarmament Commission have confirmed - if confirmation was necessary - the need for restraint and transparency on military matters.

The European Community and its member States are confident that transparency benefits all, does not limit States' own security and plays a vital role in the achievement of agreements in this area. Proof of this emerging confidence was the overwhelming vote at last year's session of the General Assembly in favour of resolution 46/36 L, submitted by the Twelve and Japan, on transparency in armaments. When duly implemented, this resolution will provide the Secretary-General with a universal and non-discriminatory Register of Conventional Arms open for consultation by all States as the first step towards enhanced transparency in the field of conventional arms.

The Twelve are greatly encouraged by the progress so far achieved at the meetings of the panel of governmental experts and look forward to the elaboration of the technical procedures necessary for the operation of the Register, thus enabling all States to provide data in due time, in accordance with the provisions set out in the annex to resolution 46/36 L.

(Mr. Reino, Portugal)

As to the illicit arms trade the Twelve welcome resolution 46/36 H, on international arms transfers, and remind participants that, according to operative paragraph 10, the decision whether to include this issue in next year's agenda must be taken during the present session of the Disarmament Commission.

The European Community and its members also look forward to further cooperation with the newly independent States of the former Soviet Union on all aspects of non-proliferation and on compliance with and adherence to existing and future regimes of arms control and disarmament agreements.

The Twelve wish to emphasize the positive outcome of the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, in particular the enhancement and extension of existing confidence-building measures and the recognition of the fact that an effective verification regime could strengthen the Convention. In this respect they look forward to positive results from the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts to identify and examine potential verification measures from a scientific and technical standpoint. They are encouraged by the results of the first meeting of this Group.

As regards chemical weapons, the European Community and its member States attach the utmost importance to the conclusion within this year of a global, comprehensive chemical weapons convention with a satisfactory verification regime, and are fully committed to finalizing such a convention in time for presentation to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. Community member States are actively engaged in promoting this goal, both in Geneva and in their capitals. They also note with great satisfaction that a large number of States - as well as the Twelve themselves - have expressed their intention

(Mr. Reino, Portugal)

to be among the original signatories to the chemical weapons convention and urge all other States to proceed likewise.

It was with the aim of confidence-building through transparency that objective information on military matters was proposed as an agenda item for the Disarmament Commission. This will be the first item to have reached the final stage of a new three-year period for consideration.

The Twelve believe that the Chairman's paper of 1991 offers a good basis for a full debate and the adoption by consensus of a set of guidelines for recommendation to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

Of the other agenda items, regional disarmament is already recognized by the Disarmament Commission as one of the essential elements in global efforts.

The European Community and its member States consider that regional disarmament is a most effective measure by which States can contribute to international security and should be aimed at keeping military forces at the lowest level consistent with the requirements of self-defence.

The Twelve believe that the Working Group report and the Chairman's paper of May 1991 provide a useful starting-point for the 1992 discussion. The European Community and its member States also believe that agreements at the regional level will prove a useful complement to bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

Examples of this are the recent agreements in Angola, the ongoing talks in Rome aimed at achieving peace in Mozambique and current peace operations in El Salvador.

In the field of regional arms control, the process of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) could serve as an interesting point of reference for other regions.

(Mr. Reino, Portugal)

The European Community and its member States support wholeheartedly the commitment of the participants in the 1A negotiations of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) to reach - in connection with its entry into force - an agreement to limit the personnel strength of the conventional armed forces within the area of application in time for the Helsinki summit meeting to be held at the end of the CSCE meeting.

In this context, the European Community and its member States attach great importance to the Vienna Document of 1992 and to the open skies Treaty, both adopted last month, which will contribute significantly to further confidence-building in Europe and beyond.

Other developments are also welcomed by the European Community and its member States, such as recent initiatives in the denuclearization of Africa, in particular South Africa's accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the safeguards agreement negotiated and signed with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the moves towards the implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa, adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at its fifty-fourth ordinary session, held at Abuja, in May-June 1991.

(Mr. Reino, Portugal)

In this connection the European Community and its member States wish to welcome the major, positive initiatives in Latin America, such as the Mendoza Declaration by Argentina, Brazil and Chile in September 1991 - to which Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay and Ecuador have acceded - the French decision to ratify the Additional Protocol I of the Tlatelolco Treaty and the recent commitments taken on by Argentina and Brazil establishing full-scope safeguards regimes with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The European Community and its member States also welcome the willingness declared by the Andean countries at Cartagena to renounce weapons of mass destruction in order to transform Latin America and the Caribbean into the first inhabited area of the world free from weapons of mass destruction.

With regard to the Korean Peninsula, the European Community and its member States welcome the ratification of a safeguards agreement with the IAEA by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and look forward to the early implementation of the agreement to allow the IAEA to carry out fully its consequential responsibilities. They also encourage further development in the bilateral arrangements between North Korea and South Korea regarding mutual inspections.

The accession of China to the NPT is also a most welcome reinforcement of the Treaty's regime.

The Twelve are ready to contribute constructively to discussions on this issue, recognizing that regional disarmament covers all types of disarmament, and hope that this year's meeting will make useful progress on the definition of the role of the United Nations in regional disarmament. In the opinion of the Twelve, that role lies in defining and upholding universal principles, encouraging individual regions to take initiatives to solve their own problems and supporting their efforts to this end.

(Mr. Reino, Portugal)

The existence of large arsenals of nuclear weapons and the danger of a further proliferation of nuclear weapons affect the security of all States. Thus, the Twelve consider nuclear disarmament and questions of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, particularly now after the end of the cold war and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, to be one of the most serious challenges, requiring the continuous attention and commitment of all States Members of the United Nations.

The Twelve appreciate the progress that has been made in this field in the past year, notably the strategic arms reduction Treaty (START) and the subsequent initiatives of Presidents Bush and Yeltsin.

They also welcome the recent progress made by the United States and Russia towards further reductions in their nuclear arsenals and encourage their efforts in this direction.

The two nuclear Powers that are members of the European Community have also made a significant contribution to this process by making unilateral reductions of their nuclear weapons.

The Twelve welcome, in particular, the unilateral decisions taken by the United States and the former Soviet Union to eliminate all land-based short-range nuclear weapons and hope that the implementation of these measures will take place in the best possible conditions of security and transparency.

As far as nuclear testing is concerned, and taking into account recent initiatives in this field, the Twelve believe that this issue should continue to be addressed.

The European Community and its member States also attach great importance to the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. They again urge all States that have not yet done so to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

(Mr. Reino, Portugal)

They welcome the establishment of the science and technology centre in Russia, which will contribute both to disarmament and to non-proliferation objectives. They have already made clear that they will extend substantial support to the centre and they look forward to cooperating with the other States involved to assure its success.

The Twelve are also pleased that some progress was made at the recent IAEA Board of Governors meeting towards strengthening the Agency's safeguards system. They hope that the efforts of the Director General in this regard will be supported by all States.

On the question of the role of science and technology in international security and other related fields, the European Community and its member States recognize the major importance of the role of science in developing the necessary know-how for arms disposal techniques, in particular in the chemical and nuclear fields, in a way which is safe for the populations and the environment and also with a view to converting military industries to civilian purposes. They also consider that science and technology have a most valuable role to play in methods for verification of arms control compliance and disarmament agreements.

The European Community and its member States are convinced, if I may quote resolution 45/61, that

"science and technology can profoundly contribute to solving problems of mankind, especially to promoting its social and economic development".

It is our task to assess the implications of science and technology for international cooperation and peace and security. The aim of the European Community and its member States is to create a situation in which all States wishing to gain access to high technology for development purposes may cooperate within a framework that guarantees security.

(Mr. Reino, Portugal)

In conclusion, the European Community and its member States will make every effort to ensure that this session will be a fruitful one and that the Disarmament Commission, as a recognized deliberative forum for in-depth study in the field of arms control and disarmament within the United Nations, will be able to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session the most significant possible set of concrete recommendations.

Mr. SEIM (Norway): On behalf of my delegation, I have the pleasure to convey to you, Sir, our heartfelt congratulations on your election as Chairman of this session of the Disarmament Commission. It is our hope that our deliberations will take place in a spirit of productive cooperation and that the positive climate which characterized the First Committee at the last session of the General Assembly will continue to prevail.

Norway fully supports the reform programme adopted in 1990 with a view to enhancing the functions of the Disarmament Commission. There can be no doubt that the reform package has strengthened the role of the Disarmament Commission as a deliberative body in the field of disarmament.

The first substantive item on our agenda is the question regarding objective information on military matters. Openness and transparency are essential elements in the broader context of confidence-building measures, arms limitations and disarmament. The improved climate in international relations is a sound basis for continued efforts to promote openness and transparency in all military matters. Greater exchange of information on military expenditures will strengthen international peace and security at the global and regional levels.

(Mr. Seim, Norway)

In recent years, several initiatives have been launched to achieve this end. The most promising result thus far has been the establishment of a United Nations Register of conventional arms. Norway welcomes the Register and we look forward to the report of the expert group on technical procedures for the effective operation of the Register. The Register will promote greater openness in international arms transfers and will help to discourage destabilizing arms build-ups, especially in unstable regions. However, such a Register will only be effective if it is based on universal participation. It is our hope that all States will provide the necessary information spelled out in the Register.

The agenda item on objective information on military matters is the only one which will be concluded at the present session of the Disarmament Commission. We hope that all delegations are prepared to contribute to reaching a successful conclusion. The paper presented last year by the Chairman provides a good point of departure for our discussions.

The next substantive agenda item covers nuclear disarmament. Norway has noted with appreciation the positive developments towards the strengthening of international security. The signing of the strategic arms reduction Treaty (START) was indeed an important event. The recent proposals by President Bush and President Yeltsin concerning further reductions in strategic nuclear arsenals should be followed up by negotiations as soon as possible.

We are gratified to note that a number of States have recently acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The intention of the new republics of the former Soviet Union to accede to the Treaty is also an important step towards universal compliance.

The one-year moratorium on nuclear testing imposed by the Government of Russia and the decision of the Government of France to suspend all nuclear

(Mr. Seim, Norway)

testing for the rest of this year are important steps towards the achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The achievement of a total, permanent ban on all nuclear testing remains an important Norwegian disarmament objective. We view the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban treaty as essential in order effectively to halt the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. A comprehensive test-ban treaty will be an important instrument in preventing any further escalation of arms competition and to contribute to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

Norway earlier voiced concern about the environmental and health risks associated with underground nuclear testing, particularly in ecologically vulnerable environments such as the Arctic. We regard this as an additional and important reason for the discontinuance of all nuclear-test explosions. Only a comprehensive test ban would put an end to the danger of contaminating the environment with radioactive substances released by nuclear explosions.

The General Assembly has repeatedly called for multilateral efforts towards this end. Norway has actively supported this call. We share the view that the most effective way to put an end to nuclear testing is through the conclusion at an early date of a verifiable, comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty that will gain the adherence of all States. The task of seeking agreement on a comprehensive test ban falls mainly on the multilateral negotiating body in Geneva. The Conference on Disarmament has particular responsibilities in the negotiation of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Norway will continue to support the Conference on Disarmament as the appropriate forum for dealing with this issue.

We regret that the Ad Hoc Committee on a nuclear-test ban has not been able to resume its work during this year's session. It is important that the Committee be re-established as soon as possible with an appropriate mandate,

(Mr. Seim, Norway)

as was decided by the General Assembly last year. A prolonged impasse in the test-ban issue within the Conference on Disarmament would give the wrong signals to the preparatory efforts for the next Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

At this year's session of the Disarmament Commission we should try to engage in a discussion of specific areas related to the process of nuclear disarmament. The extended general debate that has characterized the Disarmament Commission's earlier deliberations should be avoided. A more specific approach this year by the Working Group would allow a more in-depth discussion of the issue.

The next substantive agenda item covers regional disarmament. Significant progress has been made in various regions of the world by means of peace, security and cooperation agreements intended to enhance confidence among nations. A number of regional conflicts which originated during the cold war either have been or are being resolved. In other conflicts, such as in the Middle East, a new, arduous process of cooperation has been initiated.

Today, the United Nations has a stronger position than ever before in the management of our collective global responsibilities, as well as in the field of security. However, security will continue to be based on regional cooperation, as provided for in the United Nations Charter. Poverty, environmental degradation and mass migration are forcing countries to work together in the knowledge that our future security must be forged together. Regional solutions can set a precedent for global solutions. The adoption of regional disarmament measures is one of the most effective means by which States can contribute to international security, arms limitation and disarmament. The last substantive item on our agenda is the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other

(Mr. Seim, Norway)

related fields. During last year's result-oriented deliberations, the Working Group managed to reach a consensus report. This report provides the necessary basis for this session's work. It is in the interest of all that the positive momentum from last year be continued during this session.

Experiences gained from the Gulf war demonstrate that there is a need for control of the transfer of high-technology products, know-how and services related to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Control of weapons technology, particularly nuclear technology, is a global concern which is becoming increasingly urgent. Norms or guidelines for the transfer of technology with military applications should take into account legitimate requirements for the maintenance of international peace and security, while at the same time ensuring that they do not deny access to high-technology products, services and know-how for peaceful purposes. In fact, the exchange of scientific and technological know-how for social and economic development should be encouraged. In addition, technology can be used to enhance the possibilities for verification of compliance with arms control and disarmament agreements.

The multilateral export control regimes established by the Australian Group, the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime support all of these objectives. The sole task of these regimes is to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. With this in mind, the 27 partners of the Nuclear Suppliers Group have recently agreed to implement a multilateral export regime of nuclear-related dual-use materials, equipment and technology in unsafeguarded nuclear programmes or in nuclear weapons programmes.

In the light of growing concern over missile proliferation and in the interests of international peace and security, the participating countries in

(Mr. Seim, Norway)

the Missile Technology Control Regime have appealed to all States to adopt the Guidelines for Sensitive Missile-relevant Transfers of 16 April 1987. The significance of this appeal will certainly be underscored at the next plenary meeting of the Regime, which will take place in Oslo from 29 June to 2 July.

Mr. TUCKER (Bahamas): My delegation extends its congratulations to you, Sir, upon your election as Chairman of the 1992 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. At a time when the world continues to undergo dramatic changes and the prospects for international peace and security seem to be in jeopardy, we are convinced that through your leadership skills, our Commission in the next few weeks will be able to make viable recommendations to build on the progress that has been attained thus far. Our congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau and the Chairmen of the four Working Groups. My delegation would also like to commend the former Chairman, Ambassador Hohenfellner of Austria, for the exemplary way in which he conducted last year's session.

Just as the year 1991 was marked by a myriad of events that impacted significantly on the international community and more so on the work of this Organization, 1992 thus far has presented equal challenges. Events in Eastern Europe, and more so in the former Soviet Union, have presented us with a unique situation. While we all welcome and recognize the Commonwealth of Independent States which evolved out of the former Soviet Union, we can none the less express our concern as to what obstacles it might pose for the ratification and implementation of already-signed treaties and how it will affect further arms control negotiations.

(Mr. Tucker, Bahamas)

In this regard, my delegation welcomes the January disarmament initiatives announced by the President of the Russian Federation in the field of arms limitations and reduction. At the same time, my delegation is saddened by and concerned about the situation in Yugoslavia and hopes that an expeditious solution will be achieved in the interests of peace and democracy.

The settlement of disputes by peaceful means is one of the purposes for which this Organization was founded, as stated in Article 1 of the Charter. The Government of the Bahamas subscribes to this position as part of its foreign policy objectives. In this connection, we fully support the launching of the Middle East peace process, which can be seen as a vital element in the easing of international tensions. It is our express hope that continued progress will be made on the basis of the principles of equality and of respect for the legitimate interests of the parties concerned. We are also encouraged by the result of the referendum held on 17 March 1992 in South Africa, which can be viewed as testimony that the process of dismantling apartheid has acquired an irreversible character and that the citizens of South Africa are striving to attain national reconciliation in the noble task of building upon a non-racial democratic society.

In focusing briefly on events in our region, Latin America and the Caribbean, we see that the events of the past six months have brought both successes and concerns. Late last year the region was stunned by events in the Republic of Haiti, which culminated in the forcible overthrow of the democratically elected Government and the forcible exile of the President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Also, just as nations of the region were celebrating the successful conclusion and signing of the New York Act by the Government

(Mr. Tucker, Bahamas)

of El Salvador and the FMLN, thus ending 12 years of civil war, the cease-fire that went into effect on 1 February 1992 was overshadowed by events in our sister nation of Venezuela, where an attempt was made to overthrow the democratic Government of President Carlos Andres Perez on 3 and 4 February. My delegation was thus relieved at the successful suppression of the revolt and welcomes the triumph of constitutional order in Venezuela.

The foregoing events clearly demonstrate that, despite the present dramatic progress being made to achieve political stability, thus leading to global peace and security, major problems still persist and are reaching their boiling points, thereby threatening to undermine the progress already made. Member States must look more closely at the factors perpetuating such events and address them in the context in which they are presented.

At the first-ever summit-level meeting of the Security Council, held on 31 January 1992, leaders of 15 Member States undertook

"to work in close cooperation with other United Nations Member States in their own efforts to achieve this, as well as to address urgently all the other problems, in particular those of economic and social development, requiring the collective response of the international community"

(S/PV.3046, pp. 146-147).

The United Nations has been given a greater opportunity than at any time in its history to play its intended role as the centrepiece of the international collective security system.

"Cooperative security, keeping the peace, fostering voluntary democratic change and promoting respect for human rights",
in the words of William Durch and Barry Blechman in their report "Keeping the Peace: The United Nations in the Emerging World Order", must be the guiding

(Mr. Tucker, Bahamas)

principles for the United Nations in this final decade of the twentieth century.

At this juncture, I should like to make some brief remarks concerning our agenda for the 1992 substantive session. The 1991 session, meeting for the first time under its new reform programme, was able, after intensive discussions, to arrive at consensus on three of the four agenda items - items 4, 5 and 6. Discussions were approached from a brain-storming yet serious perspective, as was reflected in the various working papers and proposals presented by delegations. Since the last session my delegation has had the opportunity to study more closely the various proposals and has found them to be extremely useful, especially those submitted under items 6 and 7.

Recent events have illustrated graphically the long-term effects when the transfer, sale and exchange of arms go on unchecked and unabated. It is further evident that the relaxation in East-West tension and recent developments have not thus far had a dramatic effect with respect to reduction of armaments and the military budgets of States. In fact, recent events have led to a renewed concern by States about their security and ways to preserve and protect it.

As we conclude our deliberations on agenda item 4, "Question of objective information on military matters", at this session, the idea of how to promote openness and transparency in arms transfers must be advanced. Recent studies have shown that, in spite of the Gulf crisis, arms sales are up and military budgets have not decreased substantially, thereby further depleting resources that could be used for economic and social needs. Resolution 46/36 L, adopted by the General Assembly at the forty-sixth session, recognizes in its first preambular paragraph that

(Mr. Tucker, Bahamas)

"excessive and destabilizing arms build-ups pose a threat to national, regional and international peace and security, particularly by aggravating tensions and conflict situations, giving rise to serious and urgent concerns".

Therefore, we can only hope that the recently established Register, which went into effect on 1 January of this year, the details of which are outlined in the annex to the resolution, will lead to effective measures by Member States in addressing this issue.

The nuclear-arms race is usually linked with the cold war, as is nuclear-arms control. From a historical perspective, a great chance to put a leash on nuclear weapons was lost in 1946-1947, for a variety of reasons. The recent events of 1990-1991 in a sense have created a situation in which the world is afforded a second chance to contain the danger of nuclear weapons and prevent planetary suicide. We have seen much progress over the past few years in the field of nuclear-arms control. In the past year the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime has been strengthened, with at least five Member States acceding to the Treaty; unilateral and bilateral decisions have been taken by the two major nuclear-weapon States; and a joint declaration on a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, along with an agreement on reconciliation, non-aggression, exchange and cooperation, has been signed by the Governments of the two Koreas.

One of the major successes in the field of nuclear non-proliferation thus far, however, has been the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. In its preamble the States Parties pledge their desire

(Mr. Tucker, Bahamas)

"to contribute, so far as lies in their power, towards ending the armaments race, especially in the field of nuclear weapons, and towards strengthening a world at peace, based on the sovereign equality of States, mutual respect and good-neighbourliness". (A/C.1/946, p. 2)

My country remains resolutely committed to the principles and objectives espoused in the Treaty. Therefore, it is with deep satisfaction that today we share in the celebrations of the Treaty's twenty-fifth anniversary.

Despite the above, we are cognizant of the fact that more still needs to be done in the area of nuclear non-proliferation. Therefore, as we commence our second year of deliberations on item 5, "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons", we reiterate the importance of this item's remaining at the top of the disarmament agenda. Non-nuclear-weapon States especially must remain confident that nuclear-weapon States share the same concerns for a world free of nuclear weapons.

My delegation attaches great importance to agenda item 6, "Regional approach to disarmament within the context of global security", especially in the light of recent political developments in our region in the past months. Although we are situated in a region that has enjoyed relative peace throughout its history, the changing times have shown us that no region is now immune from political conflicts and threats to its national security, even from internal forces. In response to these developments, Caribbean Heads of Government, at their Third Inter-sessional Conference, held at Kingston, Jamaica, on 19 February 1992, proposed the establishment of a regional security scheme for the Community to address security concerns. The proposed scheme is to incorporate the existing regional security scheme for the Eastern

(Mr. Tucker, Bahamas)

Caribbean, with links by means of cooperation agreements with other member States of the Community. A ministerial committee has been given the mandate to finalize the structure of, and other arrangements for, the operation of the expanded security system for adoption by the Conference.

The discussions on this item at the last session provided an interesting debate, and many divergent views were expressed with respect to the relationship between regional disarmament and global security and arms limitation and disarmament; principles and guidelines; ways and means; machineries and modalities; and the role of the United Nations. My delegation again intends to follow closely the discussions on this item.

Access to scientific and technological innovations has generated much debate over the past years, especially concerning their acquisition, transfers and dual usage. The vast possibilities that scientific and technological progress offers for supporting disarmament negotiations and implementing their results, inter alia, in the fields of verification, of compliance with agreements in arms limitations and disarmament as well as conversion of military industry to civilian production, have been recognized. Further, consideration has been given to the concept that science and technology can profoundly contribute to solving the problems of mankind, especially to promoting its social and economic development. In this context, my delegation shares the view that no State should be denied access to scientific and technological capabilities.

(Mr. Tucker, Bahamas)

However, we are opposed to such technologies' being used for other than peaceful purposes since that poses a direct threat to peace and security. In this regard, we support the proposals put forward at the last session which sought to establish universally acceptable international norms or guidelines that would regulate international transfers of sensitive technologies while ensuring that such norms do not deny access to high-technology products, services and know-how for peaceful purposes. My delegation looks forward to the continued discussions on this item, which at the previous session were characterized as complex, wide-ranging and challenging.

The world is at a crucial point in its history. The challenges and pressures that continue to be placed on the political, economic and social fibres of societies grow as I speak. We continually see success being offset by setbacks which then require new strategies to address these sometimes unpredictable and miscalculated events.

As we speak of a new world order, which has yet to be clearly defined, new concepts of what constitutes democracy and sovereignty are being put forward. Poverty, economic inequalities, environmental degradation and human rights abuses persist. In the next three weeks, under our mandate from the Final Document of the first Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament, we shall continue our deliberations with the objective of formulating recommendations that will serve as the basis for directing the United Nations work in the maintenance of international peace and security and disarmament. My delegation pledges its full cooperation.

Mr. ACHARYA (Nepal): Allow me to extend to you, Sir, the warm congratulations of my delegation on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for the 1992 session. It is indeed satisfying to see so experienced a diplomat as you, active in many important areas of United Nations activities, guiding our work this year.

I wish also to convey my delegation's appreciation to Ambassador Peter Hohenfellner of Austria for his skillful leadership of the Commission at its 1991 session.

The Disarmament Commission is once again meeting at a time of momentous changes in international relations. Periods of transition are also periods of concern, and the present is fraught with uncertainties as to the shape of things to come. The uncertainties, however, have not dampened hopes for a new era. The threat of a nuclear holocaust continues to recede. Familiar concepts of ideological rivalries and the concomitant military alliances have become outdated. Democracy and human rights are becoming inalienable parts of human life around the world. Continents have come closer still, and events in one region have profound effects on the other regions.

We have witnessed the destabilizing effects of the development and proliferation of sophisticated weapons of mass destruction. This has further underscored the indivisible relationship between international security and international political, economic and environmental stability. My delegation hopes that the unfolding process will establish a new framework of cooperation, not only between what used to be called the East and the West, but also between developed and developing countries.

(Mr. Acharya, Nepal)

I wish now to turn to the current substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. My delegation is satisfied with the implementation of the decisions concerning reform of this forum. The reforms made possible a focused discussion of the items on our agenda at the 1991 session, and we are confident that this healthy trend will continue this year.

This session will be the last for the discussion of the item on objective information on military matters. The Working Group on this item has achieved important progress, Sir, under your able chairmanship during the last session. My delegation views this agenda item as an important confidence- and security-building measure. We look forward to a compilation of definitive principles and guidelines reflecting universally acceptable positions.

Important developments have taken place in the field of nuclear disarmament since last year. The signing of the START Treaty has been followed by important unilateral announcements, both in the United States and the Russian Federation. We welcome the accession by China to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Likewise, my delegation welcomes the announcement by France that it will do the same and will accept a moratorium on nuclear tests in 1992.

At the 1991 session, the Chairman of Working Group II, on nuclear disarmament, made very serious efforts to lay the groundwork for progress in this important area. We welcome the intention of the Chairman of Working Group II to try to build on the results of the last session. It is a complex matter, but the changes in the international situation have raised further fundamental questions about the value of the continued maintenance of huge

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nuclear arsenals. In the interest of collective security, it is time that the nuclear-weapon States displayed the political will to realize the global aspiration for a nuclear-weapons-free world.

My delegation hopes that, this year, Working Group III will try to build on, and expand the outcome of, last year's session. We believe that the regional aspects of disarmament and security have an impact on the global situation. To be effective, regional approaches have to be made with the participation of the States of the region concerned and taking into consideration the characteristics of each region.

Achievements in one region may not be automatically transferable to another region, but they can serve as examples. As in the case of the development of guidelines for objective information on military matters, the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament can also play important roles in building regional approaches to disarmament. In this context, I wish to recall the informal but important exchange of views at the meeting of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific held in Kathmandu in January this year.

During the last session, Working Group IV, under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Castro of Brazil, identified broad areas for this session to focus on. Science and technology hold immense promise for enhancing peace and security by promoting development, especially in the developing countries. My delegation hopes that the deliberations at the United Nations Disarmament Commission will help in developing guidelines that address the legitimate concerns both of suppliers and of recipients.

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The items on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission at this session have an important bearing on the future of the disarmament process. My delegation hopes that the 1992 session will further strengthen the spirit of cooperation on these important issues and enhance the role of the Commission in the multilateral disarmament agenda.

Ms. RIVERA (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the Costa Rican delegation, I should like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and your colleagues on the Bureau on your election to your respective posts. I wish all of you every success in this prestigious and respected body, the United Nations Disarmament Commission. I assure you of my delegation's sincere support in the accomplishment of your important work.

The atmosphere in which this session of the Disarmament Commission is taking place is conducive to the promotion of new initiatives in this field. We have entered a new era in international relations, an era in which disarmament has become one of the most important issues of the decade of the 1990s. That is why we need to give it its rightful place, to have it considered as one of the priority elements in the building of a new world order of peace, security and cooperation which can strengthen the economic and social development of all peoples the world over.

We believe that the attainment of this goal will depend completely on the efforts that States make in the processes of regional and global disarmament aimed at reaching arms control and arms reduction agreements and disarmament which can promote a greater transparency and openness of objective information on military matters and which can also lay the foundations for a new model of security that includes broad measures to regulate the production, stockpiling, reduction, conversion and balance of weapons and armed forces as well as research in this field.

There are signs that we are coming closer to the achievement of this goal as a result of the profound changes that have taken place on the world scene in recent years. It is obvious that the world wants the structures of the new world order to take shape with a view to strengthening the foundations of a

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fundamentally new security system based on confidence and cooperation. This can happen only with the active participation of all nations - large, medium-sized and small.

A clear reflection of this is the United Nations, which is called upon now more than at any other time in its history to work collectively against aggression, to mediate conflicts, to maintain peace, to defend human rights. Furthermore, it is now possible, indeed necessary, to broaden the Organization's functions in regard to arms limitation and disarmament, because of the recent establishment of the register of conventional armaments, maintained at the Headquarters of the United Nations.

My delegation attaches great importance to all the substantive items on the Commission's agenda, but we are particularly interested in the following items: regional approach to disarmament within the context of global security and other related spheres, and objective information on military matters and its relationship to international security and disarmament.

Regional disarmament is a priority in the world of today because it is one of the fundamental elements for strengthening global efforts to achieve peace. We are convinced of the importance of promoting regional disarmament measures, taken upon the initiative and with the participation of all the States concerned. Such measures should take into account the special characteristics of the region and should be consonant with the principle of reasonable security, reducing weapons and armed forces to the lowest possible level in order to improve the social conditions of peoples without jeopardizing national dignity and sovereignty.

One of the major advances which it is important to recognize and which my delegation supports is the decision taken at the eleventh summit meeting of the Central American Presidents, which adopted the Tegucigalpa Protocol,

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affirming the wish of those States to design a model of regional security based on a reasonable balance of forces and on the strengthening of civilian rule. We have no doubt that this important contribution will help to lay the foundations of a new world order of peace, security and cooperation. A clear example of the shaping of this model is to be found in the regional disarmament efforts being made in Central America. The Esquipulas process established two historic stages for the attainment of regional peace. One stage is the promotion of an internal solution to the Central American conflict, through the democratic channel of national reconciliation; the other is the laying of the necessary foundations for the establishment of the Security Commission as the organ with the task of drawing up the guidelines for the achievement of regional disarmament, with a view to concluding an agreement on security, verification, and limitation of weapons and forces in the region.

That is why Costa Rica has supported the efforts made by the Security Commission, which decided to establish a technical subcommittee to draft a model for the drawing up of military inventories. The subcommittee has also defined the elements required to establish a proportional balance of forces in the region, and it has set up machinery for the verification of the inventories drawn up by the five Central American States, with the assistance of the United Nations and the Organization of American States. The results have already begun to appear: Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Honduras have deposited their inventories with those two organizations; they will be opened once all the inventories have been submitted.

Similarly, we support the efforts towards national reconciliation made by Guatemala, through the plan for comprehensive peace, and the agreement in

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El Salvador, which will undoubtedly make it possible quickly to fulfil the goal set by the Security Commission.

The factors which I have just set out relate also to another item of interest to Costa Rica: objective information on military matters. We believe that the recent establishment of the register of conventional armaments falls within this line of thinking, since its goal is to promote greater access to objective information, and transparency and moderation in the area of weaponry.

My delegation has shown great interest in this item since 1989, when it submitted to the Disarmament Commission working paper A/CN.10/125, paragraph 6 F of which pointed for the first time to the need to initiate work on the establishment of an international register of conventional armaments and their transfers, within the United Nations Secretariat. That is why we supported and co-sponsored the relevant draft resolution submitted at the last session of the General Assembly. But we believe that the register must be broadened in order to contribute to the strengthening of confidence. We agree that the register should include objective quantitative and qualitative information on military matters supplied by large, medium-sized and small States, so that the register can be universal and non-discriminatory. Similarly, we believe that consideration must be given to incorporating broad measures regulating the production, stockpiling, reduction, conversion and balance of armaments and armed forces.

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Accordingly, we believe it is necessary to promote greater openness and transparency among States by incorporating in the Register objective information on the policies, procedures and agreements entered into by States at the national and regional levels in the following areas: first, production, stockpiling and distribution of arms; secondly, assistance in military technology; thirdly, reduction, conversion and listing of armaments, armed forces and military expenditures; fourthly, control, limitation and reduction of arms and disarmament; and, fifthly, prevention of illicit arms trafficking.

We believe that the above-mentioned aspects could lay the foundations for promoting a new model of international security leading to the establishment of a reasonable balance of arms and military personnel by reducing them to the lowest possible level. They would also make it possible to pursue efforts to bring about negotiations on security, verification and arms control and reduction, with a view to the signing of agreements in this important field.

In conclusion, I should like to quote part of the statement made in the General Assembly by our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Niehaus Quesada, as follows:

"All States and all men have the opportunity and the responsibility to make those dreams come true, to participate in the building of a new world, a new international order, and the United Nations, as the coordinator of those efforts, as the embodiment of the spirit of brotherhood that should guide mankind, must play the decisive role of designing and building the shining destiny opening up before us. Let us all contribute to making it a reality." (A/46/PV.11, p. 58)

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: There are no further speakers for this afternoon's meeting.

Tomorrow morning's meeting will not be as short, since we have some 14 speakers; in the afternoon there are 17. For that reason, I would ask members to attend the meetings punctually. I should also like to express my thanks to all those delegations that heeded my appeal and inscribed their names on the list of speakers for this afternoon.

The next plenary meeting will be held tomorrow morning, Tuesday, 21 April, at 10 o'clock - at 10, I repeat, and not at 10.30 - to continue the general exchange of views, and in view of the long list of speakers, I urge all members to be punctual.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.