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President: Mr. Adam MALIK (Indonesia).

AGENDA ITEM 97

World Disarmament Conference (*continued*)*

1. The PRESIDENT: Before calling on the first speaker for this afternoon's meeting I should like to remind the members that, in accordance with the decision taken yesterday at the 1985th plenary meeting, the list of speakers in the general debate on this item will be closed this afternoon at 5.00 p.m.

2. Mr. CERNÍK (Czechoslovakia) (*translated from Russian*): We are discussing an agenda item which is of fundamental importance not only for the future development of disarmament talks but also for the evaluation of a wide range of current problems of international politics.

3. The proposal to convene a world disarmament conference has come at just the right time. Up to now disarmament talks within the appropriate United Nations bodies have not been coping with the basic problems in that area as well as they should. This does not mean that nothing has been done, or that we have made no progress along that road. On the contrary, today we can say that in recent years some definite and positive results have been achieved.

4. It has been possible to conclude some agreements which undoubtedly have a limiting effect on the uncontrollable spread of nuclear armaments and which also have a preventive effect where they involve a ban on the use of certain substances for military purposes. In the case of the proposed ban on bacteriological (biological) weapons, we are approaching the first measures of effective disarmament. However, we are only at the very beginning and we must carry on to the end.

5. The partial results of the last few years are encouraging. But they merely indicate the possibilities open. At the same time it should be remembered that we are fighting against time and the extraordinarily rapid technological development of the most destructive types of weapons. In our efforts to limit arms, to stop the frenzied competition to invent and produce still newer and more sophisticated and thereby, in the perverted sense of the word, "more productive" weapons, we are still only at the starting point.

6. Expenditure on armaments is steadily rising. The harmful effects of this are felt by all nations. Their standard of living bears the imprint of this universal modern hydra. The average *per capita* expenditure on armaments for the world as a whole amounts to between 6 and 6.5 per cent of the total world gross national product. The Secretary-General's latest report on this subject [A/8469], prepared by a group of the most authoritative experts, provides us with a detailed analysis of the economic and social consequences of the arms race. We shall be discussing this further in the First Committee. That report shows that so far we have been able neither to impede nor to bring to a halt the dangerous escalation of the arms race, let alone move on to effective disarmament.

7. We have been on the threshold of a solution to the fundamental problems in this area not just in recent days but for a very long time. That is not because those problems are insoluble. The reason is that up to now we have not been able to budge those forces to whom armaments are not detrimental but, on the contrary, yield increasing profits. That is why those forces slow down and undermine any negotiations which affect any of the cornerstones of the imperialist nuclear strategy proclaimed and constantly put forward, albeit in various forms, by the representatives of the military-industrial complex of the capitalist States. As the facts show, only the concentrated efforts of all peace-loving forces can overcome their resistance and advance the cause of disarmament.

8. The initiative of the Soviet Union, calling for the convening of a world disarmament conference with the participation of all States, irrespective of whether they are Members of the United Nations or not, is yet one more in a series of remarkable proposals made by the Soviet Government and aimed at achieving a breakthrough in the solution of disarmament questions. This initiative emerged from the broad peace programme adopted at the twenty-fourth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which has provided a powerful impetus; it is highly cogent, it is logical, and it satisfies the objective conditions which have gradually come into being and which should indeed be made use of at this moment.

9. Some remarkable events of contemporary international development show the force that the fight to eliminate the constant conflicts and crises in various parts of the world is acquiring and how new rays of light are breaking through more clearly, confirming that there is a growing consciousness of the need to prevent the outbreak of a new world-wide military conflict. We have spoken in detail of these problems and our position regarding them, both during the general debate and in the political Committee, during the consideration of questions of international security. It has been pointed out almost unanimously that

* Resumed from the 1985th meeting.

certain favourable pre-conditions for the convening of a conference on European security, with the participation of all countries concerned, are being created on the continent of Europe. Such a conference, it seems to us, could to a considerable extent help to ensure that Europe is no longer the scene of dissent and bloody wars that it has been for many centuries and in the recent past. The statement issued recently in Paris at the close of talks between the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev, and the French President, Georges Pompidou, also provided a new and important stimulus towards such a positive development. That statement paid special attention to all-European talks on security and expressed full support for them. Interest is growing in other European countries too.

10. Finally, mention may be made of the positive course taken in the United Nations itself where an important step towards a realistic appraisal of the world situation and the consistent realization of the principle of universality was taken by the recent decision to restore the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations.

11. All these, undoubtedly, are facts which can only be welcomed. It depends on us to ensure that they do not become transitory or sporadic phenomena but, on the contrary, that they are multiplied, operate continuously and influence the future. This is of particular relevance with regard to disarmament talks. It is necessary, therefore, to stimulate still further interest in the main questions of disarmament and to increase efforts to achieve effective measures in this field. Armaments did not appear of their own accord; they were created by people. And our credo in this matter must be the conviction that Governments which have decided to produce and stockpile modern armaments are also capable of taking decisions which would make it possible to curb those armaments and gradually to do away with them altogether as a highly dangerous and ever-increasing threat to the very existence of the human race on our planet.

12. The Government of Czechoslovakia, like the Governments of the other socialist countries, is ready—today as always in past years—to discuss and implement effective concrete measures in that direction. Proof of this is shown by the proposals which we have supported and which we continue to put forward, beginning with the programme of general and complete disarmament put forward by the Soviet Union 10 years ago, and including the banning of nuclear weapons, right up to the various separate or regular steps which would open up the way and in a practical manner advance the process towards a genuine and effective reduction of the arms race until armaments have been totally eliminated. We shall continue in the future to develop such efforts, as the principles of our foreign policy and the interests of our socialist country require.

13. Disarmament is indissolubly linked with the questions of war and peace and with problems of world security. In a sense these are two communicating vessels, closely linked one with the other; there is a direct connexion, direct influence, and a common pressure.

14. Consequently, if in the world today there is a real interest in strengthening international security and in

developing peaceful co-operation between States, as has been mentioned many times at this session and as has been demonstrated by concrete examples, then the demand for a world-wide gathering of the representatives of all countries for the purposes of a fundamental discussion of the situation regarding possibilities in the disarmament field is all the more justified and urgent.

15. Thus the Soviet Government's draft resolution which was introduced by the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Andreivich Gromyko, during the general debate on 28 September [1942nd meeting], merits our complete support and, most important of all, a business-like treatment, so that it can be implemented as quickly as possible and fulfil the hopes rightly placed on it. It represents one of the most important items on the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly.

16. In the case of a world disarmament conference we are dealing, as all of us here know very well, not with a chance idea which happens to correspond to a long-standing assessment of the current international situation. This idea has a long history and neither the idea nor its supporters are to blame for the fact that it has not met with the necessary understanding in all quarters earlier and that it has not received sufficient support from all the Powers, in particular those NATO countries and especially the United States, which, as early as 1965, stated their opposition to the holding of a world disarmament conference. As is clear from the current discussion, they have still not changed their negative attitude. However, with the years this idea has steadily won over an ever-growing number of supporters and an ever-growing number of countries have spoken in favour of it.

17. The impetus for the convening of a world disarmament conference originated as early as 10 years ago, at the first Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries in 1961. In October 1964, the Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, issued in Cairo, expressed the conviction that the convening of such a conference would be extremely useful.

18. At its twentieth session, the General Assembly, by 112 votes in favour, and not a single vote against, adopted a resolution to convene a world disarmament conference [resolution 2030 (XX)]. That was exactly six years ago. For reasons which I have pointed out, that conference was not held. This does not mean, however, that the reasons which led the General Assembly to support a proposal to convene such a conference have lost their force. Quite the contrary. As can be seen, the fruits of our sowing ripen slowly. But if they have ripened we must not delay if we are not to lament a lost harvest later. For this reason we should welcome the fact that the Soviet delegation has put on the agenda the question of a world disarmament conference which, incidentally, was again supported by the most recent Conference of non-aligned States, which took place last year in Lusaka.

19. The draft resolution introduced by the Soviet delegation [A/L.631 and Add.1] is rightly the centre of attention for all delegations. We hope that it will win maximum support and will be adopted by the General Assembly.

20. The distinguished representative of the USSR, Mr. Malik, explained in his detailed statement in the 1978th plenary meeting the fundamental reasons and arguments in favour of convening a world disarmament conference and set out its purpose and aims. In that statement he also indicated possible solutions to a number of questions of procedure concerning the preparations for, the convening of, and the work of the conference. I shall therefore not dwell in detail on that aspect of the matter. I should merely like to stress once more that we attach great importance to the fact that the adjective "world" should be included in the title of the conference. Many delegations consistently point out, and quite rightly, that disarmament is a matter which concerns all nations and is close to all peoples, and that all countries should concern themselves with its implementation, whether or not they are Members of the United Nations, and irrespective of their social system, their size or their adherence to any given socio-economic system.

21. The need for all countries to take part is a categorical imperative for the organization of the conference. This particularly affects States with considerable human, economic, technological and military potential, which by virtue of their degree of development, their level of technology and their political influence play an important role in the world of today.

22. It is clear from the foregoing that disarmament talks in a world forum are impossible without the participation of all those States that wish to take part in its work. The overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations have long recognized that fact. Consequently, nothing should prevent the representatives of all countries from sitting at the green table of a world conference to discuss questions of vital importance for the whole of humanity—namely, questions relating to disarmament. The principle of universality in our Organization is advancing inexorably and I am convinced that its final triumph will be seen shortly. The demand for the convening of a world disarmament conference is also a reflection of this.

23. As I have already mentioned not only in the past, but now, too, individual voices are to be heard trying to cast doubts on the usefulness of convening a world disarmament conference. One of the arguments used, for example, is the claim that such a large forum would be unable to solve in a businesslike manner the complicated and technically demanding questions involved in the problems of disarmament. These can be handled, it is claimed, only by special, comparatively small bodies in which separate aspects of the problems can be analysed in detail and suggestions can be made as to the measures to be taken.

24. I suggest that to present the question in that way is merely an artificial device which avoids the essence of the matter and obscures it. The truth lies in the just and reasonable use of both approaches or, even better, in their integration into a single whole. There must be parallel progress along both paths, since it is clear that with their assistance we can advance more rapidly. The tasks before us require, on the one hand, a fundamental political solution, and on the other, detailed consideration and discussion leading to specific agreements which would give effect to those decisions. We must not therefore compare the

smaller, literally the working, bodies, with very widely based meetings between representatives of all Governments, which may result in decisions that would provide a new political impetus for the work of those very bodies. Consequently, there must be no talk of replacing one by the other. Quite the contrary. What is involved is rather an intensification, or synthesis, which can be provided from time to time only by such a forum as a conference of all countries of the world. Such a conference would emphasize quite authoritatively the political importance of the question of disarmament and by its conclusions would provide an important political impetus for the future work of the individual working bodies such as, above all, the Geneva Committee on Disarmament, the results of whose work will be discussed in the political Committee at the current session of the General Assembly.

25. In view of the foregoing, we feel that the contribution of a world disarmament conference to our combined efforts to achieve gradual general and complete disarmament under strict international control would be very considerable. Such a conference would be able to examine the problems of disarmament in all their complexity. At the same time it would, above all, have to concentrate on questions relating to nuclear disarmament, which is the central element of general and complete disarmament. It is quite natural that nuclear disarmament should be mainly in the hands of the nuclear Powers, whose responsibility in that direction is incontestable. Only they can take effective measures in that area. However, every country is vitally interested in it. Moreover, there has for a long time existed a real conception of a radical and final solution to this question. By this I mean the proposal for a complete and unconditional ban on the use and production of all kinds of nuclear weapons and the destruction of all stocks of such weapons. The socialist countries have been insisting on this proposal throughout the whole course of disarmament talks since the Second World War. This principle is the starting point for the programme of general and complete disarmament submitted by the Soviet Union more than 10 years ago. Consequently it is unavoidable that the demand for world disarmament should occupy an important place in the agenda for world talks, all the more so since this is the third year that useful talks have been going on between the Soviet Union and the United States on the limitation of strategic armaments (SALT) and since the Soviet Union has proposed the convening of a special five-Power conference, to solve the problems of nuclear armaments with the participation of those most competent in that matter.

26. If we are talking of the problems of disarmament in the widest sense of that word, in all its scope, then we must recognize that these problems cannot be settled at one meeting. Such an approach could be unproductive. We suggest, therefore, that the world disarmament conference should not be a matter of one meeting but that it could meet from time to time over a long period, as was mentioned by the representative of the Soviet Union. We see our session this year playing an active role in that it could provide the impetus for the beginning of talks which would ensure that the conference was prepared in the best possible way and organized so that it could fulfil its purpose. To this end, at this session of the General Assembly we should recommend the creation of the appropriate machinery for mutual consultations between

States, machinery which could right from the beginning of next year concentrate fully on working out all questions connected with the convening and the work of a world disarmament conference.

27. There are certain pre-conditions for every conference, such as the importance and urgency of questions to be discussed at the conference, the atmosphere, the world situation and so forth. This is even more so in the case of a conference of such importance and scope as a world disarmament conference. These pre-conditions, we feel, do now exist. I spoke of them at the beginning of my statement. However such a conference can, by its positive results, influence the international atmosphere and the improvement thereof. This side of the question should also be taken into account when considering the question of convening the conference.

28. The delegation of Czechoslovakia therefore hopes that the General Assembly will adopt a concrete resolution which will ensure the active participation of all States in the preparations for the world conference so that the initiative will not be lost, but will, on the contrary, be realized as quickly as possible.

29. Mr. MOJSOV (Yugoslavia): The truth that disarmament is the central problem in international relations and that it represents a top priority question in the search for a lasting universal peace has been repeated many times from this rostrum. It has also frequently been said that the stagnation in the solution of this important question and the continuation of the arms race not only constitute a direct threat to world peace but entail extremely negative long-term consequences, reflected in the freezing of existing relations between the power monopolies in the world, the widening gap between the developed and developing, big and small, strong and weak countries, and the obstruction of all efforts to democratize international relations. One could obviously speak at great length without exhausting this topic.

30. The thesis that, in spite of the continuation of the arms race and the lack of substantive progress in the field of disarmament, there could emerge from time to time some kind of controlled tension and even a *détente* of a longer duration is a very misleading one. Such reasoning implies that the control of some aspects of the arms race within the framework of relations among the great Powers, although not a decisive factor, is at least sufficient to safeguard world peace at this moment. This thesis cannot be accepted without the risk of harbouring a dangerous illusion with lasting consequences. There is hardly any need to corroborate the fact that disarmament, or at least the start of a real disarmament process, constitutes the *sine qua non* of all concrete and tangible progress towards peace, development and stability.

31. Yugoslavia, guided by the fact that disarmament constitutes a vital factor for the consolidation of peace and strengthening of international security, has always endeavoured to make a maximum contribution towards the adoption of all measures which could contribute to more rapid progress in achieving general and complete disarmament, that being the final aim towards which the international community aspires.

32. We have always proceeded from the fact that the problem of disarmament is not the problem of the great Powers alone—although they do bear the primary responsibility for it and have specific commitments in that field—but of the international community as a whole. The leading Powers have always had their own order of priorities, reflecting primarily their own interests and the state of their mutual relations, as well as the pace of their negotiations. Their political needs and military-strategic considerations have determined in every given situation not only the areas on which agreement was possible, but the nature of the negotiations and the choice of questions on which, in the opinion of one or other of the Powers, it was possible and useful to negotiate. With due respect for all priorities and due recognition of the fact that those priorities also reflect broader interests, we cannot but point out that small and medium countries also have priorities and interests, which are not always identical with the priorities of the great Powers and which should be taken into account as well.

33. The problem of nuclear and conventional disarmament is a world problem. It is logical, therefore, that all countries should participate in its solution on an equal footing. This means that the interests of every country should be represented in all disarmament negotiations and talks.

34. On the basis of a nuclear equilibrium, and because of a justified and understandable fear of the terrible consequences of a world armed conflict in which nuclear weapons would be used, it has been possible up to now to avoid conflicts of global dimensions. This, in the meantime, has not prevented the waging of limited wars with conventional weapons throughout the entire post-war period, wars which have not only threatened the sovereignty and independence of individual States, but have brought into question the very existence of entire nations. It is known that peace on a large scale does not always mean peace for all. However, it is also a fact that general peace cannot be a lasting and secure peace as long as the practice of the so-called "small wars" continues.

35. In such circumstances the results so far achieved in the field of disarmament have been neither commensurate with the needs of the strengthening of peace and security, nor in harmony with the truly significant efforts made by our Organization to that end. The disproportion between the urgent need finally to end the arms race and to undertake decisive steps towards disarmament on the one hand, and the impermissibility of a slow pace in disarmament on the other, is now more than obvious.

36. The prevailing viewpoint of this session of the General Assembly is that favourable changes have recently taken place in international relations and that this cannot but open new possibilities for activity in the field of disarmament. We are obliged to encourage such developments further and to utilize them for the purpose of adopting new disarmament measures, which in themselves would give a new impulse to more favourable trends in international relations. Never before have disarmament talks been so diversified and so comprehensive. Discussions are in progress on strategic nuclear weapons. There are also signs that we should expect some success in this area. There are indications concerning the negotiations on the reduction of

armed forces in Europe, visible initiatives have been taken regarding disarmament measures in other regions and there has been some success in the area of partial and collateral measures in the field of disarmament. This situation is encouraging and gives rise to justified hopes that we are entering an era in which it will be possible to expect more rapid and substantive steps towards disarmament. It is also in harmony with the demands formulated by our Organization in connexion with the Disarmament Decade. In such conditions we believe that a world disarmament conference could greatly encourage the intensification of disarmament activity.

37. We welcome the proposal to convene a world disarmament conference, as being the hopeful realization of an idea which for years has been appearing on the agenda of international gatherings of the non-aligned countries and in favour of which the United Nations has already declared itself in its resolution 2030 (XX) of 29 November 1965. The Conferences of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Belgrade in 1961, Cairo in 1964 and Lusaka in 1970, have proposed the convening of a "disarmament conference under the auspices of the United Nations to which all States would be invited". It is stated in the Declaration of the Cairo Conference that "the convening of a world disarmament conference . . . would provide powerful support to the efforts which are being made to set in motion the process of disarmament and for securing the further and steady development of this process."¹

38. The Conference held at Lusaka last year declared itself anew in favour of this proposal. Furthermore, the same proposal was taken up by the ministerial consultative meeting of non-aligned countries, held only recently in New York, which reiterated the belief that it would be useful to convene a conference in which, once the necessary preparations had been made, all the countries of the world would participate.

39. There is also another well-known idea—the proposal of the People's Republic of China that a conference of Heads of State or Government should be convened to consider this vital issue on an appropriate level.

40. Of these considerations of the non-aligned countries, three vital ideas stand out. First, the problem of disarmament is a matter of concern not for a narrow circle of countries but for the international community as a whole. Not only is each country called upon to make its contribution towards the solution of the problem, but conditions should be created for the equitable participation of all States in every phase of the settlement of this vital issue. Secondly, a world disarmament conference should be convened under the auspices of the United Nations as the most competent forum within whose framework the question of disarmament could be resolved.

41. It would be poor timing to have this question withdrawn from the United Nations in a year in which the United Nations is actually experiencing a renaissance and in which with the restoration of the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China, it has taken a historic step

towards strengthening its own capacity to settle even the major issues of the present-day world. Such a development would be a serious blow for the United Nations as far as its primary role was concerned.

42. Thirdly, a world disarmament conference would give support to all current efforts to set in motion the process of disarmament and to secure its continuing evolution, thereby encompassing the over-all issues of disarmament.

43. In the opinion of my delegation a world disarmament conference would be a natural and logical continuation of the present efforts of our Organization in the field of disarmament. It would make it possible to review these efforts and to perceive in depth all the difficulties and obstacles currently standing in the way of achievement of the desired disarmament results. The conference would bring the disarmament negotiations into greater harmony with the present and the foreseeable development of international relations. It would also stimulate the further relaxation of tensions in the world.

44. True, the international community does not need a conference that would only make declarations on disarmament like those that have so often been voiced in these and other conference halls. We have no illusions that a world disarmament conference can solve all or most of the complex issues involved, such as the question of general and complete disarmament. However, the conference could serve as a medium for integrating all partial efforts in the field of disarmament and for charting a new approach to general and complete disarmament. Such a conference should adopt political positions creating conditions for resolving certain specific disarmament problems—for example, the total banning of all tests—which have remained unsolved for years because of the lack of such political decisions. Furthermore the conference would have to rely upon all the positive though modest achievements already made in the field of disarmament.

45. The Yugoslav delegation considers that all States should participate in the preparations for a world disarmament conference. We also feel that, once favourable conditions have been created for those preparations, the possibility should be explored of involving and using for that purpose existing organs of the United Nations—and more specifically the Disarmament Commission, which last met in June 1965 in order to discuss the question of convening the conference. At the same time the broad participation of the developing countries would help to establish a closer link between the problems of disarmament and development.

46. Any restriction of the preparations for the conference to a narrow or even broader circle of States, especially within the framework of the five nuclear Powers, would not only delay the preparatory work and make it more difficult, but would alter the very purposes and concept of a world disarmament conference. Furthermore, such an approach would not be realistic in the present constellation of the United Nations. To judge from all that has been said, it is important that the wording of the agenda item for the twenty-seventh session should not prejudice the direction solutions would take or the role of the United Nations in preparing for the conference. We are of the opinion that the

¹ See document A/5763, of 29 October 1964.

best solution would be to inscribe the item on the agenda under a general title: "Preparations for convening a world disarmament conference".

47. My delegation is of the opinion that the idea put forward yesterday [1985th meeting] by the representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt is a very useful one, namely, that the Secretary-General be asked to consult all States on the modalities and preparations for the world conference and to submit a report to the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly. On the other hand, we believe that an agreement in principle on the convening of a conference and the initiation of preparations for it need not hamper or delay the work of the existing United Nations organs dealing with the problem of disarmament.

48. Mr. ERDEMBILEG (Mongolia) (*translated from Russian*): The delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic attaches exceptional significance to the question of the convening of a world disarmament conference, which is being discussed at the current session of the General Assembly.

49. The item in question, which has been included in the agenda on the proposal of the Soviet Union, merits the constant attention of world public opinion. And that is quite natural. The problem of disarmament affects such vital interests of all nations as the guaranteeing of peace and international security and the elimination of war from the life of human society.

50. As in the past the idea of convening a world forum on disarmament problems is widely popular and enjoys the support of the majority of States in the world.

51. For this reason, world public opinion, as is already clear from the statements made both in the general debate at the current session and on the item in question, welcomes the initiative of the Soviet Government [A/8491], which has formulated in a concrete and businesslike manner a proposal to convene a world disarmament conference in the light of new circumstances and international conditions.

52. Under present conditions, when, in a number of areas in the world, centres of military conflict are being maintained and there is a danger of an armed confrontation on a global scale; when an untrammelled arms race, including a nuclear one at that, is exerting its pernicious effect on the whole of international life, the holding of a conference, with the participation of all States of the world, to consider the whole range of disarmament questions has become more urgent and imperative than ever before.

53. It should also be noted that some of the positive changes that have been achieved in the field of international relations towards the easing of tension and the ensuring of peace and security for all nations, and also the achievement of a number of international agreements on questions of limiting military preparations and arms, may exert a favourable influence on the attainment of agreement on the item in question in the spirit of the lofty principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. Mention should be made of a new circumstance which is by no

means least in importance, and that is that the barrier to the participation of the People's Republic of China in disarmament talks, set up over a long period of time by the forces of imperialism, has finally been removed. The nations of the world anticipate that the constructive participation of that country may play a significant and positive role.

54. We are of the opinion that the time has now come when the General Assembly of the United Nations must adopt a positive decision on the question of convening a world disarmament conference.

55. Our delegation, like many others, considers that a world conference on disarmament matters will provide an opportunity for the Governments of the States concerned to concentrate their attention on the most important aspects of the problem of disarmament, to put forward new ideas and considerations and to discuss ways and means which could assist favourably the task of reaching agreement in this vitally important area. Such a conference will also effectively complement any bilateral and multilateral talks which are going on at present or which may be entered into in the future.

56. It is the contention of the Mongolian delegation that this world forum, whose task would be to consider the most important problem of international life today, should be as representative as possible in the sense that all States, without exception, should take part in it on a basis of equal rights, including, naturally, all countries possessing significant armed forces and armaments, not to mention States possessing nuclear weapons.

57. In our view the convening of a world disarmament conference should be preceded by corresponding preparatory work, consultations and an exchange of views on questions relating to the time of the convening of the conference, its venue, agenda and procedure, since the subject of discussion at the conference could be all questions relating to the problem of disarmament, including nuclear disarmament.

58. In this connexion, our delegation would like to stress that the Soviet initiative on the convening of a conference of the five nuclear Powers in the near future is consistent with the tasks involved in implementing a whole range of measures to curb the nuclear arms race. The very fact of convening such a conference would be an important event, since it would be the first time that all the nuclear Powers, which can and must work out and implement a practical programme of nuclear disarmament, would be brought together to hold talks on this question. It would be very hard, particularly in the light of the responsibility which the nuclear Powers have to the nations of the world, to find any serious justification for a negative attitude towards participation in the work of such a conference, which could serve as an effective additional measure to the world disarmament conference.

59. Under present conditions, when the very existence of mankind is placed under a real threat, the failure on the part of any State to participate in measures designed to control, limit and eliminate nuclear weapons cannot be justified by reference to the prevailing world situation. It is

important that the nuclear States should not be set against the non-nuclear States; ways must be found to bring their positions closer together, and to harmonize any action they take to eliminate weapons of mass destruction in the interests of the security and future of the world of humanity.

60. We share the view that the idea of convening a world disarmament conference is not designed to affect or diminish the significance of the talks and agreements on disarmament questions that are being conducted today through various channels, including the talks within the Geneva Committee on Disarmament.

61. Everybody knows that the attainment of agreement on the various aspects of disarmament problems and the implementation of practical measures in this area require combined efforts and co-ordinated action by all parties, and the considerable amount of time needed for these purposes. For this reason we also subscribe to the opinion that it would be useful if the world disarmament conference were to function as a permanent international forum to be convened periodically, say one every two or three years.

62. The Mongolian delegation wholeheartedly supports the draft resolution [*A/L.631 and Add.1*] submitted by the Soviet delegation on the item under discussion and attaches great significance to one of its paragraphs which contains an appeal to all States to agree, by the end of 1972, on the date for the convening of the conference and on its agenda.

63. In conclusion, I should like to express the hope that at its current session the General Assembly of the United Nations will adopt a positive decision on the item concerning the convening of a world disarmament conference, since the majority of delegates to the Assembly insists on a realistic approach to the problem in question. We cannot agree with any scepticism or lack of faith in the positive results of the work of a world disarmament forum.

64. The Mongolian People's Republic will vote in favour of the adoption of the resolution on the convening of a world disarmament conference, since it considers such a decision to be one of the main results of the current, twenty-sixth, session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

65. Mr. IGNATIEFF (Canada): I do not believe it is necessary to repeat at this time, and from this rostrum, the high importance which the Canadian delegation places on disarmament. Our contribution to disarmament negotiations over the years, I think, speaks for itself. The issue in this debate, however, as I see it, is not whether to disarm, nor how to disarm, but how best to discuss disarmament, now and in the future.

66. None would surely wish any of the avenues of disarmament open to us to be left unused, still less, unexplored. In this spirit, my delegation welcomes the impetus which has been given to us by the Soviet delegation to think once again about the available ways of concentrating world attention on this all-important problem. I note, too, that the Chairman of the delegation of the People's Republic of China, in his statement to the General Assembly on 15 November [*1983rd meeting*] also made

reference to one possibility with respect to nuclear disarmament. It seems to us that any proposal for a new form of disarmament discussions which would lead to negotiations should be judged in the light of the effect—positive or negative—that it may have on the totality of the efforts to stop the arms race. My delegation at this time would like to suggest that the Assembly give careful thought to three points: first, the appropriateness of considering the broad impact and implications of the disarmament issues now before the General Assembly in a world forum in addition to the negotiations on specific issues at Geneva; second, the importance, long maintained by Canada, of associating all—I repeat, all—the principal military Powers with the disarmament negotiations; and third, the importance of ensuring that any world disarmament conference is properly prepared, through prior consultations, if it is to achieve the purpose of acting as a catalyst for further progress on disarmament, rather than contribute to confusion.

67. There is no doubt that the introduction into the arms race of weapons of mass destruction, as has already been mentioned by previous speakers, whose use might lead to a world catastrophe, has made disarmament a matter of vital concern to all mankind. This danger was recognized at the dawn of the atomic age when the Prime Minister of Canada joined the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in calling upon the United Nations to take effective measures to ensure that this new force of atomic energy would be used for peaceful purposes only. The Soviet Union was also one of the original sponsors of this earliest effort to involve the world body in the search for disarmament. Ever since then Canada has been associated with virtually every initiative on disarmament within the framework of the United Nations. The Canadian delegation therefore believes that any world disarmament conference should be part of the continuing disarmament effort pursued through this world Organization—all the more so since the United Nations has recently taken its important decision towards universality by its decision on the representation of the People's Republic of China [*resolution 2758 (XXVI)*]. It should also be recalled that the General Assembly only two years ago designated this decade as the United Nations Disarmament Decade [*resolution 2602 (XXIV)*]. The Canadian delegation therefore believes that the sponsorship of a world disarmament conference should clearly lie with this world body.

68. Now, if it were so desired, appropriate provision could be made, while the conference was being prepared, not only for non-Member States, but also for non-governmental organizations, private institutions, even individuals with a demonstrated interest in disarmament, to make their contributions to such a conference.

69. We would hope, however, that the problem of finding a satisfactory formula for attendance at such a conference would not become a bone of contention, but rather, that the proposal to hold a world disarmament conference would serve as a vehicle for consensus within the United Nations family. Canada has been among those which have been active, both in Geneva and in New York, in urging the participation of all the principal military Powers in the disarmament effort. At this time, when the issue of the nuclear arms race and the mass destruction weapons which risk catastrophic effects for the peoples of the world

warrant priority consideration, it is especially appropriate and important that the People's Republic of China, as well as France, should join the other nuclear Powers in seeking to allay the concerns of mankind about the nuclear arms race and the danger of its escalation.

70. It would be essential, therefore, for the success of any world conference that the views of these principal military Powers should be taken fully into account, and we would hope that any resolution adopted on the basis of the draft resolution contained in documents A/L.631 and Add.1, submitted by the head of the delegation of the Soviet Union, would reflect a broad consensus and would specifically provide for on-going consultations between now and the time when a decision is taken in the General Assembly on convening a conference.

71. Moreover, the convening of a new conference on a world basis should not serve as a pretext or excuse to hold up, still less to confuse, the disarmament efforts already under way. In particular, we, who have been negotiating on disarmament questions in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament at Geneva, appreciate the value of this negotiating body and hope that a way will soon be found to associate the representatives of the People's Republic of China with the disarmament negotiating process. To this end, we hope that thorough consultations and preparations will be carried through to ensure that if and when a world disarmament conference meets, it will contribute to progress in disarmament rather than confuse the efforts already under way.

72. To the degree, then, that the proposal for a world disarmament conference meets a positive criterion and can be effective in focusing world opinion on the overriding importance of disarmament in an age of mass destruction weapons, Canada can be counted upon to support it. No issue commands higher priority than measures concerned with containing and arresting the arms race, particularly in nuclear weapons.

73. In conclusion, the Canadian delegation hopes that the process of consultation on the convening of a world disarmament conference will begin as soon as possible.

74. Mr. RONAN (Ireland): Any proposal aimed at effective measures for a cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date, nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, as set out in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons [*resolution 2373 (XXII), annex*], merits the close attention of the General Assembly. The threat to international peace and security posed by the arms race and efforts to eliminate that threat through disarmament discussions and negotiations must be the concern of all countries, large and small, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Bearing in mind too that the General Assembly has declared the decade of the 1970s as a Disarmament Decade, my delegation is sympathetically disposed towards the aims of the USSR proposal for the convening of a world disarmament conference to consider the whole complex of problems relating to disarmament covering nuclear and conventional armaments, with priority, if agreed, to be given to questions of prohibiting and

eliminating nuclear weapons. It has also been suggested that the proposed conference should become a permanent forum or one to function over a long period, meeting periodically at intervals of two or three years.

75. While my delegation is thus by no means opposed in principle to the holding of a world disarmament conference, we feel that the proposal raises rather important questions which need careful examination. The concept is not, of course, a new one. The League of Nations experience in this regard is perhaps worth recalling. The Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, held from 1932 to 1934, was preceded by slow preliminary work, first by the temporary mixed commission for the reduction of armaments from 1921 to 1925 and then by the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference from 1925 to 1932. The latter reached qualified agreement on six main points—budgetary limitation of armament expenditure; limitation of the period of service; establishment of a Permanent Disarmament Commission; the limitation of land, sea and air forces; the limitation embodied in the London Naval Agreement of 1930 and a renunciation of chemical and bacteriological warfare. These six points were so subject to reservations that they provided little satisfaction. A number of disarmament plans were considered by the Conference but produced no results, since it coincided with the period of rearmament which culminated in the Second World War. The work of the Conference itself came to a standstill in 1934 although it was never formally brought to a close.

76. The question arose again at the First Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Belgrade in 1961. The second such conference, held at Cairo in 1964, proposed a world conference and stressed the desirability of participation by all countries. The proposal was welcomed by the Disarmament Commission in 1965 and endorsed by the General Assembly later that year in resolution 2030 (XX). Operative paragraph 2 of the resolution urged that the necessary consultations be conducted with all countries for the purpose of establishing a widely representative preparatory committee which would take appropriate steps for the convening of a world disarmament conference not later than 1967. The consultations, particularly as regards the nuclear Powers, did not work out successfully and the question was not pursued any further. Previous experience with world disarmament conferences has not, therefore, been encouraging, but that in itself is no good reason why the present proposal should not be considered with an open mind.

77. While the Disarmament Commission and the General Assembly endorsed the idea in 1965, many delegations raised serious questions about the need for adequate preparatory work; agreement among and the participation of the five nuclear Powers; proper timing in relation to the international situation; agreement as to whom invitations would be extended; the agenda, procedure and financing of the conference and its relationship with the United Nations and the former Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, now the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, which meets at Geneva. These important preliminary questions are just as relevant now as they were in 1965.

78. One of the principal motivations for the earlier proposal was to associate with the deliberations and conclusions of such a conference all the five nuclear Powers and countries of military importance which were not members of the United Nations. As of now, the five nuclear Powers are represented in the Organization and have the opportunity of discussing and harmonizing their views on how best to proceed with halting the nuclear arms race and with nuclear disarmament. The proposals that have been made for convening a meeting or a conference of the five nuclear Powers are, in our view, of considerable importance. Unless these Powers can achieve progress among themselves on the road to nuclear disarmament, it is difficult to conceive how a world conference could do so.

79. There remains the difficult problem of reaching agreement on representation in a world conference of the divided States of Germany, Korea and Viet-Nam. It is to be hoped that in time acceptable solutions can be negotiated in those cases. While the maintenance of international peace and security and the achievement of general and complete disarmament depend in large measure on the application of the principle of universality, it is not always possible, unfortunately, to have universality at any price.

80. Another question of some importance to be considered is the adequacy of existing disarmament forums. We have an intensive annual debate on the whole question of disarmament in the First Committee pursuant to Article 11 of the Charter, and the Disarmament Commission, which is representative of the entire membership of the United Nations, may be convened if necessary when the General Assembly is not in session. As well as these possibilities for deliberation, the 26-member Conference of the Committee on Disarmament at Geneva is a negotiating body and has achieved some success in producing treaties. We would need to be convinced that a world disarmament conference could achieve more success in resolving the difficulties than the forums mentioned and that indeed it would not hamper the important work of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. If progress in disarmament negotiations has been much less rapid than was hoped for, then the fundamental cause lies more with the distrust and tensions which exist in international relations than with existing disarmament forums. To be noted too is the marked reluctance of the major military Powers seriously to envisage and to execute significant measures of disarmament beginning with a reversal of the trend on the part of the nuclear Powers to achieve even greater arsenals, offensive and defensive, even at a cost which in the Second Development Decade can only be described as scandalous. In this connexion we have been reminded recently, in the important report of the Secretary-General on the economic and social consequences of the armaments race [A/8469 and Add.1], that annual world military expenditures exceed \$200,000 million, and if the present rate continues the cost will escalate by 1980 to the staggering level of from \$300,000 million to \$350,000 million at current prices. The arms spiral promises neither ultimate stability nor genuine security and, if it is to be reversed, more attention must be given to the elimination of political and ideological conflicts, national mistrust and human fears, as well as energetically pursuing arms control and disarmament efforts.

81. At a stage when the preparatory arrangements for a world disarmament conference might be proceeding, there should be no slackening of the disarmament work of the United Nations and of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and their roles and relationships with the proposed conference would need to be carefully negotiated and clearly established.

82. When it comes to the agenda of the proposed conference, it has been suggested that the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons might be given priority. The principles involved in prohibition of use have been debated before and can be debated again but as long as nuclear weapons exist there is no real guarantee that these weapons would not in fact be used. Elimination of nuclear weapons will not be easily achieved but depends basically on negotiation between the five nuclear Powers which alone possess such weapons. In the context of the Disarmament Decade of the 1970s, useful agenda ideas may be found in the comprehensive programme of disarmament recommended by the General Assembly in resolution 2661 C (XXV).²

83. The proposal for the convening of a world disarmament conference, like any other proposal for a large conference, raises important organizational and substantive issues, which have to be faced if success is to be achieved. The prospects will have to be appraised realistically, and careful and thorough preparations will be necessary. Governments will require some time to study the proposal in all its aspects and to engage in the necessary consultations before reaching decisions on the issues involved. At the present stage, in our view, it is possible to advance only in a procedural or exploratory way without commitment to the principle of convening a world conference. The comments my delegation has made are, of course, intended to be constructive in the light of the great interest my Government has always had in the problem of disarmament and in achieving progress in a field that could be vital to mankind.

84. Mrs. BROOKS-RANDOLPH (Liberia): Since I am speaking for the first time in this Assembly, allow me, Sir, to extend to you—albeit belatedly—my personal congratulations on your election as President of the twenty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly as well as to extend to you my best wishes for a most successful tenure of office.

85. May I also take this opportunity to express congratulations to the representatives of the People's Republic of China. We look forward to their contribution upholding the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

86. As we speak today of a world disarmament conference, I may refer to the fact that the decade of the 1960s was characterized by deliberations on treaties concerning the dispersion of nuclear weapons, the banning of nuclear devices from outer space and the ocean floor, and the creation of a nuclear-free zone in Latin America. Africa too desires that the continent of Africa should be a nuclear-free

² *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fifth Session, Annexes, agenda items 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 93 and 94, document A/8191.*

zone. Emphasis is being placed on such immediate and crucial issues as the banning of chemical and biological weapons, the curtailing of the two spirals of strategic offensive and defensive armaments and the quest for a comprehensive test ban. The decade of the 1970s has been designated by the United Nations itself as not only the decade of decolonization but also that of disarmament. It is the hope of my delegation that the seventies will go down in the history of disarmament as the time when statesmen finally turned their attention from measures of non-armament to measures of arms control, that is to say, from curbs on potential arsenals to restraints on existing weapons or the destruction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and the prohibition of the manufacture thereof.

87. In our time we have seen men set foot on the moon, demonstrating with this impossible dream that poets and artists can foresee the future of humanity. Every great invention and discovery has started out simply with a hypothesis contrary to that which was known and has given the lie to the foresight of traditional science. One consistent quality of the men who have led humanity in the domination of the world has been to search for what seems to be impossible and then to pit their wits against it. The peaks of the mountains, the abysses of the sea, the deserts and the poles have been attained by men who have refused to stop where for centuries all who have ventured had been defeated.

88. After all, man goes forward following his dreams rather than arguments, even if only those who succeed are capable of using their own rationality most rigorously. The question of peace is a dream that sooner or later must fascinate the keenest and most rebellious spirits of our generation or of the next one. Some believe, as I do, that the first decisive step towards the conquest of peace will be made on the day when some—even if only a few—men truly begin to believe in man's ability to put an end to war. If the solution to the problem is still far distant, it is because none of us believes without reserve that it is possible. We all have, more or less, an unconscious resignation about war which seems to us a tragic fatality, and it really was such for the generations that preceded us.

89. Let us begin today to take the first step to remove the obstacle to peace of general scepticism, by accepting the principles of the draft resolution aimed at achieving disarmament [A/L.631 and Add.1]. The stockpiling of nuclear weapons and the armaments race must come to an end and mankind must work together through the United Nations for the safety and well-being of all its peoples as provided by the Charter.

90. It is timely therefore that a world conference on disarmament should be held, for the destiny of mankind as a whole must be considered by the representatives of all the peoples. The non-nuclear-weapon Powers must be given an opportunity to function in the shaping of ideas regarding disarmament, for it is they who will ultimately be most affected. I believe that this draft resolution contains measures which will enable common action to be taken for a world conference towards effecting disarmament.

91. It must be remembered that to the extent that disarmament can be achieved, the level of economic, social and educational advancement will be raised for the greatest portion of the world's population.

92. Finally, it is the hope of my delegation that the proper groundwork will be undertaken so that a fruitful result will be achieved by a world disarmament conference. In that connexion my delegation agrees that the United Nations itself will have a great role to play in connexion with the establishment of this world disarmament conference.

93. The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Bulgaria, who wishes to speak in exercise of his right of reply.

94. Mr. GROZEV (Bulgaria) (*translated from Russian*): At the end of the 1985th meeting, the representative of the United States, speaking in exercise of his right of reply, expressed disagreement with my statement on the question of convening a world disarmament conference.

95. I have asked for the floor today not to argue with the United States delegation, and still less to revise what I said yesterday. Once again, I reaffirm what I said yesterday, because it corresponds to the real state of affairs. My delegation referred to quite specific facts, not imaginary ones, to facts which are known to all here and which demonstrate obvious resistance to the process of disarmament.

96. The Bulgarian delegation takes note of the statement of the representative of the United States to the effect that his country is persevering in negotiations and will continue to do so, believing that that is the only sure road to world disarmament. We, for our part, will welcome the successful conclusion of those negotiations. We hope that they will be completed as soon as possible. For that reason, we all unanimously support and approve the Soviet initiative for the convening of a world disarmament conference.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.