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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. Roche (Canada)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: We had a very good organizational meeting last Wednesday afternoon and the programme of work was unanimously agreed upon and has been made available to you in document A/C.1/43/2. In accordance with that programme of work, I propose now to open the general debate, but I wish first to call your attention to the fact that, as shown in the document, the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament agenda items will be closed tomorrow, Tuesday, 18 October, at 6 p.m. All delegations which have not yet inscribed their names are invited to do so in the course of this meeting.

Before we hear the first speaker for this morning, please permit me to say a few words as the presiding officer of this body.

Canada is greatly honoured to have been given the responsibility of chairing this important Committee of the General Assembly. This is only the second time in the history of the United Nations that we have had this opportunity. I will do my utmost to be worthy of the trust and confidence which you have placed in me and I look forward to what should be a very productive session.

To prepare for this responsibility, I recently concluded a round of consultations in selected capitals, at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, and here in New York. My impressions were very positive. Despite understandable disappointment at the outcome of the third special session on disarmament, a clear desire to move ahead together and to work to improve the effectiveness of the First Committee was evident. In fact, I encountered a strong sense of optimism that the First Committee has a remarkable opportunity this year to advance the global arms limitation and disarmament agenda in a meaningful way.

(The Chairman)

It seems to me that the world is now at a turning-point. We are on the brink of a new age and, to my mind, there are three factors that account for this. First, there are the Washington-Moscow summit meetings between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev, which have dramatized the progress made by the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in improving their relations, particularly in the area of arms limitation and disarmament agreements. With the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, the super-Powers are destroying an entire class of nuclear weapons. An agreement to destroy a considerable number of strategic weapons is in sight.

(The Chairman)

Obviously, the two super-Powers have a long road still ahead of them. But the point is this: they have already travelled a long way, and that is the reason there is fresh hope today in the disarmament field.

Secondly, throughout the summer, we have witnessed wide-ranging accomplishment in the alleviation of regional conflicts - Iran-Iraq, Afghanistan, Namibia, Cyprus, Western Sahara, to name the principal areas. These developments are the result of diplomatic activity sustained over the years by the United Nations. The critical role which the United Nations has played in this process was recently recognized by the well-justified award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces.

Thirdly, there is a renewed respect today for the United Nations, which in turn has generated a restored sense of self-confidence at the United Nations itself. The world wants the dynamic and practical leadership of the United Nations in ending regional conflicts. As Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar noted just a few days ago: "This is a time of pride for the United Nations. We have witnessed a vindication of the concept of multilateralism." The forty-third session of the General Assembly is thus particularly important because we now have the chance to show, through result-oriented resolutions, how international relations can be further strengthened.

This new atmosphere provides our Committee with a remarkable opportunity. We must capture - and project - this new mood by speaking to a greater degree than ever before with one voice. Competing resolutions reflecting polarized positions must give way to more consensus resolutions reflecting common ground. Naturally, we cannot expect consensus where deep divisions still remain. My point is that there already is agreement in a number of areas and we can build on this common ground in order to strengthen the bilateral and multilateral negotiations. I have

(The Chairman)

in mind such subjects as the need for radical reductions in nuclear weapons, conventional-force reductions, a chemical-weapons convention, the protection of the non-proliferation régime, limitation of testing, verification and compliance.

These themes are the logical extension of what the Secretary-General has described as "a shared acceptance of some important propositions" that emerged at the third special session on disarmament. Here is the base of this new common ground on which all sides of our Committee stand:

"Disarmament is not the exclusive responsibility of the two most powerful States, but a joint undertaking of all States;

"While nuclear disarmament must continue to be the primary concern, conventional disarmament has acquired a new importance and urgency;

"The qualitative aspect of the arms race needs to be addressed along with its quantitative aspect;

"National security needs to be viewed in the broader context of global issues and international concerns;

"The goals of disarmament and arms limitation need to be pursued in conjunction with efforts to resolve conflicts, build confidence and promote economic and social development;

"The existing machinery for disarmament can and should be better." (A/43/1, p. 13)

That is the list of positions which the Secretary-General, I think very rightly, has remarked constitute "a shared acceptance" of the important propositions upon which we can build.

It is true that the the third special session was not able to bring all this together in a final document. But that should not obscure the genuine gains that were made in international understanding. We can and we must build on the positive

(The Chairman)

advances made by the special session. Simply put, the challenge the First Committee faces is this: to give substance to the hope represented by the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty. Today, there is a new momentum for disarmament pushing against the hitherto implacable arms build-up. And was noted at the special session:

"The time has come to break the cycles of mistrust, accumulation of arms, military rivalry and mutual fear, and to seek security for all."

To help us, we have two new and important reports of the Secretary-General, both consensus documents of two groups of experts of international standing. The first, "Study on the climatic and other global effects of nuclear war", states:

"The scientific evidence is now conclusive that a major nuclear war would entail the high risk of a global environmental disruption." (A/43/351, para. 22)

The second, "Study on the economic and social consequences of the arms race and military expenditures", states:

"During the 1980s the arms race has continued, in particular in its qualitative aspect, unabated, in fact expanding in scale and accelerating in pace." (A/43/368, para. 171)

Both reports show, in great detail, the environmental and economic impact of the ever growing accumulation of weapons. These reports must not be put on the library shelf and left to gather dust. They should be acted upon, with a common understanding of their priority, for the evidence is mounting that security is being challenged both by military and non-military threats, and that co-operative solutions to the global problems of a social, humanitarian, economic and ecological nature are urgently required.

(The Chairman)

In my consultations, I received universal support for moving ahead with the implementation of resolution 42/42 N, which seeks to rationalize the work of the First Committee. Here I want to note the outstanding work done by my predecessors, some of whom are in this room, who successfully guided the Committee in this process. As a result of their work, we are now able to telescope the general and specific debates into one debate, advance the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and provide more consultation time for the purpose of effecting mergers wherever possible. The work programme adopted at the organizational meeting will, in fact, increase consultation time by 25 per cent.

(The Chairman)

It is my intention to move ahead, in accordance with resolution 42/42 N, with the rationalization of the agenda itself. It is now comprised of 26 main items and 35 sub-items, which, as the result of indiscriminate growth, do not follow a logical sequence. Improved political will is certainly needed for disarmament, but an improved agenda is needed for rational work. Thus I will convene at 3 p.m. today the first open-ended meeting of Friends of the Chairman to begin discussions on how the agenda can be restructured along with other improvements. As a result of this work, on which I shall report regularly, I hope it will be possible for the Committee to make a recommendation to the General Committee.

There is much hard work ahead of us in the next few weeks, but I am greatly encouraged by the positive atmosphere prevailing today. I am also sustained by the high level of competence of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, which I would like to see strengthened at this critical moment when more is expected of the United Nations in disarmament. I believe that the role of the United Nations in disarmament should be inseparable from the role of the United Nations in world affairs.

Lastly, I am personally strengthened by your support in our common endeavours - which gives me the opportunity of requesting you to observe rule 110, which says that in your speeches congratulations shall not be expressed to the officers of a Main Committee. Following this rule will save time - and in that regard, let us open our meetings on time, for our work-load is heavy and the time is short. Good luck and God bless you all.

AGENDA ITEMS 52 to 69, 139, 141 and 145

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): Before beginning my statement I should like to express to you, Sir, the congratulations of the delegation of Mexico and to express the pleasure with which we greeted your

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unanimous election as Chairman of the First Committee of the General Assembly, the Committee that deals with the important subjects of disarmament and international security. We are doubly pleased because this has happened at the time when the General Assembly is to consider the report on the tenth anniversary of the Conference on Disarmament. In the Final Document it was defined as the sole negotiating forum on disarmament. You may count on the unreserved co-operation of my delegation as you discharge your important functions.

Our congratulations also go to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Zaire, Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya; to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Akashi; to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Komatina; to the other members of the Bureau, and to the Secretary of the First Committee, Mr. Kheradi.

In a statement such as the one I am about to make it would be impossible to cover the many items allocated to the Committee. I shall therefore confine myself to three items which, in my opinion, deserve especial attention on the part of the General Assembly, namely a nuclear-weapons-test ban, the elaboration of a convention eliminating chemical weapons, and a comprehensive disarmament programme.

The first of the items I have mentioned, that is, a nuclear-weapons-test ban, is a subject that has now been considered for more than 30 years and one on which the General Assembly has adopted more than 50 resolutions. Quite rightly then it enjoys a paramount position on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

The General Assembly, as will be recalled, last year adopted resolution 42/26 A reaffirming its conviction that

> "... a treaty to achieve the prohibition of all nuclear-test explosions by all States for all time is a matter of the highest priority". (resolution 42/26 A, para. 2)

and that such a treaty

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

"... would constitute a contribution of the utmost importance to the cessation of the nuclear-arms race". (ibid., para. 3)

Regrettably the appeal made in that resolution to the three depository Powers of the Moscow Treaty and the non-proliferation Treaty to promote the establishment by the Conference on Disarmament at the beginning of its 1988 session of an

"... ad hoc committee with the objective of carrying out the multilateral negotiation of a treaty on the complete cessation of nuclear-test explosions" (ibid., para. 5)

has not been heard. That is particularly difficult to understand when we realize that what the General Assembly has time and time again asked the States depositories of the Treaty to do is not something that they are free to do or not to do. These States are simply being asked to perform obligations which may be considered legally binding. The eleventh preambular paragraph of the Treaty states that the parties will

"... achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time". (resolution 2373 (XXII), annex)

and to quote again, they are determined:

"... to continue negotiations to this end". (ibid.)

A little further on in the final part of the first paragraph of article I, which states that there is a ban on most explosions of nuclear-weapons tests, we read:

"It is understood in this connection that the provisions of this sub-paragraph are without prejudice to the conclusion of a treaty resulting in the permanent banning of all nuclear test explosions, including all such explosions underground, the conclusion of which, as the Parties have stated in the Preamble to this Treaty, they seek to achieve." (United Nations, Treaty Series, vol 480)

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

In view of the fact that little attention has been paid thus far to the resolutions of the General Assembly such as resolution 42/26 A, which I just mentioned, and the many other similar resolutions adopted at previous sessions and fearing that the same fate will be met by any resolution adopted at this session, six States parties to the Moscow Treaty, five jointly - Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, Sri Lanka and Yugoslavia - and the sixth country separately - Venezuela - favourably welcomed the reommendation put forward in resolution 42/26 B of 30 November 1987. This is a proposal that the depositary Governments be presented with an amendment to that Treaty calling for the convening of a conference "at the earliest possible date" to consider amendments to the Treaty that would convert it into a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

It is for this reason that this proposal, which was first a document of the Conference on Disarmament, appearing in documents CD/852 of 5 August 1988 and CD/860 of 22 August this year, and subsequently of the First Committee, in document A/43/597 of 8 September 1988, is to be considered soon, at a conference convened by the depositary Governments to which all parties will be invited, to consider the amendment as proposed in Article II of the Treaty as soon as one third or more of the parties so request.

The amendment proposed is very simple. Essentially it proposes two additions: first, an Article VI providing that the protocols annexed to the Treaty shall constitute an integral part of the Treaty and, secondly, two protocols, of which the principal one is protocol I, the whole text of which would read as follows:

"States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear-Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, in order to achieve the permanent banning of all nuclear explosions, including all such explosions underground, have agreed that in addition to their undertakings in Article I of such Treaty:

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"1. Each of the Parties of this Protocol undertakes to prohibit, to prevent, and not to carry out any nuclear-weapon test explosion, or any other nuclear explosion, at any place under its jurisdiction and control;

(a) underground; or

(b) in any other environment not described in Article I, paragraph 1, subparagaph (a) of the Treaty Banning Nuclear-Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water.

"2. Each of the Parties to this Protocol undertakes furthermore to refrain from causing, encouraging, or in any way participating in, the carrying out of any nuclear-weapon test explosion, or any other nuclear explosion, anywhere which would take place in any of the environments described in paragraph I of this Protocol." (A/43/597, p. 3)

The certainty that there can be adequate verification regarding a complete test ban and the importance of this in putting an end to nuclear-weapon tests were emphasized on 27 June 1985 by the then Prime Minister of Sweden, Olof Palme, in the inaugural speech at the symposium organized by the Group de Bellerive in Geneva. That illustrious statesman, who was to be assassinated a few months later, said that

"A treaty banning all nuclear-weapon tests would be the single most important step to slow down the qualitative arms race. It would be a good complement to the bilateral negotiations, by reducing the risk that cuts in the arsenals eventually agreed upon in the strategic talks would be nullified by the development of new nuclear-weapon systems. The work by experts in my country in this field for a long time has convinced me that existing scientific and technical capabilities make it possible adequately to verify a comprehensive nuclear test ban."

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar for his part spoke in similar terms when he stressed the extraordinary importance to disarmament of a complete nuclear-test ban. In his statement of 12 December 1984 he said,

"No single multilateral agreement could have a greater effect on limiting the further refinement of nuclear weapons. A comprehensive test ban treaty is the litmus test of the real willingness to pursue nuclear disarmament."

(A/39/PV.97, p. 122)

The second of the items I should like to take up in my statement is that of negotiations to bring about a convention eliminating chemical weapons, or to use the official terminology, a convention for "the complete and effective ban of the development, manufacture and stockpiling of chemical weapons and their destruction", a task diligently pursued by the Conference on Disarmament, in which my delegation has actively participated.

First of all I should like to mention something which in my opinion is one of this year's major achievements: the incorporation in the text of the draft convention of provisions relating to installations to produce chemical weapons. Their definition in article II and the unequivocal commitment to destroy them contained in article I, as well as the detailed measures contained in article V and its Annex, filled an important gap which had existed for many years. There remain a few outstanding issues, such as a clear definition of the means of destruction, but now we do have a sound foundation.

The agreement on the installations to produce chemical weapons is, first of all, the fruit of intense bilateral negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States. This agreement unquestionably shows that when the necessary political will exists even the most difficult problems can be resolved. Let us hope that this applies to other parts of the convention.

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Due consideration was also given to the procedures which should be followed after a challenge inspection. The imposition of obligatory sanctions by all States parties in the event of a violation - commercial restrictions, for example - would in our opinion constitute a better guarantee for respect than some hypothetical intervention by the Security Council, where a veto could prevent action.

As regards assistance to a party victim of a chemical attack, this has not yet been accepted as automatic but remains subordinate to a decision adopted by the Executive Council. Furthermore, even if it is established that assistance is necessary and justified, that does not mean that such assistance would be obligatory. It is left up to the free will of the States.

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Economic and technological co-operation in the chemical area is of great importance to countries such as Mexico. Mexico does not have chemical weapons nor does it have any intention of acquiring them. For that reason, my delegation believes that the convention must not be used to stand in the way of purely peaceful and legitimate activities. This is the approach which, in our opinion, should be taken in article XI, in the drafting of which there has been considerable progress, notwithstanding misunderstandings and lack of confidence.

Thanks to the patient and determined efforts of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Sujka of Poland, work has begun this year on the so-called final clauses of the convention having to do with their relationship with other international agreements, amendments, entry into force and reservations. Briefly, I should like to touch on some of the problems which have arisen in this very preliminary stage of negotiations.

First I might mention the relationship between the future convention and the Geneva Protocol of 1925. As is well known, the Geneva Protocol bans only the use of chemical weapon,and its provisions in this regard are very weak as a result of the serious reservations that many of the signatories have entered; in practice, it is an agreement banning first use.

It is to be hoped that the convention will go much further than this, and that the use of chemical weapons will be completely banned in all circumstances. That is the desire of the overwhelming majority of the international community. The relationship with the Protocol should be such as to recognize the authority and importance of the Protocol, while ackowledging that the ban on use should be expanded.

This would seem to be simple. In fact, it is not simple, for those States that have reserved their right to retaliate under the Protocol are not ready to

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abandon it. Furthermore, they want the convention expressly to acknowledge this right. But we cannot agree with their demand. The use of chemical weapons must be absolutely prohibited. If we acknowledge that the Geneva Protocol is enough, then what need is there to launch negotiations on a broad convention such as the one we wish to complete?

Finally, as regards the possibility of entering reservations to the provisions of the convention, my delegation thinks there should be a total ban on such reservations. This was decided on by the Latin American countries in connection with the Tlateloloco Treaty. We think that this would be the best procedure, because it would not permit obligations entered into to be weakened or modified.

Mexico, as is well known, does not possess chemical weapons. We have been a party to the Geneva Protocol since 1932. We have not entered any reservations to any of its provisions and we note with concern the weakening of its fundamental principles by the repeated use of chemical weapons.

My delegation welcomed the statement of the President of France on 29 September last when he said:

"France declares its readiness, as of this moment, to renounce under the same conditions - that is to say, as soon as the future convention enters into force - any possibility of producing chemical weapons." (A/43/PV.10, p.13)

Our understanding is that this statement, made at the highest level, means that France, heeding the voice of reason, is abandoning its idea of having security arsenals, which is so contrary to the spirit and letter of the draft convention. This radical change in France's position is a credit to France and we hope that it will take the form of concrete deeds when the Committee on Chemical Weapons resumes its work.

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To conclude our consideration of this item, my delegation would like to stress the need for all of us to realize that there is an urgent need to achieve the results which we have been pursuing for many years now. In the face of the real threat of chemical weapons and its inherent dangers, there is now an overriding need to conclude a convention. We cannot accept partial agreements or provisional measures. Serious problems remain that will have to be resolved before the convention becomes a reality, and the Conference on Disarmament can give the General Assembly the first fruits of its labours. Political will is needed. We cannot afford to continue to postpone the complete elimination of chemical weapons indefinitely.

I now turn to the third and last item that, as I stated at the outset, I should like to take up in this statement. That is the item entitled "Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament", which has been discussed in an Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament since 1980 and which I have had the honour to chair since 1981.

The last report that the Ad hoc Committee submitted to the Conference on Disarmament, which appears in toto in the document submitted to the General Assembly, contains a detailed account of all the work done in 1988. It begins with a brief account of the work of the Committee and the documentation made available to it. Then there are references to some progress that has been made in harmonizing positions and reducing areas of disagreement. Stress, however, is laid on the fact that in the brief time available it was not possible to reach agreement on all outstanding issues. For that reason, the Committee agreed to resume its work at the beginning of the 1989 session. It was determined to complete work on a programme for submission at the very latest to the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

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The brief introduction to which I have just referred has a long annex made up of more than 30 pages. Here may be found the provisions that the programme might contain. These provisions are contained in six chapters with the following titles: Introduction, Objectives, Principles, Priorities, Disarmament Measures, Machinery and Procedures

As regards the first four chapters and the sixth and last chapter, the Ad hoc Committee did make considerable progress. There were very few issues left outstanding that had to do with the Introduction, Objectives, Principles and Priorities. It can be said that one need only remain faithful to the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to resolve any outstanding problem having to do with these chapters.

As regards chapter V, which deals with the disarmament measures, account should be taken of the fact that the United States and the Soviet Union have adopted positive agreements. The joint Declaration of 8 January 1985 provides an eloquent example of what can be achieved jointly to stop and reverse the arms race and to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

As regards the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, a consensus was reached regarding most of the fundamental elements making up this objective.

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A clear definition of obligations and responsibilities was agreed upon, and that would apply to States that possessed nuclear weapons, and those that do not; the task is to prevent an increase in the number of the first and to reduce and eventually eliminate other nuclear weapons. As regards other weapons of mass destruction, provisions were agreed to regarding the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare; this has been known as the Geneva Protocol because it was signed there on 17 June 1925. There is agreement that it is necessary to make every effort to conclude the negotiations which are being carried out at the Conference on Disarmament with a view to an international convention eliminating all chemical weapons. There is also agreement that a treaty is needed to ban the development, production, stockpiling and use of radiological weapons, bearing in mind the negotiations which took place in the Conference on Disarmament and all related proposals which have been formulated.

It was possible to reach a joint position on the need, concurrently with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, to pursue the limitation and gradual reduction of armed and conventional weapons within the framework of progress being made towards general and complete disarmament. There is also agreement that States with the most significant military arsenals have a special responsibility to reduce these arsenals.

The conclusion was reached that the gradual reduction of military budgets on a mutually-agreed basis, particularly by nuclear-weapon States and by other militarily important States, would be a measure which would help contain the arms race and would increase the chances of reallocating of funds which are used for military purposes at the present time to economic and social development, particularly the economic and social development of the developing countries.

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There is already a consensus regarding the need for further measures to prohibit the use of techniques to modify the environment for military or other hostile purposes, and on the need for new measures to prevent an arms race on the ocean floor or in outer space.

In order to facilitate the disarmament process, it was agreed that there is a need to adopt measures and implement policies aimed at strengthening international peace and security and encouraging confidence among States. There was also agreement regarding the need for all Member States of the United Nations strictly to adhere to the provisions of the United Nations Charter and their obligation strictly to observe its principles.

There is now general acceptance of the need for all Member States to do their utmost to ensure a better flow of information regarding various aspects of disarmament, so that false and tendentious information will not be disseminated regarding weapons and so that efforts can be focused on the broadest dissemination of informtion to all sectors of public opinion, of reliable information on the dangers of the arms race and the need for general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

A consensus was also reached to the effect that in disarmament agreements, and in the limitation of armaments, there must be adequate verification measures satisfactory to all the parties concerned in order to create the necessary confidence and guarantee that these measures will be observed by all without undue interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

The sixth and last chapter of the comprehensive programme is entitled "Machinery and procedures"; with the exception of five words having to do with the Charter, it is entirely without square brackets. It refers to three stages - the first stage, an intermediary stage and the final stage - of the programme. There

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would be periodic reviews, in addition to those at special sessions of the General Assembly, of the implementation of the measures included in the various stages of the comprehensive programme. It is stipulated that in addition to the periodic reviews which take place during special sessions, there must be an annual review of the implementation of the programme, and to facilitate this the Secretary-General will annually present a report to the Assembly regarding the progress that has been made in the implementation of the programme. The Chapter and the comprehensive programme conclude with the words that:

> "when appropriate and as soon as possible, a world disarmament conference should be convened with the participation of all States and with adequate preparation."

The undoubted importance of the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament, proof of which may be found in the various sections of this Programme already adopted by consensus - and I have referred to some of these in this statement - emphasizes the soundness of the Ad Hoc Committee's proposal, to which I have referred, in the last paragraph of its report to "resume its work at the beginning of the 1989 session" in order to complete the elaboration of the Programme for submission to the General Assembly, as I have already stated, at the very latest at its next session.

The Conference on Disarmament, which was first called the Disarmament Committee when it was created by the First Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to this lofty objective, this year is concluding its first decade, but it has not been able to transmit to the Assembly even one of the many drafts that it has been working on.

Let us hope that next year the General Assembly will receive from the Conference the three drafts that I have reviewed in this statement, and that they will make a reality of a total ban on nuclear-weapons tests, the elimination of

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chemical weapons and the proper functioning of a comprehensive programme of disarmament. In my opinion these achievements would be enough to make quite unforgettable the eleventh anniversary of the Conference on Disarmament, and the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Mexico for his kind words to me.

I should like respectfully to draw to the attention of members that it would be a little easier, I think, on everyone in the course of the debate, if ancillary conversations around the margins of the room could be held to an absolute minimum. I would appreciate that.

Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, as I have already had an opportunity - at the meeting on 12 October - to congratulate you and your fellow officers of the First Committee, I shall today move straight to the substance of my statement.

Only a short while ago an international climate of distrust served as justification for the arms race and fanned the flames of numerous armed conflicts in the world. Africa, Asia and Latin America were the theatres for these conflicts at a time when the United Nations was prepared, given the machinery available to it, to provide peaceful solutions.

The Security Council and the International Court of Justice are the two organs of the United Nations capable of using the law to resolve conflicts between States, as well as to undo the damage resulting therefrom, and to provide for judicial settlement of disputes. However, in the recent past contempt for law has been a characteristic of the life of the international community, to such an extent that certain States, instead of invoking the rule of law, have decided to take the law into their own hands. In this regard, the United Nations Charter is a document of reference and an unquestionable legal basis to which all members are committed. What is needed is strict compliance by all member States with international agreements, as this is the very basis of an organized international community and one of the fundamental principles of international law.

All States, large and small, have an interest in working towards the advent of a world in which nations will act within the framework of a system of coherent international law, as symbolized in the United Nations Charter. In doing so, they would be committing themselves to the process of disarmament and arms control in order to improve international relations and strengthen peace.

In this context, the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament laid the basis for an international disarmament strategy, involving

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co-ordinated and persistent efforts, in which the United Nations would play a more effective role by seeking general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

That was 10 years ago. The strategy gave the world the hope that efforts to put an end to the arms race would acquire new vigour, because the final document of that special session had enunciated the basic principles, the priorities and the programme of action by which the universally accepted objective of general and complete disarmament under effective international control was to be attained.

The second special session devoted to disarmament, in 1982, failed to match the accomplishments of the first and became bogged down in recrimination and rivalry between blocs.

The third special session, which completed its business last June, was attended by an impressive number of national leaders, who, by taking part, showed their interest in disarmament issues. Although the debates were free of polemics, and although the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - had been signed before the session, thus auguring well for a successful outcome, it was impossible, to the surprise of the international community, to achieve consensus on the final document, despite the fact that the bulk of the text submitted to the Assembly for adoption had won general acceptance. Delegations were unable to achieve unanimity on questions pertaining to the Middle East and southern Africa, both of which remain controversial issues and are a source of keen concern to the General Assembly. Those proved to be insurmountable obstacles to the adoption of the final document.

The organic link between regional conflicts and the frantic arms race is therefore tangibly evident. What I mean is that the existence of these conflicts

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accounts for the arms race. Nations arm in order to enhance their security, but they are endangering peace precisely at a time when the international community is seeking peace and security for all.

In the Middle East all protagonists are equipping themselves with sophisticated weapons in order to maintain their military superiority in a state of belligerency. In southern Africa foreign forces armed with the latest combat arsenals are in a state of confrontation. Yet the United Nations continues to propose an international peace conference on the Middle East and to propose dialogue on southern Africa aimed at the withdrawal of foreign forces from Angola and Namibia, leading to independence of Namibia and the restoration of peace and national unity in Angola.

The fifteenth special session of the General Assembly revealed a degree of convergence on certain major components of disarmament: disarmament is not the exclusive responsibility of the nuclear Powers but is the collective responsibility of all States; nuclear disarmament, although a matter priority importance, should be accompanied by conventional disarmament, given the growing importance of conventional armaments; and the security needs of each State should henceforth be viewed in the broad context of world-wide concerns and of international affairs as a whole.

At its third special session devoted to disarmament the General Assembly recognized that existing mechanisms should be used to the full in order to reach agreements on all items pertaining to general and complete disarmament. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which was designed to prevent the acquisition of nuclear weapons, is, in our view, a solid legal basis, which should be supported by all non-nuclear-weapon States, for halting the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, that proliferation continues, and many States

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Zaire)

are acquiring these terrible weapons while refusing to sign the Treaty. Zaire, which has signed the Treaty, endorses the holding, in 1990, of the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, which will gauge its impact on the process of halting the nuclear-arms race. Success at that Conference could attenuate nuclear-weapons testing and serve as a warning to States that might continue such testing.

In the sphere of nuclear disarmament, States unanimously welcomed the signing and ratification of the INF Treaty by the two great Powers and encouraged them to continue their negotiations to bring about a 50 per cent cut in strategic offensive arms. However, certain nuclear Powers have shown clearly that they are reluctant to support the process of nuclear disarmament simply because they remain dedicated to the philosophy of deterrence. The nuclear Powers continue to assert that States acquire nuclear weapons for the same reason that they acquire conventional weapons - to strengthen their security. They argue that the destructive power of those weapons, though regrettable, is an integral part of the military forces of certain States, and they claim that it is unlikely that that situation will change in the near future. However, the truth of the matter is that the two super-Powers have gone beyond such modes of thinking and have begun a new era of dialogue, détente and international co-operation.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Zaire)

Those same nuclear Powers are convinced that nuclear weapons are still an essential ingredient of the strategy of deterrence, which in their opinion has helped to preserve peace between the super-Powers and their allies, though by so claiming they fly in the face of current reality. Moreover, they emphasize that the desire to eliminate nuclear weapons completely should not cause one to forget crucial measures to be taken in order to achieve the final objective, which is the conclusion of an agreement providing for verifiable and effective limitation of armaments, in the form of profound, radical and equitable reductions of the offensive nuclear armaments of the super-Powers and the correction of imbalances in conventional armaments, particularly in Europe. They are acting as if there were no real issue here, whereas short- and medium-range missiles were designed for the defence of Europe. The nuclear Powers are thus belittling the efforts of the super-Powers in this field and continuing their nuclear arms race, disregarding the current historical developments.

The First Committee should appeal to them to join the two super-Powers in their efforts to accelerate nuclear disarmament, because the latter have embarked on the path of preventing a nuclear war and reversing the arms race in order to eliminate the threat of a nuclear conflagration, which would endanger the very survival of mankind.

In this regard encouragement should be given to the adoption of a time table for the gradual elimination of all nuclear armaments and also for the involvement of all nuclear-weapon States in this phase of nuclear disarmament. In this respect, space, which should be viewed as the common heritage of mankind, to be used for peaceful purposes in the interests of all countries, should be governed by an effective legal régime so that States having a space potential should be urged

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Zaire)

to comply strictly with the existing legal restrictions on limitation regarding space weapons and should refrain from taking measures for the development, testing or deployment of weapons and weapons systems in space.

The progress made by the Conference on Disarmament in the elaboration of a convention on chemical weapons is well known. It is for the First Committee, and other disarmament bodies, to do what is necessary to accelerate the adoption of a draft multilateral convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and their destruction, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 42/37. Ambassador Bogumil of Poland, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, deserves our congratulations in this regard.

The International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development acknowledged in its Final Document that the arms race, which is still continuing, is absorbing an increasing proportion of the human, financial, natural and technological resources of mankind. It weighs heavily on the economies of all countries and impedes international commercial, financial and technological flows.

World military spending is in stark contrast with the economic and social underdevelopment that exists, and with the poverty and squalor that are the fate of more than two thirds of mankind. It is therefore in the interests of all to assure security at lower levels of armaments and to find ways of bringing down arms-related expenditures so that they may be devoted to development purposes.

My delegation looks forward to the conclusion of concrete, verifiable agreements in the delicate sphere of military security and co-operation among the 35 participants in the Stockholm Conference on Security- and Confidence-building Measures and Disarmament in Europe.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Zaire)

Concerning the comprehensive programme of disarmament - the Committee dealing with which is in the capable, dedicated hands of our colleague, Ambassador Garcia Robles, the speaker who preceded me - my delegation feels that efforts should be made by the members of the Conference on Disarmament to secure the adoption of that programme, which has been painstakingly elaborated and which has already been considered by the General Assembly at its twelfth special session, in 1982.

The Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating body in the sphere of disarmament, deserves our full confidence and encouragement for the work which has been done. Zaire, a member of the Conference, hopes that it will succeed in setting up the ad hoc working groups on items 1 and 2 of its agenda - a nuclear test ban and the cessation of the nuclear-arms race, and nuclear disarmament.

Mrs. THEORIN (Sweden): In accordance with your wishes, Sir, I shall abide by rule 110 of the rules of procedure and go straight to my statement. Playing games with disarmament means gambling with our future. In her book The Game of Disarmament my predecessor, the late Alva Myrdal, describes the history of disarmament negotiations as a series of lost opportunities. We can afford no more lost opportunities. The game of disarmament must end.

The threat of mass annihilation has loomed large over mankind for decades. All nations, whether possessing nuclear arms or not, are exposed to the peril of nuclear war. Nuclear war recognizes no borders. All nations, therefore, must have a say in nuclear disarmament.

At their first meeting three years ago the leaders of the two major nuclear Powers rightly stated that a nuclear war could not be won and must never be fought. The super-Powers are committed to preventing an arms race in space and

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

terminating it on earth and ultimately to eliminating all nuclear weapons, everywhere. In this pledge they express an aspiration shared by all of us.

In spite of that, however, nuclear deterrence, the balance of terror, is still described as a means - indeed the ultimate means - of preserving world peace. If nuclear arms are to have a deterrent effect, the threat of their use must be made credible. As long as they exist there is always the possibility that they will be used, either deliberately or as a result of error or miscalculation. World peace dependent on the threat of mutual suicide is too precarious. Such a peace could never constitute a basis on which to build our future.

The Palme Commission launched the concept of common security in replacement of nuclear deterrence. International peace must rest on a commitment to common survival rather than on the threat of mutual extinction. Lasting world peace can be founded only on common security, on confidence and co-operation among nations. But common security will not replace nuclear deterrence overnight. We are not going to get rid of the weapons of mass destruction tomorrow. It will be a gradual process, but a process that must continue without interruption; a process which must not be restricted to measures concerning armaments and disarmament only.

The Swedish Government welcomes the Soviet-American Treaty on the elimination of all intermediate-range land-based nuclear missiles as a historic first step. This first nuclear disarmament agreement may well be seen as an application of the concept of common security. The United States and the Soviet Union must now rapidly conclude the treaty on 50 per cent reductions of strategic nuclear weapons, as they have promised the world. We expect them to honour their joint pledge to eliminate their nuclear weapons altogether. We have every right to expect this as we all face the menace of mass annihilation through their nuclear weapons.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

Agreements on reducing existing nuclear arsenals must be backed up by decisive measures to stop the continued development of new generations of nuclear weapons. Concerted efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons must continue and must be reinforced. The single most effective measure would be to end all nuclear tests.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

A quarter of a century ago, in the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water, the super-Powers gave expression to their determination to seek to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time. Twenty years ago, in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), they restated their determination expressed five years earlier. They declared their intention to achieve at the earliest possible date the cessation of the nuclear arms race. They undertook to pursue in good faith negotiations on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament.

Today, 25 years later, there are no negotiations on a comprehensive test ban. Instead of ending their testing for all time, the Soviet Union and the United States are engaged in joint experiments in nuclear test verification. It is conceivable that these experiments will help build confidence between the two super-Powers and allay such concerns about verifiability as the two States may have: but these tests do not build confidence among non-nuclear-weapon States.

The goal is not that the nuclear Powers should be able to verify each other's nuclear tests, but that the international community should be able to verify that nuclear tests are no longer performed. The aim is not test control: the aim is controlled non-testing. Each additional nuclear test is one too many.

The disappointing record of partial solutions in the past warrants scepticism about settling for anything less than a complete end to nuclear testing. Continued nuclear testing can only be tolerated during a transitory period and only within the context of a precisely defined plan to achieve a comprehensive test ban at an early and specified date.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

My Government finds it imperative that multilateral negotiations on a comprehensive test ban treaty be accorded the highest priority. The Conference on Disarmament is the one and only forum for such negotiations. A nuclear test ban is item number one on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament and Sweden calls for immediate action on this matter in the Conference.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty is a corner-stone of the international legal régime in the field of disarmament. It has made a significant contribution to international security for two decades. The Fourth Review Conference on the Treaty will be held in 1990. With regard to the future of the Treaty, two factors are of particular importance. First, adherence to it should be universal; secondly, all obligations laid down in the Treaty must be fulfilled. The non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty have done their share. The obvious way for the nuclear-weapon States to honour their commitment would be, besides concluding a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, a continued and drastic reduction of their arsenals of nuclear weapons. Unless all the provisions of the Treaty are strictly complied with, there is a great risk that its authority will erode.

Sweden has consistently emphasized the need for a common information base and frame of reference in the multilateral disarmament efforts. The 1968 and 1980 United Nations studies on nuclear weapons were landmarks in broadening the international community's understanding of this complex matter. But important developments have taken place since the latest study. The United Nations should take stock of these new tendencies and evaluate their political, legal and security implications.

These trends relate to nuclear weapons technology, the testing and deployment of these weapons, and new scientific findings with regard to the physical, environmental, medical and other effects of the use of nuclear weapons. The risks

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of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons merit renewed attention. So do initiatives taken or planned to reduce and eliminate the nuclear threat. Recent agreements and other arrangements for the purpose of reducing nuclear weapons arsenals need to be evaluated. Also, the efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation régime deserve to be updated. Sweden is therefore proposing that a new comprehensive United Nations study of nuclear weapons be undertaken and completed in time for the next NPT Review Conference in 1990.

The history of confidence-building and disarmament negotiations has demonstrated the importance of reaching agreement on verification measures. By their very scope and nature, major disarmament agreements, particularly those on weapons of mass destruction, have global consequences. The verification of such disarmament agreements is of concern to all nations. Indeed, the international community has a stake in all major disarmament agreements - including those on conventional armaments - and a vital interest in the verification of compliance with them. All nations should be in a position to ascertain that any such agreement is strictly complied with.

International verification, however, is not meant to replace bilateral or other verification measures already agreed upon, but rather to complement them. The United Nations has a central role and a primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament. It is therefore appropriate that the United Nations be entrusted with a corresponding role and responsibility in the field of verification.

The countries of the Six-Nation Initiative have called for a multilateral verification system within the United Nations as an integral part of a strengthened multilateral framework required to ensure peace and security during the process of disarmament as well as in a nuclear-weapon-free world.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

Since satellites may prove to have a great role to play in the context of verification, let me just add that Sweden has recently completed a preliminary study on the possibilities of satellite verification of confidence- and security-building measures and disarmament undertakings. In the near future, we plan to present the results of a technical feasibility study to interested Governments.

World opinion has been alerted to the security problems caused by the continuing naval arms race. There is growing international recognition that serious negotiations on naval disarmament are long overdue. Every fourth, if not every third, nuclear weapon is considered earmarked for maritime deployment.

Limitations on sea-borne nuclear missiles are urgently required. Tactical nuclear weapons should be brought ashore and not carried on routine patrol. Negotiated measures of restraint on navigation with vessels carrying nuclear weapons is another matter to be explored.

The great number of tactical nuclear weapons on board warships is a cause of concern. One of the reasons is the policy pursued by nuclear-weapon States neither to confirm nor to deny the presence of nuclear weapons on board any particular ship at any particular time. This practice creates increased public concern in many countries, especially when warships of nuclear Powers, in accordance with international law, make use of their right to innocent passage through these countries' territorial waters or when they call at their ports.

(Ms. Theorin, Sweden)

The policy of neither confirming or denying does not build confidence between States. Instead, whereas naval visits are intended to be confidence-building, this practice in fact undermines confidence. This provocative and outdated policy should, therefore, be abandoned.

Sweden does not permit visiting warships to carry nuclear arms. And we will work internationally for a new policy in which assurances against such visits would be given.

A few principles have been recognized by the United Nations Disarmament Commission as axioms for future negotiations concerning naval armaments and disarmament to accomodate the specific legal, strategic and geographic circumstances in the maritime domain.

First, naval forces are not independent of other military forces and should therefore be considered in their general military context.

Secondly, this fact, combined with the geographically different situations of States, could require multilateral measures of constraint for naval forces and weapons to be asymmetrical, in order to maintain an overall military balance.

Thirdly, such measures should be embodied in separate legal instruments in harmony with general principles of international law and with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Fourthly, appropriate, universal and non-discriminatory verification and complaints procedures are essential for the implementation of agreed measures in the maritime field.

Naval confidence-building measures seem to be a natural step towards halting the naval arms race and enhancing security at sea.

One objective of naval confidence-building measures should be to increase security by diminishing the risk of incidents and confrontations at sea. They should increase security for non-military activities at sea, such as fishing,

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shipping and off-shore activities. At the same time, they should increase the sea-board security of coastal States and the wartime security at sea of vessels belonging to States neutral to a conflict.

One important measure would be a multilateral agreement on the prevention of naval incidents. Such an agreement - complementing and not replacing existing bilateral agreements of a similar nature - could enhance security at sea while upholding the traditional freedom of navigation.

The experience gained from bilateral confidence-building through agreements on the prevention of incidents on the high seas is encouraging and supports the call for a corresponding multilateral agreement.

The Conference on Disarmament would be a suitable forum to be entrusted with the task of negotiating concrete measures to increase world-wide security at sea.

The priority goal of nuclear disarmament and our persistent efforts to reduce the nuclear threat are in no way compromised by the increased attention paid to conventional disarmament.

Conventional wars deprive millions of children, women and men of decent living conditions and peace. Conventional weapons and forces consume some 80 per cent of world military expenditure and have been used to kill tens of millions of people in the last decades.

Children are the great losers in war, children who - if they survive - are injured physically and mentally for life. There must be an end to the abuse and exploitation of children in war, specifically the practice of recruiting and using children as soldiers. In the elaboration of the convention on the rights of the child, this matter must be given serious consideration in order to ensure protection for children in war and rehabilitation of child victims of war.

In Europe - where the two major military alliances directly face each other - conventional arms reduction is urgent, not only for the region itself but for world

(Ms. Theorin, Sweden)

security. It is therefore a very positive development that negotiations concerning conventional disarmament in Europe are likely to start in the near future. A hopeful element in this context is the discussion of non-provocative defence. This may be seen as a bridge between confidence-building measures and disarmament.

Sweden is concerned about the rapid development of new, indiscriminate and excessively inhumane conventional weapons.

The likely development of laser weapons for anti-personnel battlefield purposes is one case in point. Such technology, with the main effect of permanently blinding the adversary, is already at hand. Sweden will continue to consult in the matter of a global ban on the use of laser weapons designed to cause permanent blindness.

The risk of an arms race in outer space causes grave concern. It requires urgent multilateral action. Existing agreements must be strictly complied with. A further development of the legal régime is needed. In order to counteract the destabilizing effects of technologies for attacking early warning systems, the prohibition of anti-satellite weapons remains a priority.

Reports by the Secretary-General on the United Nations fact-finding missions to the Gulf area have established the terrifying fact that there has been repeated use of chemical weapons. This use has been firmly condemned by Sweden and we are furthermore seriously concerned about allegations that chemical weapons have also been used in the aftermath of the Gulf war. The Nordic countries, as well as a number of other countries, have requested that these charges be investigated.

The situation is most serious. Repeated and indiscriminate use of chemical weapons has been proved. Chemical weapons proliferation appears to be on the increase. Chemical warfare agents and methods for their dissemination are being further developed.

Yet chemical warfare is a violation of international law.

(Ms. Theorin, Sweden)

There is only one way that the continued threat and reality of chemical warfare can be eliminated. That is the early conclusion of a comprehensive, fully verifiable convention banning the production, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical weapons as well as providing for their total destruction.

Such a convention is within reach. The negotiations on it in Geneva must be brought to an early conclusion, and the convention must be universally adhered to.

It is against this background that Sweden has welcomed the initiative to convene an international conference to reaffirm the 1925 Geneva Protocol. This conference must give full support and further impetus to the negotiations in Geneva. It should also serve to strengthen the efforts to achieve the widest possible adherence to the future convention.

In backing the proposal for such a conference, President Mitterrand of France gave a valuable impetus to the work in Geneva when he supported the principle that production of chemical weapons shall cease with the entry into force of the convention and that all chemical weapons stocks be put under international control. This gives us good reason to hope that the problem of undiminished security during the transitional period can be solved in a way acceptable to all.

The Conference on Disarmament must further find treaty language for the commitment to accept challenge inspections without the right of refusal and must finalize its well-advanced work on international control of the civilian chemical industry.

Work in the Conference on Disarmament has made steady progress on the chemical weapons issue. It has, however, been far too slow.

It is our hope that the untold suffering caused by the recent use of chemical weapons and the international attention given to a high-level conference designed to rally States around the international legal prohibition against chemical warfare

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will inspire Governments with a new sense of urgency and purpose so that a chemical weapons convention can be speedily concluded in Geneva.

Sweden will continue its active efforts towards that goal.

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

The processes of settling disputes peacefully, maintaining international peace and security and facilitating disarmament are closely intertwined and mutually reinforcing. The timely award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize to the peace-keeping forces is a welcome recognition of the fundamental role of the United Nations in respect of international peace and security. In addition to ensuring the peaceful settlement of international disputes and the maintenance of international peace and security, the United Nations has a vital role to play in the disarmament process. The arms race, and particularly the competition in nuclear weapons, is of central concern to all Governments. The arms race constitutes a serious challenge to the United Nations the only universal forum for efforts to stop it. The United Nations offers a mechanism for co-operation between the rather few large and the many small and medium-sized States in the world. It offers every nation an opportunity to participate in the work for peace and disarmament. We must, therefore, combine our efforts to build a more secure future for all of us, a future in which the present deadly confrontation can be replaced by a mutual search for common security.

The international community has experienced a sequence of welcome successes recently: in Afghanistan, in Iraq and Iran, in Angola and Namibia, in Western Sahara. Progress has also been made in bilateral disarmament negotiations recently, but not in multilateral disarmament. Yet, multilateral agreements are imperative. Why? It is the only way to stop the nuclear arms race. It is the only way to prevent an arms race in outer space. It is the only way to get rid of chemical weapons. Time is running out. There is no time for games of disarmament; no time for gambling with our future.

Mr. CAMPORA (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): I shall abide by rule 110 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and will not engage in the praise that personally I should have liked to express in respect of your

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election, Sir, as Chairman of the First Committee. I am sure that as you discharge your tasks your skills as a politician and as a diplomat devoted to the principles of peace, security and disarmament will be amply displayed.

The decade of the 1980s will probably go down in history as a period of profound changes, characterized by a first half in which the confrontation between the two major Powers caused acute tensions, and a second half that saw the full restoration of dialogue between them at the highest level, and with an unprecedented intensity, since the Second World War. This dialogue made possible the beginning of a new relationship based on mutual co-operation.

The turning point can be found in the middle of the 1980s. The resumption of the bilateral talks between the United States and the Soviet Union on nuclear and space issues early in 1985 was an indication of the underlying trend that was taking shape. The anti-nuclear rallies and the elimination of the intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles in Europe also reflect very clearly the contrasting nature of those two periods.

The rapprochement between the United States and the Soviet Union which facilitated the easing of international tensions also brought about the conditions that would make possible real progress in the political resolution of regional conflicts. Most of those conflicts are now on their way to peaceful settlement under the auspices of the United Nations

In the region I come from the 1980s also brought great challenges and expectations. The re-establishment of democracies and the full respect for human rights laid the foundation for the construction of a socio-economic order with justice. In Argentina democracy was restored in 1983 with the Government of Raul Alfonsin. Since then the civil, constitutional and democratic régime has steadily gained stability and today no one can have any doubt that it will last.

(Mr. Campora, Argentina)

All these new circumstances certainly offer an enormous potential. However, peace in every nation is threatened by serious economic and financial constraints that gravely affect the well-being and possibilities for development of the peoples in countries of the so-called third world. This situation has made it clear that non-military threats to security must equally be matters of the highest concern. The proliferation of poverty certainly does not contribute to a more stable and secure world.

Developments and debates that have taken place in the final part of this decade indicate the emergence of a fresh approach to international problems. An expression of this new approach has been the explicit recognition by the President of the United States, Mr. Reagan, and the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mr. Gorbachev, of the non-viability of nuclear war. As a logical consequence of that premise, a process towards disarmament was initiated and the perspective of a nuclear-weapon-free world became clearer. A new approach to national security, long demanded by the non-aligned countries, began to take shape.

New ideas soon became new practices, with frequent exchanges of visits at the highest political and technical level, which promoted better understanding among States members of military alliances. Openness, transparency and intensified contacts have contributed to the creation of mutual confidence and have dispelled suspicion and misperceptions, which have always been at the root of the arms race.

This reflection on the present international situation prompts us to raise anew a problem my delegation has mentioned in the past. I am referring to the correct definition of the relationship between the bilateral and multilateral spheres in disarmament negotiations.

(M. L. Campora, Argentina)

Much has been said about the desirability and appropriateness of adopting one or another approach, as if these were mutually exclusive alternatives. There has also been an effort to find labels to define accurately the nature and scope of this interrelationship. Different concepts were thus conceived, such as complementarity, constructive-parallelism, constructive interplay, et cetera. All of these had some merit and all reveal that this much-needed search has been limited to the semantic field.

Perhaps an answer to this question can be found in today's reality.

Recent developments, in particular those related to the favourable evolution of regional conflicts, demonstrate that the United Nations is the proper instrument to which the international community must turn to face the formidable task of finding acceptable solutions for conflicts that not so very long ago were settled on the battlefield.

We would certainly be deluding ourselves if we concluded that the renewed prestige of our Organization is the consequence of institutional or administrative changes. Today what we have is political determination at the highest level to apply diplomatic means to resolve conflicts. This fact confirms that the United Nations is the multilateral approach guaranteeing lasting solutions for all parties.

In the specific field of disarmament and international security, these observations are even more valid. It is dismayng to note how, in sharp contrast with rapid progress in the bilateral negotiations, responsible work at the multilateral level is persistently opposed with regard to a number of issues on the disarmament agenda.

An unjustified sentiment of mistrust persists in connection with the fruitful negotiating task the Conference on Disarmament can and should carry out on many of the items on its agenda.

(Mr. Campora, Argentina)

Arguments regarding the technical competence or high complexity of certain subjects under consideration are frankly surprising and, I would even say, unacceptable when we see, for example, the way in which the multilateral negotiating forum in Geneva is making constant headway, overcoming serious obstacles in the elaboration of the chemical weapons convention, a process that has rightly been considered of a more complex nature than the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles.

Détente will be real and lasting only when the entire international community feels responsible for it and only when it will have been the result of a collective effort.

Translated to the problems of disarmament, this idea indicates that disarmament measures and elimination of the arms race will constitute solid pillars of international peace and security as long as they are elaborated by all States and not just by those which act as surrogates of the international community.

The new international atmosphere that is emerging and the new prestige of the United Nations must lead, as a natural consequence, to the revitalization of the multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament issues.

This year's session of the First Committee has created unusual expectations in view of the failure of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. At the end of that special session, the multilateral competence in matters of disarmament did not emerge strengthened, as could have been expected given the improved international atmosphere. This fact calls for careful analysis of what in fact occurred.

The First Committee today has the responsibility of tackling this task. Renewed confidence in the United Nations can contribute to making the central role and primary responsibility of the Organization in disarmament matters an effective reality. We must build on the existing foundations. The Final Document of the

(Mr. Campora, Argentina)

first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament remains valid. The multilateral deliberative and negotiating organs established by that document continue to provide an appropriate framework for efficient work.

Furthermore, international verification in respect of any disarmament treaty is today unanimously acknowledged as a fundamental element.

All the conditions are thus present to ensure that, through the convergence of political wills, the international machinery will start moving once again.

It is our conviction that during this year's session we must clearly reflect the new promising prospects which are opening up in the process of disarmament and arms limitation.

In this respect we believe that there are some areas on which we should concentrate our efforts. These are the items that call for an imaginative collective effort if we are to rid ourselves of old habits and rigid stances, which have come about as a result of many years marked by the absence of any optimistic prospect.

The cessation of nuclear-weapon tests is a case in point.

Bilaterally, the United States and the Soviet Union are moving forward in a negotiating process aimed at the reduction of the number and yield of tests with the final objective of putting an end to all nuclear explosions. In the framework of this gradual process both sides have agreed to conduct a joint verification experiment, the first phase of which concluded a little more than a month ago with explosions at the Nevada and Semipalatinsk test sites. The information provided by both parties indicates that positive efforts to harmonize different verification systems and techniques are continuing.

It is encouraging to find the issue of verification, which in the past was frequently utilized as a rhetorical tool, at the centre of an intense negotiating effort at the level of experts.

(Mr. Campora, Argentina)

We therefore find it hard to accept that within the Conference on Disarmament artificial obstacles continue to be raised, to the initiation of a responsible negotiating effort, paralleling the ongoing bilateral process, which undoubtedly should focus on the requirements and characteristics of an adequate verification régime at a global level.

This need to move forward - which in no way means moving forward hastily - motivated the initiative of the States that co-sponsored a resolution calling for the amendment of the Partial Test-Ban Treaty to request the initiation of the procedural steps required to convene a review conference of the Moscow Treaty. Argentina sympathizes with this intention and shares the anxiety of these countries.

In this respect, however, allow me to reiterate certain views my delegation expressed in the Conference on Disarmament. We said that if this organ is prevented from taking up both the substantive and practical negotiating aspects relating to a comprehensive test ban, it is understandable that alternative courses of action should be proposed to break the prevailing stalemate. We also said that if some States consider this alternative inadequate to achieve the goals set forth, they will have to re-examine in depth their positions on this subject in the Conference on Disarmament.

Another subject on which we are confident agreements will again be reached this year as in previous years, is the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We hope that the General Assembly will send a clear message to the Conference on Disarmament for the continuation and intensification of its current analysis of issues relating to outer space, as well as the careful review of the legal régime applied to it and the detailed consideration of new proposals and initiatives. We refer especial. to those which harmonize with the existing multilateral legal norms and those of a bilateral nature which, due to their significance, are

(Mr. Campora, Argentina)

widely recognized as key instruments to ensure that the problems that are slowly and painfully being resolved on Earth will not be projected into outer space.

We hope that the delegations present here will pay due attention to the voice of the international community expressed by this General Assembly and will work decisively in a field that increasingly has become a priority item in the bilateral and multilateral disarmament agendas.

With regard to conventional disarmament, we believe that any further insistence on the importance of the subject is simply unnecessary. We already have an adequate framework provided by the resolutions adopted each year by the General Assembly without a vote. This framework has to be elaborated with the specificity that any prenegotiating or negotiating process requires,

Argentina does not have a selective approach to the disarmament agenda and will co-operate in the search for multilateral solutions to the serious problems arising from the accumulation of arms and forces in different regions of the world. In this regard, we must underscore the reality that Latin America is marked by the existence of an evident focus of international tension in the South Atlantic.

The open consideration of the problems of conventional and regional disarmament by the Conference on Disarmament would provide a valuable contribution, especially in a period of new hopes and fresh approaches to old problems.

As regards the prevention of nuclear war and the cessation of the nuclear-arms race, unfortunately these continue to be serious problems demanding undiminished attention.

Progress at the bilateral level has rightly and repeatedly been praised. We now urge the United States and the Soviet Union to continue their negotiations and this attitude of mutual understanding. In this sense, we hope for an early conclusion of a treaty on 50 per cent reductions in strategic forces in keeping

(Mr. Campora, Argentina)

with the commitment by both countries in Washington in December 1987 and reiterated in Moscow a few months ago.

With respect to chemical weapons, we hope that the General Assembly will again adopt a consensus resolution emphasizing the urgency of concluding a convention to ban all chemical weapons. The repeated use of this means of mass destruction underlines the need to eliminate them once and for all.

The international conference proposed by the President of the United States, Mr. Reagan, will constitute an appropriate occasion to renew the political commitment required to achieve the early conclusion and entry into force of the convention.

In this general review of items, I do not want to leave out an issue to which my delegation attaches great importance: verification. As I said a few minutes ago, we are encouraged to see that in connection with this important aspect of the disarmament process it has been possible to bring together points of view in respect of a subject on which originally it seemed that these views were irreconcilable.

This leads us to think that we will be in a position to recommend the adoption of a consensus resolution requesting the Secretary-General to undertake, with the assistance of a group of experts, an in-depth study of the different possibilities linked with the adoption of a more active role by the United Nations in international verification, as the leaders of the Six-Nation Initiative proposed at the third special session of the General Assembly on disarmament.

A new trend in disarmament debates is the increasing emphasis on the proliferation of so-called capabilities to produce either nuclear or chemical weapons and ballistic missiles. The question has two different aspects: one is

(Mr. Campora, Argentina)

directly related to the qualitative arms race, while the other is related to the peaceful or war-like uses of any technology. This is a most complex problem that cannot be simplified by clustering the three above-mentioned types of weapons or systems under the general heading of proliferation. This concerns both the developed and developing countries and consideration of the issues should not be limited to restricted circles. An open and frank debate within the multilateral framework of the United Nations is required to deal with these issues.

(Mr. Camporo, Argentina)

It is an accepted fact that technological developments can be used for peaceful or warlike purposes. In spite of this, in the past we have seen restrictive policies to prevent the spread of certain technologies and scientific knowledge, on the assumption that those restrictions would prevent others from acquiring supposedly dangerous capabilities. In some cases, exchange of material, equipment and information was withheld as a direct consequence of the implementation of those policies.

This negative approach has proved to be quite ineffective. Those controls on exports have made access to this technology longer and more costly, but it has not achieved the desired objective. Moreover, legitimate proliferation concerns were sometimes confused with a desire to preserve advantages acquired in those fields, and this was done for economic purposes in many cases.

The Argentine Republic supports a positive approach to this problem. We are convinced that the best way to prevent the military uses of advanced technologies is to promote and increase international co-operation on the peaceful uses of such technologies with adequate guarantees.

Increased co-operation together with constant exchanges both at the human and material levels, enhance the required transparancy and make it possible to ascertain the true intentions of States and what actually are the true goals of their development programs. In this way strong links of interdependence are created, links that are protected by all the parties simply because it is in their mutual benefit.

Dame Ann HERCUS (New Zealand): In the last twelve months there have been some rewards - for those who have shown political courage - in our search for disarmament and international security.

When the two most powerful nations of the world recognize that certain nuclear weapons pose more threat than protection, and conclude a treaty to abolish

(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

them, we can see evidence for the first time of a shared conviction that security can be enhanced at a lower level of weaponry.

When warring nations finally treat with each other to bring an end to conflict, with the aid of the United Nations, we can claim this as a victory for both of them, and a success for this Organization, for the Charter and for its objectives.

But in these cases, and there are other examples, the reward also accrues to all of us. We are, collectively, safer now than we were a year ago. The danger of escalation of regional conflicts is lessened. According to the agenda of the super-Powers, we are on a path to the elimination of nuclear weapons. And we witnessed in 1988 consolidation, and some quiet progress, in other key disarmament fields. So we can say that the global impetus for reductions in levels of confrontation and weaponry is strong.

According to the nations of Europe, we will see reductions of conventional weaponry, and the continued implementation of confidence-building measures, in that most overarmed region of the world.

According to the nations of Latin America and the nations of the South Pacific, their vast regions should be nuclear free, and should be respected by the nuclear Powers accordingly.

We salute what has been accomplished in 1988, accomplished by the United Nations and its Secretary-General, by the United States and the Soviet Union and by States large and small. But each of us knows what is still to be done. The nuclear missiles remain at the ready. The armies remain poised. Bitter conflicts still rage. Human suffering endures - too often that is the price of war and the cost of military preparedness. The nightmares are still there.

But we can have a dream, a dream that can be turned into reality. We can make 1988 the year in which humanity began truly to take steps away from the

(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

confrontational mode that has characterized foreign policy in our lifetime, as the year in which the international community's search for solutions to the problems of over-armament, of disparities between the rich and the poor, and of the environment, began to produce results.

We cannot arrive at these results independently of each other. In 1987, the International Conference on Disarmament and Development acknowledged the interrelationship between these most pressing of global problems.

And the pursuit of solutions is the responsibility of us all. It is the responsibility of individual men and women everywhere, of Governments and of non-governmental organizations. My Government has been particularly pleased to see an increasing involvement by non-governmental organizations and, increasingly, the leadership of women, in this search for security. They offer skills and resources which are needed.

In this Committee, our responsibility is clear. It is the General Assembly to which nations turn when they wish to air grievances and seek solutions. By this Committee, the First Committee, is the General Assembly enabled to speak with its authority on the great issues of disarmament and international security. If ever the relevance or utility of our work were questioned, that stark fact answers back.

We have on our agenda diverse new items. Amongst the most important is that presented by the nations of Western Africa. Angered by recent attempts to ship the poisonous, and perhaps even radioactive refuse of the developed world to their doorstep, they have brought their complaint before us. New Zealand sympathizes with the concerns and fears of those African countries, for we are ourselves surrounded by and dependent on an ocean which has itself been used as the dumping ground for radioactive and other toxic wastes. Those same feelings led New Zealand, with its neighbours, to seek an end to all dumpiong of radioactive wastes in the South Pacific for all time.

(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

... the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, the Treaty of Rarotonga, we South Pacific nations undertook not to dump those wastes, and to prevent, as far as we were able, such dumping by others. Later, in the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region, agreement was reached with some other industrialized States on the prohibition of radioactive dumping in the maritime areas covered by that Convention.

(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

The nations of the South Pacific are acutely aware of the fragility of their environment. In the preamble to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, New Zealand and other parties declared their determination

"to ensure, so far as lies within their power, that the bounty and beauty of the land and sea in their region shall remain the heritage of their peoples and their descendants in perpetuity to be enjoyed by all in peace".

Our determination was born of bitter experience. The "bounty and beauty" of our region has been put in jeopardy by the activities of outsiders many times and in many ways. Perhaps the greatest affront has been the nuclear testing conducted in the Pacific over the last four decades. Atmospheric testing raised radiation levels alarmingly. Although protests from regional countries finally brought tests in the atmosphere to an end more than a decade ago, testing still takes place underground at Mururoa Atoll, in French Polynesia. That atoll, and its neighbour Fangataufa, have now endured nearly 100 tests, ranging to more than 100 kilotonnes in magnitude.

New Zealand was able to report to the Secretary-General on the eight tests conducted in 1987. We did so in response to the Assembly's resolution 42/38 C, "Notification of nuclear tests". We regret that neither France nor, apart from the USSR, any other nuclear-weapon State has responded to the Assembly's request. Even so, we know that nuclear weapons have been tested by several States in the past year. The nuclear-weapon States - the five permanent members of the Security Council - continue their testing programmes.

They do so although they thereby undermine efforts to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons to other States. They do so despite the adoption by the General Assembly last year of resolution 42/27, which described a comprehensive test-ban treaty as "a matter of fundamental importance". That resolution, sponsored by

(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

New Zealand and Australia, was adopted with the support of 143 countries. Never before has the General Assembly spoken with such clarity on this matter.

The deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament on this item - item 1 of its agenda - is in sharp contrast to the Assembly's views. One hundred and forty-three Member States urged the Conference on Disarmament to "initiate substantive work on all aspects of a nuclear-test-ban treaty". Because of the position of a few States, that work could not get under way. We will again co-sponsor a resolution on the urgent need for a comprehensive test-ban treaty. New Zealand believes, with the vast majority of Member States, that the Conference on Disarmament should no longer delay its work.

Last year New Zealand joined with many others in welcoming the agreement between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to commence negotiations on nuclear-testing issues. However, now, as then, we are disappointed by the agenda and the schedule of the negotiations. We do fear that the destabilizing pressures resulting from developments in nuclear weaponry, facilitated by testing, will impede the arms reduction process.

As the super-Powers continue their negotiations aimed at achieving deep cuts in their stockpiles of nuclear weapons, the development of new weapons systems continues. History has shown that nuclear-arms negotiations and ongoing weapons development do not sit well together. A better guarantee of stability in offensive and defensive capabilities must be available to both sides. A nuclear-test-ban treaty will help to provide that stability.

It will also help to prevent the further proliferation of nuclear weapons. As many nations in a number of areas of the world can attest, concern about the possible acquisition of a nuclear-weapons capability by a neighbouring State can lead to suspicions and to regional instability. A comprehensive test-ban treaty,

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and universal adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), will dispel such suspicions.

We are now beginning the formal process leading up to the fourth review conference on the non-proliferation Treaty. A resolution that New Zealand will co-sponsor will be considered by the General Assembly shortly. Spain and Saudi Arabia have each acceded to the Treaty in the past 12 months. Just a few days ago, in the general debate, Bahrain announced that it too would shortly accede to the NPT. These welcome decisions demonstrate that the Treaty continues to earn the respect and confidence of States as one of the most important arms-control treaties ever adopted, and as a vital confidence-building measure.

Confidence in the absence of nuclear ambitions, through wide support for the NPT, and the application of international safeguards can do much to ease regional tensions. In some regions the nuclear-weapon States confront each other directly. Their respective nuclear ambitions are not at issue so much as the means by which they manage or control that confrontation.

The Asia-Pacific region is a case in point. The President of the Soviet Union, in a major foreign-policy speech, recently addressed the nature of the interrelationship of States in the Asia-Pacific region. His analysis, and his proposals, need close examination. But New Zealand has noted President Gorbachev's points about a mechanism to consider regional security matters. A great deal of further thought about the nature of such a mechanism would be required. It would be necessary, too, to ensure that any initiative should involve, and have the support of, all States of the region.

South Pacific Forum members, including New Zealand, have already laid down an important basis for the security of our part of the world - the South Pacific. Through the adoption of the Treaty of Rarotonga, the South Pacific was declared a

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nuclear-free zone. We were pleased recently to receive news that the People's Republic of China had ratified Protocols to the Treaty, becoming the second nuclear-weapon State, after the Soviet Union, to do so. The other three nuclear-weapon States have so far declined to become parties to the Protocols. New Zealand looks forward to the day when their reconsideration of the Treaty will cause them to ratify these instruments.

The United Nations has been strongly focused on regional security and disarmament issues of late. Its involvement was critical in the establishment of a cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war and in the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan. But tensions remain high in many areas. The United Nations has shown that when it is needed it can help in the search for a solution to regional conflicts. But States cannot avoid their responsibility to find ways to prevent conflicts from developing in the first place.

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One way of doing so is by focusing on the avoidance of disputes and on dispute settlement. Another way is by ensuring that neighbouring States have no cause for apprehension about the military intentions of their neighbours. Their conventional force levels should be kept within the limits of what is needed to guarantee their defence. No country can really afford a conventional arms race with its neighbours, and developing countries least of all.

In that light the failure of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to make any progress towards final agreement on a set of principles for conventional disarmament is to be regretted. The reduction and ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons will depend on asymetrical reductions in conventional forces by the major power blocs. Similarly, the elimination of regional tensions will depend on reductions in conventional forces according to clearly defined agreed principles. In the Disarmament Commission we had - but passed by - the opportunity to begin to lay down these principles.

The Disarmament Commission also failed to agree on principles for the reduction of military budgets, although the only remaining point of dispute was over the use of a reporting instrument. New Zealand has no doubt that the provision of objective information on military matters, including budgets, enhances rather than diminishes security.

The use of chemical weapons in a regional conflict has again been established in the past year by the Secretary-General. The international community has rightly denounced this violation of the Geneva Protocol of 1925. New Zealand has taken measures to ensure that no chemical needed for the production of chemical weapons can be obtained from us. The case for all countries to adopt similar precautions is strong. Until the negotiations on a comprehensive chemical-weapons convention

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are concluded, countries should do what they can to stop any further use or spread of chemical weapons that would complicate the work of the negotiators in Geneva. Meanwhile the United States has led the call for an international conference at which the prohibition on the use of chemical weapons would be reaffirmed. That is a timely initiative, for the challenge now being made to the rule of international law cannot go unanswered.

Many important issues will be discussed and decided here in the First Committee in the next few weeks. We regret that we will not be guided by a consensus final document from the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, but we believe it is possible and desirable to build on the good work that was done at that special session.

In particular, New Zealand will strongly support the proposal, first aired at the special session, for the establishment by the Secretary-General of a study group to examine the possible roles for the United Nations in the verification of disarmament agreements. As the United Nations has so amply demonstrated its ability in diverse fields in the past, its potentiality in this complex area needs thorough examination.

We deal in the First Committee with some of the great issues of our time - nuclear war and nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, reductions of conventional forces, the consequences of the arms race, the establishment of nuclear-free zones and the use of chemical weapons. The list goes on. Some subjects have been on the agenda of this Committee for many, many years. Consensus - or even broad agreement - on some of them is perhaps no nearer now than when those issues first arose. In certain cases that is because the policy at issue lies at the centre of the East-West divide - the different approaches to security taken by the members of the two most heavily armed power blocs. Matters such as the non-first-use of

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nuclear weapons and the prevention of nuclear war are examples. In other cases a particular issue may be contentious as between the developed and the developing world, or it may be contentious as between near neighbours.

I am not about to suggest that we should strip the agenda of this Committee of such contentious material. Much of it is too important to be cast aside as too difficult. It is, indeed, to such issues that we should devote much of our time, for our purpose must be to seek to overcome those divisions. But as the United Nations single decision-making body in the disarmament field we should have a higher purpose in view than the annual adoption of one-sided resolutions that reflect one point of view only and which cannot claim to reflect the broad will of the international community.

The fact is that we in the First Committee are each year presented with too many draft resolutions. No sufficient case can be made for some of them. I mean those which are declaratory, those which are one-sided, those which have no practical orientation. The time of this Committee is too valuable to waste on resolutions such as those.

When we speak as one, with a common aim and a shared will, our decisions truly matter, but when we show our divisions perhaps our decisions do not really count for so much. They will, I suppose, help to give better definition to the nature of the argument that exists between us, but I submit that our work is far more useful when it results in our overcoming such arguments than when it merely delimits our respective different views.

I need look no further for authority for this proposition than the Secretary-General's recent report on the work of the Organization. He said there:

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"Resolutions are meant to keep alive the goals to be achieved and to ensure that these goals are not lost sight of in a multitude of other concerns. In that perspective, they can become an indispensable factor for the successful outcome of negotiations and can be perceived as resolutions in the full sense of the term, not as incantations or mere formulations of theory. But they become ineffective when they look like stock resolutions. There needs to be an adjustment of political attitudes on all sides to the double requirement of making resolutions more purposeful and of paying respect to them as genuine expressions or reminders of widely shared concerns." (A/43/1, p. 9)

New Zealand, determined to help further advance the process of disarmament, looks for purposeful resolutions in this Committee. We weigh our decision to support a particular resolution depending on our assessment of such purposefulness, as well as on other factors.

(Dame Ann Hercus, New Zealand)

I believe that the First Committee took the first step towards producing a higher quality output at the forty-second session when it adopted by consensus very nearly 40 per cent of the resolutions on disarmament-related issues. The year before we managed only to adopt about 33 per cent by consensus. And last year the First Committee had 63 draft resolutions put to it for adoption, down from a total of 68 a year earlier. So the trends are favourable for the first time in a while. I hope those trends are maintained, helped by a vigorous search for consensus on meritorious texts, and by the demonstration of a disciplined restraint on the presentation of non-purposeful texts.

We hope to play our part in making it possible for some resolutions to be submitted which, through prior consultation, should attract the unanimous support of this Committee. We know that many other delegations will be similarly engaged. I particularly welcome the effort that you have made, Mr. Chairman, to provide all delegations with more time in our programme of work to discuss drafts of resolutions and to seek broadly acceptable texts. Such thoughtful preparation on your part for our Committee's work suggests that we will be in good hands as we work our way through our agenda. It would be a true mark of achievement if you, Mr. Chairman, were able to sum up our work on the disarmament agenda a month from now by telling us that we had adopted as many as one half - or perhaps more - of our resolutions without a vote.

The CHAIRMAN: We have now come to the end of the list of speakers for this morning. May I remind you once again that the list of speakers for the general debate will be closed tomorrow, Tuesday, 18 October, at 6 p.m. As the Journal notes, the meeting of the Group of Friends of the Chairman will be held at 3 p.m. in Conference Room 6. The First Committee will re-assemble tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. sharp.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.