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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTY-SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 10 May 1983, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. DE SOUZA E SILVA

(Brazil)

General exchange of views

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

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Mr. WEGENER (Federal Republic of Germany): I am making this statement on behalf of the ten member countries of the European Community.

Since it is my privilege to be the first representative to speak at this annual session, let me welcome you, Sir, to the chairmanship of the Commission with particular warmth. This Commission is indeed fortunate to have a man of your distinction at its helm. Those among us who have followed and admired your performance and the quality of your contributions in the sessions of both the General Assembly and the Committee on Disarmament over the past few years appreciate that your election opens us particularly promising prospects for the success of this session.

This augurs well, since we are meeting for the first time since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 37/78 H. That resolution, in the drafting of which your delegation, Sir, played a major role, has sharpened the focus of our work and, indeed, refined the mandate of the Disarmament Commission. As a deliberative organ, the Commission has been asked

to direct its attention at each substantive session to specific subjects and

to make concrete recommendations on such subjects to the subsequent session of the Assembly'. (General Assembly resolution 37/78 H, para.3)

The States members of the European Community welcome the thrust of resolution 37/78 H and expect that it will invigorate the work of the Commission and substantially enhance its contribution to the tasks of the General Assembly and, by that token, to the multilateral disarmament process as such. In contrast to the work in the First Committee of the General Assembly, with its given time frame and overburdened agenda, the Commission will now be able to concentrate on a limited number of important items and to bring to these subjects a degree of work in depth which the General Assembly cannot achieve. At the same time, the Commission is asked to approach these subjects with a view to formulating concrete recommendations. This will compel us to move increasingly away from

(Mr. Wegener, Federal Republic of Germany)

general pronouncements and general comparative presentations of views.

In the implementation of paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament, we shall have to become increasingly specific and operational. In this context it is significant and fortunate that our agenda does not provide for a full-fledged general debate, thus obviating the need for delegations to make broad statements on general policy.

(Mr. Wegener, Federal
Republic of Germany)

In the view of the member states of the European Community, the new work format prescribed by the General Assembly has some obvious consequences for the selection of topics for specific treatment. In the first place, the subjects on our operational agenda must lend themselves to translation into concrete recommendations and by the same token, working papers on the subjects selected will have to be drafted with such specific recommendations in mind which could form the basis for consensus results from our work. Secondly, whenever a subject is selected it should be disposed of in terms of concrete recommendations wherever possible and, in subsequent years, its place taken by other subjects of topical significance. In this respect, our present session is of a somewhat transitional nature in that there is a carry over of some subjects which the Commission has already dealt with. It is to be hoped that at least some of these can be disposed of during the present work period or, in any event, within the near future. Thirdly, the choice of topics to be given detailed treatment should reflect a general balance taking account of the various security perceptions and priority concerns.

Mr. Chairman, if these criteria are taken as a yardstick the work programme which you have suggested and which the Commission adopted by consensus yesterday should be an excellent basis for our work in the spirit of resolution 37/70 H. It provides us with a well constructed whole, yet contains a sufficient measure of flexibility to do justice to the various topics at hand. The delegations of the member states of the European Community pledge their full support in the implementation of this programme and will contribute wherever they can to a concrete and substantive discussion. The work of this Commission - and its prospects in future years - will largely depend on the quality of the results of our work. The delegations on whose behalf I am speaking sincerely hope that the Commission will be able to adduce convincing proof to the General Assembly that the working mode which has now been chosen constitutes a useful format for useful work.

(Mr. Wegener, Federal
Republic of Germany)

I limit this statement deliberately to the organizational and structural aspects of our work. The delegations of the 10 member States of the European Community will give their substantive views on each of the items on our operational agenda in the relevant working organs in order to make sure that these views have an immediate bearing upon the work process in which we should now quickly engage.

Mr. MOUSSA (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): Mr. Chairman, I wish at the outset to pay a special tribute to you. It is not a traditional one to a new Chairman; rather it is a tribute that is directed to the activity that we have felt flowing in the veins of this body - the Disarmament Commission - which has frequently been accused of being a fruitless and useless body. But the efficient preparation that you made played a certain role in giving new hope for the future of the Disarmament Commission. I hope that we will be able at this session to answer decisively the call that appeared in the April-May issue of Disarmament Times to "Save the Disarmament Commission". We hope that the response at the end of our session will have saved it, in order that it may fulfil the role that had been envisaged for it in the final statement of the first special session on disarmament. Your chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission as representative of Brazil and the presence of the Geneva Group or, as we call them, "the Geneva crowd", would establish a tangible link between the disarmament organs that actually cancels any barrier between the Committee on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission. Hence these issues would be dealt with not in an institutional manner alone, but in an actual concrete way so that those who deliberate will take part in the issues of disarmament. Your contribution, Sir, is important and essential to disarmament activities as a whole.

I wish also to take this opportunity to congratulate the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur upon their elections.

(Mr. Moussa, Egypt)

A few weeks ago the non-aligned States held their seventh summit session. The issue of disarmament was one of the main topics before it and was dealt with in detail by the final statement. The statement spoke rightly of the "armament culture": hence it seems to me that our work in the Disarmament Commission should be directed toward reversing that expression. We should call then for a "disarmament culture". This expression also should constitute the framework within which the Disarmament Commission works. In this respect, if we consider carefully the agenda we will see that the fourth item constitutes the general framework for the work of the Commission. It speaks of the different elements of the arms race, or the "armament culture", and calls for reaching comprehensive disarmament, both nuclear and conventional - that is, the "disarmament culture". If we move from the general framework to the essence of the main item, my delegation feels that the Disarmament Commission should issue a clear-cut recommendation in this respect.

We are at a crucial juncture: either we shall be plunged into the bottomless abyss of an arms race that cannot be stopped in the near future, or we shall tread the ground of peaceful coexistence that guarantees equality and security for all within the framework of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. When we say that, we do not expect it to happen overnight. Rather, the most important element is to start the serious work within the framework of a comprehensive programme conducive to creating an atmosphere of good faith and trust and, on the basis of the political will, and enabling us to achieve that within a reasonable period of time.

In its final documents the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries rightly gave this issue special place when it declared that:

"Disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament, is no longer a moral issue; it is an issue of human survival." (A/38/132, para. 28)

They therefore found it unacceptable:

"that the security of all States and the very survival of mankind should be held hostage to the security interests of a handful of nuclear-weapon States." (*ibid.*)

This, as we say in Arabic, is the heart of the matter.

(Mr. Moussa, Egypt)

There is a radical contradiction in the prevailing concept of security. The concept of security held by some nuclear-weapon countries runs counter to that held by other countries and peoples. It is clear that the concept held by some nuclear-weapon countries depends entirely on the escalation of armaments both qualitatively and quantitatively and both horizontally and vertically. We must resolutely oppose that dangerous policy and affirm our rejection of it on the basis of the theory of collective security or equal security for all and we must prove that security and armament are contradictory.

For that reason, coming to grips with item 4 should be the point of departure for this session. Needless to say, it covers all the items on the agenda, because it defines the framework and objectives of the Disarmament Commission.

My delegation feels that this session must produce a document that sets forth its stance concerning the subject-matter of this item as well as a recommendation that would be submitted to the General Assembly at its forthcoming session.

As was stated in the preparatory meetings for this session, a relevant draft recommendation will be available to delegations in the near future. We feel that this recommendation should include a call for certain immediate measures of a transitional nature that have to do with confidence-building. We find in the position of the non-aligned countries sufficient material for concrete proposals in this respect, especially in regard to the contents of paragraph 30 of the Declaration issued by the last Conference of the non-aligned countries, which may be summarized in the following five points: first, a call for urgent measures to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race; secondly, in order to achieve nuclear disarmament, there should be an immediate prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; thirdly a call for a

(Mr. Moussa, Egypt)

freeze on the development, production, stockpiling and deployment of nuclear weapons; fourthly, a comprehensive treaty banning the testing of nuclear weapons must immediately be reached; fifthly, the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States not to threaten non-nuclear-weapon States with nuclear weapons and to formulate an international instrument in this respect must be confirmed.

If there is a consensus that item 4 is a "framework item" or the main item on the agenda of this session, there is no doubt that the other four items are equally important. I wish to deal briefly with each of those items.

First, let me deal with item 6 concerning South Africa's nuclear capability. That a country outlawed by the international political and legal system should have a nuclear capability is a matter of the utmost gravity; it constitutes a more serious menace than the menace that would be posed by an equal nuclear capability on the part of a country that is considered a part of the international community. The vast discrepancy between the behaviour of South Africa and the norms of international conduct and the indifference and blatant defiance shown by that country in the face of international public opinion would make it imperative to be twice as cautious in the face of the possibility of South Africa's using this nuclear capability in certain circumstances -- a matter which would endanger an entire continent. We must therefore attach special importance to this item, basing ourselves on what was decided by the General Assembly in resolution 37/74 B, adopted at its last session.

Egypt, as an African country, attaches paramount importance to this issue, because of its impact on international peace and security and because it obviously contravenes the Declaration on the denuclearization of Africa and the principles of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and complete and general disarmament.

(Mr. Moussa, Egypt)

This nuclear capability came into being and developed because of the consistent co-operation given to the racist régime in South Africa in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and commitments entered into under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. This co-operation continues despite the fact that the racist régime refuses to submit its nuclear facilities to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

My delegation hopes that the working group will be able to prepare specific recommendations on the basis of proposals submitted in 1981 and 1982, especially those emanating from the group of non-aligned countries. Next we have item 7 which concerns the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues. We wish to pay a tribute to the members of that body, consisting of eminent personalities and chaired by Mr. Olof Palme, for their effort in preparing its report and recommendations. The structure and independence of that body attest to its importance in analysing the situation without being affected by certain political situations. Hence, it is important that the recommendations of that body and the programme of work proposed by it should be considered seriously.

We see an objective link between the six points contained in the programme for the control of armaments and disarmament. As regards these points, I shall concentrate on the following: first, support for the system of collective security of the United Nations. The responsibility of the Security Council - that is, for the maintenance of international peace and security - is a great responsibility which should not be manipulated; the role of the Security Council in the current political situation should not be compromised. The permanent members have a specific responsibility for remedying the current deteriorating situation. Moreover, the role of the Secretary-General should be supported, especially as set forth in the report of the Independent Commission, so that he can play the necessary preventive role in the context of the available possibilities and in accordance with the Charter and particularly Article 99 thereof.

(Mr. Moussa, Egypt)

There is actually a fourth basis for this action, which involves the role of Member States. The Secretary-General's report to the last session of the General Assembly provides a good analysis of the situation. My delegation supports these meetings of the Security Council held in accordance with Article 28, paragraph 2, of the Charter, although we would like to know the reason for meetings held outside the United Nations building.

We also support the principle of partnership, as mentioned in the report, between the permanent members and the countries of the third world in implementing collective security. Security is for all countries, not for one country at the expense of and to the detriment of other countries or to the detriment of the majority of countries.

I do not wish to go into the details of the proposals put forward by this Commission because they include a call that may be described as rather unrealistic, especially in view of the difficulty of achieving an agreement between the two super-Powers on certain important issues and particularly because they are parties to disputes with some countries of the third world. This has created a political system altogether different from that of the post-war period. Hence it is impossible to think of the permanent members as constituting a homogeneous group that could reach an agreement as a single unit.

(Mr. Moussa, Egypt)

Secondly, there is the regional approach to security. There is no doubt about the importance of setting forth the regional aspect when discussing security issues. However, an important development has taken place in regional conditions as defined by the Charter. How can the African countries, for example, establish an effective system for continental or regional security when South Africa is supported by all sorts of military might, even nuclear? How can the Arab countries establish an effective system of regional security in the face of a country like Israel, which is supported by a super-Power with all possibilities of military superiority? The world has become inter-related and responsibility has many ramifications. Hence any regional measures should be supported by international measures, especially on the part of the great Powers, as some of their policies tend to threaten regional security by strengthening certain countries that persistently violate the United Nations Charter and imperil international peace and security. Based on the same premise, the call for regional security conferences should take into account the special circumstances of certain regions in the light of present conflicts and of military occupation and foreign rule. This would make it incumbent upon us to put an end to these situations before starting to speak about conferences on security and co-operation. The situation in Europe is totally different from that in the Middle East, for example, or in Africa. The Egyptian delegation will deal with the other important points in the recommendations of the Commission within the framework of the working groups set up to this effect, especially those issues concerning economic security, regional disarmament conferences and the establishment of nuclear-free zones and zones of peace, although these issues could also be considered under the item concerning confidence-building measures.

Thirdly, we have the item concerning the establishment of guidelines for suitable patterns of confidence-building measures and their implementation regionally and internationally. The Egyptian delegation was among those delegations that sponsored resolution 37/100 D concerning confidence-building measures, as an expression of the importance we attach to that issue and out of its belief in the role that such measures can play both regionally and internationally, and particularly in those regions that suffer from military conflicts and unjust military superiority that threaten the security of the countries of the region. Based on this premise, Egypt's proposal since 1977 concerning the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East is also considered to be aimed at regional confidence-building

(Mr. Moussa, Egypt)

measures. It also constitutes positive action within the framework of complete disarmament for the benefit of all. We seriously consider the work of those working groups concerned with the formulation of guidelines for confidence-building measures with great seriousness, as this is of paramount importance because any regional measures in this respect cannot be completely effective if they are not coupled with improvement in international political conditions and the international situation as well as with the fair solution of existing conflicts. This should be taken into account by the working groups and Egypt will participate most seriously in this effort.

Fourthly, we have the item concerning the reduction of military budgets. The reduction of military budgets is, in our view, closely linked to positive intentions concerning the implementation of the aims of complete disarmament. This is one of the measures of disarmament and a result of it. Therefore, if there is positive political will for disarmament, the reduction of military budgets will not constitute any real problem. Until such intentions are displayed, we hope that the Commission this session will be able to reach a solution concerning the formulation of something along these lines that would meet with consensus concerning principles and steps incumbent upon States vis-à-vis a gradual reduction in military budgets, agreed upon and to be implemented while taking into account General Assembly resolutions.

Finally, I should like to add that the Disarmament Commission, at its present session, finds itself facing two alternatives: either to face up to a challenge and prove its importance through what it can achieve concerning the items that have been put forward; or to face a declared failure and thus lose its raison d'être for ever.

In this respect I should like to refer to the first statement made by the delegation of Egypt concerning the disarmament items in the First Committee during the last session of the General Assembly, where we called for the rationalization of work in the field of disarmament within the framework of the United Nations and where we confirmed the importance of the Disarmament Commission as a deliberative body that should analyse and take stock of the international situation in this respect and submit specific recommendations to the First Committee for it to take definite measures in this respect. We still believe in the importance of this role, but it is now our responsibility as members of this Commission to reactivate that body.

Mr. GOLOB (Yugoslavia): It gives me particular pleasure, Sir, to extend to you, the representative of friendly Brazil, our sincere congratulations on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of this very important United Nations body. Your country, Brazil, is well known for its constructive contribution to and its interest in the consideration of disarmament issues. We are confident that under your able and experienced guidance the deliberations of this Commission will contribute significantly to thought and action at the United Nations. Our sincere congratulations go also to the other officers of the Committee. I should like to say at the outset that we of the Yugoslav delegation pledge our full support and co-operation to you, Sir, and to the other officers in the discharge of their important duties.

I should like to begin by addressing the United Nations Disarmament Commission itself. We attach great importance to the work of this Commission. We consider it a particularly important universal organ for consideration of issues in the sphere of disarmament. The work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission is yet further confirmation of our common commitment to ensuring that the United Nations plays the central role in disarmament. The strengthening of the effectiveness of the Disarmament Commission is our common goal.

The revitalization of the work of the Commission, begun at the first special session on disarmament, has resulted in yet another instrument for the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in international action for disarmament. We feel that through the adoption of a number of concrete recommendations the Committee has so far fully justified its existence. Lately, however, we have seen attempts to discredit the role of the Disarmament Commission as a forum for the consideration of crucial problems and for initiating effective and urgent disarmament measures. The functioning of the international machinery established for the consideration of and negotiations about the substantive questions of disarmament was thereby made more difficult. We are fully aware that the Commission cannot remain on the sidelines of present adverse international developments and we feel it is natural that divergent aspirations should be reflected in its work.

(Mr. Golob, Yugoslavia)

It is, however, evident to all of us that more effective work by the Commission, which would be reflected in agreed recommendations on the issue of negotiations on disarmament, would certainly have a positive effect on international relations as a whole.

This raises the question of the better functioning of the Commission. We feel that a logical solution to that can be found in concentrating our work in the Commission on the specific issues most directly contributing to the acceleration of existing negotiations or to the opening of new negotiations on the priority measures of disarmament. We feel that consultations on the future work of the Commission should be conducted in this sense.

The guidelines for establishing priorities were adopted in 1978 - that is, five years ago - and we do not feel that they can be called into question after five years. Consequently, the possibility of drawing upon numerous United Nations studies should also be borne in mind since their conclusions can adequately be put into effect through concrete recommendations by the Commission. In that way more precise guidelines on disarmament negotiations would be submitted to the General Assembly.

Only thus can the work of the Commission, as a universal and authoritative body directly contributing to the launching and promoting of the process of disarmament, be constructive. Otherwise, we will keep presenting to the General Assembly incomplete and - as has already happened - contradictory views. We are convinced that we would thus continue to fall behind the arms race which has, regrettably, been a much more consistent practice than actions aimed at halting and reversing the arms race.

This, the fifth substantive session of the Commission, is being held in circumstances of a gravely deteriorated international situation. The Final Document of the seventh Summit Meeting of Non-Aligned Countries held in Delhi in March repeatedly stressed that the world has been brought to the brink of a

(Mr. Golob, Yugoslavia)

nuclear catastrophe. The meaning of this warning should be fully comprehended, and urgent measures must be taken in order to eliminate the threat that faces us all without exception. We believe that such measures should certainly include the following: first, the immediate halting of the arms race and the freeze on the development, production, stockpiling and deployment of nuclear weapons; secondly, the rejection of the concept of deterrence and of the use of nuclear weapons under any pretext whatsoever; thirdly, the finalization of a comprehensive treaty banning the testing of nuclear weapons; fourthly, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world with the ultimate objective of achieving a world entirely free of nuclear weapons and, lastly, the prevention of the extension of the arms race into outer space and the utilization of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes. We think that there are a number of other measures that should also be considered in this context, and it should be stressed that stable international security should be sought at lower levels of armaments. We must reiterate that in this process a particular responsibility is borne by nuclear-weapon States, particularly the States possessing the largest military arsenals.

Regrettably, the Commission has not so far been able to adopt agreed recommendations relating to the issue of nuclear disarmament and relating to the issue of eliminating the danger of nuclear war, or to elaborate general approaches to negotiations on nuclear and conventional disarmament. Owing to their indisputable significance and urgency, these problems should be constantly the focus of the attention of our Disarmament Commission. During this session of the Commission we should do our best to start formulating recommendations for urgent measures to eliminate the danger of nuclear war.

(Mr. Golob, Yugoslavia)

At the same time we would particularly like to underline the need for elaborating general approaches to nuclear and conventional disarmament. The consideration of this issue has not even been initiated, and we believe that it should continue to figure on the Commission's agenda, because its comprehensive character makes it a prerequisite for the consideration of all other aspects of disarmament.

I should now like to make some brief comments on other issues under consideration. As far as the nuclear capability of South Africa is concerned, it is to be regretted that since 1979 the Commission has not been able to adopt any concrete recommendations. There is hardly any need to emphasize the threat to the security of Africa and to international peace at large that the nuclearization of the South African racist régime represents. I think that in this Commission we should also bear in mind the aggressive nature of the racist South African régime, its continuous threat and continued aggression aimed at the front-line States and its threat to the region at large. If we keep this in mind, it seems to us even more imperative that a stop be put to this through resolute measures taken by the international community as a whole in conformity with the Charter and with the relevant decisions of the United Nations, the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and other international documents. I should like to reiterate that Yugoslavia continues to render its full support to such an international action.

With regard to military budgets, I would observe that, since that subject has appeared on the Commission's agenda for four years, it is high time to harmonize positions and determine ways to achieve the reduction of the military budgets of States. I would add that it is certain that the reallocation of the resources thus released would greatly contribute to world-wide development and particularly to the development of the developing countries.

(Mr. Golob, Yugoslavia)

My delegation warmly welcomes the efforts exerted by the Independent Commission on Disarmament and International Security Issues headed by the Prime Minister of Sweden, Mr. Olaf Palme. We think that that Commission has adopted significant recommendations. Those recommendations have rightly received great attention and may well contribute to the better understanding of various issues in the sphere of disarmament.

(Mr. Golob, Yugoslavia)

We believe that certain basic premises contained in the recommendations of that Commission should be taken into account in the consideration of relevant disarmament issues.

Finally, we support in principle the consideration of confidence-building measures. However, we favour the adoption of measures which would be more significant and wider in scope than those already adopted. In that context, we feel, the focus should rest on measures of limitation and military disengagement, such as the prohibition of military activities and manoeuvres above determined numerical limits, refraining from military activities in the crisis regions and so on.

In conclusion, I should like to state once again that this year's session of the Disarmament Commission is another test for all of us as to whether or not we shall be able to agree on much-needed recommendations aimed at launching the process of disarmament.

Mrs. THEORIN (Sweden): Mr. Chairman, allow me first to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission. I should like also to express our appreciation for the excellent manner in which you have conducted the preparations for this session of the Commission. I look forward with confidence to working under your experienced leadership.

The international picture is dark. It is characterized by political tensions, military conflicts, a continuing arms race and increased risk of a nuclear war. Super-Power relations have continually deteriorated. Disarmament negotiations have led to few concrete results.

World military expenditures are expected to exceed the amount of \$800 billion this year. The international arms trade is continually breaking earlier sales records. We see a dramatic increase in the resources devoted to military research and development. The same is true for the number of nuclear weapons.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

This represents an immoral waste of our global resources in a world where every fifth human being lives in extreme poverty and where a child dies of hunger or illness every other second.

The two super-Powers are mainly responsible for this absurd arms race: their share of world military resources is about 50 per cent; their share of international arms exports is about 70 per cent; their share of world military research and development is 60 per cent; and they possess 95 per cent of all nuclear weapons. These enormous resources spent on the military have not led to a safer world. They have instead created increased insecurity on ever-higher levels of destructive capability.

Nuclear weapons represent the gravest threat to human existence. There are about 60,000 nuclear weapons in the world today. That corresponds to one and a quarter million Hiroshima bombs. New and even more sophisticated nuclear weapons will be added if no drastic action is taken. By the end of the 1980s their number may well increase by another 10,000 warheads. The risks of a nuclear war will multiply.

The nuclear arms race calls for a new interpretation of the concept of national security since the situation in which we find ourselves today is radically different from all past eras. With today's destructive capabilities, a new world war could mean the end of our civilization. In nuclear war there are no victors. Even if a war between East and West were initially limited to conventional arms, there is a great danger that nuclear weapons would be used on a rapidly increasing scale.

At this time, it is more important than anything else to prevent a continuation of the nuclear arms race. The Swedish Government believes that all possibilities must be explored to eliminate the nuclear threat and to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race. That is why the Swedish Government strongly supports the proposal for a nuclear-weapons freeze. Such a measure would be a breakthrough and constitute an important first step in a disarmament process.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

A nuclear-weapons freeze is completely in line with our view that the basic goal is to abolish all nuclear weapons. This demand for a freeze, followed by nuclear disarmament, is in the first instance addressed with equal force to both super-Powers. We condemn all attempts to promote the nuclear arms race with ever more dangerous weapon projects. We do so even if they are disguised in the language of compromise or described as a way to acquire bargaining chips in negotiations. The world does not need more nuclear weapons; it needs less.

Nuclear weapons have created a situation in which the nations of the world can no longer afford to pursue security along familiar avenues. Their attempts to gain security at the expense of others are bound to fail, since security in the nuclear age is indivisible. The well-worn path of military competition is a blind alley; it cannot lead to peace and security.

A new, constructive approach to security must be developed which could lead to a better world, a world free from the fear of war and the threat of annihilation. Towards this end, all nations should be urged to reassess their security needs. They must recognize that security in the nuclear age can be achieved only by acting together, in co-operation with one another.

There are indeed several important items on our agenda. Let me today limit myself to some comments concerning one of these items: the report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues. The Swedish delegation would like to revert to other important issues later on.

As will be recalled, the General Assembly requested the United Nations Disarmament Commission in resolution 37/99 B, which was adopted by consensus, to consider those recommendations and proposals in the report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues which relate to disarmament and arms limitation. The Disarmament Commission was asked to suggest, in a report to the General Assembly, how best to ensure an effective follow-up thereof within the United Nations system or otherwise.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

The report of the Independent Commission has been presented at a critical stage for international peace and security. The Swedish delegation believes that the report of the Independent Commission is a timely contribution to the international debate on disarmament issues and to the efforts to maintain and strengthen international peace and security.

The approach chosen in the report is constructive. The Independent Commission has seen as its first and foremost task, the putting forward of concrete proposals, aimed at promoting disarmament and security and designed in such a way that they could be acceptable to all States.

The Independent Commission was able to reach a consensus on a concrete programme aimed at halting the arms race and creating a downward spiral in armaments. This was unique in the sense that the Independent Commission had as members prominent personalities with political backgrounds from the two major military alliances of the world as well as from non-aligned and neutral States. For this reason, the Independent Commission in its proposals has been able to take into consideration different perceptions and security needs.

The Independent Commission based its considerations on the well-known concept of common security. This concept constitutes a more positive principle for international security than doctrines of deterrence. Durable peace and security can in the end be reached only through co-operative measures aimed at achieving common survival. For the solving of conflicts between States, co-operation should be substituted for confrontation.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

The idea of common security, in addition, recognizes the importance for international security of factors other than purely military ones, such as economic development and stability.

In the view of the Swedish delegation, the United Nations Disarmament Commission should in its consideration of this report focus attention on the usefulness of the concept of common security as formulated in the report of the Independent Commission when seeking new ways of achieving progress in the field of disarmament. This concept seems to have already stimulated many who are engaged in such endeavours. One sign of this is the important international symposium on common security to be organized by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute in September of this year.

The Independent Commission has also elaborated a programme which includes a number of proposals and recommendations on disarmament and security-promoting measures concerning a considerable number of questions relating to both nuclear and conventional disarmament.

The recommendations of the Independent Commission taken together constitute a broad programme for substantial progress towards arms limitation and disarmament. They fall into six categories: first, the nuclear challenge and East-West relations; secondly, curbing the qualitative arms competition; thirdly, ensuring confidence among States; fourthly, strengthening the United Nations security system; fifthly, regional approaches to security; and, sixthly, economic security. In each of those fields the Independent Commission, to our mind, has shown the relevance and usefulness of the concept of common security. In many cases these proposals deal with ongoing efforts in these fields, inter alia, in the United Nations Disarmament Commission itself, whereas in other cases new measures are proposed.

In the view of my Government, this programme constitutes a constructive contribution to ongoing and future efforts in the disarmament field, and it seems important that the proposals and recommendations of the programme should accordingly be taken into account within the framework of ongoing and future disarmament negotiations.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

We look forward to contributing to the discussion on this item in the informal working group which has been established for this purpose.

The nuclear arms race situation is grave. Little progress has been achieved through disarmament negotiations. Time might be very short for preventing a catastrophe affecting millions of people or even mankind as a whole. Never before has this been so clearly realized by the general public. For the first time in decades, popular opinion in many countries has become a strong force for a halt to the nuclear arms race and for speedy progress in disarmament negotiations. It is our duty to respond to this popular demand.

Mr. OTT (German Democratic Republic): This year's session of the Disarmament Commission has many important issues on its agenda. They should be considered in a constructive manner and conclusions should be drawn so that the Commission is able to contribute to the solution of the most important tasks of our time, namely, to prevent a nuclear catastrophe, to show the way to ending the arms race and to disarmament.

I should like to express my best wishes to you, Mr. Chairman, for the guidance of the Commission is certainly not an easy task, and to underline my delegation's readiness to co-operate.

As is known, international relations have been further aggravated. On the occasion of an official friendly visit to the USSR last week by the Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic, Erich Honecker, the participants in the negotiations voiced their deep concern about the increasing tensions in the world as a result of the policy that is pursued by United States militarist circles. The two sides declared:

"Those circles aim to destroy the existing military-strategic balance and to gain military superiority. The United States Administration carries out programmes of superarmament on an unprecedented scale and elaborates various doctrines for nuclear warfare, from limited to protracted nuclear war."

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

Such a course is directed not only against the socialist States but also adversely affects the interests of all peoples, of all mankind. It drives the world towards nuclear catastrophe.

The most urgent demand for the preservation of peace is therefore to take concrete measures to prevent a nuclear war, a nuclear catastrophe. One important means could be for the Western nuclear-weapon States also to follow the example of the USSR and to pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. The taking of such a step, by the way, is also being demanded by experienced politicians of the respective Western countries.

The Declaration of the States members of the Warsaw Treaty, adopted in Prague in January of this year, has put forward comprehensive proposals to prevent the world from sliding into a nuclear catastrophe and contributes to the improvement of international relations. Of particular significance is the proposal on the conclusion of a treaty on the mutual renunciation of the use of military force and the maintenance of peaceful relations between the States of the Warsaw Treaty and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The core of the treaty could be the mutual commitment of both sides not to be the first to use nuclear or conventional arms against the other.

The German Democratic Republic welcomes the initiatives for the prevention of a nuclear catastrophe made in the Political Declaration and the Appeal of New Delhi, as well as relevant proposals initiated by non-aligned countries in the United Nations. Consideration of all those initiatives in the Disarmament Commission should also help to inspire the deliberations of the Geneva Committee on Disarmament on this issue and to launch negotiations on concrete measures.

An analysis of the aforementioned doctrines of nuclear warfare and the consideration of questions of nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, as called for in resolution 37/78 C which was initiated by the German Democratic Republic, should have an appropriate place on the agenda. In this connection, we wish to call attention to the growing resistance of the peoples to the planned deployment of new United States medium-range missiles in Western Europe. For the citizens of my country who are already now living in the neighbourhood of the State with the largest concentration of nuclear weapons, the new deployment would constitute an additional and completely unacceptable threat.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

The German Democratic Republic therefore strongly supports the proposals put forward by the USSR during the friendly official visit, that a parity of medium-range nuclear missiles should be maintained at a considerably lower level, taking into account the nuclear weapons of all NATO States in Europe, both the means of delivering nuclear weapons - that is, missiles and aircraft - and the number of warheads.

These proposals are a further demonstration of the effort to reach a just agreement acceptable to both sides and should be reason enough for all NATO States finally to refrain from unrealistic unilateral demands and to agree to negotiations in the interest of the security of all.

It is likewise important not to permit the emergence of new nuclear-weapon States. That applies particularly to the racist régime in South Africa, which persistently violates United Nations decisions and threatens neighbouring countries. Effective steps should be discussed to prevent South Africa's drive for nuclear arms from being directly or indirectly supported by other States.

How successful the search for acceptable solutions through negotiations can be if all parties involved proceed from the principle of equal security has been demonstrated by the report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, the consideration of which is included in the agenda of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

We support the view that that report is a positive contribution to the efforts aimed at arms limitation and disarmament. The implementation of some proposals contained in the report, proposals which are likely to contribute directly to lessening military confrontation in Europe and to limiting armaments, we consider to be of particular urgency.

The Government of the German Democratic Republic, as members know, has supported the Swedish proposal for the establishment in Central Europe of a zone free of nuclear battlefield weapons and has declared its readiness to make the entire territory of the German Democratic Republic available for such a zone, provided that the principle of equality and equal security is observed. The establishment of such a zone would be a valuable contribution to reducing the danger of war, to continuing the process of détente and to further developing international co-operation.

The Warsaw Treaty member States advocated in their Prague Declaration that Europe should be without chemical weapons. The implementation of that proposal, together with the negotiations in the Geneva Committee on Disarmament would contribute to promoting the conclusion of a convention on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons. The German Democratic Republic took an initiative in this connection at the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly. The exchange of views on the report of the Commission should include the issues mentioned there.

The reduction of military budgets has been an item on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission since 1979 without the Commission's having achieved substantial progress towards the harmonization of views on concrete measures to that end. Since that time, expenditures for military purposes have increased world-wide from approximately \$460 billion to more than \$600 billion. That trend continues.

My delegation holds the view that a halt must be put to that development. One means which could easily, and in a relatively uncomplicated manner, be agreed upon would be the non-increase, following the reduction, of the military budgets of the permanent members of the Security Council and of other militarily significant States. An agreement covering this field would become possible if all States were to have the political will to achieve positive results.

The States members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization proposed, in their Prague Declaration, to the States members of NATO that negotiations should be entered into immediately between the two sides on an agreement aimed at not increasing the expenditures on armaments, and at cutting them in percentage or absolute terms.

An agreement on that issue must, of course, include all States possessing a large military potential. The financial means released thereby could be used for economic and social development, including assistance to be given to developing countries.

The German Democratic Republic advocates the conclusion of agreements on confidence-building measures, since they constitute a suitable means for implementing the policy of peaceful coexistence and détente. They would further the endeavours to prevent a nuclear catastrophe and military conflicts in general and would promote agreement on effective measures of arms limitation and disarmament. As is known, the socialist States comply strictly with the

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

confidence-building measures adopted in Helsinki and have proposed their development and their expansion to other regions of the world. The German Democratic Republic holds the view that measures for the prevention of armed conflicts and for effective agreements on arms limitation and disarmament, as well as effective confidence-building measures, all form an indivisible unit as they are inter-related and supplement one another. Therefore, the German Democratic Republic advocates that the Madrid meeting should soon be concluded, with a substantial and balanced final document including a decision on the convening of a conference on confidence-building measures and disarmament in Europe.

My delegation will make more detailed statements on the individual agenda items in the working groups and in the Committee of the Whole.

Mr. TSVETKOV (Bulgaria) (interpretation from French): First of all, Sir, I should like, on behalf of the delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria and on my own behalf, to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the current session of the Commission. We are certain that under your competent guidance the Commission will achieve positive results. We also congratulate the other Commission officers and wish them success in their activities.

The current session of the Disarmament Commission is beginning its work at a time when the spectre of the threat of a nuclear war is hovering over peoples and States. Today there is no more timely and urgent issue than that of averting this threat through the elimination of its material basis: weapons of mass destruction whose destructive and death-dealing power is unprecedented. All other issues, including those we have come to call global, recede before the disastrous consequences of a possible nuclear conflagration.

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

The fact that the present level of confrontation is particularly dangerous is, above all, a result of the policy of certain imperialist circles - first and foremost of the United States - which aims at achieving world-wide strategic superiority and political hegemony. A formidable industrial, scientific, military and technological potential is placed at the service of this policy. New means of destruction are being developed to strike from any environment: the land, the sea-bed, the atmosphere and outer space. For scientific discoveries, the road from research laboratories to military proving-grounds is shrinking increasingly.

Growing awareness of the military threat in all its aspects is giving rise to decisive action by peace-loving States, public opinion and mass movements, sensible politicians, scientists and clergymen. While they are opposed to the unscrupulous policy of hostility and aggravation of tension, they also press for the immediate cessation of the arms race, a reduction of military stockpiles and disarmament. The international community has categorically expressed its concern at this state of affairs and appeals for reason, a sense of responsibility and goodwill in the search for solutions likely to prevent the unleashing of a nuclear cataclysm. The thirty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly, which was adjourned a few months ago, adopted more than 50 resolutions clearly demonstrating that there is no reasonable alternative to disarmament at this stage in international relations.

Of course, no one should harbour any illusions. The problems of disarmament at this time - especially taking into account the alarming trends I have just mentioned - are particularly complex. Hence political, military and technological questions - global and regional, multilateral and bilateral - are bound together in a complex whole. On the one hand, this complexity calls for an in-depth and comprehensive discussion of all these factors during the talks on disarmament. On the other hand, it remains true that this complexity requires us to adopt the most realistic approach, to show moderation in the military field and to renounce any action likely to jeopardize a mutually acceptable agreement. Strengthening political guarantees and security guarantees for States under international law, as well as simultaneous disarmament measures, constitute a prerequisite for progress.

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

Never before throughout history has mankind been faced with the real threat of having life on our planet extinguished. The fundamental task of averting this threat and ensuring the survival of mankind has led socialist countries and other peace-loving States to make many important proposals. These proposals have riveted the attention of the international community and are playing a central role in improving the international situation.

Thus, the political declaration adopted in January 1983 during the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, held in Prague, put forward a broad and realistic programme aimed at stabilizing the international situation and renewing and strengthening the process of détente. In that programme, an appeal is made to spur on the current talks and reopen those that have been suspended on all questions relating to the cessation of the arms race and to persevere in implementing the decisions that have already been taken, by common agreement, on these questions - decisions likely to ensure the elimination of accumulated stockpiles of weapons, especially nuclear weapons. As is known, the States members of the Warsaw Treaty propose that the two main political and military groups proceed to conclude a treaty on the non-recourse to military force and on the maintenance of peaceful relations, this treaty being open to all States.

There is no doubt that such a measure would be likely to play a particularly important role in improving the international climate. It would make an appreciable contribution to the establishment of the necessary political, moral and legal base for specific actions aimed at reducing stockpiles of both nuclear and conventional weapons of States subscribing to such a commitment.

The Prague Declaration clearly stresses the need to make progress in the Soviet-American talks on the reduction of strategic weapons and medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe. It indicates that the only possible path in this respect can be found in consistent respect for the principles of the equality and equal security of all participants in the negotiations. The latest proposal of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mr. Yuri Andropov, on the modalities for assessing and comparing stockpiles of medium-range nuclear weapons with a view to a more rapid and more effective reduction of their number is a specific example of the constructive position of the Soviet Union on these questions. The powerful mass movement against plans

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

to deploy Pershing 2 missiles and cruise missiles in Western Europe clearly brings to the fore the capital importance that the solution of this problem could have for peace in Europe and throughout the world.

The socialist countries attach great importance to efforts at reaching a common agreement on fundamental questions of disarmament such as the general and complete nuclear-weapon test ban, banning and eliminating chemical weapons, banning the neutron bomb, banning the emplacement in outer space of any kind of weapon, concluding work on banning radiological weapons and solving the question of strengthening guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States.

The Soviet Union's unilateral declaration not to be the first to use nuclear weapons was widely welcomed internationally. This decision, which is without precedent in the annals of international relations, is inspired by deep humanism, by a concern for the future of mankind. The world Organization has greatly appreciated this step and urged the other nuclear-weapon States to follow the Soviet example.

For its part the People's Republic of Bulgaria in its foreign policy sincerely strives for peace, détente and disarmament. It supports the peace proposals of the socialist countries as well as the constructive initiatives of all other States. In the context of its immediate geographical environment my country is working to make a specific contribution in this respect. Its latest initiatives on strengthening peace, understanding and good-neighbourliness in the Balkans and on making the peninsula a nuclear-weapon-free zone attest to this.

As the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bulgaria and Chairman of the State Council of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, Mr. Todor Zhivkov, stressed recently in a telegram addressed to the Fifth Conference of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Sofia, Bulgaria's policy serves the most sacred and responsible cause:

"to curb the arms race and to eliminate the threat of a destructive thermo-nuclear war; to make international détente an irreversible process; to establish on the globe a serene climate of security, understanding and co-operation".

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

The necessity of carefully developing a common and effective approach to problems of disarmament has found expression in the establishment of the prestigious United Nations Disarmament Commission and also in the formulation of its mandate which appears in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament. The agenda just adopted during the present session of the Commission reflects the real and important aspects of these problems. The fruitful and responsible debates which have been held on the items in our agenda can and should contribute to finding a common ground in the viewpoints which would eventually be a stable element of consensus for practical efforts to reach a solution.

My delegation, in this connection, will limit itself to some brief preliminary comments on the substance of the issues on our agenda.

We will first set forth our position of principle on the priorities of the disarmament problem which centre on the urgent necessity of curbing the new spiral in the armaments race as concerns nuclear weapons and on reducing the present military and strategic balance to lower levels.

The issue of reducing military budgets has for years been at the centre of the attention of the United Nations. The attitude of my country on this matter is clear and unequivocal. The People's Republic of Bulgaria is firmly in favour of a reduction of military expenditures and would start with a freeze on these expenditures. Its more detailed considerations in this respect have been expressed in its reply to a letter of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on General Assembly resolution 35/142.

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

For many years we have condemned all acts contributing directly or indirectly to the nuclear armament of the racist régime of South Africa. All these manoeuvres are a flagrant violation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and directly encourage the undeclared colonial war which Pretoria is carrying on against the peoples of Africa.

As concerns the recommendations and proposals in the report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, I would like to stress that my delegation is prepared to discuss, in a positive spirit, and is willing to support any ideas or initiatives when they aim at eliminating the risk of nuclear war and at consolidating peaceful coexistence among countries of different social and economic systems.

The same motives will, of course, determine the Bulgarian delegation's position during the discussion of issues relating to the elaboration of confidence-building measures and their implementation, regionally and on a world scale.

My delegation would like the report of the Commission to the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly to reflect real progress in the search for solutions in order to end the present impasse as concerns disarmament.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm my delegation's conviction that the present complicated international situation urgently requires a search for mutually acceptable decisions that will improve this situation through concrete measures for disarmament and the enhancement of security. Any other position would be an expression either of the erroneous idea that disarmament would be more advantageous for some than for others, or would simply be the expression of a policy aimed at achieving world supremacy through accelerated armament, through aggression and through diktat vis-à-vis other countries and peoples.

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

The Bulgarian delegation will always co-operate actively with you, Sir, and with other delegations in order to achieve tangible progress with respect to the items on the agenda of the present substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. AYEWAH (Nigeria): The delegation of Nigeria has already had the opportunity to extend to you its congratulations but, since I am now making a formal statement, my delegation wishes once again to welcome your election to the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission during the current session and to avail itself of the opportunity to extend to you and the other members of the bureau our full co-operation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

Today the world faces grim prospects as regards its economic viability, while the international community is becoming increasingly restless and doubtful of its very survival because of the negative trends in international relations.

The impact of the arms race on the socio-economic and political fortunes of States is an incontrovertible reason why efforts must be concerted to limit its extent in a common endeavour.

Since the perception of security lies at the root of defence postures which, in turn, motivate the arms race, there is a clear necessity for States to seek common security as a means of countering the prevailing general crisis in the economic and political fields.

For too long, the countries of the military divide have treated the rest of the world to scenarios of military postures and preparedness which have tended to imply that only when the boat of their so-called military balance is rocked must international efforts be involved or enlisted to put the boat back on course in the safety of calm waters. Peace outside the military divide is an integral part of world peace which is itself indivisible and must remain so. The action-reaction phenomenon

(Mr. Ayewah, Nigeria)

in the arms competition between the two super-Powers in particular has remained a controlling determinant of the arms race. The validity of that control must not only be called into question but also de-emphasized in the interest of peace.

The law of averages, at least in its literary sense retains its appeal for all men of good conscience. Defence postures of States cannot be immune to such laws. If they become so, then the international community must act to restore balance and rationality in the conduct of States. It will be the aim of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as a deliberative body and subsidiary organ of the General Assembly on disarmament questions to prescribe a moral average in the conduct of States as they develop their defence postures.

The point has often been made that the concept of nuclear deterrence, which is itself based on the theory of mutually assured destruction capability, has in the main been responsible for the avoidance of nuclear war. While the deterrence theory is fraught with danger because of advances in military technology and of the vagaries of technological breakthroughs, one must submit that such concepts as those of equal security, flexible response, limited nuclear war, winnable nuclear war, and closing the window of vulnerability not only accentuate the arms race but make the outbreak of nuclear war a threatening reality.

(Mr. Ayewah, Nigeria)

The current session of the Disarmament Commission has before it a wide variety of subjects which reflect the growing concern of the international community regarding the continuation of the arms race and its very harmful effects on socio-economic development.

It is regrettable to note that, in spite of growing public concern about the consequences of the arms race, too paltry a result has emerged from disarmament deliberations and negotiations. It is the more regrettable when one considers the momentous efforts that have been deployed over the years by the General Assembly, especially during its two special sessions devoted to disarmament in 1978 and 1982, respectively. The resulting crisis in regard to expectations has had the effect of further hardening attitudes and postures on the part of nuclear-weapon States in particular, the countries of the military divide in turn, and the rest of the world in general.

In their pious commitment to the construction of the peace process Member States must retain the prospect of constructive engagement with disarmament within a given time-frame. Various premises have been advanced by the countries of the two military alliances, led by their protagonists the United States of America and the Soviet Union, as constituting the only valid basis on which disarmament negotiations can proceed. Such premises have included the notion of balance, the notion of equal security, the notion of verifiable agreement and even the notion of superiority.

While it is the legitimate right of every State to seek to defend its territory and interests as a first duty, it is obvious that the notion of equal security cannot realistically be achieved since it can neither be measured nor quantified because of differences in weapons technology, in weapons themselves and in weapon-delivery systems. Neither is it tenable to negotiate only from a position of strength and superiority over an adversary. Such a situation gives rise to a vicious cycle in which the adversary

(Mr. Ayewah, Nigeria)

must seek to bridge the gap of inferiority before agreeing to negotiate. Besides, while there is no alternative to a verifiable agreement, verification requirements must not be made a precondition for undertaking disarmament negotiations. Verification must be seen as an integral part of the disarmament negotiating process. Nor does the calculus of deterrence make any sense. No one has been able to determine how much or what is necessary to possess in order to deter someone else.

The international community has determined that nuclear disarmament remains a priority concern. It is heartening to note that nuclear weapons have no military usefulness. It cannot therefore be understood why the nuclear-weapon States in general and the two super-Powers in particular have continued to develop quantitatively and qualitatively new generations of nuclear weapons with deadly precision and accuracy in addition to their existing, superfluous stockpiles of such weapons.

Progress towards nuclear disarmament must take into account the merit of a nuclear freeze, the option of a moratorium on the further development and deployment of nuclear weapons, the requirement of a comprehensive test ban and the necessity for significant reductions in nuclear weapons.

As a major contribution to the international effort to achieve nuclear disarmament, the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union must be encouraged to result in fruition. In this connection, the latest initiative on the part of the Soviet Union to count warheads instead of missiles in the strategic equation should be considered on its merits by the United States. It is realistic to expect that the nuclear weapons possessed by the countries of the Warsaw Pact and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization alliance - or, indeed, by any nuclear-weapon State - should be included in the nuclear disarmament equation.

(Mr. Ayewah, Nigeria)

We continue to stress the necessity to prevent effectively both the horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons as a contribution to the promotion of international peace and security as well as to socio-economic development. We believe that nuclear weapons in the hands of racist régimes can become instruments of public policy and of blackmail. The extension to South Africa of co-operation in the nuclear field by certain nuclear States has not only enabled that racist régime to acquire nuclear weapons with which it has sought to destabilize neighbouring countries in southern Africa and, indeed, the rest of Africa, but has also enabled it to perpetuate its obnoxious policy of apartheid, which has rightly been condemned as a crime against humanity. It should be the aim of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its current session to adopt effective recommendations to prevent further collaboration with South Africa in the nuclear field - and certain member countries have readily provided collaboration - as well as to prevail on South Africa to accept reason and rationality and conduct itself in line with international norms and the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

The 1967 Treaty on outer space provided that outer space should be explored and exploited peacefully and for the benefit of mankind. Current experience, however, points to the increased militarization of outer space through the development and deployment of various types of satellites and ballistic-missile defence systems. The prospect of "star wars" as a defence strategy, which has recently been advanced by one super-Power, is not only awesome and dangerous but also contrary to the spirit and letter of the 1967 Treaty on outer space. We retain the hope that the option will not be pursued.

Although the General Assembly has formally referred the subject of the militarization of outer space to the Committee on Disarmament for urgent consideration, it is regrettable to note that the Committee has still not been able to set up an appropriate working group on the subject. The Disarmament Commission should renew its request to the Committee on Disarmament to deal with the question expeditiously. Outer space must be used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

(Mr. Ayevah, Nigeria)

Finally, although the Disarmament Commission has recorded some modest achievements since its revitalization in 1978, there is a clear need for further revamping, particularly in relation to its method of work. With a view to its nature as a deliberative body and the fact that many agenda items are coming before it in line with international concern regarding the arms race, it should seek to complement the efforts of the Committee on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament by adopting modalities which enable substantive debates on any item to be undertaken, leading to the adoption of specific recommendations. In this connection, the setting up of working groups on each of the substantive items during the current session is a useful step in the right direction. It is our hope that the Commission will achieve meaningful results at its current session.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.