Chairman: Mr. VELLODI (India)

Agenda item 5: (continued)

(a) Harmonization of views on concrete steps to be undertaken by States regarding a gradual agreed reduction of military budgets and reallocation of resources now being used for military purposes to economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries, noting the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

(b) Examination and identification of effective ways and means of achieving agreements to freeze, reduce or otherwise restrain, in a balanced manner, military expenditures, including adequate measures of verification satisfactory to all parties concerned.

Programme of work

This record is subject to correction.

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

80-61293
The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 5 (continued)

(a) HARMONIZATION OF VIEWS ON CONCRETE STEPS TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY STATES REGARDING A GRADUAL AGREED REDUCTION OF MILITARY BUDGETS AND REALLOCATION OF RESOURCES NOW BEING USED FOR MILITARY PURPOSES TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, PARTICULARLY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, NOTING THE RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(b) EXAMINATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF EFFECTIVE WAYS AND MEANS OF ACHIEVING AGREEMENTS TO FREEZE, REDUCE OR OTHERWISE RESTRAIN, IN A BALANCED MANNER, MILITARY EXPENDITURES, INCLUDING ADEQUATE MEASURES OF VERIFICATION SATISFACTORY TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED

Mr. BUKETI BUKAYI MATULOMBELE (Zaire) (interpretation from French): It gives my delegation great pleasure, Sir, to see you once again presiding over the work of the second session of the Disarmament Commission. The successful work accomplished during the first session of this Commission permits my delegation to feel that our present deliberations will lead to a general consensus on the series of issues on our agenda despite the difficult international situation. My delegation is thus satisfied with the way in which you have been guiding our debates and reaffirms its support for you and its determination to participate fully in attaining the noble objectives we are pursuing.

The decade of the 1980s has started with a tension in international relations which reminds us of the international climate of the sad years of the cold war. As long as that climate persists it will be difficult to achieve any progress at all in disarmament. The lack of progress in the Committee on Disarmament is the most eloquent evidence of this.

The delegation of Zaire would like to approach the examination of item 5 on our agenda - dealing with the harmonization of views on concrete steps to be undertaken to achieve a gradual reduction of military budgets and to reach agreements to freeze or reduce military expenditures, including adequate measures of verification satisfactory to all parties concerned - from a dual point of view of development and of security of States.
First, we should like to discuss prospects for development. Paragraph 35 of the Final Document, adopted by consensus by all the States Members of our Organization, recognized the close link which exists between disarmament and development. It said:

"Progress in the former would help greatly in the realization of the latter. Therefore resources released as a result of the implementation of disarmament measures should be devoted to the economic and social development of all nations and contribute to the bridging of the economic gap between developed and developing countries." (resolution E-10/2, para. 35)

Reliable information reveals that since July 1978 – the time of the special session on disarmament – military expenditures increased from $400 to $450 billion a year. That means that more than $1 billion is expended each day on arms while, paradoxically, it is difficult to gather $1 billion in contributions for humanitarian purposes or for the establishment of funds for development purposes.

The destabilization of a number of régimes in developing countries has led those countries to devote enormous human and material resources to arming themselves in order to ensure their own security – unfortunately to the detriment of their economic and social development. This situation, instead of serving the cause of the poor countries, only makes them poorer and postpones even further the day of their economic take-off.

My delegation would like to refer once again to the Final Document of the tenth special session which in its first paragraph defined security as being an inseparable element of peace; to speak of peace is to speak of confidence in one's surroundings.

The adoption of concrete measures on the reduction of military budgets can never be envisaged in an international climate of insecurity and mutual mistrust. That is why it is extremely important that we should adhere to the spirit and the letter of the fundamental principles of the Charter and the pertinent resolutions of the General Assembly in order to achieve peace, the fundamental goal pursued by the United Nations and the basic reason for its creation.
How should we respond to the question raised by item 5 of our agenda? Before giving my delegation's viewpoint, I should like once again to refer to the Final Document of the tenth special session, whose paragraph 110 gives a mandate to the Disarmament Commission to make recommendations on various problems in the field of disarmament and to follow up the decisions of the special session devoted to disarmament. Paragraphs 89 to 92, being part of the Programme of Action decided upon by the special session devoted to disarmament, should be the basis for our reflections here.

For its part, the delegation of Zaire feels that the first Disarmament Decade devoted sufficient time to the elaboration of principles which will lead us to disarmament, and that the second Decade should enable us to implement those principles and to apply concrete disarmament measures. This is why we regard the publication, the freezing and the reduction of military budgets and expenditures as the first practical measures which Member States should take.

The regulation of the trade in and manufacture of conventional weapons should be the subject of negotiations first of all among producing countries, and then between sellers and buyers and my delegation regrets that during our Commission's work last year, the one of the three points which was not agreed upon by consensus had to do with the prohibition of the development, manufacture and deployment of conventional weapons of great destructive power. For, as we know, since the Second World War, it is conventional weapons that have caused the greatest losses, both in human lives and in the squandering of large amounts of material resources. The reduction of armed forces should also be a not incconsiderable element which might noticeably influence the size of military expenditures.

Finally, my delegation would like formally to propose that the Disarmament Commission give a mandate to the United Nations Centre for Disarmament to undertake a comprehensive study, based on existing documents and studies, on the question of military budgets which the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly could examine so as finally to entrust to the Committee on Disarmament the negotiation of agreements on military budgets and expenditures. The question of military budgets and expenditures is part of the problem of the arms race. That is why my delegation has always thought that the cessation of all nuclear tests, combined with appropriate control measures, would be the first major positive stage that would prepare the way for a true disarmament process.
Mr. CANALES (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, as this is its first statement in the discussions at the current session of the Disarmament Commission, the delegation of Chile wishes to extend to you its congratulations on presiding once again over our labours. We hope that our work will again bear fruit and permit us to complete our planned programme, for the issues which have been selected are of major importance.

The delegation of Chile attaches great importance to this international forum dedicated to the debate and consideration of disarmament questions, for, together with the Committee on Disarmament, which is a negotiating forum, this body has the task of presenting agreed guidelines to the international community in an effort to attain the common goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

The choice of the most effective goals for making advances which will lead us to general and complete disarmament and appreciable achievements in the second Disarmament Decade are decisive aspects which will raise hopes or continue to cause frustration in connexion with the attainment of a lasting peace, which is the ardent wish of the international community.

The aim of reducing military budgets for the benefit of the social and economic development of the developing countries is an aspiration supported by all the bodies working on disarmament.

My delegation wishes to express in this debate certain concerns about the obstacles to arriving at conclusions on the reduction of military expenditures which States might be willing to accept.

We are meeting in difficult international circumstances. All the principles and norms which govern international relations are being sorely tested. Of late the world has seen flagrant violations of the principles which we have tried to establish in the United Nations. This situation has led to a lack of confidence among States and an increase in international tension in certain parts of the world, especially in the Middle East and southern Africa, among other areas.

This situation, of course, means an increase in the arms race both among the major Powers, which have increased their military preparedness; and, above all, in the countries of the third world, which see their integrity constantly threatened.
Will it then be possible to reduce military expenditures on weapons, to reduce the number of men under arms in the permanent forces, to reduce conscription and the involvement of women in national defence?

Another matter of serious concern is the increase in the manufacture of weapons. Recently, a number of countries have become involved in the manufacture of weapons and in their trade. It should be remembered that four fifths of the military expenditure of the world are now devoted to conventional weapons, an aspect that is extremely disquieting. It means that there has been a considerable build-up of conventional weapons due to the rapid progress in military technology and that in turn has required that armies, navies and air forces of all countries be modernized.

These conventional weapons are becoming increasingly sophisticated. In addition to adding to the risk of an armed conflict, they have contributed to the enormous cost of acquiring weapons. The percentages of national budgets that are devoted to national defence have increased constantly rather than decreased, and of course that has delayed socio-economic development.

Will it be possible to reduce military expenditures voluntarily without jeopardizing national security? To that should be added, perhaps, that weapons have become extremely sophisticated; that is true of both nuclear and conventional weapons. As a result, countries have had to spend more and more on research and on the development of weapons; consequently, weapons have become more costly and destructive and in addition more technical and lengthy military training has become necessary.

Is it possible that one way of helping the socio-economic development of the countries of the third world would be to reduce military expenditures? No significant advances have been made in disarmament; progress in this area has been slow and inadequate. However, in the limited area of the restriction of the use of certain conventional weapons, the effects of which have been found to be excessively harmful or indiscriminate, we might mention the encouraging progress made at the first session of the United Nations Conference on Prohibitions or Restrictions of Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects
which was held in Geneva in September 1979. We sincerely hope that at the second and final session this year the deliberations will result in limitations on certain kinds of weapons, for example, incendiary weapons.

The draft treaty on a comprehensive nuclear test ban has not yet been adopted, nor has the draft treaty on the prohibition of chemical weapons; both are still under study in the Committee on Disarmament. The arms race in these areas continues, with the resulting increase in military expenditures; now the incredible sum of $450 billion is being spent on these weapons. Is that an indication of the will of the military Powers to abandon such projects and devote these funds to the socio-economic development of the poor countries?

It should also be recalled that new and more sophisticated ways of waging war have been invented, such as environmental warfare. That may be restricted, but is not prohibited, by the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques. Efforts have recently been made to work on problems of outer space, employing the outer space for military purposes or for the construction of satellites for destructive military purposes. My delegation has already spoken about these matters.

All of that raises the spectre of other, new forms of war, which would lead to greater military expenditures by every military Power. That would mean an increase in resources for military purposes, and would take away from those that might be used for development.

We might mention many other aspects which contribute to an increase in military budgets, and all of these stand in the way of our desire to bring about a reduction in those budgets to help in the development of the third world. However, my delegation believes that we should redouble our efforts and try to create the political will on the part of the major Powers to realize the genuine aspirations of all the peoples of the world. If we make some progress in disarmament, these initiatives that have been taken may bear fruit. However, this will not happen unless there is respect for the United Nations Charter. We must curb the expansionist aspirations of some Powers; we must resolve disputes among peoples by peaceful means; and we must see to it that force is not employed in international relations.
Compliance with international law is the only way to guarantee peace, and that in turn could create the necessary trust that is conducive to disarmament. Then and only then will some of the funds devoted to military expenditures be directed to the development of the peoples of the world. For the time being, we must try to secure greater support for this goal by creating a new International Economic Order.

Finally, my delegation welcomes the working document submitted by the delegations of Romania and Sweden, which refers to the freezing and reduction of military expenditures. We shall study it most carefully.
Mr. *HILAM* (Kuwait): May I start, Mr. Chairman, by expressing the satisfaction of my delegation that you are presiding over our deliberations. Our Commission is evolving a new approach, new methods and procedures, under your wise and creative leadership.

Military expenditures have many facets; they involve political, military and economic considerations.

My delegation believes that a constructive approach would be to promote a reduction of military expenditures among militarily significant States and to channel the resources so released to economic and social development, especially in poor countries.

Military expenditures represent an opportunity cost because resources are scarce. A corollary of scarcity is that the employment of resources in one activity has a cost in terms of the output these resources might have produced in some other activity. There is no doubt that the present monumental level of military expenditures among the big Powers represents a very high opportunity cost.

Military expenditures are also a major factor in creating and aggravating the present rate of inflation, which has reached double figures in most of the industrially advanced countries. The production of arms in the war production sector creates incomes that are not spent in the same sector. The incomes thus generated are spent mainly in the consumer goods sector and are thus a major factor in creating what is termed "demand/push" inflation. We are certain that the study being prepared on the link between disarmament and development will clearly demonstrate in many ways how arms production has undermined economic and social development everywhere.

Military expenditure is an indication of actual or potential military strength. A rise in military expenditures, either in money or real terms, is clearly evidence of intensification of the arms race and of a deterioration in the relations between the major Powers.
It may not be possible at the present stage of international relations to ask major military powers to reduce military expenditures in a meaningful sense as long as the balance of power keeps constantly changing. All we can do is to seek a reduction of military expenditures in relative terms, that is to say, relative to the capacity of the country to produce guns or butter. We can ask the major powers to reduce their military expenditures in a lump sum, calculated in a common unit of account such as a uniform currency or a basket of goods.

Such a reduction will be a first step in the right direction. The lump sum can be increased annually by a certain percentage. Though that does not guarantee an actual reduction in military expenditures, it will have a salutary effect since it will act as a constraint on the arms-producing countries, where the competition in production between butter and guns will have to take place within a narrower economic frontier and according to a reduced production possibility curve. Once the resources thus released are used for economic and social development, the benefits are likely to become more tangible over the years and to save us from the endless arguments about the measurement of military expenditures, the authenticity of figures, the definition of military expenditures and the comparison of figures among countries. All we are asking for is a common uniform assessment of military expenditures among the major powers and a proper use of the resources thus released.

Mr. MOHAMMADI (Iran): Mr. Chairman, allow me first of all to express the satisfaction of my delegation at seeing you once again chairing our deliberations and at the excellent way in which you have conducted our work. My delegation would like to present my country's general point of view concerning the issues of our debate.

A quick review of statements made by speakers on the question of disarmament in this forum and other concerned forums distinguishes two major concerns among States Members of the United Nations. First, there is a strong conviction shared by all that disarmament is essential to the establishment of international peace and security and secondly, there is a general feeling of disappointment that the purposes and objectives of the First Disarmament Decade have not been realized.
Now that we are at the outset of the Second Disarmament Decade, it is more than appropriate to undertake a thorough study of the real obstacles responsible for the failure of the First Disarmament Decade, so that in ten years from now we shall be able to witness tangible progress in the task we are committed to achieve.

In dealing with the problem of disarmament, we have been engaging mainly in fighting the smoke rather than the fire that causes it. We have concentrated on finding some means to stop the arms race, but we have not seriously tried to determine why the accumulation of destructive weapons has been and still is so appealing to States, whether big or small, developed or developing.

We have argued that it is the right of States to acquire armaments in order to ensure their national security in a world full of tensions and hostilities, but we have not seriously considered why there is so much tension among nations which, without exception, aspire to peace.

The super-Powers leading the two major alliances in Europe attempt to justify their ever-increasing expenditures on the arms race through accusations and counter-accusations concerning each other's hostile intentions, or the quantitative or qualitative dimensions of each other's arsenals, but they never stop to consider the fact that it is actually the way in which they perceive the world and the position they have unilaterally reserved in it for themselves that are the main cause of international tension.

The age of empires is over, but the empire-seeking States are not prepared to accept that fact. They have spent enormous material and intellectual resources on developing weapons systems that are capable of destroying the whole world several times over and because they possess such vast military capabilities, they tend to see international affairs only through the narrow perspective of the use of force or the threat of the use of force. It was within such a trend of perception that the latest military aggression by the United States against Iran took place. It is also within that context that a vast United States naval task force is present in the vicinity of the Persian Gulf, oceans away from the American mainland, thus creating a threat against the will of peoples in that area.
In order that the arms race may come to a stop and the world may actually move towards disarmament, thus freeing vast resources to be used in fields more rewarding for humanity, the vision of empire has to be finally discarded so that the peoples of the world may be able to exercise freely their right to self-determination and the big Powers would not be competing with each other over territories and resources that do not belong to them. That would certainly ease the existing tension in international relations and would inevitably diminish the need for armaments and reduce military expenditures all over the world.

Mr. ADENIJI (Nigeria): Item 5 on the agenda of the Commission again gives us the opportunity to reappraise in definitive terms the entire complex of the engine of growth of the arms race, which constitutes in a way the genesis of the seemingly intractable problem of the ever-increasing level of armament now facing the international community.

A number of delegations that have so far had the opportunity to address themselves to the question of military budgets of States have referred not to an apparent lack of sensitivity on the part of countries to the enormity and the impact of the continued waste of resources, human as well as material, on armaments; rather they have laid stress on the singular lack of political courage on the part of governments to adopt the necessary measures to back their pronouncements with deeds and thus redress the priorities and realities of their national situations.
Current world military expenditure stands at about US$ 450 billion. This is going on in a world where the greater proportion lives under the poverty line, without education and saddled with crippling diseases. The picture becomes even more scandalous when one notes that official development aid is only $20 billion annually.

My delegation has always approached the collateral measure of reduction of military budgets with objectivity and realism. We have always accepted the concept of reduction of military budgets as a useful basis for slowing down the ever spiralling arms race. We have also always been cognizant of the right of every country to security but we think that the principle of undiminished security of States is not necessarily related to the present level of weaponry, nuclear as well as conventional, accumulated by the major military Powers. In fact it has become obvious that the greater the level of armament the less the security that is being sought, but the more economic and social programmes are either abandoned or de-emphasized. A good example of this comes to hand in a report which I am sure representatives must have seen today in The New York Times. This is not to say, of course, that it is something peculiar to the particular case to which the report refers. It is merely perhaps one good example which by coincidence is reported at a time when the Commission is discussing this very important item. That report - and I would merely quote the relevant paragraph - says:

"The increase in proposed military spending was offset by reductions in social programs. And five liberal House Democrats among the conferees said those cuts were so drastic that they would not support the measure when it reached the House floor."


I have not quoted that as a means of drawing particular attention to any specific situation, but, as I have said, it comes at a time when it can focus our attention on the results of increased military spending in all countries, because there is no doubt that in all countries the more that is spent on armament the less will be available for economic and social programmes which are more immediately beneficial to peoples.
Pertinent studies under the aegis of the United Nations have underscored the economic and social consequences of the arms race. The hope that resources released from the implementation of disarmament measures can be used for economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of developing countries, has often been expressed. The Nigerian delegation has always supported the pertinent initiatives and proposals before the General Assembly on the reduction of military budgets. We have participated in the work of the expert group set up by the Secretary-General at the instance of the General Assembly to work out a system of international reporting of military expenditures, having regard to the geo-political and economic variants in the reporting States, and we are equally considering participating in the testing exercise on the matrix for military reporting in accordance with General Assembly resolution 33/67.

Nigeria co-sponsored resolution 34/83, an initiative that was taken by the delegations of Romania and Sweden. The Commission is again indebted to those two delegations for assisting the work of the Commission on this item by the submission of document A/CN.10/114. We have found the document very useful, and my delegation would like to assure its two authors of our support in their endeavours.

Mr. RAHMAN (Bangladesh): Bangladesh was one of the countries supporting resolution 34/83 F, in which the United Nations Disarmament Commission was asked to undertake this year the examination and identification of effective measures to freeze, reduce or limit military budgets and make recommendations to the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Therefore it is only natural that my delegation supports the paper submitted by Romania and Sweden. While extending our support to that initiative, we recognize that the freezing and reduction of military budgets should not be carried out to the detriment of the security of any State or create unilateral advantages for certain States or groups of States. It is in this context that my Government has always expressed unqualified support of the need for negotiations on this matter between the States most heavily armed and other militarily significant States.
Recognizing that billions of dollars are being spent on armament, the Final Document of the special session devoted to disarmament, in paragraphs 89 and 90, has laid special emphasis on redoubling the efforts to stem the dizzy spiral of military expenditures. As a token of our commitment to the idea of the reduction of military budgets, both nuclear and conventional, we have given whole-hearted support to the matter of participation by all the members of the Security Council in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. We believe that with their effective participation we can realize the goal of the resolution on the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

We have also pointed out that a measure of verification is an important element in this regard. As my delegation has stated in the general debate, paragraph 31 of the Final Document of the special session clearly spells out the need to establish international machinery for verification within the United Nations system.
Finally, I must add that the principal thrust in our support for the reduction of military budgets lies in the fact not only that reduced military expenditure will contribute to the relaxation of tension in the world, but also that the resources to be released by cutting budgets can be fruitfully utilized for economic and social development and the establishment of the New International Economic Order and thus lend meaning to the new round of global negotiations which is about to be launched this coming August.

As we have stated earlier, peace and prosperity are indivisible. The acceleration of military expenditures not only absorbs considerable resources, it also constitutes a destabilizing element in the entire world economy. It is our belief that a viable international system must be based on the establishment of a link between disarmament and development.

It is in the framework of this perspective that we have extended our support to the initiative of Romania and Sweden.

Mr. SHUSTOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet Union, like the other socialist countries, attributes very great significance to the question of reducing military budgets, in particular those of the major military Powers. In the declaration of the States Members of the Warsaw Treaty which was adopted in Warsaw on 14-15 May of this year, there can be found once again a proposal for the immediate commencement of businesslike negotiations on this pressing question.

The Soviet Union has consistently been in favour of introducing the practice of systematic reduction of military expenditure to replace their present constant growth.
Repeatedly in the past — in 1957, 1958, 1961, 1964 and 1973 — the USSR has raised in the United Nations the question of reducing military budgets. In many of its resolutions, the General Assembly has called for the implementation of this measure. In 1973, on the proposal of the Soviet Union, the General Assembly adopted a resolution involving a call to all States permanent Members of the Security Council to reduce in the course of that financial year their military budgets by ten per cent and to allocate ten percent of the funds saved in this way for the assistance of developing countries. However, that decision remains unfulfilled to this day, since some States have not evidenced a desire to take the matter to the stage of practical agreement.

In its attempt to find a way out of the situation in which we find ourselves, the Soviet Union amplified its proposal in the 1978 special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Our intention was that States which dispose of great economic and military potential, including all States permanent Members of the Security Council, should reach agreement on concrete measures for the reduction by each of its own military budget, not in percentage terms, but in absolute figures.

The socialist countries were prepared to reach agreement on a solution of this great task with a reduction of military budgets either by equal cutbacks in percentage terms or in absolute figures on the basis of an all-round reduction by sums of the same order. Their proposals to this effect, including a proposal that military budgets be frozen at their present level so that States could then proceed without delay to their reduction, are being examined by the United Nations.

The Soviet proposals in the field of reducing military budgets pursue the goal of substantially expanding efforts to direct economic aid to the developing countries. If one considers the present enormous volume of States' military expenditures, one can hardly fail to conclude that the practical realization of these initiatives would lead to the allocation for aid purposes of considerable extra funds to the tune of billions of dollars. This is a striking example of the connexion between disarmament and development, which has already been pointed out.
The benefits of the reduction of military budgets are perfectly obvious and nobody could seek to deny them. So why is it then that, when it comes to translating this noble idea into fact, nobody makes a move? For years, for decades, these proposals have continued to be the subject of lengthy and fruitless discussions in the United Nations and the Committee on Disarmament.

It is sometimes said, even at this present session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, that the reason for this lies in disagreements over the comparability of military budgets or the control of their reduction. As we see it, these discussions are merely a pretext for avoiding a solution to the problem. It is well known that military budgets are adopted and ultimately approved by parliaments, a process which goes on in full public view. Therefore, as we see it, such a control should and must be exercised by each State itself for itself. The question of matters relating to the comparability of budgets or their control could be endlessly extended and will only serve as a screen to mask the ever-continuing growth of expenditures for military purposes.

The true reason for the impossibility of achieving agreement on the reduction of military budgets is the absence of political will on the part of some countries to take this step. Mention has been made here earlier of the enormous expenditures laid out for the maintenance of armies and the production of arms. A major part of this expenditure comes from the participants in NATO. The leading country in this military alliance is the United States, which plans to increase its annual military budget over the next five years by 4.2 to 5.4 per cent in real terms; that is to say, 20 to 25 billion dollars at current prices.
Next year, the American military budget, according to the press, will be $161.8 million dollars, and by 1965, as the *Washington Post* recently reported, the budget is planned to reach a figure of $293.1 billion.

The major monopolies, which are part of the military-industrial complex, stand to gain most from this development, since for them the production of modern weapons of destruction and annihilation is a profitable business. It is perfectly understandable that representatives of the all-powerful military business can have not the slightest interest in reducing the profits which they derive from military orders.

A reduction of military expenditures could be achieved if there were sufficient political will, without any far-fetched control procedures. It is not difficult to imagine how positive the reaction would be throughout the world if there were an indication of the willingness on the part of the permanent Members of the Security Council to reduce their military budgets by, let us say, an agreed percentage, and if their parliaments were to enact the legislative measures to this end.

The States participants in the Warsaw Treaty at their recent meeting again evidenced their willingness to enter into business-like negotiations on the reduction of the military expenditures of these major Powers. The goal of these negotiations must be the drawing up of an agreement on concrete measures for the reduction, whether in percentage terms or in absolute figures. As a first step, agreement on this question could be reached to do something in the next three years or some other period of time acceptable to all.
At the same time, it would be possible to agree on the concrete amounts each country would cut from its military budget and allocate to assistance to the developing countries. In distributing such assistance funds to the developing countries through the United Nations, it would be advisable to create an appropriate mechanism representing all States which had undertaken to reduce their military budgets, as well as the States receiving assistance. It would be useful were the United Nations Disarmament Commission to pronounce itself in favour of the immediate achievement of an agreement on the reduction of military budgets and, as an initial step, the freezing of such budgets for a period of time.

The most radical way to reduce military budgets would obviously be to take real steps to reduce the arms race and to undertake real disarmament. A major programme to achieve this, including nuclear and conventional weapons, is contained in the declaration of the Political Consultative Committee of the States members of the Warsaw Treaty that was issued on 15 May of this year. In support of what was stated in this connexion with regard to the significance of this document, my delegation would like once again to call upon all members of the Commission to devote their most considered attention to the proposals contained in the declaration of the States participants in the Warsaw Pact, and to take a constructive approach to them, because these initiatives will create a reliable basis for resolving the urgent problems of disarmament, including the problem of reducing military budgets.

Mr. MESHARRAFI (Egypt)(interpretation from Arabic): We have been discussing the freezing and reduction of military budgets, and this question is one to which my delegation attaches considerable importance. It is linked to a number of other complex matters that involve military, political, economic and social problems. The participation of several delegations in the discussion of this question has revealed that there is general concern over
the continuing increase in military budgets and the tremendous amounts of money
being spent on arms and military research.

The international situation has been deteriorating because of the flagrant
violation of the principles we have tried to enshrine, and this has obviously
led to the present arms escalation and to the escalation in military expenditures.
We find ourselves wondering whether smaller countries will be able to safeguard
their own security. We must therefore deal with the question of military
budgets in a practical and positive manner.

Egypt is one of those countries that has supported debate on this matter
ever since it was raised at the General Assembly's 1973 session. We have
supported every General Assembly resolution in this connexion, most
recently resolution 34/83 F. Egypt supported the setting up of a panel
of experts to consider the question of military budgeting and to prepare a
uniform system of reporting on military budgets. The panel of experts produced
results which, we hope, will help us reach agreement on the reduction of
military budgets.

My delegation would like to spell out its position, which is based on
the need for the nuclear countries and countries with significant nuclear
potential to freeze their military budgets and to proceed to their subsequent
gradual reduction, on a percentage basis to be agreed upon when uniform
structures and elements for military budgeting have been decided. There should
be effective control for such reductions. These measures entail the promotion
of mutual trust, and will surely have an impact on various other areas,
especially on the developing countries of the third world.

The reduction in military expenditures and the credits devoted to military
research will release natural and human resources. Those resources should be
devoted to development. One of the problems that might arise
would be that of converting military production to civilian production. The
United Nations has conducted studies in this respect, and we may later be able
to arrive at an agreement on an international programme for co-operation to
convert military production and productive capacity to civilian production.
The study carried out by the group of experts on the relationship between development and disarmament, and the proposals to create a development fund - including the proposal that the permanent members of the Security Council and the countries with sizeable nuclear potential reduce their military budgets by a certain percentage - represent an interesting approach. The resources thus released would then be devoted to the benefit of the countries of the third world. All these proposals must be given concrete form and must be implemented in the near future.

Romania and Sweden have submitted a working document, A/CN.10/14, which contains a number of ideas that might prove useful, such as the preparation of a declaration based on a number of principles including the need to freeze and reduce military budgets, a balanced implementation that will not jeopardize the security of States and an effective implementation that will be acceptable to the parties. The working document in question advocates the conclusion of an international agreement on the freezing and reduction of military budgets. The document also recommends that we call upon the General Assembly to ask the Disarmament Commission to embody its commitment in a declaration.

My delegation would like to say that it is very grateful to the delegations of Sweden and Romania for their efforts, and we think that these proposals may prove to be useful when we come to define the measures we may wish to adopt along these lines. However, my delegation notes that the working paper submitted by Sweden and Romania places all States on an equal footing regarding their commitment to reduce their military budgets. We do not completely agree with this, as I have already indicated. We believe that primary responsibility in this connexion rests with the nuclear Powers and countries possessing important military potential. Although the countries of the third world feel the urgent need to devote all of their resources to development and to put an end to the deficits in their balance of payments, they also have an obligation to safeguard their security and independence. Many of these countries are unable to do so and feel that today, more than ever before, their security
and independence are endangered. The third world is the victim of the struggle between the major Powers and of the policy of polarization, and it has been the victim of violations of principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, and of the failure to solve a number of political problems on a fair and lasting basis. If we are to overcome the problems of general arms reduction, any solution must be linked to the need to respect the Charter and the principles of the United Nations and to resolve international problems.
Then and only then will there be the kind of climate which we need, marked by trust among States. Then and only then will we be able to encourage countries to disarm at a regional level. Then we shall be able to implement measures of regional security, as we might call them.

The delegations of Denmark and Spain have submitted working papers on conventional weapons. Those documents contain some very constructive ideas on reductions in military expenditures. We should like to make it clear, however, that a solution to the problem of reducing conventional weapons requires that there be restrictions, which must be adopted within the over-all context of general and complete disarmament. Also, there must be respect for the Charter. We must indicate how we are going to discourage States from violating United Nations principles.

We must put an end to the conventional arms race and other forms of the arms race. It is only thereafter that we shall be able to begin consultations and talks between producing and importing countries in order to put an end to the export of weapons. And of course all of this is linked in the end to the reduction of military budgets.
The CHAIRMAN: As there are no further speakers we have now completed the present stage of the consideration of agenda item 5, and I wish therefore to consult the Commission on the procedure we should adopt for our further work on it.

I have had consultations on this with several delegations, and we have also had occasion to discuss it in the Bureau. There seems to be general agreement, at least among the delegations which I have consulted, that we should not set up a working group on item 5 but should continue to consider it in the Commission, but at informal meetings as in the case of item 4.

There is, of course, the problem of who will take this Chair at the informal meetings, and possibly during the drafting stage later on. It would be difficult for me to undertake that work because I shall be busy with item 4, both in meetings here and perhaps in informal consultations outside. We have discussed this matter also in the Bureau, and have agreed unanimously on a suggestion that I should like to submit to the Commission for approval. It is that I ask one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Commission - specifically the representative of Austria - to preside over the further consideration of item 5 in informal meetings of the Commission.

Since I hear no objection, the further consideration of item 5 will take place in informal meetings of the Commission under the Chairmanship of the representative of Austria.

Monday being a holiday, we shall begin the informal consideration of item 4 in this room on Tuesday morning, and on Tuesday afternoon the informal consideration of item 5 will begin, also in this room. It is my expectation that this informal exchange of views will continue for a few meetings - perhaps during Tuesday and Wednesday - and then, depending on the progress which we make in the informal exchanges, we might have to consider the possibility of setting up a drafting group. I shall, however, leave the decision on that for a later stage.
It is my expectation that the work of drafting the recommendation that the Commission has to make to the thirty-fifth session on all these items will be completed - or that at least the effort will be made to complete it - by the end of next week, or at the latest by the following Monday, so that the plenary Commission may meet for three or four days during the week after next to complete our work by Friday 6 June.

That is the general picture as I see it now, but I think that perhaps we shall have a clearer indication by the middle of next week.

If there are no observations or comments I shall adjourn the meeting. I do not expect that the Commission will hold another plenary meeting before the week after next.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.