



General Assembly

UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS
REFERENCE LIBRARY

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CN.10/PV.87
15 May 1985

ENGLISH

DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 8 May 1985, at 3 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. AHMAD

(Pakistan)

- General exchange of views (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages, preferably in the same language as the text to which they refer. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also, if possible, incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

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

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued)

Mr. LOWITZ (United States of America): Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to join you and other colleagues for this year's meeting of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. My delegation intends to participate actively in the deliberations of this forum, and I assure you of our co-operation. I also take this opportunity to express my pleasure at seeing you in the Chair. Your broad experience, wisdom and demonstrated skills, together with the able assistance of the other officers of the Commission, will ensure a positive result for this session.

The United States was encouraged by the serious nature of the debate at last year's session of the Commission, even if it did not achieve all its goals. This bodes well for our work this year. As we begin our deliberations, I will outline the United States views on the agenda items of this session, some of which have become perennials, while others will be examined for the first time. I note that there are more agenda items before us this year than in 1984. In that context, I recall General Assembly resolution 37/78 H, adopted by consensus, which requested the Disarmament Commission to

"direct its attention ... to specific subjects from among those which have been or will be under its consideration" (resolution 37/78 H, para. 3) in order to permit meaningful debate and enhance the prospects for reaching a consensus.

On agenda item 4, on nuclear and conventional disarmament, last year's attempts to develop a complete set of recommendations failed to achieve a consensus. The development of a comprehensive set of balanced recommendations - an approach proposed in the document (A/CN.10/65) submitted last year by the United Kingdom on behalf of seven delegations - might facilitate progress. In any event, our work should promote the search for effectively verifiable agreements that would substantially reduce weapons and forces on the basis of equality of rights and limits. We should also bear in mind ongoing negotiations in both multilateral and bilateral forums dealing with a comprehensive agenda of global and regional security issues.

I also want to point out that countless military conflicts in recent years, involving tragic loss of life and untold human suffering, have been launched by

(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

conventional forces, thus demonstrating the dangers of conventional warfare and the need to make efforts to reduce the likelihood of any war. The United States is committed to the maintenance of international peace and security, and, together with its allies, has reiterated its commitment to balanced and verifiable arms control at the lowest possible level of forces. In this context, let me recall that the Ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have stated repeatedly that

"None of their weapons will ever be used except in response to attack."

Regarding the now familiar agenda item 5, "Reduction of military budgets", we note that additional countries have recently submitted certain military expenditure data to the United Nations Secretariat. We welcome this as a first step, and encourage all States to meet the full requirements of the United Nations standardized reporting system in order to achieve the goal of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament - namely, that transparency should be the norm rather than the exception. The submission by all States of complete military data would promote the attainment of the goals of realistic comparison and verification, and substantially advance our efforts by contributing to mutual confidence among States participating in this United Nations endeavour.

Mr. Chairman, my delegation shares your hope that it will be possible for us to conclude work on agenda item 6 - the question of South Africa's nuclear capability. We agree that the issue has been adequately addressed. Progress will be facilitated this year if we work with the demonstrable facts at hand and avoid any temptation to crown speculation as fact.

Let me now turn to the new subjects on our agenda. Agenda item 7, on the role of the United Nations in disarmament, is undoubtedly of great interest, as it addresses the question of how the United Nations can more effectively carry out its role in the disarmament field.

The United States has submitted its views and constructive suggestions on this subject in response to United Nations General Assembly resolution 39/151 G. I assume that our paper will be available for deliberation and possible incorporation along with the views of others in the Commission's report to the General Assembly at its forthcoming session.

Agenda item 8, on curbing the naval arms race, is based on a General Assembly resolution which did not receive widespread support. In fact there were fewer

(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

votes in favour of the resolution than the combined total of those abstaining or opposing it, thus indicating that a consensus on this controversial issue would be difficult to obtain. In addition, the United Nations study on the question of the naval arms race is still in progress. We should keep these facts, as well as the request contained in General Assembly resolution 37/78 H, in mind in considering how to handle this agenda item. The United States shares the views on this item expressed by the 10 members of the European Community.

The last agenda item is number 9, on the review of the implementation of the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade. Last year's General Assembly resolution on this question calls, inter alia, for the resumption of bilateral as well as multilateral arms-control negotiations.

Such negotiations are now under way in both multilateral and bilateral forums. Among the principal multilateral negotiating forums are the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the talks on mutual and balanced force reductions in Vienna and the Stockholm Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe.

My delegation is pleased that a consensus has recently been reached in the Conference on Disarmament on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. On chemical weapons, an additional impetus to the ongoing negotiations was provided in April 1984 by the submission of a United States draft convention banning chemical weapons world-wide. We are disappointed at the slow pace of the chemical weapons negotiations and hope that progress will be made this summer. The need for such a ban is sadly underscored by the continued use of chemical weapons, in violation of international obligations, and by their rapid proliferation.

Negotiations are also continuing in Ad Hoc Committees of the Conference on Disarmament on a comprehensive programme of disarmament and on radiological weapons. We are disappointed that no consensus has been reached on continuing Conference on Disarmament work on the issue of a nuclear-test ban and believe that in this context the important subjects of verification and compliance merit the attention of the Conference on Disarmament.

The United States-Soviet bilateral arms talks in Geneva were unilaterally interrupted by the Soviet Union in the fall of 1983. New negotiations on nuclear

(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

and space weapons were agreed to in January of this year. The United States hopes that these talks will continue until equitable and verifiable agreements are reached. In these negotiations the United States is committed to reducing, reciprocally, rather than just freezing, stockpiles of nuclear weapons.

Since taking office four years ago, President Reagan has promoted an ambitious arms-control agenda. He has proposed a 30 per cent reduction in strategic missile warheads; he has proposed the total elimination of intermediate-range land-based missiles - the so-called intermediate nuclear force (INF) systems; he has offered concrete measures to reduce the risk of surprise attack and substantially to reduce conventional arms in Europe; he has promoted the concept of nuclear non-proliferation; he has submitted a draft convention to ban chemical weapons altogether; he has completed an agreement to upgrade the hotline between Washington and Moscow. In Strasbourg today he called for a series of confidence-building measures designed to reduce tensions and the potential for misunderstanding and misinterpretation between the United States and the Soviet Union, including the establishment of a permanent military-to-military communications link; and he launched an effort to identify a conventional alternative to nuclear deterrence - the strategic defence initiative - which aims at creating non-nuclear defences against offensive nuclear missiles.

While the United States proposals on radical reductions or the complete elimination of offensive nuclear weapons are indeed ambitious, the strategic defence initiative research programme can be described as bold and far-reaching. It seeks to challenge the traditional strategic doctrine of mutual assured destruction and proposes to replace it with mutual assured survival. With the strategic defence initiative the President has inaugurated a search for a new era in defence policy and arms control.

The basic United States objectives in arms control can best be summarized in the new United States strategic concept, which I should like to describe briefly.

During the next 10 years, the United States objective is a radical reduction in the power of existing and planned offensive nuclear arms, as well as research into the possibilities for stabilization of the relationship between offensive and defensive nuclear arms, whether on earth or in space. We are even now looking forward to a period of transition to a more stable world, with greatly reduced levels of nuclear arms and an enhanced ability to deter war, based upon an

(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

increasing contribution of non-nuclear defences against offensive nuclear arms. This period of transition could lead to the eventual elimination of all nuclear arms, both offensive and defensive. A world free of nuclear arms is an ultimate objective on which we, the Soviet Union and all other nations can agree.

In conclusion, my delegation welcomes the opportunity this session of the Disarmament Commission can provide to consider fully some of the pending issues on our agenda, and we pledge our co-operation in seeking positive results, especially as we celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations this year.

Mr. BUTLER (Australia): Mr. Chairman, may I begin by saying how good it is to see you presiding over this Commission. You are well known to many of us; we all know your skill and sensitivity, and we are confident that you will bring those qualities to bear in guiding our work. I can assure you of the complete co-operation of the Australian delegation.

Seven years ago the General Assembly met in special session and redesigned the machinery of the United Nations for the conduct of our work on disarmament. The General Assembly decided that the machinery should have three main parts. Those three parts reflected the Assembly's wise recognition that three functions needed to be performed within the United Nations family. Those functions are declaration, deliberation and negotiation.

The declaratory part of our machinery is the First Committee of the General Assembly. The work of that Committee and of the Assembly itself is directed towards the formulation of resolutions under the principles of the Charter designed to declare, with the moral authority of the Assembly, the goals and objectives which should be pursued in disarmament. It is only appropriate that such activity takes place on the basis of the universality of membership of the United Nations.

The function of deliberation was assigned to this Commission. This was done because it was recognized that issues of such moment and gravity as those which now make up the disarmament agenda required to be reflected upon and considered aside from the highly charged process of formulating and negotiating resolutions.

In this circumstance, too, it was appropriate that the Assembly decided that participation in such a deliberative body should be open to all and that the operational rule should be that of consensus. By this means, it was believed, the product of deliberation would be a common wisdom that would support and assist the other two parts of the United Nations disarmament machinery.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

The third part is the Conference on Disarmament, the mandate and underlying rationale of which is negotiation. Here the Assembly recognized that, in addition to the declaration of goals and objectives and our common reflection on disarmament issues, we would require a mechanism for forging practical results. The operational procedure for such work is, and must be, negotiation.

The Assembly took the view that the most efficient way to negotiate would be for a representative group of States to form the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. It was decided that universal representation in that Conference would create a body which would be too large for an efficient process of negotiation.

Given the priority that the Australian Government attaches to disarmament, we view our membership of the Conference on Disarmament as an important responsibility and a significant privilege. We seek to discharge that responsibility with determination, and we will continue to do so.

It is because of the priority my Government attaches to disarmament that we place great importance on our taking part in this 1985 session of the Disarmament Commission. We come to this session as a member of the Conference on Disarmament, but we agree with those who have already pointed out that all members of this Commission are equal. There is no inner or outer group.

We believe the Assembly was right to create disarmament machinery with three distinct, but related, parts. Each part of that machinery is significant, because the functions assigned to each part must be performed. The work in this deliberative body, in a sense, stands between the declaratory function of the First Committee, on the one hand, and the negotiating function of the Conference on Disarmament, on the other hand. Our deliberations in this body are necessary as such and they should inform and strengthen our work in the other two parts of the United Nations disarmament system.

If one surveys our present agenda, it is clear that the purpose to which we are compelled is that of mutual adaptation. The full range of the diverse interests and concerns of the world community is represented in this body. Countries of the developed and developing worlds are represented. This is the whole global compass - north, south, east and west.

What we must do is enter into a serious process of mutual adaptation. This would be a process of adaptation to each other's requirements in order to build

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

bridges across the diversity of views held in this body - bridges that will lead within the United Nations system to real and practical measures of disarmament.

The easier course is rigidity - the rejection of mutual adaptation. The harder course is to be flexible. It is harder to adapt to the views and concerns of others than it is to stand on a fixed point and say "My view must prevail". I would like to illustrate this point by referring briefly to the main items on our agenda.

Under item 4, the resumption of bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union should have a positive effect on our work. It should be possible to achieve consensus on the issues involved in stopping the nuclear-arms race.

Some progress was made last year and much more should be available to us this year. In this context, my delegation stands ready to play a constructive role and we will want to see work on this item give particular attention to issues highly relevant to stopping the nuclear-arms race, such as work towards a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

With regard to item 5, we continue to believe that an essential step towards the reduction of military budgets is for all States to make available objective data on present levels of those budgets. In our view, the United Nations statistical reporting instrument should be utilized by all. This would greatly facilitate the establishment of such an objective data base.

With regard to item 6, the question of South Africa's nuclear capability remains a vital one and my Government's position, in substance, remains that apartheid is abhorrent enough and it should never be nuclear armed. This Commission should be able to reach common conclusions on this issue this year - conclusions which would then be directed to the General Assembly and, through it, to all States.

With regard to the three new items on our agenda - items 7, 8 and 9 - we would accept an initial plenary discussion of item 8, the question of curbing the naval arms race. But we believe we would be wise to await the results of the United Nations expert study on that subject before going beyond such an initial exchange of views. That study will be available to us later this year and should be able to provide us with new and further directions for our work on this subject.

With regard to item 9, this Commission must prepare a report for the fortieth

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade. We will need to work hard together on that report, because practical progress towards the goals of the Second Disarmament Decade has been disappointing. We are at the mid-point of the Decade. We must reflect together and agree upon ways in which we can make progress towards those goals.

I have left to the end of this statement item 7, the proposed review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament - although, I believe, I offered some reflections on this important subject at the beginning of this statement.

My delegation is pleased that this item has been placed on our agenda. It is seven years since this new machinery was created and, let us frankly acknowledge, those seven years have brought little progress, in practical terms, towards the goals in arms control and disarmament to which we have all agreed and to which we are all solemnly committed. So we should reflect together on the reasons for that lack of progress.

The question could and should be posed: Is it the machinery, or are our instruments, our tools, inadequate, or is there some other reason for the lack of progress? The Australian view is that there is available to us in the Charter of the United Nations every facility and every reason for making progress in disarmament. In addition, as I have already said, the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament gave us a machinery, with three parts, designed to facilitate the implementation of the principles of the Charter in the field of disarmament.

But machinery is not enough in itself. No machine will perform adequately if those who operate it do not use it correctly. It is also true that the best will in the world can be thwarted if the machinery itself is in fact inadequate.

My delegation is prepared to join with others in examining this important issue and we will take this approach towards item 7 of the agenda. If our machinery can be reshaped or fine-tuned towards greater productivity, then let us discuss that. But in doing so let us not overlook the fundamental reality that no machinery can be made to work productively if those who are operating it lack the will or determination to make it work. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Australia have expressed our determination to make that machinery work, and this

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

is our policy. Last August the Foreign Minister of Australia, Mr. Bill Hayden, said: "The preservation of peace and the promotion and achievement of nuclear disarmament are overriding objectives of Australia's role in international relations."

We Australians are determined that the arms race should be brought to an end. We are convinced of the urgency of this task and that multilateral efforts through declaration, deliberation and negotiation are indispensable to that end, and we will work in this Commission on the basis of that conviction.

Mr. WASIUDDIN (Bangladesh): It is with great pleasure that I extend to you, Sir, our warmest congratulations on your unanimous election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. We are confident that under your able and proven leadership the Commission will achieve concrete and positive results during the current session. I also extend our sincere felicitations to the other officers of the Commission on their election. I would like also to pledge our full co-operation and support to you and to the other officers in the discharge of your onerous responsibilities.

The Bangladesh delegation welcomes this opportunity to participate in the current session of the Commission and to share with other members our views on the items included in our agenda which rightly focus on some of the principal disarmament issues. It is our earnest hope that the present session will comprehensively deliberate on these items and come up with appropriate recommendations.

In the preceding session my delegation voiced its grave concern over the unprecedented arms race, both nuclear and conventional, and emphasized the need for dialogue and meaningful negotiations. We are therefore particularly happy to note that the bilateral negotiations between the two super-Powers have recently been resumed in Geneva. Any progress achieved in these negotiations will make a positive contribution towards the reduction of international tensions.

The preceding speakers have already given a graphic account of the deteriorating international situation that prevails in this world today. The unrestrained arms race, in particular the feverish accumulation of the most sophisticated and lethal weapons by the super-Powers and other militarily significant States, has jeopardized not only international peace and security but also the very existence of mankind. We are firmly convinced that there can be no

(Mr. Wasiuddin, Bangladesh)

lasting peace without the elimination and destruction of nuclear weapons and their stockpiles. Recent studies have also demonstrated that any outbreak of nuclear war would inevitably lead to the self-destruction of mankind.

Bangladesh, in pursuance of its firm and irrevocable commitment to general and complete disarmament, acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It is a matter of great regret that the cherished objective of that Treaty has still remained unfulfilled and that nuclear proliferation, both vertical and horizontal, continues unabated. The limitation of nuclear armaments and other weapons of mass destruction is an essential prerequisite for the creation of an atmosphere of trust and confidence and the relaxation of international tensions. We had therefore urged that, pending the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, all States should refrain from the testing of nuclear weapons and that there should be a freeze on the production and deployment of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems and on research and development in this field. The nuclear Powers and some militarily significant States unfortunately have not complied with their obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and have continued to develop new and more sophisticated types of weapons of mass destruction.

The non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty have on the other hand fully honoured their commitment and have not acquired nuclear weapons or even nuclear explosive devices. The forthcoming Third Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is particularly important as its outcome will have a definite impact on the future of the Treaty itself.

We are equally alarmed to note that attempts are being made by the nuclear Powers to use outer space for military purposes. These developments would undoubtedly upset what they themselves consider as the security balance of power. All such attempts therefore should be halted and outer space should be declared the common heritage of mankind. Any delay in the adoption of concrete and effective measures to that end will only complicate the situation, making it more difficult to reach any agreement in future.

My delegation feels also that the question of conventional disarmament should receive our equal attention. Our failure in the past to adopt effective measures has led us to the phenomenal growth in the conventional arms race, in particular the development of high technology conventional weapons and indiscriminate arms sales.

(Mr. Wasiuddin, Bangladesh)

The current session of the Disarmament Commission should therefore deliberate on various aspects of the arms race, in particular the nuclear-arms race, and should make every effort to narrow the areas of disagreement.

The Bangladesh delegation has in the past also taken an active interest in the deliberations on the item "Reduction of military budgets", and we should like to place on record our sincere appreciation to the Romanian delegation for the initiative it has taken in this regard. This item has been on our agenda for a number of years and we have already made some progress in preceding sessions. The Commission should therefore make a renewed effort during the current session to conclude its deliberations on this item and adopt suitable recommendations. In the past, the Bangladesh delegation emphasized the need to divert the colossal financial and other resources currently being consumed by the armaments race towards the elimination of world poverty. Any reduction in military budgets and the redirection of these resources will undoubtedly help both developed and developing countries alike. Bangladesh has always fully associated itself with all initiatives taken in the past on the question of the relationship between disarmament and development, and we sincerely hope that, in pursuance of resolution 39/160 adopted at the latest session of the General Assembly, a preparatory committee will be set up soon to facilitate the early convening of an international conference on that subject.

My delegation attaches particular importance to the question of South Africa's nuclear capability, which has also been on our agenda for a number of years. The apartheid régime of South Africa, in defiance of United Nations resolutions, has continued to occupy Namibia and has mounted repeated acts of aggression against neighbouring States. Its policies of aggression have threatened the peace and security of Africa and the world at large. In such circumstances the subject deserves our serious consideration, and determined efforts must be made at this session to adopt concrete recommendations with a view to preventing South Africa from becoming a nuclear Power. May I in this connection convey our deep appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Bahamas for the exemplary manner in which he guided the deliberations on this item in the Working Group last year.

Three new items have been included in our agenda this year, and we hope that the Commission will deal with them in a satisfactory manner. The item on the review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament is a timely

(Mr. Wasiuddin, Bangladesh)

one on the eve of the fortieth anniversary of the founding of this world body. It is a universally recognized fact that the question of disarmament, which has global dimensions and implications, can only be addressed in a multilateral context. The United Nations therefore has a vital role to play in the field of disarmament, and every effort should be made to strengthen United Nations machinery for helping the Secretary-General in his disarmament efforts as well as in his peace-keeping role. It is in this context that Bangladesh attaches particular importance to the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament, and has already applied for membership in that body.

It is true that during its six years of existence the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to produce a single disarmament agreement. But we cannot afford to lose hope. We are encouraged to note that after protracted negotiations the Conference has recently been able to reach agreement on the mandate for an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race. Earlier, the Conference achieved substantial progress towards the conclusion of a convention banning the use of chemical weapons. However, the primary responsibility for breaking the current deadlock in the discussion on such major substantive issues as a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, the prevention of a nuclear war or nuclear disarmament clearly lies with the nuclear-weapon States. We hope that they will display moderation and vision and enter into serious and meaningful negotiations on those vital disarmament issues.

The Disarmament Commission, on the other hand, could also play a highly positive role in facilitating the negotiations in various disarmament fields. As I mentioned earlier, consideration of the items that have been on our agenda for a number of years should be brought to a satisfactory conclusion during this session. At the same time, new initiatives should be undertaken in other areas of disarmament.

We are aware that the tasks ahead of us are difficult, but, given the necessary political will, they are not beyond the possibility of accomplishment. On the eve of the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, let us make a determined effort to strengthen this great world body in the interests of international peace and security.

Mr. GARCIA ITURBE (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): Allow me first of all to convey to you, Sir, the congratulations of my delegation on your election

(Mr. Garcia Iturbe, Cuba)

to the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission at its 1985 session. Your vast experience, your knowledge of the issues we are going to analyse here and your experience as a diplomat assure us that the work of the Commission will be channelled in such a way that we shall achieve the fruitful results for which we all hope at this year's session.

Our agenda, already a broad one in former years, has this year been augmented yet further by items that are of serious concern to countries throughout the world and of great importance in the solution of the problem of disarmament. It is now incumbent upon the countries represented here to demonstrate at this session the necessary political will to ensure that our efforts are crowned with success and that, when the session ends, we shall be able to return to our respective countries satisfied with the work that we have accomplished and happy in the knowledge that, through our personal efforts, we have achieved progress in the field of disarmament.

My delegation wishes to repeat in the Commission our Government's belief that the cessation of the arms race and nuclear disarmament constitute the most important and urgent task facing the international community at the present time precisely because nuclear disarmament is the only way in which mankind can be saved from the scourge of a war whose effects would be totally devastating and whose consequences would threaten the very survival on earth of the human race. My delegation believes that it is essential to halt and reverse the arms race in all its various aspects, but principally in its nuclear aspect, in order to avoid a conflict such as I have described. In order to achieve that it is urgently necessary to hold serious negotiations on arms limitation which could lead to agreements in this very difficult area.

In a world in which there are more than 55,000 nuclear weapons, each far more powerful than the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki and 18,000 of which are strategic in nature, the possibility exists of destroying several times over all the cities on the planet, after which there would still be 30,000 tactical atomic weapons left with nothing to destroy. We therefore ask what is the purpose of continuing to manufacture such lethal devices. What is the purpose of persisting in the idea that a nuclear war can be won? Thus it becomes more important with every passing day to try to lay the foundations for achieving peace rather than prepare for war, and we see how essential it is for all States, and in

(Mr. Garcia Iturbe, Cuba)

particular the nuclear-weapon States, to abstain from taking any measures that might hamper the negotiating process at the Conference on Disarmament.

The nuclear Powers should, as a matter of necessity, hold bilateral talks in order to achieve agreement that would make it possible at least to postpone a further deepening of the arms race. It is apparent, however, that such agreement is far off, largely because of the attitude of the United States, which in its pursuit of what it refers to as "nuclear supremacy", engages in talks while at the same time increasing its military budget and its nuclear arsenals, in addition to creating new nuclear-weapon systems. That, in turn, makes it even more difficult to reach agreement and thus heightens the threat of nuclear war.

As to the concrete measures which States must take with respect to the reduction of military budgets, my delegation wishes to reaffirm that the first step towards eventual reduction of military budgets must be an immediate freeze of those budgets by all States which possess nuclear weapons. This would establish a propitious climate for subsequent reductions of such weapons.

Parallel with this, and as a result of the initial freeze and subsequent reduction, the human and material resources now devoted to the arms race could be diverted to peaceful ends and could contribute to the economic and social development of peoples, especially in the developing countries. They could also be used to bring about the new international economic order.

If, for example, we take into consideration the external debt borne by a whole series of developing countries and if we analyze the chances those countries have of paying, we can see a wonderful way of making use of the economic resources which are channeled each year into military budgets. In a recent interview in the newspaper Excelsior, Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Council of State and the Council of Ministers of Cuba, and Commander-in-Chief, said,

"It is well known that at present annual world-wide military expenditures amount to a million million dollars: in United States terms \$1 trillion. And if this arms race - which mankind's conscience considers absurd and unacceptable in a world with more than 100 underdeveloped countries and billions of people suffering from want of food, health services, housing and education - is not halted, the expenditures will continue to increase until a nuclear catastrophe is unleashed, a threat that would eclipse the economic catastrophe now afflicting a great portion of mankind. Indeed, nuclear catastrophe would render moot any discussion of economics.

(Mr. Garcia Iturbe, Cuba)

"It would be prudent and wise to link a reduction of military budgets to the principle of solving international economic problems. All economists have stated that a fraction of current military expenditures could solve the problems of underdevelopment and poverty which scourge the world."

As to the substantive consideration of the question of South Africa's nuclear capability, my Government has affirmed on several occasions its unstinting support for the interests of the African peoples in their struggle against the apartheid régime, and its vigorous condemnation of all States which permit or assist South Africa, directly or indirectly, to pursue its policy of aggression and destabilization against the countries of Africa by means of developing its capability to manufacture nuclear weapons, which has been achieved primarily through military and nuclear collaboration with Israel, the United States and other Western countries.

Document A/CN.10/84 contains an eloquent exposition not only of how it developed this nuclear capability, but also of how it uses it to maintain the abominable policy of apartheid. That document denounces the illegal exploitation of Namibian uranium, specifically with the goal of strengthening the South African nuclear base. It also calls on all States Members of the United Nations to intensify efforts to put an end to the development of South Africa's nuclear weapons programme. That can come about only when the States I mentioned earlier cease the co-operation and assistance they currently grant to South Africa in violation of resolutions imposing an arms embargo against South Africa. It is our hope that we shall be able in the course of this session satisfactorily to conclude our consideration of this item and that last year's fatal obstructionist manoeuvres will not be repeated.

As to the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, my delegation considers that existing United Nations machinery adequately covers the Organization's mandate in the field of disarmament, particularly considering the modifications and changes made by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978. If the United Nations has been unable to play a more important role in the field of disarmament, that is not the result of any inadequacy of the Organization's structure and machinery to fill such a role. We all know that that inability is due to the obstructionist positions taken in the work of those bodies by a small number of countries, particularly by the United

(Mr. Garcia Iturbe, Cuba)

States and its closest allies. With those positions they have prevented the United Nations from fully meeting its responsibilities regarding the maintenance of international peace and security.

Thus, it is not the machinery, but the contributions and political will of some States that must be changed in order to achieve the noble purposes pursued by this Organization in the field of disarmament. I do not believe it necessary to recall the experiences of this Disarmament Commission in past years, experiences which fully support what I have just asserted.

Concerning the item relating to curbing the naval arms race and the extension of confidence-building measures to seas and oceans, my delegation can do nothing less than reaffirm its position, that the study to be carried out should contribute to the drafting and adoption of concrete measures to limit and halt the naval arms race in all its aspects, and should not be considered as an end in itself. We further consider that the study should take account of the importance and necessity of putting an end to naval manoeuvres, with the participation of nuclear-weapon States, in zones of conflict. Moreover, it should consider the urgent need to dismantle naval military bases belonging to nuclear-weapon States and located on the territory of other countries; such bases continue to contribute greatly to the spread of nuclear weapons across the seas and oceans.

The international climate, in Latin America in particular, has been seriously affected by a series of situations which every day represent a loss of life, a loss of human and economic resources, and which renders world peace precarious. Respect for the principle of non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, the obligation to respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of other States, as well as the obligation to respect the rights of others to decide freely on the political, economic and social system which best suits their own interests - these are principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations - which are all too often forgotten and, on many occasions, violated.

That, of course, does not help to improve the international climate, nor does it help to promote peace and economic development. Actions such as the recent embargo against the people of Nicaragua; the supply of millions of dollars worth of weapons for the sole purpose of overthrowing the Government of Nicaragua; the

(Mr. Garcia Iturbe, Cuba)

constant, sustained and intimidating military manoeuvres that are carried out in Central America and in the Caribbean: those actions are the antithesis of good faith and the will to create an international situation conducive to understanding.

In that connection, I would recall the position taken by the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held in New Delhi, India, in March 1983, with regard to non-interference and non-intervention:

"Recalling the relevant decisions taken at the Sixth Summit in Havana, the Heads of State or Government observed with appreciation that the efforts of the member States of the Non-Aligned Movement had culminated in the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention and Interference in the Internal Affairs of States contained in resolution 36/103. They hailed the adoption of this Declaration as a historic contribution by the Non-Aligned Movement to the task of ushering in a régime of inter-State relations based on mutual respect for sovereignty and independence. They noted with concern, however, that policies of intervention and interference, pressure and the threat or use of force continued to be pursued against many non-aligned countries, with dangerous consequences for peace and security. They called upon all States to adhere to the Declaration and observe its principles in their dealings with other States." (A/38/132 and Corr.1 and 2, p. 46, para. 172)

As far as in their consideration and assessment of the application of the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade, my country has stated that the leaders of all countries must show greater awareness of the very delicate and dangerous situation that the world is going through at present, and demonstrate the political will which, without prejudice to any State, will make it possible to adopt specific measures that will contribute to healthy international relations and thus establish a climate for world peace and security.

The arrogant, bellicose attitude taken by the present Government of the United States, ever since the beginning of the decade, is without a doubt the main obstacle to the smooth running of the negotiations that were initiated in the period.

The United States Administration must shoulder responsibility for the serious situation in which we find ourselves. Therefore, it should adopt a more conciliatory attitude that would make it possible to achieve the goals set out by the international community when declaring the Decade of 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade.

(Mr. Garcia Iturbe, Cuba)

The Government of the Republic of Cuba, true to its policy of peace, offers its co-operation and contribution to all efforts, regional and international, to achieve solutions and agreements conducive to the establishment of an atmosphere of peace in all regions - an atmosphere that will be to the benefit of all peoples and thus lead to an improvement in international security. In such an atmosphere of détente, it will be possible to adopt specific measures on disarmament. The work of our delegation will at all times be directed towards such goals.

This year, as we commemorate the defeat of fascism, my delegation would like to pay tribute to the millions of people who died in the Second World War fighting against the fascist hordes, and the millions of innocent people who were taken to concentration camps and later murdered, for the sole reason that they were anti-fascist or were not Aryan, or because they professed the Jewish religion. We believe that this anniversary is a time for reflection: we must do everything to ensure that mankind will not suffer the horrors of another war, the consequences of which would be even more devastating.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank Mr. Garcia Iturbe, the representative of Cuba, for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. LE KIM CHUNG (Viet Nam): May I begin by warmly congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of this important Disarmament Commission. I congratulate also the other officers of the Disarmament Commission.

Forty years ago, on 9 May 1945, the Second World War ended with the victory of the peace-loving democratic forces over fascism, the victory that had cost the lives of millions of people. But today, 40 years later, the reality is that mankind is faced with an unprecedented threat of self-extinction. This situation is the result of the policies of some circles which, for the past 40 years, have been continuously accelerating the arms race to serve their selfish interests, to reap economic benefits, and to build up strength for world domination.

Mankind has paid a tragically high price for the lessons of the Second World War. But if a third world war, this time a nuclear one, were to break out, there would be no one left to know and value its lessons. Today provides an occasion for all of us, not only to pay tribute to all those who have shed their blood to save mankind from fascism and proclaim world peace, but also to remind ourselves of the tragic lessons of the Second World War and to heighten our vigilance against any threat to our hard-won peace.

(Mr. Le Kim Chung, Viet Nam)

At this time, in Viet Nam, our people are also observing the fortieth anniversary of the victory over fascism and militarism. The Vietnamese people ardently cherish peace because for the past 40 years, while world peace has been preserved, the Vietnamese people have been subject to successive wars of aggression by the forces of militarism, colonialism, imperialism and inhumanity.

My delegation shares the assessment of previous speakers that since the end of 1984 there have been some new developments that give rise to hope for a turn for the better in the field of disarmament. Of particular importance is the opening of new talks between the Soviet Union and the United States on nuclear and space arms.

Nevertheless, tensions are still characteristic of current East-West relations. Conflicts, some of which are fraught with the danger of spilling over, are still raging in various parts of the world. We all know the large-scale propaganda campaign launched by some bellicose circles to mislead world peoples' opinion on the true intention behind their "Star Wars" plan. They are also making intensive efforts to create a material basis for implementation of that "Star Wars" plan, and are stepping up across-the-board nuclear-weapons modernization programmes. The collusion between United States imperialism and international and regional reactionary forces constitutes an obstacle to the trend towards dialogue and to the peaceful solution of conflicts in many regions of the world. Therefore, regrettably, the present-day international situation remains very complicated and adversely affects the disarmament process.

Of the six substantive items on the agenda at this session of our Commission one more item than last year - three are carried over from last year's session and three are new items transferred to the Commission by decisions of the General Assembly. As strongly recommended in the relevant General Assembly resolutions, the questions under these six items are all of great importance and should be treated as being of an urgent nature. With the limited time allotted to our Commission we shall surely have to work very hard, but we cannot evade our responsibility.

Items 4, 5 and 6, namely, the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament and consideration of a general approach to nuclear and conventional disarmament; reduction of military budgets; and the nuclear plans and capability of South Africa, have been included in the agenda of the Disarmament Commission since its very first session in 1979. It is high time that we concluded work on these items and reported significant and substantive recommendations to the General Assembly.

(Mr. Le Kim Chung, Viet Nam)

The "Compilation of proposals for recommendations on agenda item 4" annexed to last year's report of the Commission (A/39/42) continues to be one of the useful bases for our work under item 4. To achieve progress on this item it is essential that the principles, priorities et cetera in the field of disarmament which were set out in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament be preserved.

The concepts of "transparency and comparability" as now qualified and demanded by some people are in fact used as a pretext to delay the commencement of concrete negotiations on the halting of the increase and subsequent reduction of military expenditures. The reduction of military budgets can take place only when Governments approach it with political good will. There should be immediate cessation of negotiations on reducing military budgets, and all related matters should be discussed within the framework of those negotiations.

The South African racist régime can be so disdainful of the will of the overwhelming majority of the international community only with the condonation of some Western countries. To stop the further development of South Africa's nuclear-weapon capability, an end must be put to all kinds of collaboration with South Africa in the military and nuclear fields. In this connection, the Security Council would make a great contribution if it enforces and extends its arms embargo against South Africa to cover the nuclear field.

On the questions of reviewing the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, curbing the naval arms race and reviewing the implementation of the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade, the Government of Viet Nam has submitted in detail its views, which are now incorporated in documents A/CN.10/68, A/CN.10/69 and A/CN.10/70 of the Commission, to the Secretary-General. At this stage I wish to make some brief comments.

The 1978 special session devoted to disarmament concluded that

"The United Nations, in accordance with the Charter, has a central role and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament." (resolution S-10/2, para. 114)

As a result of the successful struggle carried out by peace forces throughout the world for the past four decades, the achievements obtained so far at the United Nations have in return played a considerable part in encouraging that struggle. But unfortunately the people's legitimate desire for peace, détente and disarmament, which can be found in the resolutions adopted at the United Nations, are far from reality.

(Mr. Le Kim Chung, Viet Nam)

Five years have now elapsed since the adoption of the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade, but the international community has taken no step closer to the goals set out in that Declaration. A small group of countries should be held responsible for this situation. These countries ignore the will of all peoples and the decisions of the United Nations, even those decisions in which they themselves had participated. My delegation holds that the United Nations should continue to concentrate its efforts on the goals and priorities in the field of disarmament, as defined in many important United Nations documents, and come to grips with any new dangerous developments in the arms race. The United Nations can play a more active part in promoting fuller and more effective co-operation among all peace-loving forces and encouraging the participation in good faith of all States, especially the nuclear-weapon States, in the disarmament process. United Nations efforts should result in effective and concrete measures and commitments.

With regard to the agenda item on curbing the naval arms race, my delegation considers the discussion of this question at the current session very useful, since it provides an opportunity for all countries to exchange views and lay the initial basis for subsequent negotiations. We are aware of the fact that a study is being carried out by a group of experts on this subject. Consideration of the naval arms race in this Commission and the work being done by the group of experts are not incompatible; on the contrary, they are complementary if both are aimed at the early finding of measures to curb the naval arms race. My delegation is of the view that it cannot be considered too early to start now discussions and negotiations on curbing the naval arms race, because the naval arms race for a long time has adversely affected the peace and security of the entire world and of each individual country.

The New Delhi Joint Declaration issued by the Heads of State or Government of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania, for which the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam has expressed support, begins with the following words:

"Forty years ago, when atomic bombs were blasted over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the human race became aware that it could destroy itself, and horror came to dwell among us. Forty years ago, also, the nations of the world gathered to organize the international community and with the United Nations hope was born for all peoples."

(Mr. Le Kim Chung, Viet Nam)

Today, as we celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the victory over fascism and militarism and of the founding of the United Nations, the horror of extinction still dwells among us and our hope remains far from being a reality. This situation sets us many difficult but noble tasks and calls for concerted action by all the forces of peace. Together, in present-day circumstances, the peace-loving forces are fully capable of frustrating any adventurous attempt by the warmongering circles.

Mr. ADENIJI (Nigeria): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We fully share the warm sentiments expressed by earlier speakers about your personal qualities, your capabilities and your wealth of experience. We have no doubt that you will be able to steer this Commission's affairs to a successful conclusion.

The subjects on the agenda of the current session of the Disarmament Commission reflect the growing concern of the international community on those disarmament issues that are vital to the security interests of all States. From the end of the Second World War when those so-called crude bombs devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the international community has always expressed serious concern at the dangers of nuclear war. What is of immediate concern to mankind is the existence of this lethal set of weapons, nuclear weapons, and the threat that they pose to the entire human race.

It is a well-known fact that the nuclear arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States, in particular the two super-Powers, contain enough explosive capacity to destroy the whole world several times over. Notwithstanding that awesome statistic, research and development in the nuclear field proceed apace and development and deployment continue unabated. On land, at sea and in the air there are plans by both super-Powers to increase their deployment of nuclear weapons.

The conclusions drawn at the Washington Conference in which over 100 scientists participated and which were summarized in Carl Sagan's article entitled "Nuclear war and climatic catastrophe" have thrown more light on the estimation of the extent of devastation by a nuclear war. It is in realization of that hazardous situation that the General Assembly has asked the Commission to consider the various aspects of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament so as to expedite negotiations aimed at the effective elimination of the dangers of nuclear war.

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

It is pertinent to note that continued research into the nuclear triad - land-based, sea-based and airborne - renders each set of weapons more vulnerable. The explanation is sometimes given, therefore, that the reason for the militarization of outer space is to render nuclear weapons obsolete. One wishes it were so. That feeling might be based on the assumption that research has already been undertaken on killer satellites, radio-frequency weapons, phased-array radars and the ultimate concept of the strategic defence initiative. The conclusion is that at some time in the nuclear-arms race nuclear weapons will no longer be a reliable or guaranteed defence system. Logically, the arms race does not provide the security it is meant to achieve; this has been proved by 40 years of the arms race. We are left, therefore, with only one choice - to arrest the nuclear-arms race through genuine negotiations. Should we fail to do so, the entire human civilization will run the risk of being wiped out.

The Disarmament Commission should facilitate the work of the Conference on Disarmament by examining these issues and making effective recommendations to the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament. The Commission's recommendations should emphasize the lack of progress in and the concern of the international community over the ongoing disarmament negotiations in Geneva, whether at the Conference on Disarmament or at the bilateral level in Geneva. We urge Member States, in the interest of the human race, to give their fullest co-operation in all negotiating forums on the question of nuclear disarmament. While saying this, we also wish to indicate that all positive encouragement should be given to the two super-Powers in order to enable them to reach agreement in their current round of negotiations in Geneva. Whether they are going to reach positive results or not, of course depends mainly on the two negotiators, but the rest of the international community cannot stand by and seem unconcerned by the negotiations that are being undertaken. We therefore urge the super-Powers, for their part, to approach those negotiations with absolute openness and seriousness and with constructive determination to reach an agreement that will enable them to make substantial cuts in their arsenals of nuclear weapons. In the same vein, we urge those engaged in regional disarmament efforts to show more political will - in particular those engaged in the mutual and balanced force reduction talks in Vienna, where the disparities in armament and troop deployments are causing setbacks to the achievement of planned objectives.

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

Several theories have of course been advanced by the two super-Powers as providing the basis for the continuation of the disarmament negotiations. While accepting that there is some merit in such concepts as "balance", whether quantitative or qualitative, "equal security", "reciprocal limitation" or "gradual reduction", we cannot be oblivious to their demerits. The notion therefore that all these ought to be pre-conditions of the conclusion of disarmament agreements cannot be acceptable. These concepts lead to the vicious circle of efforts to attain a position of strength or superiority, even though this is constantly denied. We have the impression that at the bottom of the reluctance to take meaningful steps towards disarmament is the belief that at some stage or other one side may be able to enjoy a degree of superiority. We think that this is a rather short-sighted approach, because the technological gap between the two parties concerned is not wide enough to permit a degree of superiority to be maintained for any length of time by one side before the other side catches up. We hope therefore that the two super-Powers will realize the urgent need to narrow their points of divergence on nuclear disarmament once and for all so that a consensus can be reached at the current session of the Commission.

It is equally expected that the Commission, in its recommendations, will emphasize the need for all States to abandon any doctrine of reliance on nuclear weapons and urge the nuclear-weapon States to co-operate with the non-nuclear-weapon States in all negotiation forums. This is particularly important this year, when the Review Conference on a major instrument on non-proliferation is to be held.

It has been shown that the conventional arms race also constitutes a great problem and a danger to the existence and development of mankind on earth. Although conventional weapons have relatively smaller destructive capabilities, qualitative improvements in conventional weapons such as precision-guided munitions further advance the conventional arms race. Again, of course, the two super-Powers are far ahead in the quantitative and qualitative development of conventional arms. But even more disturbing is the fact that here is an area in which, through the transfer of their surplus requirements by way of sales - partly because of obsolescence, or to offset part of their expenditure - they also in effect transfer a conventional arms race to the third world.

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

The recent study on conventional disarmament (A/39/348) proves conclusively that the modern trend towards the transfer of sophisticated conventional weapons is aimed at regional destabilization and the spreading of ideological concepts. It is pertinent to note that, of about \$800 billion spent on military activities in 1983, up to 80 per cent was sunk on conventional armaments and armed forces. The developing countries are the usual sufferers because their territories constitute the dumping ground and the testing ground for these weapons. Besides, they are made to spend their scarce and hard-earned resources in purchasing this equipment for the destruction of development projects financed from the same hard-earned resources.

The work to be done on conventional disarmament is of course important, but this should not divert our attention from the very serious and basic task in connection with nuclear weapons. We urge the Commission to draw a distinction between the conventional arms requirements for self-defence of States which are not producers of arms and the acquisition of sophisticated conventional armaments to perpetuate regional domination or aggression, repression, threats to neighbouring States and all forms of destabilization. The acquisition of sophisticated conventional weapons and weapons technology through illegal collaboration with some Western States creates a military imbalance and constitutes a serious threat to the peace and security of certain regions, in particular the African region. We therefore call on those Western States to desist from collaborating with régimes such as the racist régime of South Africa, whose intentions are clearly to destabilize their neighbours.

The reduction of military budgets has been a subject of debate in various United Nations forums for quite some time. We recall that the General Assembly, in its resolution 35/142 A, of 12 December 1980, requested the Disarmament Commission "to identify and elaborate on the principles which should govern further actions of States in the field of the freezing and reduction of military expenditures".

It is regrettable that no substantial progress has been made in any forum. The problem areas in the Commission have been the general approach to the question of reduction, the authenticity of data and the special responsibility of militarily significant States.

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

While accepting the concept of the reduction of military budgets, it is our firm belief that any meaningful reduction should start with the nuclear-weapon States, which, together with their allies, account for about 80 per cent of all military expenditure. We seize this opportunity to appeal to those countries to exercise some restraint in military expenditure pending conclusion of an international instrument on the reduction of military budgets. We continue to uphold the concept of voluntary reduction as a significant measure and hope that the ultimate objective of an internationally verifiable agreement on the reduction of military budgets and armed forces will be achieved, beginning with the concrete recommendations expected to be made at this session of the Commission.

The question of South Africa's nuclear capability has also been on the agenda of the Commission for quite some time. It is now clear that South Africa's nuclear capability is a reality. This, unfortunately, is in stark contradiction with the Cairo Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa by the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in 1964. When apartheid South Africa purchased its first nuclear reactor in 1955, it was obviously intended not only to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, but also to develop the apartheid régime's nuclear capability.

We recall that the first jolt given to the international community by the racist régime was in 1977, when apartheid South Africa was caught making preparations to test a nuclear device. The incident of 22 September 1979 was another demonstration of the nuclear experiments being conducted by the régime.

The "offensive defence" policy of apartheid South Africa has been pursued by the régime in violation of the sovereign rights and territorial integrity of neighbouring States. South Africa occupies territory belonging to Angola and Mozambique and frequently carries out incursions into Zimbabwe and Zambia. South Africa's strategy includes support for UNITA as a means of destabilizing the legitimate Government of Angola. Destabilizing features similar to those inherent in "offensive defence" are seen in the policy of "total strategy".

To entrench apartheid further, the racist minority régime set up a so-called constitution that dispossessed the indigenous African majority of their right to their land. The régime now maintains a repressive policy and uses its nuclear-weapon capability to blackmail black African States.

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

The illegal régime has long been called upon to submit its nuclear installations to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards and has long blatantly refused to observe and, in the process, has violated the pertinent resolutions of the United Nations. Other General Assembly resolutions have called on those States that collaborate with apartheid South Africa in the nuclear field to desist from such collaboration. Regrettably, notwithstanding these resolutions, many countries continue to collaborate with the illegal régime in the nuclear field.

The Disarmament Commission should consider the subject of South Africa's nuclear capability with the seriousness it deserves and make effective recommendations to the General Assembly at its next session. We call on the international community to play a decisive role in the elimination of apartheid. One means of doing this is to desist from any collaboration whatsoever with the apartheid régime. It is an inescapable obligation to Africa and the world as a whole that all join in the elimination of that obnoxious policy. In the words of the Nigerian Foreign Minister when he addressed the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly:

"History will not fail to record the Western world's unpardonable neglect of its responsibilities to Africa, to the international community and to the United Nations over this issue of apartheid and racial discrimination in South Africa". (A/39/PV.25, p. 48-50)

The review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament is an important agenda item which this Commission should consider in the light of General Assembly resolution 39/151 G. The United Nations undoubtedly has a central role to play in disarmament and should therefore ensure that progress in disarmament negotiations is accelerated.

The United Nations also has a responsibility to accelerate the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, in accordance with paragraph 33 of the Final Document. The Security Council should formulate measures to ensure effective disarmament, in accordance with the powers vested in it by the Charter of the United Nations. In reviewing the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, we should focus on how best the world body can improve its central role in the disarmament process.

The commitments of the first special session on disarmament were reaffirmed in the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade. It is pertinent to

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

note that both the Declaration and the Final Document were adopted by consensus and that the first special session on disarmament was the most representative meeting of nations ever held to consider disarmament problems. Despite this wide representation and full participation, the Programme of Action in the Final Document has unfortunately remained largely unimplemented.

It should be recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 34/75, of 11 December 1979, expressed its disappointment that the purposes and objectives of the First Disarmament Decade had not been realized. Consequently, it directed the Disarmament Commission to prepare the elements of a draft resolution entitled "Declaration of the 1980s as the second disarmament decade". It is the implementation of that Declaration that this Commission is being called upon to review and appraise, as provided for in paragraph 25 of the Declaration. Among the goals of the Decade were:

"Halting and reversing the arms race, particularly the nuclear-arms race;

"Concluding and implementing effective agreements on disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, which will contribute significantly to the achievement of general and complete disarmament under effective international control." (resolution 35/46, annex, para. 7)

Considering the emphasis on these goals, particularly the goal of nuclear disarmament, and considering the fact that this emphasis and these goals derive from the Final Document, consideration of this agenda item should be more than routine. As stated by the Chairman in his opening remarks, the review and appraisal have to be concluded by the Disarmament Commission at this session and effective recommendations made to the General Assembly. Only by doing that will the Disarmament Commission have lived up to the following recommendation contained in the text of the elements of the Declaration in its report to the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly:

"In addition, the General Assembly will undertake at its fortieth session, in 1985, a review and appraisal, through the Disarmament Commission, of the progress in the implementation of the measures identified in this Declaration." (A/35/42, p. 15)

It is of course common knowledge that there has been a marked lack of progress in the achievement of the objectives of the Declaration as set out in the annex to General Assembly resolution 35/46, of 3 December 1980. The limited results

(Mr. Adeniji, Nigeria)

obtained in the field of disarmament in the 1970s have since been sacrificed on the altar of super-Power rivalry and mistrust. Resources sorely needed for socio-economic development have been diverted to unproductive military use. The decade of the 1980s started with signs of a deterioration in inter-State relations. Five years into that decade, we are now witnessing an unprecedented arms race, particularly in the nuclear field, with a major threat that that race will be extended to outer space. No substantial agreement has been reached in nuclear arms negotiations. Indeed, no agreement has been reached on anything in terms of the disarmament. The indication at the beginning of the decade that within two years agreement would have been reached on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty has of course no longer proved unwarranted. Five years from the beginning of the decade, any hope of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty is further away than it was at that time.

As is the case of nuclear weapons, little progress has been made in negotiations on other items on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, such as the question of chemical weapons. While noting that the actual negotiation of a text of a draft convention on chemical weapons has started, we hope that the divergent views which still inhibit progress will be reconciled. The Commission, being a deliberative body, cannot of course undertake negotiations, but it can at least make meaningful recommendations to the Conference on Disarmament through the General Assembly on these issues.

Other areas the Commission should address are the strengthening of international peace and security; the relationship between disarmament and development; effective international measures to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; and confidence-building measures and conventional disarmament. The role of the Commission in these areas would be to make the necessary recommendations to the General Assembly on ways and means of achieving progress.

There is no doubt that the accomplishment of these specific disarmament measures would create the much desired favourable international climate for the realization of the goals for which the 1980s was declared the Second Disarmament Decade. Also, there is no doubt that failure on the part of the Commission to give a factual assessment of what has and has not been done in the course of the Decade would be a great disservice to the cause of disarmament.

Mr. ABOULNASR (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission. Your vast experience and deep knowledge of disarmament matters are the best guarantees for making progress in our work towards achieving the noble goals we have set for ourselves.

This session of the Commission is taking place at a time when we are commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and of the signing of the United Nations Charter and the establishment of the Organization. The results achieved and the progress made so far to protect future generations from the scourge of war fall far short of the aims and the principles and purposes laid down by the authors of the United Nations Charter. The main reason for that is the failure to achieve disarmament, which is due to our inability to adhere to the various principles contained in the United Nations Charter and to ensure collective security.

First, I wish to underscore the importance of giving equal attention to the need for increasing the effectiveness of the United Nations - in particular the Security Council - and for ensuring maximum protection and security of States in order to restore confidence and in order for all Governments and peoples to give serious consideration to the many requests we make at each session of the Disarmament Commission, failing which the resolutions we adopt seeking a reduction of weapons and of military expenditures will remain mere theoretical aspects of disarmament without our having tackled the core of the problem.

In our view, disarmament matters cannot be dealt with outside present-day realities. We must give the necessary importance to efforts aimed at implementing the provisions of the Charter with regard to a collective security system and do everything feasible to bring a fresh approach to the way in which to restore confidence within an effective world collective security system guaranteeing the non-use of force and the prohibition of aggression, as well as the effective implementation of the United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions.

Some seven years after the adoption of the recommendations of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, we very much regret that we have not yet reached any significant, effective disarmament agreement. What is more, we are meeting today in a complex international situation that is putting to a difficult test the principles and practices of international relations, and we can but hope that the bilateral negotiations begun in January in Geneva between the Soviet Union and the United States will contribute to giving

(Mr. Abdoulnasr, Egypt)

fresh impetus to progress in multilateral negotiations, whether in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva or in the work of the Disarmament Commission. Both these disarmament bodies must make complementary efforts which must receive our total support and encouragement.

While we regret the meagre results obtained so far from the work of the Commission and of the Conference on Disarmament, in particular last year, this must not be allowed to impede progress. As a non-aligned country, Egypt is committed to the principles and objectives of the Non-Aligned Movement and believes that we must pursue the goal of complete and general disarmament under effective international control in order to avoid sliding towards a catastrophe threatening the whole of mankind. In its consideration of the various aspects of the arms race, in particular the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament, and having regard to its task to establish a general approach to negotiations for nuclear and conventional disarmament, the Commission should take up the principles contained in the Declaration of the New Delhi Summit Meeting of the Non-Aligned Countries as the basis for more definitive proposals to be included in our recommendations to the next session of the General Assembly.

The item on the cessation of the arms race and on nuclear and conventional disarmament leads us to seek a ban on underground nuclear tests. In so doing, we believe that, to the questions closely linked to horizontal and vertical non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, must be added the question of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban to complement the partial test-ban Treaty signed in 1963, thanks to which it has been possible to reach agreement on the cessation of nuclear testing in the atmosphere, outer space and the sea.

On the eve of the Third Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), agreement on a treaty banning all nuclear tests is of capital importance, for the nuclear States parties to the Treaty that have not yet carried out their commitment to put an end to the nuclear-arms race and achieve nuclear disarmament must at least, as a first step, cease nuclear testing as proof of their sincerity to honour their obligations under the provisions of Article VI of the Treaty. What is perhaps the minimum required of the two super-Powers pending a comprehensive treaty on the banning of all nuclear tests is the implementation as soon as possible of the 1974 Treaty on the limitation of underground testing and its Protocol and of the 1976 Treaty on underground testing for peaceful purposes.

(Mr. Aboulnasr, Egypt)

There is no doubt that the fact that the nuclear States parties to the NPT have responded to the appeal contained in General Assembly resolution 39/52 calling for a freeze on nuclear testing is a step forward in pursuing serious efforts to arrive at further progress in the field of nuclear disarmament and conventional disarmament as well. We welcome the Secretary-General's study on conventional disarmament in all its aspects, and we view that study as a practical step to be followed in the field of conventional disarmament within the framework of assured security for any State. As that study points out, the main nuclear Powers and those possessing significant military arsenals must lead the way in this field by being the first to implement the recommendations contained in the study. If a consensus can be arrived at that the item on nuclear and conventional disarmament and the cessation of the arms race is the priority item on the agenda of this session, the other items will remain closely linked and retain equal importance.

Indeed, in our view the item on South Africa's nuclear capability deals with matters deserving all the attention and objectivity of the Organization. The nuclear potential of the racist régime in South Africa is daily becoming more dangerous. Mention is made of this in the report of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, which confirms that South Africa is pursuing the development of its nuclear potential, including the establishment of uranium-enriching installations and studies towards achieving its own development of nuclear materials, thus constituting a threat to the peace and security of the African continent and an impediment to the proclamation of Africa as a nuclear-free zone.

As an African State, Egypt is bound to give the matter all the attention it deserves. As we all know, South Africa's nuclear potential has been developed and enhanced owing to the ongoing co-operation in nuclear fields between its Government and certain other Governments, as well as with certain transnational corporations which are now mining Namibian uranium. The report of the Institute on Disarmament Research points out that the production of uranium in South Africa and Namibia has increased by about 50 per cent since 1982, which makes it necessary for us to renew the call to abstain from providing any assistance in developing the nuclear potential of the racist régime, especially in view of its refusal to adhere to the NPT and to submit its nuclear installations to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. We are convinced that the Working Group can take up this question and do constructive work on the basis of the results and the recommendations we came close to adopting last year.

(Mr. Aboulnasr, Egypt)

The "Review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament" is one of the most important items on our agenda. This is a question we must examine in all frankness and clarity. Indeed, in the past few years we have noted that a number of United Nations bodies devoted to disarmament questions, especially the First Committee, are no longer organs dealing with the search for solutions and the consideration of serious proposals on disarmament subjects and have become forums for exchanges of accusations and recrimination. Furthermore, they have been entrusted with numerous bilateral questions, something which has led them to turn away from their task and from what was expected of them. Similarly, we have also noted the proliferation of resolutions and documents at each session - the repetition of numerous resolutions from one year to the next - which has made their study and consideration a problem in our respective capitals. In fact, an observer of our work at a particular session who were asked to differentiate between a resolution on a given subject at the latest session and a resolution adopted at a previous session would find it difficult to see any difference between them. Furthermore, the belief is held - wrongly - that if a resolution is not repeated session after session it would mean that it has simply disappeared or that its importance has diminished. Consequently, each session adopts dozens of repetitive resolutions, to which attention is no longer being paid owing to this tedious repetition. Also, anyone seeking to follow the activities of the United Nations or those of other international organs in the field of disarmament is faced with another complex problem: in addition to the multiplicity and the repetition of resolutions adopted by the same body, the same subject is being dealt with in more than one body simultaneously, which in no way enhances the possibility of serious follow-up and study. I believe that it is now necessary to review the proliferation of committees, organs, sub-committees and conferences which are dealing with the same subjects and which cause duplication, something which makes our resolutions ineffective outside this building.

There is another problem to that of the proliferation of resolutions, organs and subjects: the effectiveness of resolutions we adopt and the extent to which they are complied with. There is no doubt that taking up this important question will make it possible to bring out the reasons for non-implementation of numerous resolutions and to ascertain the limits between what we wish and what can be realized and to take the appropriate measures with regard to the possibility of implementation. That would give pause for reflection on our asking for the impossible and on the confrontation of present-day complex international relations

(Mr. Aboulnasr, Egypt)

with a serious search for a solution to the crisis of confidence, thus making it possible to have the benefit of other accrued experience in other regional and international fields with a view to identifying a certain number of basic commitments susceptible to implementation and allowing us to re-establish the basis for restoring confidence.

The Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade is proof of the sincere efforts made by the international community during the First Disarmament Decade and reflects the common desire of all peoples to pursue efforts to create a society free from the threat of armed aggression and the use of force in international relations. Now that we have reached the mid-point in the Second Disarmament Decade, we are faced with challenges and we have assumed heavy responsibilities in studying the result of our efforts so far; and now that we are at the mid-point of the 1980s, we deeply regret that what has been accomplished from the recommendations of the Declaration is minimal. In our view, that is because of the lack of political will especially on the part of the two super-Powers; nevertheless we must welcome the few positive measures that have led to the adoption of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. We also welcome the international consensus on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, not to mention the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques. One can also point to the preparations for the convening of an international conference on the promotion of international co-operation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, to be held in 1986. There are other positive measures, such as the accomplishments of the World Disarmament Campaign and the various United Nations studies. As we know, all these activities have been recommended in the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade and in a number of other declarations. Unfortunately, the overall results fall far short of what we had hoped for.

We must renew our commitment to the priorities set out in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, especially with regard to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons and a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. We must achieve the reduction of military budgets and the allocation of the resources thus saved to development.

(Mr. Aboulnasr, Egypt)

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that the Disarmament Commission faces a challenge: either it will justify its existence through concrete recommendations to the General Assembly or it will fail again and the fears and apprehensions of some with regard to its effectiveness will be confirmed.

We hope that under your wise leadership, Sir, we shall be able to achieve the positive results for which we all yearn.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.