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Chairman: Mr. PASTINEN (Finland)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.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. FISHER (United States of America): We are met here to renew debate in this Committee on questions basic to the survival and prosperity of mankind. These are not new questions. We have reasoned long together in past years in search of ways to minimize the risk and destructiveness of armed conflict and to assure that the resources, both human and material, that have been devoted to the means of war are progressively redirected to man's social and economic betterment.

The obstacles we face remain awesome. The accumulation of arms, both by developed and developing countries, continues largely unchecked; the antipathies and fears which at once drive the arms race and are driven by it have not abated; and technological progress both enhances the destructive potential of armaments and makes more difficult the task of achieving balanced, verifiable agreements to limit and reduce them.

Yet the response of the world community to the challenge of arms control and disarmament is probably more vigorous and promising now than it has ever been. The United States, for its part, is engaged in a programme of negotiations of unprecedented scope, variety and import.

Since we last met in this Committee, the community of nations has passed an important milestone in its quest for a better and safer world: the first special session of the United Nations devoted to disarmament. Vice-President Mondale, addressing representatives to the special session shortly after its opening, called it "a symbol of hope". Looking back at the accomplishments of the special session, I think we may now fairly say that it has also given cause for hope.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

At the special session consensus agreement was reached on a programme of action which covers a broad spectrum of disarmament issues - a remarkable and precious achievement. Practical measures were agreed upon to strengthen the multilateral machinery for disarmament deliberations and negotiations. For all who participated in the session there was a raising of consciousness, both of our varying perspectives and emphases in the search for ways to control and reduce arms, and of our shared responsibility for the process.

In his statement to the plenary General Assembly, Secretary Vance spoke of what the United States regards as another important achievement of the special session: the decision by several nuclear Powers to give assurances about the non-use of nuclear weapons in order to strengthen the security of non-nuclear-weapon States.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

In the case of the United States - and I suspect the same is true of some of the other nuclear-weapon States as well - this decision was taken as a direct consequence of the raised consciousness to which I have just referred. In October 1977, President Carter declared before this Assembly that the United States would not use nuclear weapons except in self-defence - a guarantee that no nation need fear being made the victim of nuclear aggression or blackmail by the United States.

Before and during the special session, my Government gave careful thought to what further assurance the United States might provide those nations which have forsworn nuclear weapons. Vice President Mondale told the special session that we were there "to listen to the voices of other nations" as well as to speak our own views. We did listen, and one result, decided upon after careful review of our security requirements and our alliance commitments, was the further elaboration of the United States position on security assurances announced by Secretary Vance on 12 June, an elaboration which built substantially upon President Carter's earlier statement. Secretary Vance stated that the President declared:

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

In speaking to the General Assembly last month, Foreign Minister Gromyko described this pledge and a similar assurance given at the special session by the Government of the United Kingdom as "replete with all kinds of reservations rendering them valueless". (A/33/PV.8 p. 33-35) The Governments of non-nuclear-weapon States which have given thought to these carefully considered, solemn declarations know better. They know that their security has been further vouchsafed, that the significance of their decision to abjure nuclear weapons has been more sufficiently acknowledged.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

Together, the solemn pledges given by the nuclear Powers during the special session represent an important measure of security for the non-nuclear-weapon States. For this reason, as Secretary Vance stated in the General Assembly on 29 September, the United States believes the Security Council should take formal note of them. At the same time we do not believe that these pledges can be forced into a common mould. It would be unrealistic to anticipate that a single formulation could be found which would be generally acceptable and meet the diverse security requirements not only of each of the nuclear Powers but also of the non-nuclear weapon States, for many of which relationships with specific nuclear States are an essential ingredient of their national security.

My Government also continues to support the concept of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a further means of strengthening the security of non-nuclear-weapon States, as a means of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and enhancing stability in regions where appropriate conditions exist. The United States, with other nuclear Powers, has of course already made a treaty commitment not to use nuclear weapons against parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

The achievements of the special session - an agreed Programme of Action, strengthened multilateral machinery, heightened awareness and commitment, broadened security assurances for the non-nuclear-weapon States - are cause for encouragement. It is our responsibility now to follow up on the conclusions and recommendations of the session, sharpening the definition of our goals and narrowing our differences over the steps we must take to achieve them.

I think we may take heart at what has already been accomplished in the brief three and a half months since the consensus adoption of the Final Document. Thanks in large part to the perseverance and diplomacy of Ambassador Mojsov, President of the thirty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly, to whom I join others in paying tribute, the membership of the Committee on Disarmament has been agreed upon and the Committee will begin its work in January. Drawing upon the experience of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD), but with a broadened and more representative membership, the Committee on Disarmament will provide

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

a continuing forum for serious, multilateral negotiation of important disarmament issues. We particularly welcome the decision of France to take its place in the Committee. We look forward to the day when China too will take its place.

Since the special session also, the revived United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) has held its organizational meeting. Pending the decision of the General Assembly it will hold its first substantive meeting in May and June of next year. The United States looks forward to the opportunity the UNDC will give for more extensive and profound discussion of the central issues of disarmament complementing the resolution-oriented debate of this Committee.

The United Nations study on disarmament and development mandated by the special session is already under way with good prospects of being completed on schedule or earlier.

Nations have nominated a number of truly eminent persons to serve on a board which will advise the Secretary-General on aspects of studies to be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations in the field of arms control and disarmament.

My own Government has taken steps to implement and seek funding for the expanded programmes of peaceful nuclear assistance announced by Vice President Mondale and described in detail by Ambassador Young.

My Government is pleased also to note the progress made since the special session by the nations of Latin America towards coming to grips with the problem of controlling conventional arms. While not a direct outcome of the special session this reflects the new sense of urgency and purpose which the session has given us all. Having already provided the world with a model for regional "suffocation" - and here I am borrowing Prime Minister Trudeau's apt term - of the nuclear arms race, Latin Americans have begun a process which the United States hopes will provide a model also for restricting the transfer of conventional weapons and dealing regionally with other conventional arms issues. The United States welcomes and supports these efforts.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

At this General Assembly we may expect a larger number of resolutions dealing with disarmament than ever before. Agreed to by consensus, the Final Document of the special session expressed our shared vision of the fundamental imperatives of disarmament. It did not, it could not, reflect the particular, detailed perspectives and emphases which different nations brought to the debate. Many specific proposals and suggestions submitted by individual nations did not achieve consensus.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

The Final Document recognized that a number of these deserved to be studied more thoroughly. The United States is prepared to give careful consideration to all serious proposals, in this Assembly or in other appropriate deliberative and negotiating bodies. That consideration will begin here.

For its part, my Government hopes, in particular, that this session of the General Assembly will recommend to the Security Council the action regarding nuclear non-use assurances about which I have already spoken.

We hope it will also take concrete measures to advance the work already under way to develop a system for uniform international measurement and reporting of military expenditures and thereby begin to build a foundation for negotiated limitation and reduction of military budgets. I listened with interest to the suggestion made by the Foreign Minister of the Philippines that it would be advisable for the pilot test of the reporting instrument of military expenditures to have the participation of at least one State from each political system or geographical area. This is an interesting idea and deserves careful consideration.

We should like to see further attention and impetus given to regional approaches to arms control and disarmament, particularly to what have been called confidence-building or stabilizing measures, that is, measures designed to increase the transparency of military activities, reduce the chances of miscalculation, complicate the task of achieving surprise in attack and alleviate the conditions of mutual ignorance in which force postures are based on worst-case estimates of what others are doing.

We are confident also that this Assembly will give appropriate recognition and endorsement to preparations for the Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference and the biological weapons Convention review conference, which are to take place in 1980.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

In our deliberations here we have an obligation not only to follow up on the work of the special session but to seek to preserve the unity of purpose and vision that was achieved there. This will require restraint, a willingness to forgo polarizing resolutions which could undermine the consensus achieved in the Declaration and the Programme of Action. It will also require patience, a recognition that the disarmament process is not a sprint, to be completed with short bursts of zeal, but a marathon requiring sustained effort. We must all recognize the complexity of the process and the futility of grandiose schemes which ignore security realities. We hear from some that only "political will" is required to achieve sweeping agreements; but an essential element of that political will must be a willingness to provide the information about programmes and forces on which concrete, practicable measures of disarmament must be based, and a commitment to measures of openness and inspection essential to verify mutual compliance with agreements affecting the security, the independence and even the survival of nations. We must be prudent in our institution-building. The proliferation of structures for which a cogent purpose and realistic role have not been clearly defined can only devalue our efforts.

Preservation of the shared sense of purpose, broad priorities and commitment which I believe was achieved at the special session will be vital to the success of our future multilateral efforts in this forum and in others: in the Committee on Disarmament and in the revived United Nations Disarmament Commission; at the review conferences for the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the biological weapons Convention; in the continuing work of the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation; as well as in regional forums already constituted, such as the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, or in other regional arms forums in prospect. The multilateral disarmament calendar is full, the scope of the agenda more inclusive than it has even been.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

Disarmament is a universal responsibility. Political interdependence and the ubiquity of arms accumulation make it so. At the same time, the United States recognizes and accepts the special responsibilities in the disarmament process imposed on it by its status as a nuclear-weapon State one of the two principal military Powers and a major supplier of arms to other nations.

The United States shares the disappointment that all feel and many have expressed that a comprehensive test ban has not yet been achieved. Despite the complexity of these negotiations we are making steady progress towards an agreement which will ban any nuclear-weapon test explosion in any environment, an agreement which will include as an integral part of the treaty a protocol prohibiting nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, an agreement which will apply equally to all States parties, those with nuclear weapons as well as those without them, and an agreement which we hope will achieve the widest possible international adherence.

At the United Nations special session on disarmament Vice-President Mondale put forward a set of what he called "bold objectives and realistic steps" to guide our arms control efforts. The Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Mr. Warnke, described in detail the steps the United States is already taking, in negotiations currently under way, including those on the limitation of strategic arms and on a comprehensive test ban. Secretary Vance also spoke of progress in the strategic arms limitation (SALT) negotiations in his statement before the General Assembly on 29 September of this year.

The hope has been expressed that the negotiators in the ongoing bilateral and trilateral negotiations would be able to set dates for the successful conclusion of these negotiations. The statement that I am just completing does not offer any promise as to precisely when these negotiations will be concluded. This is not out of neglect but rather due to the realities of international negotiations. Experience

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

has shown that in international negotiations on issues of importance and concern to each member of the international community an attempt to prescribe in advance a set deadline is more apt to be counter-productive than helpful. Therefore, the United States is not able, at this time, to give a specific date for the conclusion of our talks without jeopardizing the progress of these ongoing negotiations, the success of which is so important to us all.

Nevertheless, I can now report encouraging progress in what is perhaps the most consequential of those negotiations, the SALT II talks between the United States and the Soviet Union. There are still a number of differences remaining between the sides, but the United States is hopeful that as a result of next week's discussions in Moscow, which Secretary Vance and Director Warnke will attend, we shall be able to complete a SALT II agreement in the near future.

Today we take up in this Committee the work left to us by the special session. As we do so, let me assure you that the United States will not shirk its responsibilities; that its commitment to the objectives set forth by Vice-President Mondale and reflected in the Programme of Action of the special session is unwavering and that it is ready to work with all nations to make those objectives a reality.

Mr. IMAM (Kuwait): This is the first session of the First Committee following the special session devoted to disarmament. It is a cause of great satisfaction that the First Committee will now devote itself entirely to disarmament and security matters. It is our fervent hope that it will revise its methods of work and procedures in a manner commensurate with its new duties. It should particularly co-ordinate its work with that of the revived Disarmament Commission. The Disarmament Commission has already decided, during its first organizational session, to consider the possibility of holding a second organizational session towards the end of this thirty-third session to consider the relevant decisions to be adopted by our Committee which may have a bearing on its first substantive session scheduled for May/June 1979.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission set up by the General Assembly in 1952 was originally entrusted with the task of preparing proposals for the regulation, limitation and reduction of armed forces and armaments, and for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. The Commission has not met since 1965. In its revitalized form it should be entrusted with the task of examining and amending the drafts agreed to in the Committee on Disarmament, before the final texts are submitted to the General Assembly for approval. This will be in consonance with paragraph 116 of the Final Document of the tenth special session which provides that draft multilateral conventions should be subjected to the normal procedures applicable in the law of treaties, and that those submitted to the General Assembly for its commendation should be subject to full review by the Assembly. The General Assembly can no longer play a passive role, but must see to it that draft multilateral disarmament conventions fulfil the aspirations of all countries, big or small, and are not merely instruments that promote the interests of a few militarily significant States.

Though the special session did not achieve all that we had in mind, yet it succeeded in improving the existing machinery and giving small countries a better opportunity for bringing their moral force to bear on disarmament issues. Interested States not members of the Committee on Disarmament are empowered for the first time to submit to the main negotiating body written proposals or working documents on measures of disarmament that are the subject of

(Mr. Imam, Kuwait)

negotiation in the Committee, and to participate in the discussion of the subject matter of such proposals or working documents. Non-members are also to be invited, upon their request, to express views in the Committee when the particular concerns of those States are under discussion. We hope that small countries will take advantage of these new provisions to make their views known on disarmament questions from which they have been excluded in the days of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD).

Even in the days of the CCD the two super-Powers preferred to discuss bilaterally strategic nuclear arms limitation and related issues. Within the newly created Committee on Disarmament we would like this trend to be reversed so that the range of measures to be negotiated multilaterally should expand considerably,

It is also to be noted that in the days of the CCD, that body did not initiate discussion of specific measures. Rather, the United States and the Soviet Union usually decided which items should become the subject of regular multilateral talks. It is a cause of great satisfaction that the elaboration of a comprehensive programme of disarmament is now the joint responsibility of the Disarmament Commission and the Committee on Disarmament.

One cannot stress strongly enough the importance of the elaboration of a comprehensive programme on disarmament. The arms control agreements hitherto reached have not halted the arms race or reduced the military potential of States. The choice of arms control measures has been haphazard; in many cases, the weapons prohibited have had little, if any, military importance, and the outlawed activities have never been seriously contemplated as methods of war. All this must change as it has been clearly established that negotiations have not kept pace with advancing military technology and a rising level of armaments. There is no need to discuss small, easy to achieve unrelated steps; the comprehensive programme for disarmament must seek to achieve a more integrated approach. An integrated approach can give better guarantees against unilateral advantages than piecemeal arms control.

The tenth special session reflected the interest of non-governmental organizations in disarmament and the constructive role they can play in mobilizing world public opinion.

(Mr. Imam, Kuwait)

Japanese non-governmental organizations were particularly effective in organizing a campaign against nuclear weapons. The literature they distributed portrayed vividly the evils of nuclear war; the damage done to Hiroshima and Nagasaki served as a warning to humanity of the destiny that must befall it if nuclear weapons are not banned.

My delegation welcomes the constructive role played by research institutions which distributed valuable material and studies as their contribution to the tenth special session. They have shown how the most technical data can be made intelligible to the ordinary man and woman. Their initiative may be an indication and a guideline to the Secretariat of the United Nations, which has not yet successfully pierced the veil which separates its information media from world public opinion.

The growing interest in disarmament studies is tangible evidence of the growing interest of world public opinion in disarmament. Moreover, disarmament studies must immensely facilitate the task of decision-making as they are equivalent to management information systems.

It is not always easy to agree on guidelines for disarmament studies. Studies can be used to support one viewpoint against another. Concrete and specific guidelines are essential to obtain optimal results. An Assembly with 150 Members can hardly agree on a detailed programme of disarmament studies. My delegation, therefore, welcomes the decision to set up an advisory board of eminent persons, selected on the basis of their personal expertise, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical representation to advise the Secretary-General on various aspects of studies to be made under the auspices of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and arms limitation, including a programme of such studies.

(Mr. Imam, Kuwait)

In document A/33/312 the Secretary-General stated that he intends to submit to the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies, at its first meeting, a compilation of all proposals and suggestions for studies made during the tenth special session. The Advisory Board, with its limited membership, will be more competent to deal with these proposals than larger United Nations bodies.

The report of the Secretary-General cites the Secretariat and some specialized agencies as competent bodies which have already prepared studies in the field of disarmament. No specific mention is made of the United Nations University which, we believe, can make a major contribution in this field. The University is now envisaged as an institution to stimulate and co-ordinate research and training in existing academic centres. The emphasis is on multi-disciplinary research that will yield practical results in selected subjects. The University is particularly suited to take part in preparing disarmament studies as it co-operates with existing institutions that will be associated with the University for a specific purpose or period of time. The University should be requested to stimulate research in the disarmament field. Arms control and disarmament are an interdisciplinary topic with which the University is particularly equipped to deal.

The disarmament studies envisaged may cover a wide field. It is therefore necessary to agree on some priorities. Studies are already under way on the relationship between disarmament and development and on the interrelationship between disarmament and international security. Such studies are naturally very wide in scope and cover a wider range of issues. One should also consider studies on more specific issues which seek to clarify matters and correct existing misconceptions that nuclear deterrence can permanently prevent nuclear war. One would appreciate a study that will demonstrate the falsity of this conception and make it clear that nuclear deterrence can be no substitute for general and complete disarmament.

There is also a popular belief in some industrially advanced countries that arms spending is a vital pillar of their economy which reduces unemployment. A brief study may show how scarce resources are and that arms production, instead of eliminating unemployment, aggravates inflation, increases the burden of taxation and seriously undermines the economy. We are not making any formal

(Mr. Imam, Kuwait)

suggestions at this stage, but are merely indicating how disarmament studies can rectify misconceptions and enlighten public opinion, which may have been misled into believing in certain erroneous ideas.

It is the task of the United Nations to educate world public opinion. No field has been more neglected or more promising than that of disarmament. The people in the industrialized countries should understand the importance of comprehensive disarmament as an essential measure in the promotion of their security and economic welfare. Studies should be made available to educational institutions and be used to change attitudes and values, in order to generate support and understanding of disarmament goals. People should realize that the major issue is how to end the threat of nuclear annihilation and permit the diversion of the resources, time, money and effort devoted to the war system to improving the quality of life on our planet. Mankind must not be lulled by arms control measures into a false sense of security. Agreements such as SALT I and SALT II must be shown in their proper perspective. They are, at best, a means for reducing the exorbitant cost of maintaining the existing balance of terror.

My delegation does not believe that the time is yet ripe to set a date for the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We should first see how the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Committee on Disarmament function in unison. We must assess the work of the tenth special session in light of the progress to be made. A second special session on disarmament should not be convened in haste.

However, though we are not eager to rush into new special sessions on disarmament, we are at the same time keenly alive to the urgency of the need for general and complete disarmament. The initiative in this respect remains the prerogative of the super-Powers. We, as small countries, are eager to enlarge the negotiating forum and make it more effective. We are also seeking to achieve perfect harmony and co-ordination between the deliberative and negotiating organs. However, our efforts can be of little value if disarmament negotiations on major issues continue in the form of a dialogue between the two super-Powers. Our deliberations have had little impact on new technological developments, which maintain the momentum of the arms race and increase the

(Mr. Imam, Kuwait)

expenditure of scarce resources for military purposes. The urgency of the issue was clearly spelt out by the late President Eisenhower, a military man of great distinction, who warned the world of the threat implicit in uncontrolled military power, and said in a 1953 speech that:

"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in a final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its labourers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children".

A quarter-century has elapsed since this prophetic warning was made, and yet the trend of events has made it more timely than ever.

Mr. PEREZ HERNANDEZ (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): The convening of the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament resulted essentially from an initiative started by the non-aligned countries which, from their first summit conference held in Belgrade, had called for such a session. The fifth summit conference held in Colombo, gave the final impetus to that proposal and it became a fact.

The special session itself responded fully to the interests and objectives of the economically under-developed countries, for which the threat of war is the same as for any other country in the world, namely a matter of their own survival. Beyond that, they view with bitterness the squandering of funds caused by the arms race to the detriment of their economic situation and development prospects. This creates political conditions in which the forces of imperialism seek to maintain and to intensify the conditions of neo-colonialist domination and exploitation and to preserve the remaining vestiges of colonialism.

My delegation does not intend to embark upon a detailed analysis of the issues dealt with in the Final Document nor to express its views on them. We did this during the tenth special session itself.

(Mr. Perez Hernandez, Cuba)

The main reason for our statement this afternoon is our desire to comment briefly on what we consider to have been the positive achievements of the special session and to express our views regarding the way in which they should be kept up and proceeded with in the future.

While the special session was taking place, the amount of investments in the arms race was calculated as being about \$400 billion. Today, some institutions believe that the figure has risen to \$450 billion.

(Mr. Perez Hernandez, Cuba)

Can we imagine what benefits would have resulted from the investment of only part of those resources in development? The reduction of military budgets, a halt to the arms race and the achievement of a number of agreements on disarmament would make available to us additional resources that might be used for development. It must not be forgotten that the linking of development to disarmament and international security must be ensured and must be uppermost in our minds during our discussions.

Certain priorities were set out in the Final Document of the special session. The first was nuclear weapons, followed by other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons; conventional weapons, including any which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects; and reduction of armed forces.

My delegation can support that order of priorities because, apart from being logical and just, it takes account of the expressions of opinion of all delegations as well as the non-governmental organizations that were invited to speak, to the effect that the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of civilization is the possible use of existing nuclear arsenals. Therefore, it was concluded that it was essential to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race in all its aspects in order to achieve the final goal, namely the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

In this context, we attach particular importance to the conclusion of a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons tests and a protocol covering nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, which, as the special session decided, would constitute part of that treaty. If that treaty were to be concluded, we should be taking a decisive and effective step towards the gradual reduction of nuclear weapons themselves.

My delegation recognizes the importance in this line of reasoning of what has been called "political will", but at the same time we feel it necessary that all States and peoples of the world should know who are those who lack that political will, oppose the achievement of concrete results, and are trying to defend their imperialist interests through the arms race.

(Mr. Perez Hernandez, Cuba)

One of the concrete achievements of the special session was the establishment of the Disarmament Commission as a deliberative body, subsidiary to the General Assembly. We have already decided when we are to meet, what methods we shall use and what we are to do. However, it is worth recalling the fate suffered by the Commission's predecessor, which was created pursuant to the terms of resolution 502 (VI). For this reason we attach crucial importance to the Commission's specific work on the consideration of the elements of a comprehensive disarmament programme. Unless, that is done I think that concern about the future of the new Disarmament Commission is warranted.

My delegation takes the position, even at this early stage, that the comprehensive disarmament programme must contain those elements that were considered during the special session but do not appear in the Final Document, having failed to achieve a consensus precisely because of the lack of political will on the part of certain States, although they had the support of the overwhelming majority of the international community represented at that special session, backed by world public opinion. Otherwise, the programme to be prepared will be incomplete and will not contribute to general disarmament.

Next January the new negotiating body, the Committee on Disarmament, will begin its sessions, with its membership increased by eight countries. We welcome them and trust that we shall be able to work in close co-operation with them, as we did with the previous members.

Important changes have been made in the Committee's structure as well as in its methods of work ranging, as the special session recommended, from the adoption of decisions by consensus to the invitation to States that are not members of the Committee to express views when they wish to do so during the consideration of subjects of particular interest to them.

All the measures adopted for the new negotiating organ should contribute to its effective functioning and guarantee progress in the negotiations on disarmament. But we believe that we should stress the need to ensure the participation of all the nuclear-weapon States, as a guarantee that our agreements will be universal.

(Mr. Perez Hernandez, Cuba)

It is most encouraging that since the decisions of the special session were made some countries have already submitted specific proposals for our consideration. That is true of the Soviet Union's proposal on the strengthening of the security of the non-nuclear-weapon States.

My delegation is giving special attention to the conclusion of a treaty on the non-use of force in international relations, a treaty which, if it were implemented, would serve as an adequate framework for any other instruments that might be drawn up and would in time form an integral part of those instruments.

Another idea to come out of the special session was that of holding a world disarmament conference at the earliest appropriate time. My delegation warmly supports the holding of such a conference, as it has been a constant aim of the non-aligned countries from the time of their Belgrade meeting to the Colombo conference and has been urgently called for by many non-governmental organizations. A world disarmament conference would be the most suitable forum for all States, great and small, nuclear and non-nuclear, to adopt binding decisions having universal acceptance.

The second session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament must be adequately and most carefully prepared, because of its importance, as it will give a new impetus to our negotiations. It should be held at a date that is not so soon as to stand in the way of our carrying out an exhaustive and thorough analysis or so late as to make it impossible to achieve our final objective. The date of the session must be linked to the holding of the world disarmament conference. That element must not be overlooked. It must be borne in mind at all times.

The advisory board to assist the Secretary-General in disarmament matters, a board whose setting up was decided upon by the special session, we regard as most important, as not only is it to be given an opportunity to use all the documents that make up an invaluable fund of material on disarmament matters but it will carry out any other studies that may be required to ensure implementation of the Programme of Action and any other initiatives that may emerge in the course of future negotiations.

(Mr. Perez Hernandez, Cuba)

The studies referred to in paragraph 4 of the Secretary-General's report, document A/33/312, are to all intents and purposes a series of guidelines that will be of great help to the members of the board in their disarmament studies.

My delegation also welcomes the steps being taken to implement the decision on disarmament fellowships. The fellowships will undoubtedly be a valuable source of trained personnel who will in due course be able to make invaluable contributions to the cause of disarmament and to the development of their respective countries.

(Mr. Perez Hernandez, Cuba)

In advocating achievement of our final goal - general and complete disarmament - we are merely implementing article 12 of our own Constitution, the basis and guarantee of all of the rights of the Cuban people, which states:

"The Republic of Cuba is working for a worthy and lasting peace based on respect for the independence and sovereignty of peoples and their right to self-determination. It bases its international relations on the principles of equality of rights, sovereignty and independence of States, and mutual interest."

That is the motive force behind my delegation's approach to the problems of disarmament, which leads us to offer our enthusiastic and determined support and assistance.

In analyzing our achievements, or what remains to be achieved, we are mindful of the need to combat the existing desire of some to despoil others of their wealth, and of the obstinancy with which they retain the wealth that grew from that despoilment. As President Fidel Castro told the General Assembly 17 years ago:

"When this philosophy of despoilment disappears, the philosophy of war will have disappeared." (A/PV.872, para. 188)

Mr. RAMPHUL (Mauritius): Mr. Chairman, obedient to the rules, I shall refrain from paying you the traditional compliments, especially since you are, or should be, well aware of my profound admiration of your in-depth knowledge and experience regarding, inter alia, disarmament issues and your exceptional talents as a most distinguished and skilful diplomat. Suffice it for me to say that I feel proud to count you among my closest colleagues and personal friends and to be participating in the work of the political and security Committee of this session of the General Assembly under your wise guidance. I assure you, Sir, of my full co-operation.

The discussions taking place in this Committee have a very special significance since they aim at ensuring the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the tenth special session of the General Assembly. The success of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament should be measured by the measure and manner in which the letter and spirit of the Final Document are implemented.

The special session, through the Final Document, which was adopted by consensus, set up a new standard of international behaviour of States commensurate with the requirements of our highly interdependent world. It is, in this respect, only proper to recall that in adopting the Final Document the States Members of the United Nations solemnly reaffirmed their determination to work for general and complete disarmament and to make further collective efforts aimed at strengthening peace and international security; eliminating the threat of war, particularly nuclear war; implementing practical measures aimed at halting and reversing the arms race; strengthening the procedures for the peaceful settlement of disputes; and reducing military expenditures and utilizing the resources thus released in a manner which will help to promote the well-being of all peoples and to improve the economic conditions of the developing countries.

(Mr. Ramphul, Mauritius)

This is based on the conclusion by the special session that disarmament, relaxation of international tension, respect for the right to self-determination and national independence, the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the strengthening of international peace and security are directly related to each other. Progress in any of these spheres has a beneficial effect on all of them; in turn, failure in one sphere has negative effects on others. There is also a close relationship between disarmament and development. Progress in the former would help greatly in the realization of the latter. Therefore, resources released as a result of the implementation of disarmament measures should be devoted to the economic and social development of all nations and contribute to the bridging of the economic gap between developed and developing countries.

The implementation of the measures envisaged in the Programme of Action - and, in particular, the measures of nuclear disarmament - should receive the highest priority in all disarmament efforts. The Final Document is a general disarmament strategy and should be conceived as a single whole. The adoption of disarmament measures should take place in such an equitable and balanced manner as to ensure the right of each State to security and to ensure that no individual State or group of States may obtain advantages over others at any stage. At each stage the objective should be undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces.

The United Nations has a central role and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament. In order effectively to discharge this role and facilitate and encourage all measures in this sphere, the special session stated that the United Nations should be kept appropriately informed of all steps in this field, whether unilateral, bilateral, regional, or multilateral, without prejudice to the progress of negotiations. In this respect I wish to reiterate the proposal made previously by my country and invite Governments to consider extending invitations to the Secretary-General of the United Nations to participate in or to designate representatives to attend disarmament deliberations and negotiations taking place outside the United Nations. I take

(Mr. Ramphul, Mauritius)

the opportunity to commend the Latin American countries for the manner in which they are keeping the United Nations informed of their disarmament efforts and for their invitations extended to the Secretary-General to be present or represented at their meetings.

In this context I would also stress the need for a more direct co-operation between the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations Centre for Disarmament in matters of general interest, such as, for instance, information about the arms race and its consequences, the observance of Disarmament Week, and so on, or in disarmament proposals relating to the continent of Africa.

Without our underestimating the importance of other achievements of the special session which are of high political significance, I would say that the most visible results are those relating to the improvement of the machinery for deliberations and negotiations. The decisions taken by the special session reflect the new trend towards democratization of international relations, and they should be implemented in the spirit in which they were conceived. In this context I wish to stress once again that not only does the nuclear-weapon era demand a completely new vision of the world today, but the practices of the conduct of international relations should be fundamentally changed. This is to say that we expect, particularly from the nuclear-weapon States, a new understanding of the requirements in the field of deliberations and negotiations, in which not only would the danger of the continuation of the arms race be adequately assessed, but also the imperative demands by the overwhelming majority of Member States to start the real and overdue process of reduction of their military arsenals, together with measures of a qualitative nature aimed at the cessation of the arms race, would be translated into action. We should like in this respect to draw the attention of Member States and, in particular, that of the nuclear-weapon States - to the provisions of paragraph 116 of the Final Document, which requires that draft multilateral disarmament conventions should be subjected to the normal procedures applicable in the law of treaties. Those submitted to the General Assembly for its commendation should be subject to full review by the Assembly.

(Mr. Ramphul, Mauritius)

In our view, the Disarmament Commission should not be considered a peripheral body, as some countries tend to look at it, but as a real laboratory where fresh ideas are sorted out and agreement reached on priorities, and through the General Assembly, recommendations should go to the negotiating bodies or to other organs and organizations having specific responsibilities.

We see the Committee on Disarmament as a real negotiating body where real negotiations should take place on very specific proposals. By that I mean to say that there should be no room for general political dissertations and the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament should reflect its negotiating character; it should be specific. Similarly, its reports to the General Assembly should reveal the substance of negotiations and the progress made therein.

The Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies occupies a very special place in the new set-up agreed upon at the special session. I would refer here to the statement I made on the subject at the special session and express the full satisfaction of the Government of my country at its establishment.

The representative of Argentina raised the issue of consensus. May I remind representatives present here that at the special session my country submitted a working paper (WG.A/CRP.29) dealing with the subject. We proposed the inclusion in the Final Document of a statement to the effect that procedures of the negotiating bodies should enable all views, interests and proposals to be duly considered and taken into account. Along that line of thinking we tried to define consensus as a process of intensive and real consultations and negotiations with the participation of all interested States, fully taking into account all their views and interests so that the agreements reached would enjoy the largest support without serious opposition and substantive reservations. I believe that definition expresses the concern relating to the decision-making process in disarmament organs.

Among the decisions of the special session, the one initiated by Nigeria relating to the Fellowships Programme is meant to enable the developing countries in particular to participate more fully in disarmament activities. We welcome the guidelines submitted by the Secretary-General on that programme and we consider them satisfactory.

The CHAIRMAN: Since no other representative wishes to speak on the item at this stage I should like, with the Committee's permission, to revert to the matter that came up at the close of this morning's meeting, namely, arrangements for the first day - Tuesday, 24 October - of Disarmament Week.

I have had an opportunity to consult representatives of regional groups and a number of specially interested delegations and the results of those consultations are as follows.

The morning of 24 October will be devoted to a commemorative meeting, with the exception that one delegation will be allowed to make a statement in the debate on agenda item 125. That would begin our proceedings, at 10.30 a.m. promptly, on that day.

We shall then transform ourselves into a commemorative session that will, inter alia, hear a message from the President of the Assembly, read by the Chairman, and a message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, read by the Assistant Secretary-General, Director of the Centre for Disarmament; after which short statements would be made by representatives of regional groups and those representatives who have a particular interest in the matter.

Thereafter, if time permits we will see the film entitled "Count-down", produced by the Office of Public Information.

Does any representative wish to express views or to ask questions concerning these arrangements?

Mr. GHAREKHAN (India): I have listened with attention to what has been proposed tentatively for the commemorative session of Disarmament Week.

First of all I should like to ask whether the commemorative meeting will be held in this room or in the General Assembly hall. I personally feel that, since it is the first time Disarmament Week will be observed, it would be appropriate and fitting if that first meeting were held in the General Assembly hall.

(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

Secondly, if I remember correctly, the Chairman said that statements would be made by representatives of regional groups and other delegations which have a particular interest in the subject. It is my feeling that we should either restrict the list of speakers to the two plus five mentioned by the Chairman, or leave it completely open and allow any interested delegation to speak. For if representatives of regional groups speak on behalf of those groups, it will appear rather odd for other delegations of the same groups to speak on the same subject. Hence we might consider being a little more consistent, perhaps, and restrict the list of speakers to representatives or chairmen of the regional groups.

Those were the two points that I wished to raise at this stage.

The CHAIRMAN: As far as concerns the representative of India's first point that the solemnity of the commemorative session would be heightened by celebrating it in the General Assembly hall, I must say that I agree with him. But, if I am correctly informed, the General Assembly hall will not be available to us or to anyone else on that day because of preparations for the concert in observance of United Nations Day. So, much to our regret, we shall have to make do with this room.

On the question of speakers, again I agree with the representative of India. Certainly the idea of five speakers from regional groups and perhaps two specially interested speakers lacks consistency. At the same time, I would suggest that it is the most practical way of accommodating the special interest in this. But if, in addition to those delegations, there were others that felt an urgent call to make statements on the occasion of the commemorative session, obviously the Chairman would have to bow to their wish.

Mr. RIOS (Panama) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation feels that the representative of India has just raised a very important point. Far too often we have found that in this type of solemn ceremony it is said that spokesmen will be heard for the regional groups, a statement will be made by the Secretary-General and/or the President of the General Assembly and one or other personality who wishes to add something important. Yet, in practice it usually happens that after having heard the statements expected, anyone who wishes to speak is then given an opportunity to do so. As a result, the meetings become unduly long and do not serve the interests of the Assembly. The Chairman has just given an answer which I find most satisfactory and which I trust will be implemented.

Mr. GHAREKHAN (India): I wanted to thank the Chairman, first of all for responding so promptly to my queries. If I am not mistaken I did not specifically say that the meeting should be held in the plenary hall of the Assembly. What I did suggest was that the meeting should be held as a plenary meeting of the General Assembly. I am aware that the plenary hall itself will not be available on 24 October for other reasons, but it has happened in the past that the plenary of the Assembly has met elsewhere.

I suggested that this meeting should be a plenary meeting because I have a feeling that Disarmament Week will be the concern not merely of the First Committee but is essentially a matter which concerns the entire membership of the General Assembly itself and therefore, as the Chairman agreed, it might be more in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion if the meeting were to be in plenary though not in the plenary hall. If there are some technical or other reasons for not having a plenary meeting of the Assembly then I should be grateful if the Chairman could enlighten me as to those reasons. But if there are no particular objections either from the Secretariat or from the Chairman, I would request that this matter be considered and perhaps not disposed of straight away at this meeting. Perhaps we could keep it open in order to give more time for reflection. I believe that at least for the first year when we are starting this practice of observing Disarmament Week, it might be more appropriate to have a plenary meeting of the Assembly.

The CHAIRMAN: Frankly, I am not aware of whether or not another plenary meeting might have been scheduled for that morning. I do not suppose it is possible to hold two plenary meetings at random, but we will certainly look into the matter with the Secretariat.

Mr. KITI (Kenya): I fully agree with those who have spoken before me that the occasion should be a solemn one. If the Chairman agrees, I would suggest that we do not have any speaker on item 125 at the morning meeting but concentrate our efforts on the commemorative celebration. At the same time, I should like to ask a question because the Chairman said that the speakers should be himself, reading the statement of the President, the statement of the Secretary-General which will be read by the Assistant Secretary-General, then representatives of the regional groups, and then one or two delegations with special interest. My delegation at least has always emphasized that disarmament is the concern of us all and I should like to know who these delegations are which have more of a special interest than anybody else so that we will know exactly what is meant by those with a special interest. I think we all have a special interest and I should like to be enlightened on that point.

Mr. MADADHA (Jordan): We were listed to speak on Tuesday, 24 October, but since it has been decided that the meeting that morning will be held for commemorative purposes I should like to suggest that this be decided as such, totally, without any statements on the general debate, in spite of the fact that we would have been very honoured to speak on that day in the general debate.

Mr. MUJEZINOVIC (Yugoslavia): I do not want to further complicate this procedural discussion on how the commemorative meeting should take place but I wonder whether the Chairman could kindly enlighten me as to the content of the speeches on behalf of the regional groups. It is well known that on matters of disarmament there are different countries and different views within

(Mr. Mujezinovic, Yugoslavia)

many of the regional groups. If this meeting is to remain a commemorative one then of course the speeches should be appropriate to the occasion. If they enter into an evaluation of any aspect of disarmament, that might cause some difficulties. I should appreciate guidance in this matter.

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid I am unable to give any guidance to the representative of Yugoslavia.

I think that we have had a very useful exchange of views. Some questions have been asked which obviously have to be considered and we may revert to the final arrangements later.

I should also like to draw the attention of the Committee to a Committee document which has been circulated today and which bears the symbol A/C.1/33/L.1.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.