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Chairman: Mr. PASTINEN (Finland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

INAUGURATION OF DISARMAMENT WEEK

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to deliver, on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Lievano, his message on the occasion of the inauguration of the Disarmament Week. The message reads as follows:

"In accordance with the resolution of the General Assembly 24 October, United Nations Day, marks the beginning of a week devoted to fostering the objectives of disarmament. No occasion could be more appropriate than this date for stressing the importance of limiting the armaments race and emphasizing how vital for this enterprise is the active and persevering support of world public opinion.

"It has been said that wars begin in the minds of men. If world public opinion can be made fully aware of the devastating effects of modern weapons, if people reflect on what could be built with what is wasted on armaments, the clamour for disarmament will grow into universal demands for peace, conciliation and tolerance.

"The armed conflicts which our generation has witnessed should teach all nations large and small not to indulge in the self-deception of believing that military might leads to national security. In our time the nations which are richest and most advanced in science and industry have accumulated so much weaponry that it would be possible for them to annihilate all the other nations. But since science and technology know no frontiers, the presumptive adversaries of these nations also have the weaponry to inflict total destruction on them.

"Where is the security then? Never has human existence been as precarious as in our time, and man has become the most dangerous enemy of man. No pestilence, no famine, no natural disaster can inflict on us greater sufferings and destruction than war.

(The Chairman)

"Let us combat the violence that begins in the minds of men. Let us contribute to the reduction of international tensions and to an increase of trust among countries. Rather than dwelling on the power and the threat of modern weapons, perhaps it would be better to imagine what we can accomplish if we channel our efforts towards peace, co-operation and equity in relations between countries. With those resources released by disarmament, we can put an end to hunger, ignorance and want.

"With the determined support of the peoples and Governments of the world disarmament can be organized under effective international control, and as a first step let us establish the mechanism for eliminating nuclear weapons, which have already destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the other weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical and biological arms. At the same time it is also necessary to ensure just relations between the industrialized countries and those of the third world and obtain the resources required for sustained harmonious and vigorous development."

I now call on the first speaker, who is the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Bjornerstedt.

Mr. BJORNERSTEDT (Assistant Secretary-General, Centre for Disarmament): The Secretary-General of the United Nations has asked that the following message be read on the occasion of the observance of United Nations Disarmament Week:

"This year the General Assembly, at its tenth special session, added a new dimension to the observance of United Nations Day. It proclaimed the week starting 24 October, the day of the foundation of the United Nations, as a week devoted to fostering the objectives of disarmament.

"This decision reflects the shared concern of all Member States that we are still distant from obtaining one of the central aims of our Organization, the building of a structure of durable peace.

(Mr. Bjornerstedt, Assistant Secretary-
General, Centre for Disarmament)

It is true that some constructive debates have taken place and that some significant results have been achieved. But the arms race has accelerated. Stockpiles of nuclear weapons are enlarged. Missiles, aircraft and artillery to deliver them are constantly diversified and their performance improved. Conventional weapon systems are continually refined. While the arsenals of the major Powers are being augmented, the arms race has proved increasingly difficult to confine geographically. More and more countries are being drawn into its vortex.

"The cost of \$400 billion a year expresses only partially the unbearable economic, social and political toll of this global phenomenon. Today's armaments have rendered obsolete the concept of war as understood in the past. The fact is that organized life on our planet itself is at stake. The continuation of human society requires that the enterprise of disarmament should be pursued with an energy greater than that of the material and intellectual efforts hitherto devoted to the development of weapons of ultimate destruction.

"Our effort has to be scaled to the magnitude of the challenge. The political will as well as the expertise to deal with the complexity of modern weaponry are essential to the aim. But they need to be supported by a clear and widespread understanding of the lethal consequences of the arms race. The will of the people to live a life free of want and fear represents a power which is stronger than physical force. Peoples the world over can in fact unite to help determine a new course in international relations, away from the agglomeration of armaments, away from war. A mobilized public opinion can make such a course irreversible. But this opinion must not be oriented only to long-term objectives. It must support concrete steps towards arms reduction here and now. It must be actively interested in current negotiations if they are to produce results.

(Mr. Bjornerstedt, Assistant Secretary-
General, Centre for Disarmament)

"As we observe Disarmament Week, we must ensure that the impetus created by the special session is maintained and intensified. The solemn undertaking of the States Members of the United Nations should now be translated into tangible and effective measures. The disarmament agenda for the weeks and months immediately ahead is broad in scope, with priority being given to nuclear disarmament. Efforts are under way to link disarmament more effectively to development and thus to help establish a New International Economic Order. The United Nations has a central role and primary responsibility in the achievement of these interrelated aims.

"Let us therefore all unite our voices and concert our efforts in this Disarmament Week and in the weeks ahead. It is not yet too late to initiate the process which will transform the direction in which human destiny moves."

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of Hungary who will speak on behalf of the Eastern European States.

Mr. DOMOKOS (Hungary): On the occasion of this commemorative meeting I should like to make a brief statement on behalf of the following members of the Group of Eastern European countries: People's Republic of Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, German Democratic Republic, Polish People's Republic, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Hungarian People's Republic.

At its tenth special session the General Assembly proclaimed the week starting 24 October, the day of the foundation of the United Nations, as a week devoted to fostering the objectives of disarmament.

We consider the yearly commemoration an important event. The first Disarmament Week is being held at a time when the need for effective disarmament and for actions supporting this goal has never been greater. The halting and reversing of the arms race is the most urgent task confronting humanity. Disarmament Week provides an opportunity to mobilize world public opinion, to remind the new generations of the devastations of past wars and also to induce the representatives of Governments in disarmament deliberations and negotiations to seek with renewed efforts the only rational possibility - disarmament at the earliest moment.

The task ahead is enormous. Disarmament is an absolute necessity, essential not only for the prevention of the danger of nuclear war and for strengthening international peace and security but also for the economic and social advancement of all peoples. There is a growing awareness in the international community that the continued arms race is a threat to the very survival of mankind. There is an urgent need to put an end to this situation, to abandon the use of force in international relations and to seek security in disarmament. The tenth special session of the General Assembly, the first ever devoted to disarmament, was proof that all nations share these goals.

(Mr. Domokos, Hungary)

The special session, on the other hand, also proved that we still have a long way to go; we have to surmount many obstacles so that the important recommendations and decisions of the special session may be fulfilled and we may reach our common, final goal: general and complete disarmament.

However complicated that task, we can, and should, count on the support of public opinion. In this respect we see an important interaction between Governments and public opinion. It is not only public opinion which exerts a certain influence on the policy of Governments; this is true also in the reverse direction. It is necessary to stress the primary responsibility of Governments and opinion makers - and here I quote from paragraph 105 of the Final Document of the special session -

"... to avoid dissemination of false and tendentious information concerning armaments, and to concentrate on the danger of escalation of the armaments race and on the need for general and complete disarmament under effective international control." (A/RES/S-10/2, para. 105)

There is a growing recognition of the fact that all Governments have a responsibility to educate their peoples for the purposes of peace, co-operation and understanding among nations. The socialist countries place at the centre of both their educational activities and their foreign policy the peaceful co-existence of countries with different social systems and mutually advantageous economic co-operation among them. That is inherent in the nature of socialist society, since in our countries there is no class or social stratum which would have any material interest in stirring up international tension and in the ensuing increase in arms production. In our countries the striving for peace is reflected in the Constitutions and it is against the law to make war propaganda or to arouse hatred against other nations.

The role peoples, public opinion and their organizations can play found expression in the important contribution made by the non-governmental organizations to the work of the tenth special session. The participation of those organizations, representing peoples with different political views,

(Mr. Domokos, Hungary)

different religions and professional interests, proved - if proof was needed at all - that, regardless of differences in other fields, world public opinion is resolutely for peace, for disarmament.

Disarmament, as we are all painfully aware, is a complicated task and we need all the support we can get to help to accomplish it. The Disarmament Week will remind us of these tasks ahead and will provide an additional opportunity to mobilize all peace-loving forces in the world for disarmament.

The CHAIRMAN: I next call on the representative of Indonesia who will speak on behalf of the Asian States.

Mr. ANWAR SATHI (Indonesia): It is indeed an honour and a privilege for me to be able to speak both as Chairman of the Asian Group of States and on behalf of Indonesia, on the occasion of the proclamation of the week beginning 24 October as a week devoted to promoting the objectives of disarmament. This is doubly significant in view of the fact that the proclamation coincides with the day of the founding of the United Nations. One of the declared objectives of the United Nations, as stated in the preamble of the Charter, is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. It is within the framework of this objective that we should like to see exerted our efforts to achieve disarmament.

(Mr. Anwar Sani, Indonesia)

It is significant to note that the very first resolution which was adopted by the United Nations was one which concerned disarmament. Since then, our Organization has exerted relentless efforts to make progress in this field. Although during the past decade and a half there have been some achievements, these have been directed towards arms limitation rather than disarmament. The decision to hold the special session devoted to disarmament is unique in the history of the efforts of the United Nations to deal with disarmament problems. It is also a reflection of the deep feelings of concern that we all share about the need to achieve greater progress in alleviating the serious dangers inherent in the continuation of the global arms race.

Thus, the greatest challenge today is to stop the arms race. The future of mankind will very much depend on whether we are able to curb this race, reduce the existing arms arsenals and finally eliminate them. It is a matter of regret that the arms race has become increasingly a world-wide phenomenon. The armament efforts involve the diversion of resources which could be used for more productive purposes of economic and social development. In recent years, we have seen the continuous and rapid qualitative change in the weapons being produced, resulting in each new generation of weapons being more complex and destructive than the one it replaced. The arms race is becoming not only more complex, but also more lethal.

In the light of these developments, we should explore candidly the dangers of the continuation of the arms race, and should dispel the illusion that lasting peace can coexist with huge accumulations of the means of destruction which have reached the stage of overkill many times over. The international community should exert every effort to reverse the race before it engulfs the whole world with incalculable consequences. We must reaffirm our commitment to the goal of general and complete disarmament. The adoption and implementation of resolute measures of disarmament have become imperative.

At the same time, the active involvement of the United Nations to co-ordinate and stimulate our individual efforts towards the achievement of these goals and aspirations is an important obligation of our Organization,

(Mr. Anwar Sani, Indonesia)

emanating from its purposes and principles. We believe that the strong desire for peace and co-operation is part of the new trend which we are witnessing in international life, and is an important factor as harbinger of the world of tomorrow from which conflicts, threats of war and war itself will be abolished forever.

It is in this context that we rededicate ourselves to the responsibility of the United Nations and its central role with regard to issues concerning disarmament. It is in this spirit that we join other Members in proclaiming the week starting today as a week devoted to fostering the objectives of disarmament.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of Burundi to speak on behalf of the African States.

Mr. SIMBANANIYE (Burundi) (interpretation from French): Today, 24 October 1978, the anniversary of the United Nations, we are inaugurating the week devoted to fostering the objectives of disarmament, in accordance with the historic decision taken by the General Assembly at its tenth special session held from 23 May to 30 June 1978.

It is with genuine pleasure that the delegation of Burundi to the thirty-third regular session of the General Assembly associates itself on behalf of the African Group, with speakers from the other regional Groups and distinguished personalities who have already addressed this gathering, or who will be addressing it, at this commemorative meeting, in stressing once again the importance of the decision of the General Assembly and also that of the genuine commitment to complete and general disarmament.

Since the end of the Second World War, for reasons stemming from the struggle for influence and profit, nations have engaged in both quantitative and qualitative competition in the manufacture of weapons, so much so that, thanks to an unprecedented technological revolution that has, alas, been going on in that field, the world is teeming with arsenals bursting with conventional, chemical, bacteriological and nuclear weapons. In spite of

(Mr. Simbananiye, Burundi)

the cries of alarm uttered by the international community, arms of mass destruction continue to be developed and distributed throughout the world. Such an accumulation of weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, and such an arms race are not calculated to promote a climate of confidence between Governments or the establishment of normal relationships among States and, what is worse, may plunge mankind into an orgy of self-destruction by means of a third world war, as it quite rightly stressed in paragraph 11 of the Final Document of the General Assembly adopted at its tenth special session.

There is no lack of signs to warn us of this total war which threatens us and which suggest a return to cold war through points of international tension which emerge every day throughout the world. In this connexion the conflicts which break out here and there in Africa, and which are planned by the enemies of Africa, and the persistent challenge of the racist minority régimes in southern Africa constitute for our Group a subject of major concern and should be of greater concern to the international community. South Africa's preparations to acquire nuclear weapons and the repeated acts of aggression by the racist and colonialist régimes against independent neighbouring States constitute a serious threat to international peace and security. The international community should do everything in its power to put an end to these situations, which are so many obstacles to the peace and economic progress of the peoples of this part of the world. But in fact it is the whole of mankind which is threatened by the constant spectre of a world nuclear conflagration.

The African Group believes that the present uncurbed arms race constitutes a genuine threat to the security of all peoples, and a considerable obstacle to development. Mankind is in fact devoting huge amounts of human and financial resources to military research to the detriment of development research. The percentage of development aid laid down within the framework of the development decades is far from being achieved by the developed countries, which invoke economic and financial difficulties and institutional obstacles in attempts to justify their delay in applying decisions in this area. However, military budgets continue to be increased in spite of monetary inflation and the disturbing recession in these same countries on the pretext of maintaining the balance of terror.

(Mr. Simbananiye, Burundi)

In this policy of escalation, developing countries find themselves constrained to review their priorities within the framework of their plans. And indeed, under the influence of these power politics, they are obliged to take the measures they deem appropriate to defend their sovereignty and safeguard their territorial integrity. Hence the relatively large part of the budgets of these countries devoted to national defence programmes. Hence also the mobilization of the forces of the nation for the defence of the country, when those resources should be devoted to the process of development and national reconstruction. In this way, the objectives of the development decades and the New International Economic Order are jeopardized.

There is no need for the African Group to stress any further the danger of self-destruction for mankind which is constituted by the present arms race and the proliferation of arms of mass destruction. Nor is there any need to demonstrate the indispensable link which must exist between disarmament and economic development in the light of the felicitous conclusions of the tenth special session of the General Assembly. I venture, however, on behalf of my group, to appeal to the General Assembly, and in particular to the First Committee, for it to redouble its efforts this week in order to lay the necessary foundations for accelerating the implementation of the recommendations and decisions of the tenth special session of the General Assembly. Those decisions and recommendations, although they deserve our approval, would benefit from being supplemented or by being made more precise in certain parts.

(Mr. Simbananiye, Durundi)

The General Assembly in the Final Document of its tenth special session expressed a consensus in which we can all take pleasure. We are particularly pleased by the important role given to the United Nations in the conduct of disarmament negotiations, a role which is perfectly in keeping with the universal nature of this concern. Because of its very urgency, the problem of disarmament can no longer be considered the business of the great Powers alone; its solution requires the most active participation of all nations, great and small. The negotiating and consultative bodies, research institutes and fellowships provided for in the Final Document of the tenth special session are such as to meet this aspiration, provided we keep to the principles of the periodic rotation of mandates and equitable geographical distribution taking into account not only the geographical situation but also of the actual needs of Members of the United Nations.

Finally, aware that the important Programme of Action and the machinery established by the General Assembly at its tenth special session cannot be put into effect or be effective without the political will of the Members of the United Nations, we would venture also to appeal to States, and, in particular, to the five permanent members of the Security Council which bear a particular responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security to confirm during this Week devoted to the promotion of the objectives of disarmament their determination to work for the implementation and acceleration of the process of general and complete disarmament. In this way we would be meeting the profound aspirations of the whole of mankind which desires solidarity in a world of peace, justice and liberty.

In so doing, according to the very terms of the Charter, we shall have saved succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind. This, in our view, is the message to be addressed to the peoples of our planet on this anniversary United Nations Day.

The CHAIRMAN: The next speaker is the representative of Malta, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Mr. GAUCI (Malta): This is an auspicious occasion, in which, I am privileged to participate today and I do so with considerable trepidation. It is a moment for honest reflection, as we contemplate the future on the basis of our experience in the past. It is proper that the spotlight of world attention should, momentarily at least, focus on what is one of the most fundamental dilemmas facing the world today. In this way the world's public will share our frustration, our difficulties and our hopes, as we give them a brief account of what their representatives are trying to do on their behalf. An aroused and enlightened public opinion is in itself a catalyst for dedicated effort to secure results from which all would benefit.

To put our dilemma briefly and graphically in perspective, let us recall that today, with our advanced technology, we have progressed to such an extent that at one and the same time we can use - in fact we have used - our technology to enable us to disengage ourselves from the gravitational pull of our planet and to view it from outer space, and so to see its unity, its fragility and our common destiny. That same technology - whether we like it or not - also enables us, unless our negotiations succeed, to cause incalculable damage to our planet and practically to cripple civilization as we know it today.

This, then, is the formidable choice that confronts us. Perhaps at the root of our perplexity is the evident fact that our thinking and our institutions have not yet evolved in a way to cope efficiently and effectively with the rapidity of technological change, the complexity of modern life and the interdependence of nations. One hundred and fifty independent countries, each with different perspectives and preoccupations, are trying in this forum and in their everyday life to grapple with many problems, but particularly those of peace and security, the constant accumulation of arms and the persistence of conflict situations in various parts of the world. We cannot but candidly admit that our collective efforts have not yet produced the solutions we all seek. It is true that we have known at times even worse situations, but this is no reason for us to be complacent at the present.

Even in the limited field of the complex disarmament negotiations, we have no precedent in experience which gives us guidance in curbing the development of today's

(Mr. Gauci, Malta)

weapons systems. Our patient and persistent efforts at control to date have only had limited results, and the accumulation of weapons has acquired a potential for destruction which almost baffles our comprehension and immeasurably complicates the negotiating process.

As we all know, disarmament efforts predate even the establishment of the League of Nations. It is therefore small consolation to stress that the search for peace and security continues and that it is an awesome responsibility which none of us can shirk since failure could spell our common doom. But we have no alternative choice. And these negotiations are taking place in many different ways - at the bilateral, multilateral and regional levels and, last but not least, in this very forum.

The countries on whose behalf I am speaking today - large and small, geographically spanning the five oceans of this earth and politically representing various shades of opinion, and each according to its own responsibility and capability - are all dedicated to a renewed effort on as broad a front as possible to secure our final objective of peace and security, including general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

Today it is proper for us to note the happy coincidence of this occasion with United Nations Day. Therefore, while not minimizing in any way the extreme importance of the issues of disarmament, we nevertheless reaffirm that our objectives can best be secured by complete adherence to the Charter of the United Nations, through its comprehensive approach in the search for peace and security. We can look back with satisfaction to the many genuine efforts in the past - both regional and universal - made by the countries of the Group of Western European and Other States to promote shared objectives, and we look forward in the future to an intensification of the work. A valuable reservoir of effort and negotiations is already to hand to be utilized and translated into agreed and verifiable commitments for common benefits.

(Mr. Gauci, Malta)

The recent special session on disarmament gives all nations a new impetus for the complex negotiations that still lie ahead of us. We participated actively in that session and we put forward our proposals in good faith, willing - as on all other questions - to accept analytical, vigorous and informed scrutiny of them by public opinion not only within our own societies but also in this forum, a scrutiny which we recognize as indispensable for our future progress. In the same spirit, we are prepared to consider proposals from other sources. The Final Document is our common platform of action, which covers a broad spectrum of the issues we face and provides refined machinery and a new momentum to help the search for solutions.

The longing for peace, security and economic and social progress binds us all. Though the world still has not succeeded in banishing the use of force, we shall continue to exert all efforts to avoid conflict and to promote peaceful change, while maintaining our vigilance to ensure stability. Soliciting the co-operation and contribution of all, we shall continue to seek the means whereby to verify strict compliance with measures which affect the independence and security of nations. We shall pursue in parallel our initiatives on peace-keeping and on procedures for the peaceful settlement of disputes. We shall continue to extend assistance in the process of decolonization and economic aid to the developing countries.

We recognize that the situation is serious. We shall therefore approach the tasks ahead of us with renewed effort, confidently relying on the proven adaptability of our Organization to respond to requirements and the dedication of the Secretary-General and his staff in extending all support necessary for the achievement of our declared objectives. We have much to do; but success in the final analysis depends on mutual restraint, collective efforts and diligent work. To this our enthusiastic and considered response will always be forthcoming.

The CHAIRMAN: I call next on the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, who will speak on behalf of the nine States members of the European Community.

Mr. PFEIFFER (Federal Republic of Germany): On behalf of the nine States members of the European Community, I should like to make the following statement on the occasion of the Disarmament Week commencing today.

In paragraph 102 of the Final Document of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the week starting 24 October has been proclaimed as a week devoted to fostering the objectives of disarmament. The Governments of the Nine endorsed this decision.

The Disarmament Week is not only intended as an incentive to Governments; it is meant above all to enhance the awareness of public opinion of the vital necessity as well as of the problems of disarmament. To the Governments of the European Community, and to numerous non-governmental organizations in the community, this Week provides an additional opportunity of highlighting in speeches, conferences and publications the central importance of disarmament and arms control for peace all over the world.

The Governments of the European Community pursue a policy of maintaining and promoting peace. They contribute actively to regional and world-wide endeavours towards disarmament and arms control, pursuing the aim of making détente an indivisible, universal process. It is with this conviction that the Nine made their contribution to the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, to the results of which, as incorporated in the Final Document, they attach high importance.

Today, disarmament and security have assumed a global dimension. We are convinced that all those who participated in the special session are more strongly aware than ever of this global dimension. The States members of the European Community will do everything in their power to make tangible progress towards the objective of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, as reconfirmed in the Final Document of the special session.

(Mr. Pfeiffer, Federal Republic of Germany)

The special session chose for the beginning of the Disarmament Week a special day, the day of the founding of the United Nations. This day thus acquires a double significance to which the Governments and peoples of the Nine feel committed. The celebrations and other events taking place in the member States of the European Community on the occasion of the United Nations founding day assume particular significance in view of the fact that they mark, at the same time, the beginning of the Disarmament Week.

The States of the European Community avow their commitment to international co-operation and the United Nations. This includes their commitment to peace and disarmament.

The CHAIRMAN: I call next on the representative of Sri Lanka, who will speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Group of countries.

Mr. FONSEKA (Sri Lanka): I speak now with a little reluctance, especially when the list of speakers is already somewhat extended. But I am obliged to speak because I do so on behalf of the Non-Aligned Group, whose concern with the subject of disarmament dates back to their first meeting in 1961. The non-aligned countries were among the first to recognize the fearful consequences of the arms race and called for a special session of the General Assembly to seek solutions to this grave issue. That special session materialized only some 17 years later and only historians might be able to tell us whether we could have done better had we taken heed of this problem earlier.

The inauguration today of Disarmament Week - pursuant to a decision which was included in the Final Document of the special session - is at the least a symbolic expression of the new importance we attach to this matter. It is perhaps only appropriate that today - 24 October, which is also observed as United Nations Day - should have been chosen as the day for the inauguration and observance of Disarmament Week.

(Mr. Fonseka, Sri Lanka)

We, the non-aligned countries, have long sought to make the United Nations the main forum for resolving the problem and to vest this Organization with the primary responsibility for disarmament. We recognize that it might be some time before our views are more widely shared. But today's ceremonies, at least in their symbolic value, will, we trust, help to advance that objective.

My remarks would be incomplete without a comment on what would in our view be the immediate and continuing purpose of these ceremonies. It is to focus the attention of people everywhere on the grave issues that face us and on the fact that they could not be the concern of just our Organization or the preoccupation of a few Governments. We must communicate to these people everywhere that the arms race not only is a threat to mankind but has a continuing impact on their day-to-day lives. The United Nations can with its resources carry this message only to a limited audience. The main task must rest with Governments, and not least of all with the non-governmental organizations. Today seems to be an appropriate occasion to express our appreciation of what these non-governmental organizations have already done and to support their efforts in the future.

As we all know, ceremonies of this nature have become a regular feature of the activities of the United Nations. For that reason, and no less for the reason that we are in the midst of our own debate on the review of the special session, where every conceivable comment if not pronouncement on disarmament has already been made, we may tend to regard these ceremonies as an unavoidable imposition. If we could resist that and convince ourselves that we have a duty to try to give more worth and meaning to the views we express on behalf of our respective Governments, our participation in this meeting today would not have been wholly in vain.

Mr. ENE (Romania) (interpretation from French): The delegation of Romania would like to add its voice to the voices of preceding speakers in emphasizing the special significance that we attach to this first Disarmament Week.

In proclaiming a world Disarmament Week beginning on 24 October, the anniversary of the United Nations, the recent special session of the General Assembly revealed that, as is now beyond doubt, disarmament arouses universal interest, and that all States and all peoples are called upon to participate in the efforts to achieve it.

(Mr. Ene, Romania)

This is also an illustration that the United Nations is the most adequate framework and the most representative body to arrive at that end. The meaning given by Romania to Disarmament Week is that it is an appeal to action because of the need to intensify the combined action of all Governments and of all progressive forces, so as to proceed to concrete disarmament measures and, first and foremost, nuclear disarmament.

In these circumstances, we also wish to reaffirm our conviction that resolute international action in the field of disarmament, as an integral part of the establishment of a new world economic and political order, requires a new approach, a redefinition of objectives, of functions and structures based on values other than those which brought about the present crisis. Our point of departure is the conviction that disarmament problems do not only concern a restricted group of States and Governments; on the contrary, they are of vital interest to all States and peoples of the world, whether large or small, regardless of their military strength or their level of economic development. All have the duty and the right to participate in achieving disarmament. All peoples have the right - and this is normal - to know what is happening in an area of decisive importance to their existence, and not to be carried away by the illusion that they can live in complete calm and security while vast means of destruction are constantly being accumulated throughout the world. In this respect, the United Nations should more actively and more effectively help to inform public opinion and the peoples of all countries of the present arms situation and its consequences, and to build up a powerful current of opinion in favour of disarmament and the adoption and implementation of tangible disarmament measures.

The tenth special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament was an important step towards such a new approach to the problem of halting the arms race and proceeding to tangible disarmament. In our opinion, that session opened up the possibility of achieving genuine progress in halting the arms race and paving the way to a new course in the negotiations.

(Mr. Ene, Romania)

It is therefore essential in this Disarmament Week to marshal our forces in this direction, to act at present in a resolute and responsible manner, so as to reflect in deeds the spirit, recommendations and decisions of the special session. We believe it is the duty of every State, of all of us, and of the new deliberative and negotiating machinery established by the special session, to resume and consider in detail the opinions, suggestions and proposals submitted by States to that session; to organize and take fresh action which is immediately applicable and likely to encourage the process of halting the arms race and to provide the conditions required for increasingly substantive action that will bring us closer to the final objective which remains general and complete disarmament and, first and foremost, nuclear disarmament.

For its part, Romania, interpreting the fundamental will and aspirations for peace and progress of its people, reaffirms its determination to act resolutely in the future as well, together with other States which have the same ideals, to set a new course and arrive at tangible results in the field of disarmament, so as to build a world of co-operation, a world where force and the threat of force are banished and in which all resources are devoted to the prosperity of each State and to the progress of human civilization.

Mr. DASHTSEREN (Mongolia): Today we are celebrating for the first time a solemn occasion - the commencement of the international Week devoted to fostering the objectives of disarmament, a Week which symbolizes the aspirations of the peoples and countries of the world to work together in the name of universal peace and security. Being the original sponsor, the Mongolian delegation is very pleased to make a statement at this commemorative meeting.

The Mongolian People's Republic, faithful to the lofty ideals of peace and security, has taken the initiative in proposing to hold a Disarmament Week annually. In doing so, we were guided by the sincere desire to enhance and advance disarmament efforts through a broad and constant mobilization of world public opinion in support of creating a most favourable international

(Mr. Dashtseren, Mongolia)

atmosphere for preserving peace and security and ultimately for achieving the goals of general and complete disarmament. The above initiative has once again testified to the sincerity and genuineness of the aspirations for peace which the Government and the people of my country cherish, like those of the other countries of the socialist community.

I am happy to note that our modest contribution, made to the elaboration of the Final Document of the special session devoted to disarmament, now commands wide support and approval on the part of States Members of the United Nations, as well as of various international organizations both governmental and non-governmental. We are grateful to the Secretariat, and especially to the Secretary-General, for the preparation and organization of this meeting. The delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic considers, like many others, that this meeting also attests to the recognition by Member States of the importance of disarmament measures.

The very fact that the commencement of the Week falls on the day of the foundation of the United Nations signifies, furthermore, the importance which the States Members of this august body attach to the cause of preserving and strengthening international peace.

I likewise note with satisfaction that this Week is being celebrated, not only in the framework of the United Nations, but also at the level of non-governmental organizations. As an example, I should like to mention that the World Peace Council is observing a Week of Action for Disarmament from 24 to 31 October, which will symbolize the struggle to implement the decisions of the tenth special session of the United Nations General Assembly. All these efforts, designed to bring about the necessary conditions and climate conducive to the implementation of disarmament measures, deserve high appreciation and praise. Moreover, we are of the view that such activities should be further continued and consolidated so that the world community be enlightened and educated in the true spirit of peace, détente and disarmament. In this connexion, we hope that the realization of the objectives of the draft resolution which we, together with other delegations, had the honour to submit yesterday, will heighten the significance of the observance of the Week.

(Mr. Dashtseren, Mongolia)

We also believe that Disarmament Week can best serve its goals if it encourages and helps in every possible way the ongoing efforts and negotiations in the field of disarmament. Proceeding from this premise, we maintain that in order to make the Week more meaningful and significant, the world community should mark it by taking concrete measures to foster disarmament objectives. In our opinion, States and Governments might consider the possibility of adopting practical steps in securing the effectiveness and universality of existing disarmament agreements in connexion with the celebration of Disarmament Week.

In conclusion, the delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic would like to reaffirm once again our continued and determined support of the cause of disarmament for the good of mankind and in the interest of the peaceful development of its own country.

Mrs. THORSSON (Sweden): Representing a country that has decided to remain outside all military alliances, I should like to say a few words at this session devoted to the observance of Disarmament Week. I do that as in matters related to disarmament my country cannot accept as spokesman the representative of any of the regional groups. I do that in the conviction that the decision by the special session to proclaim an annual Disarmament Week was caused by the keen desire, so evident throughout the Final Document, to promote the mobilization of world public opinion in support of the cause of disarmament.

We all know how urgent this task is. Based on my experience of disarmament negotiations over the years, I have reasons to doubt that we shall have, while there is still time, their sorely needed results unless effective pressure is put upon the Governments of the leading military Powers, at the national and international levels, to considerably speed up the disarmament process.

Of course we know that the step-by-step approach to disarmament involves technically complex and often politically sensitive issues. But it has been said that disarmament is too important to be left solely to experts and Governments. And is it not true that the many years that

(Mrs. Thorsson, Sweden)

we have spent in vain on efforts to reach, say, a comprehensive test-ban treaty stand out in glaring contrast to the speed at which military research and technology develop qualitatively new weapons and weapon systems? The observation must be made that if the leading military Powers started seriously questioning their present priorities, if they decided to use half of the ingenuity and skills now being used to further develop the already monstrous war machines, for disarmament efforts, if that happened we should soon, all of us, be partners in an efficient and effective disarmament process.

The call must therefore go out to people of goodwill everywhere: peoples and Governments must co-operate for disarmament against those forces in society, material or immaterial, that are counteracting mankind's supreme interest. These forces are sometimes difficult to identify. But we must look them up because the result of their work is before us in terms of the irrefutably horrifying figures of an unabated arms race, far beyond the requirements of national security.

Is it not typical of the present absurd situation that while inaugurating, through today's commemorative session, the first United Nations Disarmament Week, our efforts so far have had to concentrate on decelerating the tremendous speed of the quantitative and qualitative arms race, and negotiating measures of arms control such as a comprehensive test-ban treaty, instead of bringing about genuine disarmament? How long shall we have to wait before we reach that stage? How long can we afford to wait?

It is the considered view of the Swedish Government, representing one of the small neutral countries in the world, that the disarmament negotiation tables cannot, either literally or figuratively, be left to the great and powerful. We shall all of us enter the new phase of our efforts in the Disarmament Commission and in the Committee on Disarmament, collectively and on a truly equal footing. We shall do that because, should we register failure in our efforts, we would all of us be equal in having to face its consequences.

(Mrs. Thorsson, Sweden)

But let me end on a less dismal note. Let us not speak of failure. Let us speak about success. For success we need to be strong. Indeed, not militarily strong, but strong in intentions, knowledge, common sense and will power. In order to get that strength, Governments and their representatives must create closer and stronger ties with the people and their representatives. They constitute a tremendous potential force now to be effectively mobilized for peace and global security through disarmament.

May this first Disarmament Week be the happy inauguration of a new era when people will speak out, loud and strong, in favour of these noble purposes.

Mr. BOATEN (Ghana): On this auspicious occasion, I am privileged to take the floor to renew the commitment of the Government and People of Ghana to international efforts to relieve the world of the nightmare of the continuing arms race and to start a genuine process of reducing nuclear weapons.

It is significant that this commemorative event is taking place on the thirty-third anniversary of the coming into force of the Charter which gave birth to this Organization. When the founding fathers signed the Charter of our Organization in San Francisco they were inspired by the need to provide the necessary framework for resolving international disputes, inculcating the virtues of tolerance, good neighbourliness and channeling our resources towards the promotion of the economic and social advancement of mankind. In short, the resolve of the founding fathers when they met on that historic day in San Francisco was to break with the past - a past that had been marked by conflict, mistrust and, indeed, a world war with its heavy toll of life and property.

Unfortunately, 33 years after this resolve we are no nearer the peace we all sought and resolved to achieve. Admittedly, man has over these years forged the bonds of co-operation and drawn closer together, thanks to the remarkable advances in technology. But, all told, we have

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(Mr. Boaten, Ghana)

been driven by these same advances in technology to devise and stockpile weapons of devastating capability so that today we are confronted with an unprecedented threat of self-extinction.

(Mr. Boaten, Ghana)

It is to avert this danger that the tenth special session decided to set the week beginning today to remind us all of the special responsibilities we owe to save mankind from the outbreak of another war and, above all, the need to spare our resources for the millions in want and poverty.

On this occasion, therefore, we call on all Member States to rededicate themselves to the ideals and objectives of this Organization and help transform the new impetus generated by the tenth special session into concrete results.

Only in this way will we be worthy contributors to the ideals and objectives of this commemorative week.

Mr. HUDA (Bangladesh): On this anniversary of the foundation of our Organization, Bangladesh, my country, reiterates its adherence to the Charter of the United Nations. The observance of Disarmament Week symbolizes the eagerness of nations, large and small, to work in co-operation and harmony with one another, shunning suspicion and distrust. I sincerely hope that this week will go down as a significant event in the annals of peace-loving nations of the world as an important endeavour to promote individual trust, respect and understanding among States Members of the United Nations and as a vital effort to establish peace.

My delegation, on the eve of the inauguration of Disarmament Week, appreciates the endeavours of the United Nations in the peace-keeping role it has played so far, but we sincerely feel that much is yet to be done by the United Nations.

Despite the first step the United Nations has taken in its mission of devising a process for disarmament, my country cannot forget the horror and destruction wrought by nuclear weapons in the past. We sincerely hope this horror will not reoccur in any form in any part of the world.

We therefore, on this august day, place on record our call for an immediate halting of the arms race and for the introduction of a programme for effective and total disarmament without further delay, for the sake of peace and to save humanity from the threat of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, which are designed for mass destruction, and to enable human civilization to prosper and to sustain itself.

With new hopes for a better life in full freedom, permit me on this occasion to urge all nations of the world to divert their resources to a goal which may help to bring new economic order and social justice and possibly help to wipe out hunger and privation from the face of this planet.

Finally, on behalf of my delegation, I wish Disarmament Week full success.

Mr. VINCI (Italy): Upon this dual occasion of the thirty-third anniversary of the United Nations and the proclamation of the first Disarmament Week which we are observing this morning, I should like to read a message from the President of the Republic of Italy, Mr. Sandro Pertini. It reads as follows:

"Italy, like all the other nations of the world, is celebrating today the thirty-third anniversary of the United Nations, reaffirming the ideals of peace and universal co-operation which form the basis of the United Nations Charter.

"Born out of the catastrophe of war, the Organization is called upon now, more than ever, to play a role of fundamental importance in favour of all the peoples of the earth, beyond any barriers of race, culture or social structure.

"It is significant that the Declaration of Human Rights itself was the first document of universal value to be adopted, in 1948, just after the birth of the Organization.

"We have come a long way since then, and concrete progress has been made in that direction - progress to which Italy feels honoured to have made a contribution. But there is still a long way to go before the Universal Declaration will find full application in every part of the world. In many countries - far too many - the most basic human rights continue to be violated even now - rights which lie at the foundation of the United Nations Charter. I, who have fought all my life for the affirmation of these rights and against tyranny, cannot but raise the most vigorous protest.

"With the special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, the United Nations devoted its attention to another serious threat to the future of mankind: the question of armaments. The special session marked an occasion not only for giving formal attention to this problem, but also for expressing the deep conviction of the international community that the moment had long since arrived to make a decisive effort to reverse the trend towards rearmament and to break the spiral which is causing the majority of States to acquire ever more sophisticated, and thus more destructive, weapons.

(Mr. Vinci, Italy)

"In this light, we must reaffirm our commitment to uphold the United Nations. Any contribution we can make to this end will be all the more valid if all of us - citizens as well as statesmen - are vigilant in protecting the ideals of freedom and justice which are the outcome of a shared vision of civilization for all the peoples of the earth, and the indispensable foundation for any civil coexistence among men and among countries."

May I now take this occasion to inform the Committee that, as its first steps towards the implementation of the decision taken at the special session to devote a week to fostering the objectives of disarmament, the Italian Government intends to sponsor and promote the organization of symposia and other meetings which will be especially directed towards encouraging a fuller knowledge of the contents of the Final Document adopted at the special session. In this connexion, my Government is considering a widespread circulation of pamphlets, printed in Italian, which will set forth the texts of the decisions taken at the United Nations special session devoted to disarmament, as well as provide background data and other relevant information on this new beginning towards disarmament. As part of this initiative, the Government has in mind to present these pamphlets to the members of our Parliament during a ceremony to be broadcast nationwide by the mass communications media. We trust that the mass media will play a greater role in this effort of ours to foster the aims of disarmament.

It is our earnest hope that the actions to be taken in Italy, and in other countries throughout the world, for Disarmament Week will contribute - at the level of public opinion, as well - to preserve that shared sense of purpose and commitment which characterized the conclusion of the special session and which appears to be essential for the success of any future disarmament efforts.

Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia): I did not decide to speak until I found that various speakers were addressing the Committee on behalf of various countries on a regional or a continental basis - that is, on behalf of the continent of Asia, the continent of Africa and so on - and that in the case of Europe, for example, we had some splintering. The Group of Eastern European Countries spoke, and then the Group of Western European and Other Countries spoke, and finally the Group of Nine spoke, which rather fragmented the continent here. This means also that there are special interests inside certain continents, particularly Europe. I think the Soviet Union considers itself in Europe, or at least partly in Europe. I am not saying this lightly. This is very symptomatic of what is taking place.

I listened to eloquently expressed, pious hopes about mankind's yearning for peace - the clarity of the speakers could not be improved upon - but I wonder whether we are justified in commemorating our efforts to achieve a reduction of armaments, let alone disarmament. Are we actually commemorating here something that has not taken place? In the Charter the first paragraph of the Preamble states:

"to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

How many wars have been waged in the next part of our lifetime that followed 1945? I do not want to count them. War is war. When we say World War we mean a regional war. Even the First World War was regional, and the Second World War was not a war fought all over the world. But how many wars have been fought since 1945? I do not want to count them, as I may perhaps miss one or two in counting them. What we find is that the arms race is accelerating. All you have to do is look at the annual reports of corporations which have been producing arms. Their net earnings have never been better since the Second World War came to an end.

I decided to speak not in a spirit of criticism but to make a few suggestions which could be translated into practical action. I do not want to reiterate what I have said in the past 25 or 30 years on this subject. I am heartened to see a lady from Sweden who has been most alert about what has been taking place all these years. We always benefit from her statements on this question.

(Mr. Baroody, Saudi Arabia)

However, three years from now or two years from now we may be having another session, and should we follow the same procedure without practical action?

I have mentioned time and again in this Committee, as well as during the special session on disarmament, that the United Nations should produce a film taken from the archives of films of the First and Second World Wars, as well as other wars in between and in the aftermath of the Second World War, so that it could be shown in schools all over the world on television. That perhaps would be the best propaganda for peace, to condition the minds of the young against war. Regardless of the ideology of the countries, those films should be shown all over the world through the United Nations agencies. I will bet you anything that there would be very few countries that would dare not to show such films to their people, especially the young. I took up the question with members of the Secretariat, and I was approached by none other than the Assistant Secretary-General who is now sitting alongside you, Mr. Chairman. I believe we should encourage the Secretariat to embark on a project to produce such a film to be shown in schools on television. It would be a United Nations film, a candid film, an apolitical film.

Another suggestion I have to make is perhaps a little avant-garde, but I see no reason why what I am going to suggest could not be done. Let the leaders of the world and their Defence Ministers come to the United Nations on each 24 October, which commemorates the founding of the United Nations, and declare before the General Assembly or the First Committee that they will not be first to use nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction. I should rather say "weapons of mass killing" - because sometimes, I am told, there are weapons, like the neutron bomb, that kill people but do not destroy buildings. Other examples are bacteriological weapons and chemical weapons. They should declare themselves before us here in the United Nations and reassure us that they will not be the first to use such weapons - leave aside conventional weapons.

I do not want to burden this Committee now with all the programmes I have in mind - in my statement during the tenth special session which dealt with disarmament, I read out a ten-point programme - but let us begin with those two points, so that they may be acted upon.

(Mr. Baroodi, Saudi Arabia)

I read with interest a draft convention, which will be submitted by the Soviet Union, on the non-use of nuclear weapons against countries that do not have such weapons or that renounce their use. This is a step in the right direction, but there are loopholes which we must plug so that no one can subscribe to the words alone while, in spite of all the good will of the Soviet Union and all those who are submitting such draft conventions, the use of certain loopholes cannot be controlled.

To recapitulate, may I ask through you, Sir, that the Secretary-General and his assistants here take seriously those two suggestions for the time being - first, the film and secondly, the oath by leaders and their Defence Ministers. If they cannot personally attend, they could send someone to read the message on their behalf, like our good friend Mr. Vinci today read a message from his own President. What is wrong with the suggestion that every year they should come here and say:

"We take an oath before the world community that we shall not be the first to use nuclear or other mass destructive weapons against anyone no matter how they may differ economically or politically from us."

Otherwise, we are parroting platitudes, generalities and, on behalf of our Groups, solidarity. My brother and I are against my cousin; but my cousin and I are against the stranger - that is an old tribal proverb. This is solidarity; this is what it amounts to. But what if the stranger is right and my brother and I are wrong? What if my cousin is right and I am wrong?

The approach has been stultifying. We need a practical new approach, not with words but with action.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to advise the Committee that on this Day we have received a message from the Director of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and that the text of that message will be published as a press release.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.