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8th meeting
held on
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at 10.30 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 8TH MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PASTINEN (Finland)

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

AGENDA ITEM 125 (continued)

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/33/279, A/33/305, A/33/312, A/C.1/33/L.1)

Mr. de LAIGLESIA (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): Obviously, it is premature to attempt to take stock of the results of the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted particularly to disarmament. Very few months have elapsed since we adopted the Final Document which constitutes the basis for the work connected with disarmament that we are in the process of carrying out. However, my delegation feels that we cannot remain silent about such an important event, and for that reason we feel in duty bound to make some brief comments on the work that Member States carried out last June.

Although the aforementioned Final Document may appear to many to be extremely vague, the complexity of the questions dealt with made it very difficult, in most cases, to find specific solutions or formulas. However, we are bound to recognize that henceforth our approach to questions relating to disarmament will be much more precise and that we have new means that doubtless will make it possible to achieve progress in this field. This does not mean that the task will not continue to be arduous or that it will be easy to achieve positive results.

Up until now many questions which appeared to have been solved have remained outstanding and this will probably continue to be the case in the future as well. Every time we meet we experience a slight feeling of frustration because we are compelled to recognize that new obstacles have emerged with respect to questions that had apparently already been definitively clarified.

In our view, and as was stated in his address to the Assembly during the general debate by the Foreign Minister of my country, Mr. Oreja Aguirre,

(Mr. de Laiglesia, Spain)

the adoption of the Final Document by consensus is a factor of the highest importance, since it means that all independent countries, whether nuclear or non-nuclear, have shown the political will to establish a framework which will enable us to move towards that great objective of our work: namely, general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

I should also like to express my satisfaction with the structure of the Final Document, which we find well balanced, because it comprises an important part that could be called doctrinal in nature and that appears in the Introduction and the Declaration, and another more operative part, which is to be found in the Programme of Action and in the chapter relating to machinery.

In our view, although this does not imply that we minimize the importance of the doctrinal part, those sections to which we must give our greatest attention are the Programme of Action and the chapter dealing with machinery, since they are closely interlinked, and the latter in fact provides the means that will enable us to put the former into practice. As for the order of priorities, we agree fully with that laid down in paragraph 45 of the Final Document; and, as is also stated further on, in the field of nuclear disarmament we hope that the second series of talks between the United States and the Soviet Union on the limitation of strategic weapons will lead to positive results shortly, as appears to be possible at present.

We also hope that, soon, a joint draft on the total suspension of nuclear testing will be submitted to the Committee on Disarmament. That is a document which we have for some time been hoping would be discussed in this forum. As for military arsenals of conventional weapons, we must pursue our endeavours to reduce them, since that group of arms plays a much more important part in the arms race than the nuclear group. That is why anything that is done in connexion with this question will be reflected in a positive way in regard to the hot-beds of tension that at present exist in the world and which unfortunately show no signs of diminishing.

(Mr. de Laiglesia, Spain)

A series of proposals which did not command consensus are also listed in the Final Document. We believe that among them are many of great interest and importance which deserve detailed consideration. My delegation therefore feels that they should not be forgotten and that it would be desirable to consider them very carefully.

Finally, and with respect to the Programme of Action, we hope that the Disarmament Commission, which was recently revived, will be in a position in the near future to make recommendations to the General Assembly on the elements of a global disarmament programme for subsequent consideration by the Committee on Disarmament. We attach particular importance to this question and believe that it should be more actively considered, since so far we have achieved very little in this field.

With respect to the chapter dealing with machinery, we are gratified at the establishment of the aforementioned Disarmament Commission, and I take this opportunity to congratulate the Chairman of its first session, the representative of India, Ambassador Vellodi, to whom as a previous speaker said that body owes its resurrection. We hope that the Disarmament Commission will complement the work of the First Committee and help to keep alive the questions we are dealing with during those periods in which neither the General Assembly nor the Committee on Disarmament meet.

(Mr. de Laiglesia, Spain)

My delegation has noted with satisfaction the decision to enlarge the Committee on Disarmament as well as the changes introduced into its rules of procedure. I should like to congratulate most cordially those countries which, by virtue of this enlargement, have now become members of the new expanded negotiating forum.

In our view, an additional result of the tenth special session that deserves to be stressed because of its major importance is the incorporation of France into the negotiating body, where its contribution will undoubtedly prove invaluable. We should like also to express the hope that China will decide shortly to participate, because only if all nuclear countries are members of that body will it be truly effective.

The Spanish delegation wishes at this time to reiterate its desire to become a member of the new Committee on Disarmament. In this connexion, we hope that the decision of the General Assembly at its tenth special session to consider at regular intervals the composition of the Committee on Disarmament will be put into effect and that an opportunity will be afforded us to elect new Committee members following exhaustive consultations. In any event, we intend to follow the work of that Committee very closely and with the greatest interest while making use of the opportunities for participation open to non-member States, as laid down in paragraph 120 of the Final Document.

We hope, therefore, that the new machinery will function effectively, and we believe that the fact that it is more flexible and democratic will to a very large degree contribute to that end.

In conclusion, I should like to express the gratitude of my delegation to all those who have contributed their endeavours and vast experience to the initiation of this new phase of the work relating to disarmament. I should like, in particular, to mention Mr. Garcia Robles of Mexico and Mr. Ortiz de Rozas of Argentina, to whom, we can say without exaggeration, we are fully indebted for the fact that the tenth special session devoted entirely to disarmament has left in our minds the hope that our future work will not be in vain.

Mr. CHAVDA (India): This is the first session at which the First Committee is meeting under the new mandate decided for it by the General Assembly at its special session devoted to disarmament. Under the new mandate the First Committee is to deal only with the questions of disarmament and related international security issues. The decision to restrict the scope of the First Committee to disarmament and related security matters was taken so as to ensure that it would have ample time and opportunity to consider these vital items in depth. Experience over the past two decades showed that the allocation of several items, important in themselves, in addition to items relating to disarmament did not leave enough time for the First Committee to consider disarmament matters with the profundity that they demand. It is our hope that this year and in the years to come we shall not spend our time merely on the drafting of resolutions without serious debate on and consideration of the issues involved.

It is appropriate that we have started our debate this year with agenda item 125 under which we are called upon to review the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session. The special session, the initiative for the convening of which was taken by the non-aligned countries, served the very useful purpose of focusing the attention of the international community on the vital issues involved in the problem of disarmament. On this admittedly important, though limited, objective the special session achieved reasonably satisfactory results. As far as the Final Document itself is concerned, as my delegation said at the time, it has some positive elements, particularly so far as the section relating to machinery is concerned. On the whole, however, the Final Document failed to meet even the modest expectations of the large majority of Member States. The Foreign Ministers of non-aligned countries, meeting in Belgrade in July 1978, reviewed the resolutions of the special session and expressed their gratification that the session was held at a high political level. The Ministers underlined the significance of the fact that a Programme of Action in the field of disarmament was adopted for the first time. However, they expressed regret in the communiqué of the Belgrade meeting:

"that the negative attitude of some nuclear-weapon States has prevented the adoption of measures necessary to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons and to have a moratorium on their testing pending the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty". (A/33/206, para. 147)

(Mr. Chavda, India)

The non-aligned Foreign Ministers considered that effective efforts to attain those objectives should be vigorously pursued at the thirty-third session. We were greatly distressed at the attitude of some of the nuclear-weapon Powers, which refused to heed the desire of the vast majority of Members to see some concrete and meaningful steps towards actual disarmament taken at the special session. Particularly disappointing was the refusal of the nuclear-weapon Powers to agree to call for a moratorium on the testing of nuclear weapons pending the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty and to agree to enter into negotiations on arrangements for the prohibition of the use or threat of nuclear weapons. My delegation, which tabled draft resolutions on these two issues at the special session, and which agreed, in a spirit of compromise and in the interest of consensus, not to press them to a vote, will reintroduce them during the current session of the General Assembly.

It is declared time and again in the Final Document that it is nuclear weapons that pose the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of civilization. The following statements appear in various paragraphs of the Final Document:

"Removing the threat of a world war - a nuclear war - is the most acute and urgent task of the present day." (General Assembly resolution S-10/23, para. 18)

"... effective measures of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war have the highest priority". (Ibid., para. 20)

"... the accumulation of weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, today constitutes much more a threat than a protection for the future of mankind". (Ibid., para. 1)

Accordingly, the special session gave the highest priority in the Programme of Action to nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Chavda, India)

Paragraph 50 of the Final Document has spelled out the most important areas in the nuclear field for which urgent negotiations have been emphasized. The objective, of course, is the complete elimination of all the stockpiles of nuclear weapons and the means of delivering them at the earliest possible time. In the comparatively shorter time frame, my delegation believes that the negotiation of agreements for the cessation of the qualitative improvement and development of nuclear-weapon systems and the cessation of the production of all types of nuclear weapons, including fissionable material for weapons purposes, is an extremely urgent matter and should be undertaken without any further delay.

My Prime Minister, speaking from the rostrum of the special session on 9 June 1978, outlined the first step that should be taken within a prescribed time schedule. This first step, in the words of Shri Morarji Desai, must consist of:

"First, a declaration that the utilization of nuclear technology for military purposes, including research in weapon technology, must be outlawed; secondly, qualitative and quantitative limitations on nuclear armament and immediate freezing of present stockpiles under international inspection; thirdly, formulation of a time-bound programme - not exceeding a decade - for the gradual reduction of the stockpiles with a view to achieving the total elimination of all nuclear weapons; and fourthly, a comprehensive test-ban treaty with provision for safeguards to prevent breaches of the treaty, which in my view can only be done by independent inspection."
(A/S-10/PV.24, p. 12).

Of course, of the measures mentioned above, the question of the comprehensive test ban treaty has been the subject of fairly intensive negotiations among three of the five nuclear-weapon Powers. The international community has been told for the past 18 months that negotiations on a comprehensive test ban treaty have reached a very advanced stage and would be completed before long. Indeed, all the three nuclear-weapon States participating in the negotiations on a comprehensive test ban treaty had voted in favour of resolution 32/78 in which the General Assembly declared that the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban agreement and its opening for signature would be the best

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possible augury for the success of the special session. The General Assembly went on to urge the three nuclear-weapon States to use their best endeavours to transmit the results of their negotiations for full consideration by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament by the beginning of its spring session in 1978. The fact that the three nuclear-weapon States concerned had indeed taken an active part in its drafting had led us to hope that a draft comprehensive test-ban treaty would be finalized before the commencement of the special session. The special session has come and gone, and the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament has even practically ceased to exist, but the draft treaty on a comprehensive test-ban is nowhere in sight. In fact, the testing of nuclear weapons has continued even after the special session. It was under these circumstances that the Indian delegation put forward a draft resolution at the special session calling for a moratorium on the testing of all nuclear weapons pending the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty. The willingness on the part of nuclear-weapon States to agree to a moratorium would have inspired hope and confidence among the international community. We trust that the intervening period since the conclusion of the special session has provided enough time to the nuclear-weapon States to ponder over the matter and to be in a position now to agree to a call for a moratorium.

As has been stated in paragraph 56 of the Final Document, "The most effective guarantee against the danger of nuclear war and the use of nuclear weapons is nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons". We have, however, to be realistic enough to realize that even if the nuclear-weapon States had the necessary political will to undertake effective measures in the field of nuclear disarmament, the process would be necessarily complex and the pace of progress painfully slow. What is the international community to do pending achievement of this ultimate objective? Should the world continue to live under the constant and unpredictable threat of a nuclear holocaust? The answer to this dilemma is contained, at least partially, in paragraphs 57 and 58 of the Final Document. Paragraph 58, which was included as a result of the efforts of the Indian delegation, refers to an international agreement "to secure the avoidance of the use of nuclear weapons, the prevention of nuclear war and related objectives". My delegation believes

that an international convention banning the use and threat of nuclear weapons, which has been declared a crime against humanity by the General Assembly in its resolution 1653 (XVI) of 1961, should form the subject of appropriate negotiations at an early stage. To this end we will be submitting a draft resolution at the current session of the General Assembly. We, the non-nuclear-weapon States, are entitled to an assurance that the probability of a nuclear war will be reduced, if not removed altogether, in the foreseeable future.

My delegation is convinced that the problem of disarmament, particularly in the nuclear field, cannot be solved by a system of checks and balances devised as a result of bargaining. It can only be solved in a total manner keeping in view the whole of the globe and not the regions into which, presumably as a matter of political convenience or strategy, some countries seek to compartmentalize the world. It is idle to talk of regional nuclear-free-zones when there would be zones which would continue to be endangered by nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Chavda, India)

Those that have such weapons lose nothing if some distant area is declared non-nuclear. The nations without nuclear-weapon capability that imagine that their inclusion in such zones offers them security are suffering from a delusion.

Nuclear weapons and their means of delivery are intercontinental in nature and could make no distinction between nuclear-weapon-free zones and other areas. Even if some countries managed to avoid an actual nuclear strike on their territories they would not be much better off than others, since the atmosphere in which we all live and the air we breathe are one and indivisible. There is also the fact that the delivery systems, however carefully programmed and controlled, do not always follow their predetermined flight paths and could, indeed would, hit unintended targets. We are convinced that there cannot be a limited approach to the question of freedom from nuclear threats and dangers; the only answer lies in declaring and making the whole world a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Paragraph 64 of the Final Document deals with the question of the establishment of zones of peace in various regions of the world. I should like to refer particularly to the proposal for the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, which has been the subject matter of several resolutions of the General Assembly. In spite of three rounds of talks between the United States and the Soviet Union on the subject there is no perceptible movement towards actually implementing the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

As the Foreign Minister of India said in his statement in the General Assembly on 10 October, it is ironic that littoral countries that are affected most by the big-Power rivalry in the Indian Ocean are not directly involved in those talks. We have been told that the talks will be resumed shortly, and we trust that they will lead to a speedy elimination of big-Power rivalry and military presence from the Indian Ocean, thereby facilitating the implementation of the General Assembly resolution declaring the Indian Ocean a zone of peace.

(Mr. Chavda, India)

Apart from nuclear weapons, the Programme of Action contained in the Final Document also deals with other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, as well as conventional weapons. As far as other weapons of mass destruction are concerned, my delegation believes that it is of the utmost importance to reach early agreement on the prohibition of the development and production of all chemical weapons as well as the destruction of existing stocks. As for other weapons of mass destruction, an agreement should be reached on the prohibition of the development and production of new types of such weapons, whether they are based on existing or new principles of science.

As regards conventional weapons, it is important to refer to paragraph 55 of the Final Document, which reads in full:

"Real progress in the field of nuclear disarmament could create an atmosphere conducive to progress in conventional disarmament on a world-wide basis." (General Assembly resolution S-10/2, para. 55)

Thus the General Assembly clearly recognized that in order to make progress in the field of conventional disarmament genuine progress in the field of nuclear disarmament would be essential. My delegation would be prepared to consider proposals relating to the limitation and gradual reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons within the framework of a comprehensive programme of disarmament.

The section in the Final Document that my delegation found particularly satisfactory was the one relating to the establishment of new international machinery to deal with problems of disarmament. The special session recognized the need for all States to exercise political will. At the same time, it highlighted the urgent need to vitalize existing disarmament machinery and to constitute forums for disarmament deliberations and negotiations of a more representative character. The deliberative organ - namely, the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) - has already held its first organizational session, earlier this month.

(Mr. Chavda, India)

By setting up the Disarmament Commission the General Assembly decided to reaffirm, and indeed intensify, the deliberative function and the central role of the United Nations in the disarmament field. The Commission, representing as it does the entire membership of the United Nations, would bring to bear on the consideration of the questions of disarmament the collective political awareness of the world community. My delegation wishes to register its satisfaction with the work carried out by the UNDC at its first session and hopes that the first substantive session in 1979 will be devoted to an in-depth study of the issues involved. In this connexion, my delegation feels that it would be perfectly legitimate for the General Assembly at its current session to give such directives to the UNDC as it might consider necessary with regard to the priorities of the various tasks entrusted to the UNDC by the General Assembly.

As for the negotiating body, the special session has led to the constitution of the Committee on Disarmament, which will be convened in Geneva not later than January next year. My delegation welcomes the composition of this new body, referred to by the President of the thirty-second session of the General Assembly on 19 September. India looks forward to a productive session of the Committee on Disarmament in 1979, and pledges its co-operation to that end with all other members of the Committee. At the same time, it would like to appeal to States that are not members of the Committee on Disarmament to make full use of the opportunities open to them to make effective contributions to the Committee's work. We note with satisfaction the declaration by France of its readiness to participate in the work of the Committee. We hope that China, too, will join the negotiating body at an early date.

Subparagraph (e) of paragraph 120 of the Final Document implies that the General Assembly is expected to make recommendations to the new negotiating body with regard to that body's agenda. My delegation is ready to exchange views with other delegations on this matter.

The present session of the General Assembly has to fix the date for the convening of the second special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. My delegation believes that it would be appropriate to hold that session some time in 1981.

(Mr. Chavda, India)

As the Committee knows, the first and foremost purpose of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security and, to that end, to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace. We also know that the Charter of the United Nations came into force on 24 October 1945. And yet it is very disheartening that while over half the world is hungry and half-starved, over a billion dollars a day are spent on armaments. But the progress made so far is not in the direction of international peace and security; rather, it is in the direction of further production of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons and the development of increasingly sophisticated weapons of mass destruction. The destructive potential of these modern weapons has made the world fearful of war, which would inevitably result in the annihilation of the whole of mankind.

Disarmament, peace and security, and economic and social development are interrelated. Therefore the call of the hour, in the words of my Prime Minister, Shri Morarji Desai, is to replace "bombs and bullets by bread and books". (A/S-10/PV.24, p. 14-15). Let this be the slogan for the forthcoming disarmament week, to commence on 24 October.

Mr. von WECHMAR (Federal Republic of Germany): As the representative of the country currently exercising the presidency of the European Community, I should like to begin with a statement on behalf of its nine member States.

The year 1978 has provided new momentum to the world-wide endeavours towards disarmament and arms control. For the first time in history, a special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted itself entirely to issues of disarmament and arms control. It adopted by consensus a Final Document which, we hope, will serve as a basis for further progress. The States members of the European Community welcome the positive response to the statement given in the name of the Nine by the Danish Minister, Mrs. Lise Oestergaard, on 25 May 1978 and to the view she expressed on behalf of the Nine that there was an alternative to the costly and destabilizing world-wide arms race and that disarmament processes must go hand in hand with sustained efforts to eliminate the sources of tension and injustice in the world.

We also hope that the special session on disarmament has given a new momentum to international relations which will contribute towards the full realization of the purposes of, and the universal respect for, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It is a fact that the obligation of all States to refrain from any use of force inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations, as well as the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence under Article 51, are basic principles embedded in the Charter itself.

We are now faced with the task of enhancing the scope of the consensus reached during the special session and of making concrete arrangements to give effect to that consensus. The member States of the European Community feel that they have contributed to the success of the special session through the submission of constructive proposals both before and during the session itself. They will continue to work for the achievement of tangible results in a climate of mutual confidence and towards an improved understanding of the security interests of all.

The Nine would hope that the disarmament machinery, reformed as a result of the special session on disarmament, will help to facilitate

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Republic of Germany)

the effective participation of all States in the disarmament process while creating a working climate conducive to the attainment of the objectives we have set ourselves.

In the process of working closer together, public awareness of the issues involved is essential. The Nine therefore welcome the recognition in the Final Document of the need for this awareness on all issues related to disarmament and of the role which world public opinion can play in that process.

Only through progress in disarmament and arms control will it be possible to halt the arms race and to use resources thus released further to promote social and economic progress and in particular the social and economic progress of the developing countries. The Europe of the Nine represents a community which at all times has given practical proof of its commitment to the cause of peace and to the promotion of the well-being of all. It is not only by far the largest trading partner of the countries of the third world but also the biggest donor of development aid to those countries. The community will continue to be guided by its commitment as expressed by the Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Genscher, when he addressed the General Assembly on 26 September 1978 on behalf of the Nine. He said:

"This Europe of the Nine wants to be a centre of co-operation in the world, and it sees itself on the side of those who seek to create an order for that co-operation founded on equality and partnership." (A/33/PV.8, p. 53-55)

I should like to come now to the second part of my intervention, in which I elaborate on the position of my own Government.

First, in my statement last year I expressed the hope on behalf of the Federal Republic of Germany that the special session on disarmament might open up a world-wide dialogue and lend new momentum to the international policy of arms control. This hope which, I believe, is shared by all, has materialized. The special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was indeed the outstanding international event in

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Republic of Germany)

this field in 1978. For the first time in the history of the world Organization all Member States were able to discuss questions of disarmament and security at the highest level during a session convened solely for this purpose. The fact that no fewer than 20 Heads of State or Government and 49 Foreign Ministers were among the 126 speakers in the general debate clearly illustrates the strong commitment of the Governments concerned to progress in the field of disarmament and arms control.

Despite the differences in their individual positions, the Member States reaffirmed in the Final Document, jointly prepared and adopted by them, their determination to take the action required to achieve progress towards disarmament and arms control. This Final Document thus provides an important political framework for the debate on disarmament today and in the future. Although it does not impose on States any obligations binding under international law beyond organizational decisions, it sets a standard by which all future efforts towards disarmament and arms control will be judged.

The special session on disarmament did not only focus the attention of the international public on this subject of vital importance for the future of mankind. It also helped to make Governments more deeply aware of their own responsibility for peace and international security. All of us who are trying here in the United Nations to find solutions to difficult issues realize that in a world full of distrust there is no easy way of securing peace world-wide and of creating a climate of confidence. What matters is the political will of all concerned to create both at a regional level and within the United Nations the conditions for a stable partnership based on international security as described by Federal Chancellor Schmidt in his address of 26 May. The Federal Chancellor mentioned as the first and most important prerequisite for this the principle of political, strategic and military balance on which all efforts towards arms limitations and disarmament must be based without, however, disregarding the additional guidelines for a comprehensive security policy, which are equally essential to the attainment of a stable peace. He listed: détente, containment of conflicts and reconciliation of interests; capacity for effective crisis management; and predictability and calculability of political and military conduct.

(Mr. von Wechmar, Federal Republic
of Germany)

With the provision, also mentioned in the Final Document of the special session, that undiminished security is maintained at each stage, the Federal Government is ready to engage in disarmament and arms control measures which will lead to a more balanced relative strength at a lower level. Together with its partners, my Government is striving to attain this aim in the mutual and balanced force reduction negotiations in Vienna. In this as in other areas, a clear data basis is absolutely essential for achieving genuine parity.

Secondly, the Federal Government actively supported the special session from the outset; it contributed to its success by submitting its own proposals. The Federal Government is gratified that the special session extended the North-South dialogue to include the important security issue, which had hitherto been discussed and negotiated mainly in an East-West context. The Federal Government hopes that the special session has signalled the beginning of world-wide co-operation in the interests of peace and security. This co-operation is today more important than ever, since any disturbance in one part of our interdependent world is bound to have repercussions in all others.

Disarmament and security are of a dimension today which concerns East and West, North and South in equal measure. This, I believe, was one of the major experiences we acquired during the special session.

Thirdly, with regard to priorities, the result we have achieved after almost three decades of endeavours at disarmament and arms control is better than some critics would have us believe. There are in existence today world-wide agreements such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty and a number of others prohibiting particular types of weapons or excluding weapons from specific areas, like the Antarctic Treaty and the Sea-bed Treaty. I shall not enumerate these agreements, since they are sufficiently known. They are of varying significance individually but, taken as a whole, they reflect the common effort to contain the arms race through world-wide and regional measures.

Given the complexity of the tasks involved in disarmament and arms control, there is good reason to ask where the priorities lie. The special session on disarmament did not limit itself to repeating the demand for nuclear disarmament as a first step which has been made time and again in recent years. True, the

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of Germany)

reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons, again, ranks first in the order of priorities set up by the special session, but the same priority is accorded to the elimination of other weapons of mass destruction, to that of conventional weapons and to the reduction of armed forces. In order to emphasize the urgency of each of these matters the Programme of Action adds that nothing should preclude States from conducting negotiations on all items concurrently.

Fourthly, as to conventional weapons, I underline the weight which has thus been given to conventional weapons in the over-all context of disarmament and arms control measures, taking into account the ever larger expenditures made on conventional weapons in recent years throughout the world. This has not been without effect on the arms race or on the international arms trade. The weapons market has changed from a sellers' to a buyers' market, where conditions and specifications are dictated to the suppliers by the recipients. In the Federal Republic of Germany, arms exports are subject to strict and restrictively applied controls. Armament exports to areas of tension are prohibited altogether. The Federal Government therefore strongly endorses the appeal in the Final Document to the major arms-supplying and recipient countries to enter into consultations on the limitation of the transfer of conventional weapons.

Fifthly, I turn to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks and the mutual and balanced reduction of forces, the Final Document makes it clear that responsibility for disarmament and arms control cannot lie with the United Nations alone: every State is called upon, now as before, to make arrangements for disarmament and arms limitation on a bilateral, regional and world-wide basis. Positive results in these areas will have an impact beyond the regional or substantive scope of such agreements. It is also for this reason that the Federal Republic of Germany endorses an early conclusion of SALT II. These bilateral American-Soviet negotiations on the limitation and reduction of strategic arms are of key importance, not only for the relations between the two super-Powers but also for the safeguarding of peace in the world as a whole. In view of new disparities which have developed it

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of Germany)

is therefore more important than ever before also to include in the proposed world-wide system of military balance medium-range missiles, which threaten Europe and other regions with their tremendous destructive power. The Federal Government is also concerned that progress be achieved in the regional mutual and balanced force reduction negotiations. We take an active part in these negotiations. In the light of our own experience we are convinced that there is no feasible alternative to our policy dedicated to the cause of peace.

Sixthly, the Federal Government advocates a comprehensive nuclear test ban, which is currently the subject of negotiations between three nuclear-weapon States. A test ban treaty would be of considerable importance for ensuring the effectiveness of the non-proliferation régime established by the States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968. The Federal Government has pledged its support for the development and testing of a verification system designed to monitor adherence to a comprehensive test ban. The Federal Government supports the objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and continues to advocate its world-wide application.

A further urgent task will be the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement prohibiting the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and on their destruction. It is the Federal Government's hope that the current talks between the United States and the USSR on a joint initiative for a treaty prohibiting chemical weapons will soon enable the Committee on Disarmament, the new negotiating body established by the special session, to prepare a draft treaty, ready for signature, and to submit it to the United Nations.

We are aware of the concerns frequently voiced by other States that international verification of an agreed ban on the development and production of chemical weapons might violate commercial secrets of chemical plants and thus place them at a competitive disadvantage. We take these concerns seriously. The Federal Republic of Germany is a country in which the chemical industry plays a very important part. Its manufacturing processes and patents must be protected against industrial espionage and imitation. The Federal Republic of Germany renounced the production of nuclear, biological and

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of Germany)

chemical weapons in 1954 and agreed that the observance of this pledge should be subject to international verification. Since then, a verification system has been developed in co-operation with the verifying agency and the chemical industry. This system permits on-site inspections, but it is nevertheless acceptable to the industry because it does not entail any economic disadvantages.

In his address of 26 May to the special session, Federal Chancellor Schmidt invited interested Member States of the United Nations to the Federal Republic of Germany to see for themselves that it is possible adequately to verify a ban on the production of chemical weapons. In this connexion a workshop for experts has been scheduled to take place in my country in the summer of 1979. We shall inform Member States of further details.

(Mr. von Wechmar, Federal Republic
of Germany)

Seventhly, the Federal Government has underscored time and again the potential significance of confidence-building measures for progress in the sphere of disarmament and arms control. The Federal Government believes that its efforts to normalize relations with its Eastern neighbours have contributed towards creating conditions which paved the way for the past two Conferences on Security and Co-operation in Europe and for the Vienna mutual and balanced force reduction negotiations. Although the results we had hoped for in both spheres have not yet fully materialized, we find that the confidence-building measures which we supported and on which the Conference agreed have proved effective in Europe.

We are convinced that agreements on confidence-building measures can serve, not only in Europe but in other parts of the world as well to improve the political climate for disarmament and arms control. We proposed a number of possible confidence-building measures in our working paper which we distributed during the special session as part of our initiative of launching a confidence-building campaign. They were taken in part from the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Among these measures, which would have to be adapted to specific regional conditions at the discretion of participating States, we included the following: prior notification of military manoeuvres; the exchange of observers to attend military manoeuvres and of military delegations; and the establishment of so-called hot lines or other means of reducing the danger of conflicts.

We shall return to this point at some later stage of our debate and submit concrete proposals.

Confidence building cannot be confined to the sphere of military security. As Chancellor Schmidt announced during the special session, we shall present before the end of this year a proposal in connexion with a United Nations programme aiming to foster understanding among the youth of all nations.

The Federal Government is concerned about the disproportion between the expenditures for military purposes on the one hand and for development on the other. We do not regard arms supplies as a contribution to development.

(Mr. von Wechmar, Federal Republic
of Germany)

The ever more rapidly increasing transfer of arms has a destabilizing effect and precludes the development of urgently required infrastructure and industrial progress.

We therefore endorse the recommendation of the special session that a thorough study should be carried out on the complex subject of disarmament and development. It is precisely in this area that a reliable data basis and an analysis of possible effects are imperatively necessary. If we succeed in limiting armaments and in reducing military expenditures, funds will be released for additional development aid for the benefit of developing countries.

Eighthly, the United Nations has a central guiding and initiating responsibility in the sphere of disarmament. The General Assembly has always been the main deliberative organ in this field and should remain so.

During the special session, the international disarmament machinery was reviewed and reorganized. We expect this reform to lead to an intensification of the debate. We know that the Member States of the United Nations are united in the belief that duplication must be avoided in the interest of progress. Within the framework of this machinery we can endorse only complementary functions which are in no way conflicting.

The Federal Government welcomes the new arrangement which allows this Committee to deal in the future only with questions of disarmament and related international security matters. The Federal Government also welcomes the newly established United Nations Disarmament Commission which will be at the disposal of the General Assembly as a deliberative body complementing the First Committee. It is our understanding that questions assigned to and considered by the Commission can be brought up for discussion in other bodies as well.

We shall co-operate for the fulfilment of the tasks entrusted to the Committee on Disarmament which will operate with an enlarged membership as from January 1979. We are determined to play an active part in the discharge of the Committee's mandate to elaborate, as a negotiating body, agreements in the sphere of disarmament and arms control to be submitted to the General Assembly for adoption.

(Mr. von Wechmar, Federal Republic
of Germany)

Ninthly in conclusion let me say a word on the prospects for tangible progress towards disarmament and arms control. Much concern has been voiced of late that the disarmament and arms control negotiations may not be able to keep abreast of the rapid technological progress that is bringing forth ever new weapons. My Government does not share this pessimistic view. Given political will on the part of the Governments concerned, we will consider it possible to prepare, through joint endeavours, agreements on disarmament and arms control which will halt the race for quantitative and qualitative improvement of weapons. This calls for a wide range of agreements at both the global and the regional level in order to attain the objectives set forth in the Final Document of the special session. Let me illustrate this idea by quoting again from the Federal Chancellor's speech of 26 May before the plenary Assembly during the special session, in which he said:

"It has been the general experience that all-embracing, all new, dramatic concepts for global disarmament hold out no prospect of success. What we need instead are many individual advances, progress step by step, each step taken with the determination to harmonize conflicting interests." (A/S-10/PV.5, p. 86)

The Federal Chancellor went on to say:

"There is far too much enmity in this world. What we need instead is partnership. Such partnership must ensue from the recognition that no one can guarantee his own security and peace by himself alone." (A/S-10/PV.5, p. 87)

The CHAIRMAN: I draw the attention of representatives to paragraph 102 of the Final Document of the tenth special session

"The General Assembly proclaims the week starting 24 October, the day of the foundation of the United Nations, as a week devoted to fostering the objectives of disarmament." (General Assembly resolution S-10/2, para. 102)

Now, as representatives will appreciate, this might imply the implementation of this particular recommendation next Tuesday, and I am given to understand that the Secretariat has given some thought to the problem of how this could best be done. I shall hold consultations in this regard with the representatives of the countries holding the chairmanships of the regional groups after the adjournment of this meeting.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.