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Chairman: Mr. PASTINEN (Finland)

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 128 (continued)

CONCLUSION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE STRENGTHENING OF GUARANTEES OF THE SECURITY OF NON-NUCLEAR STATES (A/33/241; A/C.1/33/L.6)

Mr. KERROUM (Algeria) (interpretation from French): The question of security guarantees against the nuclear threat is one of the major concerns of the non-nuclear States. The position of Algeria on this question, which has been repeatedly stated here, is based on the two following principles.

First, nuclear disarmament alone, through the cessation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons and the destruction of all existing stockpiles, constitutes a true and complete guarantee against the nuclear threat. While awaiting the realization of that objective, all efforts should be made, in accordance with paragraph 58 of the Final Document of the tenth special session on disarmament, to prohibit recourse to nuclear weapons and to prevent a nuclear war.

Algeria, moreover, co-sponsored the draft resolution submitted on this question by India. It is to be hoped that the nuclear Powers, in particular the two great Powers which bear a special responsibility in this field, will support this draft resolution.

Secondly, it is incumbent upon the nuclear Powers to ensure, without conditions or restrictions, true security guarantees to non-nuclear weapon States. These security guarantees, however adequate they may be, cannot, however, eliminate the nuclear danger. Hence, they should be accompanied by a commitment on the part of the nuclear Powers to proceed to effective nuclear disarmament measures.

This second principle has always met with reluctance on the part of nuclear Powers. That reluctance was clearly manifested when the Security Council adopted resolution 255 (1968). That resolution was thus deprived, even in the opinion of those countries to which it was addressed, of any practical effect. Algeria expressed its reservations at the time and abstained in the vote on it.

(Mr. Kerroum, Algeria)

The Algerian delegation would wish today to emphasize two particularly negative aspects of resolution 255 (1968). First, resolution 255 (1968) does not include negative assurances. On the contrary, the reference to the right of legitimate self-defence, although not directly related to the aim sought, could be interpreted as the affirmation by the nuclear Powers of the use of nuclear weapons in a conflict with a non-nuclear-weapon State if they feel that they are not the aggressors.

Secondly, resolution 255 (1968) could have had some practical effect where a non-nuclear-weapon State should become the victim of a nuclear attack by a country not a permanent member of the Security Council. But the restrictions provided for are such that they may entail surprising consequences. To take a topical example, the Security Council under resolution 255 (1968) would not be bound to act in support of a front-line country not a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty if it were the victim of nuclear aggression by South Africa.

At the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the growing concern of the non-nuclear-weapon States encountered the same reluctance which was reflected in the restrictions contained in the statements of certain nuclear Powers. Thus, paragraph 59 of the Final Document states that the nuclear Powers are called upon:

"... to pursue efforts to conclude, as appropriate, effective arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons." (A/RES/S-10/2, para. 59)

and thus to break with the pattern of the past.

The Soviet proposal is a first step towards the implementation of paragraph 59. It is encouraging that one of the two great nuclear Powers, in this case the Soviet Union, should have taken the initiative in seeking implementation of a fundamental provision of the Final Document. This is the first constructive attempt to provide a framework of international binding commitments to meet the legitimate demands of non-nuclear-weapon States and to develop an adequate system of security guarantees.

(Mr. Kerroum, Algeria)

Algeria would like at this stage to make some preliminary observations on the Soviet draft convention on the basis of the principles which have been mentioned earlier. First, guarantees should be applied to all non-nuclear-weapon States. This is particularly true with respect to those countries which voluntarily have remained outside military alliances involving the nuclear Powers. In the opinion of the Algerian delegation, the problem posed by countries on whose territories nuclear weapons have been placed must be solved by the dismantling of foreign bases and the dissolution of military alliances built around the nuclear Powers.

Secondly, positive guarantees should be provided for non-nuclear-weapon States victims of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons on the part of one of the five nuclear Powers or of a Power which is not a permanent member of the Security Council. In this case, the Security Council, whose action would not then be paralysed by a veto, could play its full role.

Finally, security guarantees, both positive and negative, should be accompanied by effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament, the only genuine and complete guarantee.

Bearing in mind these observations and the need to emphasize the urgency of nuclear disarmament as well as the will to depart from an approach which has proved ineffective, the draft resolution submitted by the Soviet Union, in the opinion of the Algerian delegation, appears to outline an appropriate procedure. In particular, it appears to us that the Soviet draft, along with the observations and proposals made by the various delegations, should be transmitted to the Committee on Disarmament, where delegations could undertake negotiations leading to the establishment of an adequate system of guarantees.

The discussion begun on the subject this year may be continued by the General Assembly at future sessions.

The Algerian delegation appreciates the importance of such an initiative and will support the draft resolution presented by the Soviet Union.

Mr. PFEIFFER (Federal Republic of Germany): The proposal of a draft convention put forward by the Soviet Union, which we are debating, is an additional contribution to the discussion of the question of how security can be strengthened by assuring non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons on the basis of the assurances contained in the United Nations Charter not to use or threaten to use force. We have taken note also of the texts drafted by the delegation of Pakistan and of its statement made on 31 October. We are studying them and will comment on them at a later stage.

The Federal Republic of Germany renounced the production of nuclear weapons as early as 1954 and we have accepted the obligations of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We understand the concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States to secure effective assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and we are prepared to contribute to efforts designed to reduce the threat emanating from the existence of nuclear weapons.

In pursuance of that aim, my country contributed to several working papers in the Preparatory Committee and in the special session devoted to disarmament. In those working papers the need for security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States was clearly recognized. Furthermore, I wish to recall in this context that during the special session devoted to disarmament certain nuclear-weapon States did give binding and specific assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States that they would not use nuclear weapons against them. I should like to refer to the United States and United Kingdom declarations on this subject. Those declarations are internationally binding commitments undertaken by nuclear-weapon States. At the same time, they specify the circumstances in which those assurances are provided. Indeed, they extend beyond the general obligation of the United Nations Charter to refrain from the use or threat of use of force.

Any further examination of this problem must therefore proceed from the facts established by the commitments made already in the course of the special session devoted to disarmament. Together with those declarations, all other relevant statements and views expressed by nuclear-weapon- and non-nuclear-weapon States during the special session devoted to disarmament

(Mr. Pfeiffer, Federal Republic of
Germany)

should also be taken into account.

In our opinion the assurances given by nuclear-weapon States, together with the Soviet draft, form a solid basis for further discussion. We have, however, difficulties with some elements of the Soviet draft.

First, the proposal envisages only one approach to the problem of security assurances, that of a multilateral convention. The argument for that approach is that it would create identical obligations for all nuclear-weapon States and also for the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the convention. At first glance the idea seems to be attractive. We have, however, doubts about its practicability. Effective security assurances must reflect and conform to the varying security interests of States in different regions. I may mention as a parallel example the recognition of the need to respect the differing characteristics of various regions in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. The situation is very similar with regard to security assurances. Bearing in mind the different situations and interests of nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States which would have to be accommodated, we are concerned that the approach of a uniform convention would not allow the necessary adjustments to varying conditions and would therefore not attain its objective.

Secondly, we cannot see that the text as drafted would provide for stronger and more binding obligations than the guarantees against the use or threat of use of force contained in Article 1, paragraph 1, and Article 2, paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of the United Nations Charter and in the unilateral declarations I mentioned earlier.

Thirdly, the commitments already undertaken are not reflected in the Soviet draft. We think further discussion is necessary, taking into account all developments during and since the special session devoted to disarmament. In these circumstances it appears premature to decide to start actual treaty negotiations and to look exclusively to a convention as the only possible solution. We think it is necessary to examine the problems in depth, taking into account all the material to hand. That, in our view, should be the objective of the next round of discussions, which

(Mr. Pfeiffer, Federal Republic of Germany)

could take place in the Committee on Disarmament. We are prepared to participate in working out a solution which will find broad support, in particular that of the nuclear-weapon States.

Those are our preliminary comments. As the discussion develops we may have further comments to make and we shall avail ourselves of future opportunities to do so in this or any other forum.

Mr. RABETAFIKA (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): It has become a commonplace in United Nations bodies to say that the nuclear weapons which the super-Powers have in their arsenals could destroy our planet several times over and remove every trace of life, to such an extent that despite the disquieting nature of that warning we see attitudes and stances that are apparently contradictory but which do no more than reflect our disarray. Some, in fact, multiply their assurances without being able to, or wishing to, draw the conclusions that one might logically expect. Others fall back on considerations more philosophical than political, because they still seem to believe in human wisdom and the impossibility of humanity's bringing about its own destruction. Still others call for immediate measures for the non-development, non-use and destruction of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles.

However, if we take a closer look at those attitudes we feel they should be supplemented in order definitely to overcome the practical and political difficulties of nuclear disarmament and ensure that the security to which all States, nuclear and non-nuclear, are entitled acquire a scope and meaning in keeping with their commitments.

The situation in which we find ourselves is quite different. Each interest, or rather each group of interests, seeks to defend its priorities and imperatives, which are in fact only theoretical and do not necessarily reflect the urgent need for a search for universally acceptable solutions. In addition, despite the emergence of what we call a nuclear conscience, the nuclear Powers continue to enjoy and ensure relative

(Mr. Rabetafika, Madagascar)

security, thanks to the maintenance of the balance of deterrence and terror, whereas the non-nuclear States are left to themselves, powerless and without any true defence. The precariousness of their situation is all the more disquieting - and why not say so - since they are exposed to contingencies which could compromise their freedom of choice and action and therefore their political independence. It is only natural that non-nuclear-weapon States should not have ceased to demand, and for many years, that the nuclear Powers should undertake solemnly and irrevocably, regardless of circumstances, not to use nuclear weapons against them. Their appeal has never been heeded.

(Mr. Rabetafika, Madagascar)

After the statements whereby the nuclear Powers have jointly or severally undertaken not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries, the Soviet initiative to conclude a convention of international legal force designed to guarantee and therefore to strengthen the security of non-nuclear-weapon States deserves to be considered with all due attention. My delegation believes that the Soviet proposal is a logical follow-up to the recommendations reached at the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It is intended to make every effort to associate the international community as a whole in the disarmament process and to strengthen international security. It is intended through the machinery set up for this purpose to restore to our Organization its central role in the negotiation and conclusion of agreements, conventions or treaties on disarmament and international security. It represents a positive contribution to the action we have undertaken to bring about the denuclearization of Africa and the Indian Ocean as well as to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world. Finally, it can serve as a safeguard against those, such as South Africa and others, that might be tempted to use for military purposes facilities granted to them for the peaceful utilization of nuclear power.

My delegation is among those which attach particular importance to the priority we must give nuclear disarmament. If only for that reason, we could not reject out of hand any step of a collateral or related type taken in this area designed to improve the international climate and promote the process of general and complete disarmament. In fact, let us try to respond to the concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States for their security. Let us attempt to establish a certain confidence between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. Let us seek to adopt the most appropriate legal guarantees, when those provided by the Treaty on Non-Proliferation are no longer regarded as adequate. We cannot in all conscience oppose such action if we are fully aware of political realities.

My delegation will not go into the details of the provisions contained in the draft convention on the strengthening of guarantees for the security of non-nuclear States. We shall confine ourselves to presenting a few general comments on principles that we believe should govern the elaboration of the final convention.

(Mr. Rabetafika, Madagascar)

First, we consider that in view of the vicissitudes that may be encountered in international relations it is essential that the obligations of all States Parties be subject to serious multilateral negotiations to arrive at precise definitions that are accepted freely and by common consent and not imposed or endorsed in declarations of intent, which are always subject to unilateral interpretation.

Secondly, the final instrument must, in order to win the support of one and all and to be credible and viable, reflect the necessary balance of responsibilities and obligations as between the nuclear Powers and the non-nuclear-weapon States. We insist upon this principle because too often the counterparts demanded of the small Powers far exceed the concessions made by the great Powers. Proof of this is provided by the Non-Proliferation Treaty, in connexion with which so many promises were made to the non-nuclear States when the latter drew attention to the unequal treatment implicit in the implementation of some of the provisions of that Treaty.

Thirdly, my delegation, still anxious to preserve a reasonable balance between the responsibilities and obligations of both categories of States, also believes that the aspects of verification following on the presumption of non-compliance with these obligations should be spelled out in more detail. In this connexion it might be useful to set up legal, technical and even political machinery designed, on the one hand, effectively and efficiently to ensure that all States parties, without any discrimination, have in fact complied with their obligations and, on the other, to propose the necessary steps to be taken in the case of non-compliance.

Finally, my delegation believes it would be desirable that some concepts, particularly those relating to extraordinary events and matters of higher interest, be the subject of detailed study so that the States Parties may share if not a uniform interpretation at least a generally accepted one. It would in fact be dangerous to leave the State that withdraws from the convention with the power to evaluate these two concepts, although it is quite obvious that account should be taken of the sovereignty of each and every State party.

Having made these general comments, my delegation is convinced that the time has come to conclude an international convention on the strengthening of

(Mr. Rabetafika, Madagascar)

the security of non-nuclear States. The task we are going to entrust to the Committee on Disarmament will not be an easy one in view of the observations, criticisms and hesitations that have been expressed and the understandable disappointment of non-nuclear-weapon States. However, it is true that an interesting initiative was taken on 8 September of this year by the Soviet Union, to which we should like to pay a well deserved tribute. We hope that the conclusions we reach after the work of the Committee on Disarmament will this time be conducive to assuring the non-nuclear States that they will enjoy true security based on non-discriminatory treatment.

Mr. PAQUI (Benin) (interpretation from French): From the Conference of Non-Nuclear Weapon States held in Geneva in August 1968 up until the adoption of the many declarations, resolutions and treaties that have created nuclear-weapon-free zones in some areas, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to which most of the developing countries are parties, how many disappointments and frustrations have we had -- disappointments because, to begin with, most of the non-nuclear-weapon States that took part in that Geneva Conference thought that the United Nations would adopt measures in close co-operation with the nuclear Powers that would be likely to prevent the proliferation of these terrible weapons of mass destruction and for ever prevent the holocaust that a nuclear war would inevitably bring about.

Today we are in duty bound to note that our Organization has been unable to do anything to counter the development of the nuclear programmes of many States. This shows, more disquietingly than ever, that there is a danger of the proliferation of such weapons. Then comes our frustration: by acceding to the Non-Proliferation Treaty the developing countries acted in good faith in the belief that their concerns were shared by the overwhelming majority of the members of the international community. But today those countries are very seriously asking themselves whether in the last analysis they have not been duped. This question arises with even greater acuity in Africa and in the Middle East, where faced with an overwhelming majority of States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the minority régimes continue with impunity and arrogance to develop their nuclear-weapon programmes, which they think they will be able to hold as a Sword of Damocles over the heads of those States that refuse to accept the dictates of a minority.

(Mr. Al-Ali, Iraq)

Therefore, the demand to decrease the danger of the use of this weapon, requires legitimacy and objectivity and is of vital importance. Hence it becomes one of the primary and principle obligations imposed on us. It is quite obvious to all that the non-aligned countries have always attached and continue to attach great importance in all their conferences to topics related to nuclear disarmament and the elimination of the nuclear threat.

We also find that most of the representatives here, in one way or another, through the statements we have heard from them in this hall, have stressed the need to save humanity from the fear and anxiety over its destiny and to attempt to create the necessary methods conducive to an atmosphere of security which these countries require urgently and speedily, in order that they may direct their energies to construction, to building and to progress. When the representative of the Soviet Union takes the initiative of putting forward the draft of an international convention to provide guarantees for the security of non-nuclear States, he, as the representative of a super-Power which has the nuclear weapon, expresses through this attitude his sincere desire to avoid and renounce the use of such a weapon against these peoples.

(Mr. Al-Ali, Iraq)

The delegation of the Republic of Iraq, in warmly supporting the Soviet draft proposal in document A/C.1/33/L.6, feels sure that that draft will have the support and agreement of those countries which do not possess those weapons in the first place. Our delegation also hopes that the representatives of the other nuclear Powers, headed by the United States, will express their support for this draft, which will be one of the effective means of testing the intentions of the nuclear States and knowing whether those States have acquired such energy for the purposes of destruction, aggression and, consequently, threatening human civilization, or to serve to protect humanity, its progress and its happiness.

Mr. FISHER (United States of America): I do not believe there is any better way to begin to state the United States position on the current agenda item than by quoting the Presidential declaration on the issue of security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, announced by Secretary of State Vance during the special session. That Presidential declaration reads as follows:

"The United States will not use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) or any comparable internationally binding commitment not to acquire nuclear explosive devices, except in the case of an attack on the United States, its territories or armed forces, or its allies, by such a State allied to a nuclear-weapon State or associated with a nuclear-weapon State in carrying out or sustaining the attack."

I believe that this statement should dispose of one of the issues which has recurred from time to time in our current deliberations on this issue; that is, whether there should be a "legally binding treaty obligation" or whether individual declarations are satisfactory. The United States does not consider this to be a real issue. A formal statement by the President of the United States is not something that is made lightly and without careful consideration of all its implications and the obligations it imposes. And its effect is immediate, not at some future date.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

Many may then ask why, if the United States considers the impact of that declaration significant and binding, does the United States not welcome the concept of a formal treaty obligation? The answer is clear: it is not that we are attempting to hedge in any way on the nature of our obligation, but rather that we are faced with a situation in which the five nuclear Powers have made statements on this issue which differ substantially in their content and in their scope. The United States sees little prospect of melding them into a single formulation.

As the United States indicated before this Committee on 19 October, it would be unrealistic to anticipate that a single formulation could be found which would be generally acceptable and meet the diverse security requirements, not only of each of the nuclear Powers but also of the non-nuclear-weapon States, for many of which relationships with specific nuclear States are an essential ingredient in their national security.

The United States, of course, conceives of the concept of security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States both as a means of strengthening the security of non-nuclear-weapon States and as a means of strengthening the non-proliferation régime. It should be noted in this context that the Presidential declaration does not limit its application to parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It is applicable to any other State that has undertaken "a comparable internationally binding commitment not to acquire nuclear explosive devices".

One possibility comes to mind - the nuclear-free zone concept. As early as 1971 the United States extended an appropriate non-use assurance to full parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the Latin American nuclear weapon-free zone. Another regional effort with provisions comparable to those in the Treaty of Tlatelolco would be covered by the United States assurance. Other alternatives may also exist.

We have heard often in this debate that the non-use or threat of use commitments by the nuclear-weapon States should be unconditional. The United States respectfully disagrees with this position.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

A good deal has been said in this forum about the theory of nuclear deterrence. This is not a pleasant subject but we cannot overlook the fact that in many areas of the world nuclear weapons are part of the security arrangements that have so far kept the peace, and in effect kept all of us in this room alive. These facts exist. The idea that they can be made to disappear by a declaration, agreement or convention is fundamentally unrealistic.

It is for this reason that the United States could not extend a non-use pledge to other nuclear-weapon States. It is for the same reason that, in certain situations clearly described in the Presidential declaration I have quoted, our pledge cannot be unconditionally extended to all non-nuclear-weapon States.

As I stated in my remarks to this Committee on 19 October of this year, the United States is convinced that the solemn pledges given by the nuclear Powers during the special session represent an important measure of security for the non-nuclear-weapon States. For this reason, we believe the Security Council should take formal note of them. The United States is not committed, however, to this approach as the sole way of proceeding. There may be other forums in which the question of negative security assurances could be treated, such as the Committee on Disarmament. The United States has an open mind on which is the best forum, so long as all views and all ways of treating the subject are open for consideration.

Mr. SOURINHO (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (interpretation from French): For those in whom the results of the tenth special session have aroused renewed optimism regarding the negotiations on disarmament, including my own delegation, remarks made in the present discussion taking place this week, and which is on the point of concluding, obviously are a matter of particular importance, because we are now taking up a specific proposal aimed at the immediate implementation of the recommendations and decisions reached by the tenth special session. In this connexion,

(Mr. Sourinho, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

a number of representatives who spoke before me have already very pertinently analysed all those recommendations and decisions which this proposal seems to refer to. Among the latter there is one in particular which my delegation - at the risk of disagreeably repeating itself - would like to emphasize again, since we believe that it best expresses the thinking behind the initiative of the Soviet Union, that is, the recommendation which appears in paragraph 59 of the Final Document of the special session which stipulates, inter alia, the following:

"In the same context, the nuclear-weapon States are called upon to take steps to assure the non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons." (resolution S-10/2, para. 59)

(Mr. Sourinho, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

By promptly proposing at the present session of the General Assembly consideration of the conclusion of an international convention on the strengthening of security guarantees of non-nuclear-weapon States, the Soviet Union has proved once again that it is always prepared to co-operate with the international community in order to be in the vanguard on the road that will lead to general and complete disarmament under effective international control, which remains the final goal of the joint efforts undertaken by all the peoples of the world that love peace and democracy.

In this connexion, unless one really adopts a negative attitude, one cannot fail to recognize that the Soviet action constitutes a direct response to the appeal of the tenth special session and is therefore a laudable attempt to make progress in the cause of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament. Therefore, above all, my delegation would like to express warmly to the delegation of the Soviet Union its deep appreciation of its very happy and opportune initiative.

More than a decade has elapsed since the non-nuclear-weapon States, confronted by the unbridled quantitative and qualitative nuclear arms race, made the first efforts to secure from the nuclear-weapon States guarantees that those States would never use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them. But those efforts have so far had only insignificant results.

Undoubtedly, with respect to the assurance of guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States, there is Security Council resolution 255 (1968), which takes note of the intention expressed by the three nuclear Powers signatories to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that they would give and support immediate assistance, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, to any non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Treaty that was the victim of an act or threat of aggression with the use of nuclear weapons.

However, in view of the fact that such assistance would be subject to the normal procedure of the Security Council and could therefore be the object of a veto, the guarantee represented by resolution 255 (1968) is questionable. It should be emphasized also that that resolution refers only to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, completely leaving aside all the others.

(Mr. Sourinho, Lao People's
Democratic Republic)

In view of those short-comings, it cannot constitute a solid security guarantee for non-nuclear-weapon States.

In addition to Security Council resolution 255 (1968), there is also, as regards security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States, the declarations of intention made at the tenth special session by certain nuclear Powers to the effect that they would not resort to the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. But, like all such unilateral declarations, except one, since they were more or less tied to conditions, they quite obviously did not meet the grave concern of the non-nuclear-weapon States.

In these circumstances, we believe that the Soviet proposal now before the First Committee presents, at the present stage of negotiations on disarmament, considerable advantages for all non-nuclear-weapon States, although we are still mindful of the fact that the most effective guarantee against the danger of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is the ending of the nuclear arms race and the total destruction of all such weapons. In view of many of the elements it contains, we believe that the proposal of the Soviet Union constitutes an excellent point of departure along these lines and we therefore support it wholeheartedly.

We should also like to state that the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic is prepared to become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/33/L.6, submitted by the Soviet Union, which, inter alia, recommends that the draft convention annexed to the document be referred to the Committee on Disarmament, which would undoubtedly take into account in its work all the comments and pertinent suggestions that have emerged in the present discussion in the First Committee on this item.

Mr. ELARABY (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): The question of providing guarantees for the security of non-nuclear States is, in the opinion of the delegation of Egypt, one of the most important questions in the field of disarmament, because all efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons depend to a large extent on giving the non-nuclear countries real assurance that their peace and security will not be threatened as a result of the fact that they do not seek to acquire nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

The question of security guarantees occupied a large part of the time of the First Committee years ago when the Committee discussed the ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The delegation of Egypt was among those that emphasized the need for such a treaty to contain effective security guarantees that would provide the parties to the Treaty with the necessary security.

It is not necessary at this stage to deal with the history of the discussions in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva and in the First Committee here in New York, as well as in the Security Council and in the Conference of non-nuclear States on this subject, since we all know that the final result of all those efforts was failure, and that the Treaty that was accepted did not include clearly defined and satisfactory guarantees of the security of non-nuclear States. Security Council resolution 255 (1968) merely expressed the intention to assist a non-nuclear State in the event of nuclear aggression, does not add anything new to the provisions of Article 51 of the Charter.

Undoubtedly the reason that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons has not been ratified by all the countries of the world is that for the most part it does not provide the necessary security for the non-nuclear States parties to that Treaty.

The delegation of Egypt has taken a clear and decisive position on guarantees of security. From the beginning we have emphasized the importance of security guarantees and have stressed the need to provide such guarantees to all non-nuclear States, provided that their nuclear activities are under international supervision and control.

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

It may be relevant to mention here the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt at the special session devoted to disarmament on 31 May 1978:

"We ... call for the urgent adoption of a security guarantee, free from the restrictions and limitations that would prevent the Security Council from discharging its responsibilities; a security guarantee that would enable the Council to take effective preventive measures before, and not after," - I repeat, "before, and not after," - "the occurrence of a nuclear threat." (A/S-10/PV.11, p. 23)

With the security guarantees of limited effect which are contained in the provisions of Security Council resolution 255 (1968) the international community will have to redouble its efforts and direct them towards finding more effective and wider security guarantees for those countries which have pledged themselves to renounce the nuclear alternative.

Defining the dimensions of such security guarantees requires that we take into consideration the circumstances prevailing in each area and the requirements of providing security in it. As far as some countries are concerned, security may be provided by means of a pledge by nuclear-weapon States not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. That is what has come to be known as "the negative guarantee". However, such a guarantee must not be considered as the best that can be done for the security of non-nuclear-weapon States. The maintenance and protection of international peace and security require consideration of the sensitive situations existing in some areas and the pockets of real danger in such areas before the situation deteriorates and the international community finds itself faced with a sudden nuclear escalation, which would finally put an end to all attempts to limit the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

I should like to refer here to the statement made by the representative of Egypt in this First Committee two weeks ago when he said that until such security guarantees are included in a formal treaty it might be necessary for the nuclear States to deposit the instruments of such guarantees with the

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

Security Council, because such commitments are an indivisible part of the steps towards nuclear disarmament. These then constitute the scope of the security guarantees on which Egypt considers that our discussions should focus.

In view of the deep concern that we feel on this matter, the delegation of Egypt welcomes the initiative of the Soviet delegation for the inclusion of this topic on the agenda of the General Assembly. From the discussion here and the points of view expressed by the non-nuclear countries, we have come to realize that the question of security guarantees should have special priority.

My delegation will not make a detailed analysis of the important points of view we have heard expressed here, being satisfied that they will be placed before the Committee on Disarmament, the new negotiating body in Geneva. Nevertheless, we should like to praise the constructive attitude adopted by the delegation of Pakistan in this debate.

The delegation of Egypt has studied the draft resolution and convention proposed by the Soviet Union and, generally speaking and without at this stage dealing with any of the details, we do not object to sending that draft convention to the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva. We attach special importance to having the necessary progress made in the work of that Committee.

We have some concluding remarks to make on the draft convention, dealing basically with some matters which are raised by the text - for example, the interpretation of the term "non-nuclear States" and the linking of that to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and any agreement on the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones as well as the machinery or instrument which will verify that some countries have indeed renounced the production and acquisition of nuclear weapons and that those countries will continue to respect their commitments and pledges in that respect.

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

The delegation of Egypt has listened with great care and attention to the explanations and interpretations provided by the representative of the Soviet Union and we feel sure that there is still need for further study.

Mr. MAKONNEN (Ethiopia): The Ethiopian delegation considers that the new item now before this Committee, namely, the strengthening of the security of non-nuclear-weapon States, is of undeniable importance. Its importance derives not only from the fact that it is fully in accord with the goals emphasized at the tenth special session of the General Assembly but also because it is an initiative taken by a major nuclear Power. In our view, this new proposal of the Soviet Union adds more vigour and impact to the momentum generated at the special session by providing tangible opportunities for moving forward towards the implementation of the goals of that session.

The significance of the Soviet proposal springs also from the fact that it answers the repeated call by non-nuclear-weapon States for credible security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, it seeks in a positive and constructive manner to harmonize the varying degrees of commitment already entered into in the unilateral declarations of all the nuclear Powers, within the framework of a mutually binding international convention. The final shape that such a convention may assume will depend very much on the sincerity and the level of commitments in those declarations and, above all, on the will to participate positively and constructively on the part of all concerned.

(Mr. Makonnen, Ethiopia)

What is important at this stage is that we have now reached a starting-point as provided by the Soviet draft convention. Such active and constructive participation would be in keeping with the principles and guidelines contained in paragraph 58 of the Final Document adopted at the special session. In that paragraph it is clearly stressed that:

"... all States, in particular nuclear-weapon States, should consider as soon as possible various proposals designed to secure the avoidance of the use of nuclear weapons, the prevention of nuclear war and related objectives, where possible through international agreement, and thereby ensure that the survival of mankind is not endangered. All States should actively participate in efforts to bring about conditions in international relations among States in which a code of peaceful conduct of nations in international affairs could be agreed and which would preclude the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons." (A/RFS/S-10/2, para. 58)

Any action that would be contrary to those premises and such as to deny the new proposal of the Soviet Union the consideration it so clearly deserves should obviously be regarded as an attempt to frustrate the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of the international community. Moreover, it would also bring the credibility of those nuclear Powers, which initially gave security assurances in their unilateral declarations, into serious question.

The ultimate goal is general and complete disarmament to be achieved in a manner that would in no way diminish the security interests of any State and on the basis of the common acceptance of the well-founded fact that mankind's future security and prosperity lies not in the acquisition and global proliferation of nuclear weapons but, on the contrary, in effective and equitable measures of disarmament which of necessity must begin with the cessation of the nuclear arms race. While speaking of security guarantees, therefore, we cannot fail to emphasize that the ultimate guarantee against the danger of nuclear war and the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Such a measure would strengthen the security not only of the non-nuclear weapon States but also that of the nuclear Powers. No legal guarantee can be as effective as that ultimate goal. At best, it could only be regarded as an intermediary step designed to create the necessary conditions for nuclear disarmament and, as the Permanent Representative of the

(Mr. Makonnen, Ethiopia)

USSR, Ambassador Oleg Troyanovsky, said when he was introducing the new item in this Committee on 30 October 1978, it

"would serve the same purposes of lessening the danger of an outbreak of nuclear conflict and limiting the sphere of the possible use of nuclear weapons." (A/C.1/33/PV.20, p. 6)

Moreover, it would undoubtedly strengthen the régime of the Non-Proliferation Treaty by providing the incentive desired by non-nuclear-weapon States in order for them to remain committed to the renunciation of their nuclear-weapon option. In our view, future elaboration of and negotiations on the draft convention by the Committee on Disarmament must give the necessary emphasis to the need for an early cessation of the nuclear arms race and provisions for parallel obligations for nuclear disarmament, thereby making certain that we do not lose sight of the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

Mr. HOVEYDA (Iran): Deep concern over the accumulation of weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, which constitute a threat to the future of all mankind, was articulately voiced during the tenth special session of the United Nations General Assembly, devoted to disarmament. It is quite obvious that today, as before, there is not one single country which can claim to enjoy absolute security. In effect, this precarious sense of security, rather than being remedied, is unfortunately being accentuated by an unabated nuclear arms race. The continuous build-up of nuclear arsenals intensifies the risk of their use, which would have the most disastrous consequences for all nations, nuclear as well as non-nuclear.

The time has come to put an end to this situation. Iran is deeply interested in the security of non-nuclear-weapon States. Our position and policy regarding the regional approach towards containing nuclear proliferation as a means of lessening the danger of an outbreak of nuclear conflict and limiting the sphere of the possible use of nuclear weapons through the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is well known. One aspect of this approach concerns the responsibilities of nuclear-weapon States towards the States located in those zones. The creation of such zones would certainly provide a better guarantee against nuclear aggression for the countries involved than unilateral non-use commitments by the nuclear

(Mr. Hoveyda, Iran)

Powers alone, especially since non-use pledges would be an integral feature of any denuclearized zone. Accordingly, in this spirit, in the coming days I will be once again introducing in this Committee a draft resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Indeed, as long as the nuclear Powers base their security on the nuclear deterrent they must face the question of security guarantees to protect the non-nuclear-weapon countries from nuclear attack. The resolution of the United Nations Security Council concerning security assurances is subject to restraints that can render it inoperative. It should be supplemented or superseded by firmer and more meaningful provisions. As a first step, the nuclear Powers should in a more binding framework commit themselves to not using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. Furthermore, we hope that the nuclear-weapon States will soon assume the necessary responsibility by taking the initiative in promoting nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

As long as nuclear disarmament and an effective international security system are beyond our grasp, pledges and commitments concerning the non-use of nuclear weapons will be welcomed by non-nuclear-weapon States. Indeed, the question of guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States was the subject of intensive discussions both during the preparatory stages and in the course of the special session of the General Assembly. The Final Document of the special session contains provisions in this regard. The appeal to the nuclear-weapon States to take measures to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is explicitly contained in paragraphs 32 and 59 of the Final Document. We consider this to be a positive response to the persistent calls from non-nuclear-weapon States and one that partially rectifies the problem.

(Mr. Hoveyda, Iran)

Any concrete measure which would give guarantees of security to non-nuclear States would evidently affect in a positive manner the threat perceptions of such States. Such guarantees will: first, increase the security of non-nuclear States by reducing their susceptibility to nuclear attack; secondly, dissuade States from proliferating, thereby strengthening the non-proliferation régime; and thirdly, create a favourable atmosphere for the materialization of further measures in the field of security and the ultimate objective of nuclear disarmament.

Our views on this matter have already been reflected in our statements during the Non-Proliferation Treaty review Conference. These have been followed up continuously in both the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and other forums, and most recently during the special session.

It is in this spirit that we welcome the Soviet initiative. We consider it as an overture to further studies on this question. In view of the shortage of time, we will not be able to consider the proposal thoroughly or to decide on the form in which the matter can be handled in the best interests of non-nuclear States, but we believe that the continuation of discussions concerning this issue in the Committee on Disarmament can serve a constructive purpose and, as we hope, a fruitful one.

Mr. VERRET (Haiti) (interpretation from French): Item 128 of the agenda of this session of the General Assembly, which is the subject of our present discussion, is in the opinion of the Haitian delegation of the greatest importance. Haiti is a non-belligerent country; it is among the non-nuclear-weapon countries. I am very happy to be able today to consider the draft resolution on the conclusion of an international convention on the strengthening of guarantees of the security of non-nuclear States (A/C.1/33/L.6).

No one here can be unaware of the dangers of a nuclear war. We all know that the considerable accumulation of nuclear weapons stored in secret arsenals in all parts of the world is a serious threat both for nuclear-weapon States themselves and for those that possess no such weapons. We are particularly concerned about this since the hundreds of billions of dollars which are spent annually on the

(Mr. Verret, Haiti)

manufacture of these weapons could serve to relieve the suffering of two thirds of the world's population.

Our goal must undoubtedly be to bring about general and complete disarmament under effective international control. We are aware that this is a complex issue and that it can only be considered in stages. Nevertheless, for mankind to survive, for peace to come once and for all to this troubled world, for which we are all responsible, it is essential and even urgent to eliminate the risk of war, particularly nuclear war. It is important for us all to become convinced of the need to take steps so that the force and the threat of the use of force is ruled out in international life.

We do not intend at this time to rehearse all the arguments put forward during the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We shall not describe the destructive power of nuclear weapons, nor shall we enter into any technical considerations regarding the manufacture of these weapons, their purpose and their number. What is important for us at the present time is to ensure the security of all peoples in a spirit of understanding of the security interests which we all share, since we do not have any panacea which can resolve the whole problem of general and complete disarmament.

The Government of the Republic of Haiti has always encouraged any steps which are designed to bring this about. It was in that context that the Haitian delegation participated in the preparation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which has made of Latin America a non-nuclear zone. We ratified that Treaty unreservedly, although we had in mind the risks which might be run by countries that are neighbours of the United States and the Soviet Union were nuclear war to break out between these two super-Powers.

In truth, the only solution would be for peoples to renounce the use of nuclear weapons. We consider, however, that this draft convention, in view of the actions it advocates, represents a rather important step towards the final solution of the problem and can somewhat dispel the legitimate and profound concerns felt by the non-nuclear-weapon States.

(Mr. Verret, Haiti)

We will support this draft resolution, which comes within the context of the policy pursued by our Government in connexion with world peace and security. We hope that this is only a first step and that other efforts will follow, because our purpose is not only the search for guarantees for non-nuclear zones but the total banning of nuclear weapons in order to bring about general and complete disarmament, which alone can guarantee mankind complete protection against any threat of nuclear destruction.

The CHAIRMAN: I note that the Committee has dealt with its business this afternoon with commendable dispatch. We have in effect concluded the debate on item 128, although 11 representatives have spoken during this meeting.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: I have a few announcements to make. First, as members of the Committee may recall, at one point we set a tentative deadline of today, at 5 p.m., for submission of draft resolutions on item 125. I have been given to understand that there are in the offing draft resolutions which are not yet quite ready, and I would therefore suggest that we extend the deadline at least until next Wednesday, when we can review the situation.

Secondly, I should like to propose officially that we close the list of speakers on items 35 to 49 on Monday at 5 p.m.

Thirdly, the Committee will not meet again until 3 o'clock on Monday afternoon because we have no speakers for a morning meeting. In fact there are so far only two for the afternoon. I would remind members of the very good advice of the representative of Pakistan this morning when he said that these moments could well be used for the introduction of draft resolutions. Therefore, if any delegations are ready to introduce draft resolutions, Monday afternoon will be a splendid occasion for doing so.

Finally, there are a number of additional sponsors of draft resolutions. They are: Qatar, draft resolutions A/C.1/33/L.7, A/C.1/33/L.10 and A/C.1/33/L.11; Senegal, draft resolutions A/C.1/33/L.2, A/C.1/33/L.3 and A/C.1/33/L.10; and Uruguay, draft resolutions A/C.1/33/L.2, A/C.1/33/L.4, A/C.1/33/L.5 and A/C.1/33/L.10.

Mr. ADENIJI (Nigeria): Since the debate on these items is starting on Monday, Mr. Chairman, and since you have just pointed out that we are not meeting until Monday afternoon, would you be good enough to consider keeping the list of speakers open until, say, Wednesday? This is an appeal to prevent the rush which we are likely to make on the Secretariat if we have only Monday morning in which to inscribe our names.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Nigeria for his suggestion. I am sure that the Secretariat is able to handle any rush that may develop, but could I make a counter-proposal and say Tuesday at 1700 hours?

Mr. DOMOKOS (Hungary) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, I hesitate to choose between your proposal and the proposal of the representative of Nigeria, but I should like to propose that we accept the Nigerian suggestion. That is the first point I wanted to make.

Secondly, I should also like to propose that we revert to the question of the organization of our work once the list of speakers has been closed. I have doubts that two weeks will be enough for a general debate, in view of the length of the present list. I feel also that one week will not be enough for the consideration of draft resolutions. That is why I propose that we revert to this question once we know how many representatives wish to take part in the general debate on the item.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall be only too pleased to follow the suggestions of the representative of Hungary, except on the question of closing the list, since I understood that I had come to an understanding with the representative of Nigeria regarding Tuesday. I should be very reluctant to go back on that, and perhaps we shall be able to agree on it.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.