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Chairman: Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

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The CHAIRMAN: Before calling on the first speaker for this morning, I would like to inform the Committee that the meeting scheduled for tomorrow afternoon will be cancelled because of the lack of speakers. This afternoon's meeting has already been cancelled for the same reason. On the other hand, we have a full list of speakers for tomorrow morning's meeting. I should like also to remind the Committee that the list of speakers for the general debate will be closed tomorrow at 5 p.m.

Mr. WYZNER (Poland): It used to be taken for granted that the annual disarmament debate in the General Assembly offered the best opportunity not only to take stock of past accomplishments and failures in the field of arms limitation and disarmament, but also to chart the course in that area for both the immediate and the more distant future. I need hardly add that the latter exercise is not only more important but also more difficult, involving, as it does, the ability to map out the course between many pressing priorities, between the desirable and the feasible; this, as we know, is an exercise in political judgement often verging on the instinct of self-preservation.

Following the time-honoured practice of this Committee, I should like to address myself to some of the broad range of problems covered in the report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD). Before I do so, however, I want to make some observations which, even though of a more general nature, are nevertheless relevant to our subject-matter.

The Secretary-General in his Introduction to the report on the work of this Organization as well as many speakers in the general debate in the plenary Assembly have again sounded a warning note over the spiralling nuclear arms race, which accounts for the fact that nuclear war, with its potential for catastrophic devastation, looms as the overriding threat to mankind. Indeed, the diversion of the technical effort of an estimated 400,000 scientists and engineers to military

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research and development programmes -- away from pressing civilian needs --- has resulted over the last few years in the further multiplication and increased perfection of military hardware. Not only vocabulary but also arsenals are now replete with a variety of "smart bombs" and an inventory of intercontinental ballistic missiles whose accuracy rate approaches counter-force capability, while nuclear-tipped Cruise missiles might soon be added to the dreaded list of instruments of mass annihilation.

Poland and other socialist States have amply demonstrated their readiness and resolve to contribute not only to halting the arms race but to seeking effective disarmament measures as well. It will be recalled that political programmes of peace and disarmament have been worked out and accepted as major documents by the Seventh Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party and by the Twenty-fifth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Proceeding from that premise, Stefan Olszowski, the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his statement in the general debate on 27 September 1976 stated, inter alia:

"Putting an end to the arms race is the concern of peoples and the responsibility of Governments. The race is continuing faster than ever and becoming more and more dangerous. It is imperative that the pace of disarmament efforts be harmonized with that of the processes of détente. Without concrete progress in the task of disarmament, the process of positive political transformation in the world may become inhibited or even suppressed. This cannot be allowed." (A/31/PV.5, pp. 24-25)

No less unequivocal terms can be found in the memorandum on the ending of the arms race and on disarmament which the Soviet Government submitted to the current session of the General Assembly. Its message is simple and stark: either the arms race is stopped and States approach disarmament seriously or the gigantic war preparation machine will keep devouring even greater resources, bringing war inexorably closer for all nations.

Evidently, to sit idly by, waiting for the problem to go away, is not a practical proposition. We therefore note with satisfaction the contents of the Soviet memorandum, which we interpret as an attempt to translate the concern over

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the acceleration of the arms race into a practical and constructive programme of action. The document identifies those areas where determined and concrete action by all States -- first and foremost the nuclear-weapon Powers -- would offer promising prospects for tangible progress.

For its part, Poland finds it particularly gratifying that the cessation of the nuclear arms race, nuclear disarmament and, especially, the prohibition of nuclear weapon tests have been accorded such a prominent place in the document presented to the General Assembly by Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The Polish Government has always attached great significance to early and tangible progress in those areas. We also believe that, now more than ever, renewed and resolute efforts are urgently needed to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race. The first step in that direction must be the cessation, at the earliest possible date, of nuclear weapon testing. To be fully meaningful, that step must be taken simultaneously by all the nuclear-weapon Powers.

While not a disarmament measure in itself, the concept of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations and the overwhelming support it received in this Committee last week contribute to an auspicious climate in which to pursue the objectives of arms limitation and disarmament. For one thing, if concluded, such a world treaty would not fail to alleviate political tensions and ease military rivalries. While scaling down many weapons programmes it would, above all, result in a substantial reduction in military expenditures, thus releasing considerable resources for development.

This, I might add, is precisely the course of action eloquently urged in the important Political Declaration adopted at Colombo by the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries.

What I have been seeking to convey is that, despite the well-known difficulties encountered at times, there are rays of hope and there is a sober determination not to leave unexplored any avenue leading towards disarmament or arms limitation.

Since the thirtieth session of the General Assembly alone, we have witnessed not only the continuation of the difficult and critically important Soviet-United States Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) and the sustained efforts at the

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regional Vienna talks on mutual reduction of armed forces and armaments in central Europe, but also some welcome instances of tangible progress. In other fields, we welcome the Soviet-United States Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes, a measure which significantly contributes to bringing closer the prospect of elaborating a comprehensive test ban, as well as the Soviet-French Agreement on the Prevention of Accidental or Unauthorized Use of Nuclear Weapons.

We also believe that the cause of international security in the nuclear age has been greatly advanced with the further strengthening of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It came about, inter alia, as a result of the highly symbolic act of the ratification of the Treaty by Japan, the first and only nation which suffered from nuclear energy unleashed to kill and maim. While the chances are that from now on the power of the atom will serve man's welfare only, this cannot be taken entirely for granted, and the international community is increasingly aware of the need for constant vigilance in order to keep the nuclear genie well under control. Poland and other countries of the socialist community will spare no effort to work towards greater effectiveness of the Treaty by promoting its universality and effectiveness as well as by expanding and perfecting the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

As recorded in the report of CCD, the positive results of its disarmament negotiations have also finally emerged. I submit that the elaboration by the Geneva Disarmament Committee and the presentation to the current session of the General Assembly, as requested in Assembly resolution 3475 (XXX), of the broadly agreed draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques is an eloquent testimony to the usefulness and efficacy of the multilateral disarmament negotiating machinery.

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Admittedly, viewed against the background of the pressing needs in the realm of arms limitation and disarmament, the record of the CCD accomplishments of the past 12 months may seem to be less significant than desired. However, considered against the background of the odds which stand in the way of effective disarmament, they are certainly important and remarkable achievements. They must not be dismissed, for, if anything, they bear out that dedication, good faith and political will which are the essentials on which depend the success of all disarmament efforts.

In the view of my delegation, and I am sure this goes for many other members of the CCD, that organ has had this year one of the most busy, rewarding and worth-while sessions which -- among other things -- helped effectively to disprove the disparaging and specious label of a sterile debating club.

Owing largely to the spirit of hard work, co-operation and accommodation prevailing in the Committee, it has turned out possible to elaborate, within a relatively short time, a draft convention which we believe will effectively proscribe the abuse of the environment and climate for the purposes of war while assuring unhampered possibility of its peaceful utilization for man's welfare. No claim can legitimately be made that this is a perfect document: it is a product of compromise elaborated in a give-and-take negotiating process. In fact, my delegation itself went on record as favouring a ban not qualified by any definitions. However, we endorsed the emerging consensus on the principal provisions of the draft convention, for we sought to promote, not to complicate or delay, an agreement whose objective was to outlaw a technique of warfare which, if left alone, would in time inevitably add new unpredictable dimensions to the technological arms race. We also appreciated the validity of the adage that "better" is an enemy of "good enough".

As far as the specific provisions of the draft convention are concerned, the Polish delegation would wish to underline that it finds particular merit in the compromise formula of Article V, representing a precedent-setting solution of the problem of verification and complaint procedure. This new formula may prove of relevance also for other measures now on the agenda of the CCD.

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On the basis of the foregoing considerations, the Polish delegation trusts that the General Assembly will commend the Committee on Disarmament for its prompt action on the draft convention, in keeping with the terms of resolution 3475 (XXX). An overwhelming endorsement by the General Assembly of the draft convention itself would open the way to concluding at an early date yet another arms limitation agreement which would substantially add to the sense of international security.

The General Assembly's commendation of the draft convention to early signature and ratification would also make it possible for the CCD, at its 1977 session, to give its urgent and undivided attention to other pressing business on its agenda, including such a priority item as the elimination of chemical weapons.

While, regrettably, little substantive progress has been made in Geneva this year in regard of chemical disarmament, the 1976 session of the CCD, also in that province, was anything but time lost. Due to the constructive and wide-ranging discussions, many of them with the participation of experts, and owing to the submission of a number of important documents, the Committee is now in effect much better equipped than ever before to come to grips with the problem of chemical disarmament in an informed way, hence more effectively. For one thing, the United Kingdom delegation has tabled a draft convention, adding a new point of view to the drafts introduced in the Committee much earlier: in 1972 by the socialist countries and then in 1974 by the delegation of Japan.

The total prohibition of chemical weapons, based on general purpose criterion, has been all along the mainstay of the position which Poland has always taken in this regard. Since that approach appeared to pose unsurmountable difficulties to certain countries, the socialist States offered to explore any other constructive concept, including that of phased or partial solutions, which would facilitate progress and contribute to the ultimate goal of a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons. The growing appeal of such partial solution now seems to present promising prospects for the near future. In the opinion of my delegation, such prospects have been further improved with the flexible and imaginative suggestions on verification which have been outlined in the memorandum of the Soviet Government. The chances of tangible and long overdue progress on chemical weapons in the CCD have been also enhanced by the useful technical consultations between Soviet and American experts and by the stated intention of the two Powers to resume and continue them in the future.

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Against that positive and basically optimistic background, the Polish delegation is determined to co-operate closely with all interested parties in a constructive search for an early break-through in the Committee's efforts. We are confident that the First Committee will accordingly wish to urge the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to persevere in its efforts, on the broad basis of the draft conventions and other documents now before it and to seek -- as a matter of the highest priority -- meaningful solutions capable of promoting the ultimate objective of a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons.

Incidentally, we have just begun consultations with a number of interested delegations in order to work out a draft resolution along those lines which, we hope, will commend itself to unanimous approval by the Committee.

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My delegation feels that the fruitful and searching examination in the CCD, during 1976, of the Soviet initiative with regard to the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and of new systems of such weapons is another legitimate ground for positive assessment of the Committee's record this year.

As a result of the exchange of opinions at a series of informal meetings attended by a number of experts from the East and West, it was possible not only to clarify terminology and formulate definitions but also to obtain a clearer perception of the true dimensions and all implications of that forward-looking initiative. The exchange of views brought home to many the realization that the potential of science and technology for abuse and for destruction defies imagination. It has also demonstrated that the vast research and development programmes often tend to take on a life of their own, inevitably bringing about pressures to develop and deploy --- much against man's better judgement and regardless of need or desirability --- what only yesterday seemed to be sheer science fiction.

The informal deliberations in the CCD convinced my delegation that in dealing with war-oriented technological environment, complacency cannot be tolerated. That is why we could not reconcile ourselves to suggestions that concrete action would be premature at this stage. To the contrary, it is our considered view that any delay in putting into effect this timely initiative can only lead to incalculable consequences for the whole of mankind.

We, therefore, find it commendable and wise that the CCD has resolved to continue giving the Soviet proposal sustained and careful attention in its future work.

To sum up, I would like to stress again my delegation's sense of satisfaction over the fruitful and productive session of the Geneva Disarmament Committee this year. We believe that its results fully vindicate the consistent confidence in and support of my Government for the Disarmament Committee. There is no other more competent or more tested organ available for multilateral negotiations on arms limitation and disarmament. It is representative, both politically and geographically. Indeed, it would be even more representative and effective had the

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remaining two nuclear-weapon Powers displayed interest in joining the ranks of the CCD members and contributing to their endeavours.

Regrettably, this not being the case, it seems only natural that in the face of the vast scope and complexity of the disarmament problems, the international community is increasingly searching for universal negotiating fora capable of halting the nuclear arms race and diverting the badly needed resources to the purposes of development and to other peaceful pursuits.

One such forum --- as indicated in the Political Declaration of the Colombo Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries -- can be a special session of the General Assembly devoted to the scrutiny of various aspects of disarmament. We subscribe to that view and Poland would be ready to get actively involved in the preparatory process to such a session --- if and when the General Assembly decides to convene it -- on the understanding that, as proposed at the Colombo Conference, the question of convening a World Disarmament Conference would be included in the agenda of that session. We are persuaded that the special session on disarmament matters, apart from its own intrinsic merits, would represent an important and decisive step in the preparation to the convening of a World Disarmament Conference which we believe will be the best forum for the solution of remaining dominant issues.

Mr. DOMOKOS (Hungary) (interpretation from French): Comrade Chairman, may I first of all, avail myself of this opportunity to say how happy I am to see you presiding over our Committee. I should like to extend my congratulations to you and to the other members of the Bureau and to wish you every success in your work.

In the period of time which has elapsed since the last General Assembly, certain results and a certain lack of progress have been alternating features. But, in the final analysis, we are still entitled to conclude that putting an end to the arms race remains one of the most crucial problems of contemporary international life, for it is the arms race which complicates or even prevents a solution to the major economic and social problems which face mankind and which arouse uncertainty, fear and distrust among peoples and nations. For that reason,

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it is our binding duty to engage in detailed discussions in this Committee in connexion with this very complicated undertaking. What we need is constructive discussions with a full desire to be of assistance in seeking a possible solution, and avoiding extremism or denying or exaggerating results already achieved. Only a realistic approach can yield maximum progress.

It is encouraging to note that the disarmament negotiations begun at an earlier date have continued. Apart from the United Nations, a number of international conferences or bilateral governmental negotiations have been attempting to achieve positive results in the field of disarmament.

We consider that the Soviet-United States talks, which are of exceptional importance, can have a considerable impact on reducing armaments and on improving the international climate and strengthening security throughout the world. We welcome the new treaties which have been concluded on nuclear test threshold limitation and on the regulation of nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes. It is our sincere hope that the SALT II talks which are now proceeding in Geneva will shortly be crowned with success. A new agreement between the two major Powers and the subsequent restriction of strategic weapons might give a fresh impetus to the disarmament negotiations which are being held elsewhere.

My country is extremely interested in the Vienna talks on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in central Europe. We believe that any reduction in the degree of military confrontation on the European continent would be a necessary and logical continuation of the Helsinki Conference. The bringing to bear simultaneously of the two facets of détente -- namely, political détente and military détente -- could be the sort of factor which would have a broader beneficial influence in Europe and even beyond.

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On the other hand, any immobility in the talks would be fraught with the danger that people would continue to arm and it would thus be more difficult to reach any agreement because of the continual development of weapons techniques. But, it should also be recalled that the condition for a successful conclusion of any disarmament negotiations is mutual respect for the interests of the parties.

We consider it a favourable sign that world public opinion is more and more resolutely coming out in favour of a cessation of armaments and for genuine disarmament. We consider that the cause of the disarmament should not be deprived in the future either of the resolute involvements of the popular masses mobilized by various progressive movements and by their international organization.

During its previous session the Disarmament Committee had negotiations on a number of subjects derived either from its original agenda or from subsequent decisions taken by the General Assembly. The Committee's report (CCD/520) shows clearly and beyond any doubt that it made great efforts in the interests of disarmament.

Apart from negotiations continuing on a number of matters relating to disarmament, the CCD has succeeded in drawing up a new draft convention prohibiting ecological warfare. This is not only a very fortunate development, but also one of considerable importance. The Committee has once again demonstrated that it is a viable negotiating body and an effective one and it has provided us with an indispensable tool for the creation of legal instruments for disarmament.

This year, the CCD has devoted the major part of its activity to work on this draft convention. The results attained in other areas are not entirely satisfactory. But, while it is true that the work of the CCD has not been as productive as we had hoped or expected, this is something that should be attributed to factors other than any inadequacy in the way this organ functions.

The mere listing of everything which happened last year, shows that our Committee has to summarize a year full of stormy events. But, apart from undeniable developments, it is also true that we have not succeeded in bringing about a halt in the arms race which would only be the point of departure of the probably lengthy process of complete disarmament. The arms race continues in the fields of stockpiling and perfecting nuclear arms as well.

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There has been no adequate progress in military détente either. The volume of conventional arms sales, sophisticated arms which have an ever-growing destructive capacity, has been increasing at an unprecedented rate.

Notwithstanding all this, we believe firmly that the arms race could be and should be halted. Common sense and the results already obtained in the field of disarmament, the conventions on the limitation of armaments which have been concluded, or which will be successfully concluded, are the reasons for this conviction we hold. The struggle for disarmament has genuine prospects, even if the results achieved so far have been less than we would have wished.

During the general debate in the General Assembly, our Minister of Foreign Affairs stated:

"Lasting peace and stable security are the central purpose of our foreign policy endeavours. We are convinced that this policy is, at the same time, fully in keeping with the vital interests of the Hungarian people." (A/31/PV.16, p. 41)

It is this conviction which determines my position -- my Government's position on disarmament matters. It is on this basis that we would like to welcome and support the Soviet proposals made in the Memorandum of 20 September. This document repeats the disarmament initiatives of the Soviet Union, which for many years now have been a characteristic feature of the work of our Committee.

The Memorandum provides a complete programme of steps by means of which a world without armaments and without wars would be brought closer. Not only does it summarize the previous initiatives of the Soviet Union, but, using and analysing the experience previously gained, it adds new elements in order to advance negotiations so that an agreement can be reached as soon as possible.

But unilateral efforts are not sufficient to solve the stormy questions which we are facing. It is our hope that this new Soviet initiative will meet with a favourable response in our Committee.

We share the views of those who give a particularly important place to nuclear disarmament among the disarmament priorities. Any measures which restrict nuclear weapons would have a cumulative beneficial effect.

In the field of nuclear disarmament, we have witnessed both favourable signs and also rather unfavourable factors. We warmly welcome the Treaty on Underground

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Explosions for Peaceful Purposes concluded between the Soviet Union and the United States which constitutes an appreciable step towards the achievement of the complete cessation of tests and which could bring closer the process of genuine nuclear disarmament.

In the light of this agreement we cannot agree that certain nuclear Powers should continue to refuse to become parties to the Moscow Treaty of 1963. It is for that reason that we cannot share the view that an arrangement that encompasses only some of those countries which possess nuclear arms, can really hope to further the cause of nuclear disarmament. The only possibility which is available in the present day is for all nuclear States to cease tests simultaneously in all environments.

We consider, therefore, that our main task is to get all the nuclear Powers that have hitherto refused to be involved in the negotiations provided for in General Assembly resolution 3478 (XXX) seated around a negotiating table.

(Mr. Domokos, Hungary)

The Soviet memorandum once again demonstrates that the Soviet Union is ready, on a reciprocal basis, to give up all subsequent tests. A general and complete cessation would put an end to the perfecting, and probably the stockpiling, of nuclear weapons.

We welcome the bilateral treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States on nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, which did away with the last obstacle standing in the way to the conclusion of a treaty prohibiting nuclear tests on the basis of a threshold.

At the same time, this treaty will make it possible for the benefits of nuclear energy to become widely available to mankind without the results thus obtained helping to increase nuclear know-how for military purposes. The signing of this treaty is indeed an encouraging sign for the future. It strengthens our hope that an appropriate solution will be found for the regulating of explosions for peaceful purposes in the context of a complete prohibition of tests as well.

Following the Conference on the Treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons there has been a particularly fortunate development, in that the number of countries acceding to this Treaty has increased.

With regard to exports of nuclear technology and fissile materials, we endorse everything that has been done to ensure that the provisions of the non-proliferation treaty are entirely respected. On the other hand, we are disturbed that the export activities of some countries are motivated by other interests. In such cases, we are not convinced that the system of guarantees has been effectively put into practice.

We believe that even more effective steps have to be taken to continue to strengthen the non-proliferation system so that we can neutralize the danger which is undoubtedly inherent in increased knowledge concerning nuclear energy. The swift development in the peaceful utilization of this energy and the ongoing improvement in technological receptivity can restrict the danger of military application only if a strict régime is followed. Therefore, these efforts have to be intensified and all necessary steps must be taken to strengthen the non-proliferation régime and to ensure that adherence to the treaty is genuinely universal.

Along with atomic weapons, chemical weapons are another means of waging a war of mass destruction, and the prohibition of these materials has been for a long

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time an item on the agenda of the General Assembly and that of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD). Neither of these two bodies has been able to achieve any real progress, but there are some new elements which would permit us to hope that a positive turning point has been reached, that is, the beginning of specific negotiations. At the last session of CCD, a number of delegations dealt with the problem of prohibiting this means of warfare, and the large number of working documents presented show that there has been increased interest in this subject.

During its previous session the Disarmament Committee held unofficial meetings with the participation of experts. These meetings made a useful contribution to a better understanding of the problem, provided new arguments on the subject and, to a certain extent, helped to reconcile positions on some matters, particularly regarding the criteria which should govern the prohibition of chemical agents. It should also be noted that the delegations of the Soviet Union and the United States to CCD held talks at the expert level for the purpose of drawing up a joint proposal. It is our hope that all the obstacles will shortly be eliminated so that joint action can be undertaken which would considerably help in the commencement and speedy conclusion of these negotiations. Verification problems have been given an artificial importance, and this has given the false impression that it is these technical matters, rather than the lack of political decisiveness, that are preventing the conclusion of an agreement.

The position of the socialist countries, as well as the documents which contain their proposals, are well known to members of this Committee. We would like completely to eliminate this new method of waging war, which is so dangerous to mankind and to his environment. In reaffirming this position, in order to move towards appropriate solutions, the socialist countries are trying to take into account acceptable proposals of their partners. It is in this spirit that in its memorandum the Soviet Union has stated its readiness to consider the possibility of an additional method of verifying the destruction of the chemical weapons which are to be banned. It is our belief that the thirty-first General Assembly could give further stimulus to CCD and encourage it to initiate concrete negotiations on the drafting of a convention.

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If the arms race encompasses many means of waging war, and this is indeed the case, it is quite logical and necessary that efforts to prohibit it should not be limited to one single area. If we were to approach it in this way, we would inevitably be making it easy for nuclear weapons to spread out into other areas, involving us in an even larger arms race. The parallel search for disarmament possibilities is therefore justified and is even essential. This approach is also in accordance with the objectives of general and complete disarmament, the continuing importance of which has been stressed by numerous delegations.

It is for that reason that we have always supported proposals on non-nuclear disarmament as well. For that reason, we believe that the Disarmament Committee, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 3479 (XXX), should continue and intensify negotiations on the Soviet draft convention which was presented a year ago, concerning new weapons and weapons systems.

The CCD has already held two series of informal meetings with the participation of experts. These talks were very constructive, and they made it possible for CCD better to acquaint itself with the technical aspects and other relevant problems which have to be borne in mind when future negotiations are undertaken. We must ensure that there are joint efforts on the part of all Members and, particularly, ensure that a more active contribution is made by the industrialized countries to further the implementation of the General Assembly resolution in question. The introduction to the report of the Secretary-General states that "... while the world spends approximately \$300 billion a year on armaments, the net flow of official development assistance amounts to some \$15 billion a year". (A/31/1/Add.1, pp. 11, 12) These figures clearly indicate one of the greatest contradictions of the present day. At the same time they demonstrate the exceptional urgency of the proposal which has been renewed by the Soviet Union on the reduction of the military budget of the permanent members of the Security Council.

It is a matter for regret that previous Soviet suggestions had for a long time been held up, and instead of there being genuine negotiations among the States concerned there has been a tendency to get bogged down in technical detail, in matters of interpretation, which only put off ad infinitum a decision which is more than ever necessary. It is therefore desirable that in 1977 the first concrete measures should be undertaken. The Soviet initiative would provide a flexible basis for negotiations.

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There are two other questions on the agenda to which my delegation attaches particular importance. The first is item 40, the World Disarmament Conference and, in this context, the convening of the special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations which will be devoted to matters of disarmament. The other is item 45, the Convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques. My delegation would like to reserve its right to put forth its views on these matters at a subsequent stage in our proceedings.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Hungary for his very kind words addressed to the officers of this Committee and to me personally.

Mr. ELIAS (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): The activities carried out during 1976 in the different bodies dealing with disarmament have in this debate been assessed by some delegations as practically fruitless and useless, whereas other delegations have ennobled them, praised them, and considered their results as highly promising. This diversity of opinion obviously must mean something and perhaps it is what we might term the subjective component of value judgements on a subject whose importance is recognized by both the optimist and the pessimist.

In this First Committee and in other bodies we very often hear it said that the disarmament matter finds itself in a cul-de sac. The reason for this is ascribed to the lack of will on the part of the States most directly concerned about and involved in the arms race. My delegation, which is one of those that has participated very actively in some of the bodies and has followed with great attention the deliberations of the others, does not believe that the lack of political will, whatever the multitude of sins covered by that designation may mean, can be sufficient reason to explain this slow rate of progress towards the final objective of disarmament, which, apparently without exception, is desired and hoped for by all mankind. It is true that routine, mistrust, and the lack of initiative, are quite widespread and coexist with concern over the lack of

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concrete results and the inherent dangers in the present situation. We cannot discard the possibility that in some distant future and at some distant place in our galaxy, the archaeologists of the cosmos may take note of the fact that on planet earth the species self-styled homo sapiens died out through lack of imagination, being unable or not knowing how to free themselves from the machines of war they had created. But these prejudices are so strong that in the course of the meetings of the Committee to assess the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, when the item labelled Studies under a letter F, No. 6 of the proposals agreed on by the Committee was discussed, my delegation was surprised to find that there was stubborn opposition on the part of certain delegations to the proposal that the General Assembly consider the appropriateness of an in-depth study of the causes underlying the arms race. If the arms race is undesirable, and this appears to be denied by no one in his right mind, and if, according to the logic that we inherited from the Greek philosophers, effect follows the cause, then my delegation does not understand how anyone can combat an effect while at the same time trying to conceal the causes that produced it. All the more so, if you take into account the fact that the causes of the arms race are not necessarily unavowable. Some may correspond to egotistical interests spurred by the production, sale and purchase of weapons; but probably to a very much larger extent, the determining factors must be others and among those motivations there are many that can be understood without necessarily tarnishing the morality of any, namely, to ensure self-defence and to maintain the vital interests of the country concerned.

The experience gathered by my delegation over the years in which it has participated in the consultations and negotiations within the context of the preparation of a world disarmament conference, has shown that we must take a relatively positive stand. All the delegations with which we have maintained contact, even while they upheld different and, at times, even antithetical opinions, have acted with goodwill and in good faith. In very rare cases have we seen positions adopted on a purely mechanical basis, or oppositions stemming from group mandates; but basically, the majority of them were due to reasons of security. That is why my delegation has repeated its conviction that the initiatives for disarmament can only reach a successful conclusion if they are

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considered in close relation with the problems of international security, because the latter is the fundamental cause that gives impetus to and maintains alive that arms race. A security system that is not one purely of balance of armaments is one that at least calls for a minimum basis of mutual trust that can only be achieved by constantly pursuing a policy of détente. My delegation is convinced that disarmament, security and détente are an inseparable trilogy, to the point that it would be senseless to think of one of these elements divorced or dissociated from the other two. And we seek appropriate bodies and more efficient machinery with which to discuss and negotiate disarmament, so at its appropriate time this political committee should seriously weigh the possibility of recommending to the Security Council, that it give priority attention to the duties entrusted to it in Article 26 of the Charter, to elaborate plans to be submitted to the members of the General Assembly for the establishment of a system of regulation of armaments. At the same time the Security Council should give serious attention within this same context to the appropriateness of establishing the subsidiary bodies that it deems necessary for the performance of its functions, as authorized by Article 29 of the Charter.

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After these somewhat general comments, my delegation would like to refer more specifically to the report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) (document A/31/27). Spain is not a member of that Geneva-based organ, whose structural and functional difficulties are well known to all, but which is nevertheless the only negotiating body where progress, albeit modest, is achieved in the sphere of disarmament -- I refer, of course, to multilateral bodies.

The tasks of the Committee for 1976 had been defined by a series of resolutions adopted at the thirtieth session of the General Assembly, in particular resolutions 3465 (XXX) on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons, 3466 (XXX) on prohibition of nuclear tests, 3470 (XXX) on the mid-term review of the Disarmament Decade, 3475 (XXX) on prohibition of environmental modifications, 3479 (XXX) on prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction, and 3484 A (XXX), on the consequences of nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes. We must point out that some of these resolutions requested the Committee to give high priority to the conclusion of agreements on the subject dealt with therein.

How did the Committee meet the General Assembly's requests? How did it live up to the hopes placed in it? As regards prohibition of tests, the Committee continued to be paralysed by the problem of control, and conflicting technical considerations were again adduced to defend apparently irreconcilable positions of principle. Progress was minimal, and may be summed up in the decision to take note of the first report of the group of experts on the detection of seismic movements -- a group that is to meet again in February 1977 and presumably in the years that follow, in so far as can be foreseen at present.

The efforts of the United States and the Soviet Union in connexion with a treaty on quantitative partial prohibition and a treaty on peaceful explosions may be appreciated. However, the general opinion tends to consider those efforts as very inadequate.

With regard to chemical weapons, we note that a good number of documents are listed in the report submitted, some of great technical sophistication, but the Assembly's desire for speedy agreement on measures to prohibit and destroy these weapons seems no closer to fulfilment as a result of the Committee's activities in 1976.

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On the question of new types of weapons systems, the Committee decided to meet in the spring of 1977, with the participation of experts.

With regard to the mid-term review of the Disarmament Decade, the Committee decided to consider an appropriate programme in 1977.

In a word, all the activities covered in part II of the report, entitled "Work of the Committee during 1976", may well be described as exchanges of views which may be useful as preparatory work for future agreements, but which have thus far produced no practical results. It might therefore have been desirable if the Committee itself had communicated to the Assembly the reasons why it had not been possible to reconcile the differing points of view. The General Assembly might then have been able to take appropriate measures to break the stalemate in the Committee, or to devise alternatives.

Having made these points, my delegation wishes to say that we do not believe that the work of the CCD in 1976 was entirely fruitless, since part III of its report contains a special report on a draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques which deserves the close attention of the First Committee. My delegation believes that all peaceful initiatives jointly sponsored by the Soviet Union and the United States should be taken into account and deserve a favourable reception, regardless of the final position we may adopt in each case, because the special responsibilities which both Powers have assumed in the maintenance of world balance confer a special importance on their agreement on the subjects before us. This consideration is of particular significance when, as in this case, their initiatives deal with a field that is almost new, namely, the spin-off from the arms race. It is therefore desirable that this initiative, with all due modifications, should be transformed into an operative reality as soon as possible.

My delegation has taken note of the comments made on this matter by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico at the beginning of this debate -- and primarily of his criticisms of article I of the draft convention. My delegation also feels that paragraph 1 of article I of the draft convention uses very unusual language when it distinguishes between military and hostile uses of the techniques under discussion, as in the somewhat bizarre alternatives of "widespread, long-

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lasting or severe effects" and "destruction, damage or injury to any other State Party". However, in reading the report, it is easy to understand that each and every one of the linguistic inconsistencies of this article were subjected to very careful examination in the Committee and were the subject of a good number of observations and comments by members. The final wording was arrived at as a compromise solution, or as the solution that would be most acceptable from among all the alternatives put forward in the search for a consensus.

My delegation reserves its right to speak on this point later, if necessary, but we nevertheless wish to express our appreciation to the countries that submitted identical texts of the draft treaty as well as to all the members of the Committee that participated in the debate and contributed to devising the modified test now before us.

The work on disarmament can basically be divided into two broad categories. The first deals with the competent bodies and the machinery that might most effectively lead to the achievement of the goals set. The second is the devising of specific disarmament measures, whether through the establishment of areas or zones free from certain weapons or certain military activities, or through control and reduction or destruction of conventional or nuclear weapons. The CCD is mainly concerned with matters in the second category. As far as the first of the categories is concerned, i.e. machinery and bodies in which disarmament can effectively be discussed, we should stress that in 1976 three important events took place which might well mark a milestone. I refer to the third report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference, the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament and the initiative taken by the group of non-aligned nations for the holding of a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament.

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The Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference has now been working for three years, under the difficult circumstances which are common knowledge, and limited by a mandate which imposed the consensus rule for the reaching of agreement. If that Committee has failed to achieve more spectacular results than those reflected in its third report -- document A/31/28 -- this is certainly not due to any lack of application or short-comings: in the way in which its Chairman, Ambassador Hoveyda, whom my delegation wishes explicitly to commend and to thank here, has guided its work. The main reason -- as may easily be discerned from a reading of paragraph 37 of the report -- is the lack of consensus among the nuclear-weapon States under present conditions. This is not the right moment to pass judgement on the attitude of the nuclear Powers, or some of them, but the fact remains that the possibility of a World Disarmament Conference seems to have slipped farther over the horizon. Yet the efforts of the Committee will not have been fruitless if they have served to arouse an awareness on the part of all States and to facilitate the adoption of more flexible positions towards other initiatives aimed at setting up new multilateral disarmament organs.

I should also like, albeit briefly, to refer to the activities and the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament. My delegation is grateful to the delegation of Sweden for its initiative in this regard. We feel that the recommendations for rationalization of work to ensure greater co-ordination among the competent organs and an improvement in the Secretariat services are useful contributions to the objectives we are pursuing here, as are the studies requested from the Secretary-General with the assistance of qualified experts and the possibility of reactivating the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

My delegation has given particular attention to the proposal to convene a special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament. On this matter, the non-aligned nations have played a pioneering role -- as they did with regard to the World Disarmament Conference -- which warrants my delegation's congratulations and support. I would hope that this initiative will meet a better fate than the initiative for the direct convening of a World Disarmament Conference, and I would venture also to hope the misgivings felt by certain

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Powers regarding the idea of the World Disarmament Conference will not be so marked, or perhaps will disappear altogether, in relation to the prospect of a special session. In this connexion, my delegation has taken note of the interest shown by the United States delegation, as reflected in the statement made by Ambassador Joseph Martin on 1 November 1976.

If it were to be decided to convene that special session of the General Assembly -- and my delegation here and now pledges its vote in favour of any draft resolution to that effect which may be submitted -- we believe that the objectives of that special session should not merely be procedural or relate to the improvement of the negotiating machinery, but should also cover matters of substance. Obviously, careful preparation must precede it, through the establishment of the appropriate committee, in which Spain would be ready and eager to collaborate actively, as it did in the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference. We hope and trust that the membership of that preparatory committee would comprise all the nuclear-weapon States, together with an adequate number of non-nuclear-weapon States, a number preferably not less than the number of such States members of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference, due account being taken of equitable geographical distribution. In due course, the Government of Spain will inform the Secretary-General of its views on this and other pertinent matters related to the holding of a special session on disarmament.

This is all that my delegation wished to say for the time being. However, we may wish to take the floor on the other items on our agenda as and when the development of the discussions makes it appropriate to do so, and we reserve our right in this regard.

The CHAIRMAN: No other delegation wishes to speak at this stage but before we adjourn I would inform the Committee that I have been requested to announce that the Dominican Republic and Ecuador have become co-sponsors of the draft resolution (A/C.1/31/L.4) which was distributed this morning.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.