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President: Mr. Adam MALIK (Indonesia).

AGENDA ITEM 97

World Disarmament Conference (*continued*)*

1. Mr. LONGERSTAEY (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*): First of all I should like to perform a pleasant duty. This is the first time that the delegation of Belgium has spoken in the Assembly since the delegation of the People's Republic of China joined us. Accordingly, I extend to Mr. Chiao and his colleagues our warmest welcome. I have no doubt that fruitful contacts will be developed between our delegations and that the participation of the People's Republic of China will be an important contribution to our debates and to our work.

2. The Soviet proposal to institute consultations among Governments on the subject of a world disarmament conference [*see A/L.631 and Corr.1 and Add.1*] has both definite merit and at the same time certain dangers which it would be a mistake to underestimate. The Soviet initiative takes up, within the context of on-going political developments and at a time when the People's Republic of China is beginning its participation in our work, an idea which is already old and which was upheld here in 1965 by a group of non-aligned countries. If it is adopted, this idea will make it possible to institute consultations among Governments regarding the best way of conducting work and negotiations on the matter of disarmament. The political importance of this work is too obvious for us to remain indifferent to the Soviet proposal.

3. Disarmament negotiations, whether they be bilateral, regional or multilateral, should be further developed and become a more and more vital component in the efforts to reduce tension and to organize peace. One can well imagine the advantages of a world disarmament conference which, if well thought out and well prepared, might ultimately give impetus to this work of negotiation and eventually help speed them up.

4. This, in a nutshell, is why we would be prepared to participate in consultations related to the organizational aspects of disarmament.

5. In 1965 Belgium had voted in favour of the resolution [*2030 (XX)*] adopted by the General Assembly on that

subject. The consultations advocated in the Soviet draft resolution, if actively pursued in various forms and at various levels, would undoubtedly help us to clarify this concept of a world disarmament conference which is referred to in the text proposed by the Soviet Union. They would undoubtedly enable us better to identify, and thus to avoid, certain of the pitfalls that may beset our path.

6. First of all, with respect to participation in the conference, we cannot conceive of such a meeting without the presence of the main military Powers. If one of those Powers, nuclear or non-nuclear, were not to participate, this would obviously considerably reduce the usefulness of such international proceedings. Before deciding to convene such a conference, therefore, we must be sure, through consultations, that these States will accept the organizational arrangements proposed and that they will be present.

7. We must also consider the institutional aspect. Mr. Gromyko has proposed [*1942nd meeting*] a conference which would be held outside the United Nations. We must confess that we are somewhat concerned about this point. We are very well aware of the objective pursued by the Soviet Union. That objective of universality is one which we also share, but are we not now in a dynamic period of international relations? And can we not reasonably hope to achieve this universality in the United Nations itself in the relatively near future? Given the present state of our thinking, we would prefer the world conference, if it is to take place, to be planned under United Nations auspices. The mounting of such a conference outside our Organization would certainly present some danger. This formula would tend to lend credence to the idea that there are two types of international organization which aim at universality; that could constitute a dangerous precedent and might go so far as to undermine the very prestige of the United Nations.

8. Another pitfall to be avoided is the idea that the conference must not become a meeting simply to repeat the debates which take place here and the decisions which we adopt together at each session. If we wish the conference to give new impetus to disarmament efforts, we must think of it as something more than a mere debate of the kind we have every year. This, we confess, is the objective which seems to us the hardest to attain. In the consultations, therefore, it is not only the terms of reference of a possible conference which should be discussed and the subjects which might be debated there but also the way in which the proceedings would be conducted, the level of national representation and the results that may be expected. And when our Assembly comes to take a decision on the results of those consultations it must not lose sight of the fact that it has a full-fledged subsidiary body, the Disarmament Commission, which has not met since 1965, but which

* Resumed from the 1990th meeting.

could perhaps be called upon to resume its activities. The convening of the Commission would be a very simple decision, requiring very few formalities.

9. A last danger has been referred to by Mr. Gromyko: the possible repercussions of a world conference on the bilateral, regional or multilateral negotiations under way or projected, such as the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), regional reduction of forces, or the work of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. Mr. Gromyko has already given an assurance that the conference would not reduce the importance of these proceedings and negotiations, which have already brought us specific results and to which we look to provide more. That is already a valuable indication; but we must be assured that that concept is indeed shared by all. Nor can we allow the conference to call into question everything that has been achieved in recent years through international legislation, achievements which already represent a considerable step forward for mankind. In paragraph 5 of the Soviet draft resolution a link is clearly suggested between the work of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and the world conference. We believe that paragraph is essential and we would also agree to the Committee on Disarmament engaging in an exchange of views on the very concept of the world conference, independently of other forms of consultation—bilateral or multilateral—which may prove necessary.

10. If we wish to avoid all these obstacles and to ensure that the conference is a success for mankind, the need for serious and thorough consultations and careful and detailed preparation is therefore obvious. Thus we believe that the draft resolution should call for the inclusion of the item in the agenda of the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session—without at this stage indicating that it would be desirable to set a date for the conference in 1972. There are still too many unknowns connected with the consultations to be held. The essential thing would be for everyone to begin this work of exploration and decide right now to evaluate its results next year. If the consultations bear fruit the Assembly will be free to take the appropriate decision at that time. However, operative paragraph 6 of the present draft does not seem to us an indispensable element in the resolution we are asked to adopt. Too often in the course of its existence the Assembly has suggested time schedules which experience has proved it impossible to keep to. Perhaps we have often detracted from the credibility which should belong to Assembly decisions by advocating targets which have never been met.

11. A final observation on the permanent character that Mr. Gromyko recommends for meetings of the conference: Belgium is not now in a position to express a view on this concept of permanence, at a time when we do not yet clearly know what the arrangements and the chances of success for the first such conference will be. Only the impact and the results of that first meeting can tell us whether it would be desirable to set up permanent machinery and to hold regular meetings.

12. In conclusion, apart from certain drafting points which seem to us easily negotiable, Belgium could accept the general purport of the Soviet proposal. We would be prepared, therefore, to participate in consultations which

would cover all the topics of concern which we have mentioned and also other points which have been commented on from this rostrum.

13. Our dedication to the cause of disarmament and to the reduction of tension will always compel us to participate actively in the exploration of ways for obtaining those objectives. Through consultations we can thus assure ourselves that the chances for the conference's success will live up to the hopes which would inevitably be aroused among our peoples by the announcement of such a conference.

14. Mr. FAREMO (Norway): In spite of all the negotiations and efforts aimed at significant and meaningful arms control and disarmament measures, and all our rhetoric, concrete results have been few and modest.

15. When the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) were initiated two years ago we were told that the negotiations would constitute a sustained effort not only to limit the build-up of strategic forces but also to reverse it. It was furthermore stated that achievement of that important goal would meet the vital interests not only of the American and Soviet peoples but also of other nations of the world.

16. We are still waiting for a break-through in the negotiations. In the meantime, new weapon systems are constantly being tested or are looming over the horizon and decisions are taken in the field of weapons technology that carry fateful implications for decades ahead. It is the opinion of many that extensive development and deployment of some of the new weapon systems cannot but have a destabilizing effect on the global strategic balance; and time is running out. Weapons technology is advancing rapidly and qualitative improvements of the various nuclear weapon systems are constantly occurring. The situation in the field of conventional armaments gives equal cause for alarm. Time and again technological development by-passes even the best of arms control proposals.

17. We should not, however, underrate the progress that has been made in this most intricate area of arms control negotiations. Earlier this year it was announced that the United States and the Soviet Union had agreed on a framework for continued negotiations. The negotiators would aim at working out an agreement limiting the deployment of anti-ballistic missiles, while at the same time agreeing on certain measures with respect to the limitation of offensive strategic weapons. We have also taken note of the first formal SALT agreements aiming at improving Soviet-American communications and on measures reducing the risk of nuclear war by accident.

18. In our view, even limited agreement or understanding between the two super-Powers in this vital area could lead to further improvement of the relations between those two countries and thus contribute to a general lessening of tension. We also consider the negotiating process itself as valuable, since the talks presumably provide both sides with an increased understanding of each other's capabilities and intentions. Such mutual insight could help in slowing down the arms race.

19. A world disarmament conference could, under the right circumstances, help to focus the attention of world public opinion on the ever-increasing arms race in all parts of the world and, in particular, on the resulting awesome financial burdens imposed upon the peoples of the world. A conference could help to marshal much needed world-wide support for limitation and subsequent reduction of armaments. In short, a conference could provide a significant stimulus for intensified work in the area of disarmament.

20. We agree with the representative of the United Kingdom, who stated [*1990th meeting*] that a world disarmament conference might also help to encourage countries to subscribe to the treaties which we, collectively, as the United Nations, had commended, but to which not all of us, as individual nations, had yet felt able to accede. Like him, we believe that a conference might act as a catalyst to enable all the major military Powers to become truly involved in disarmament negotiations. In particular, my Government hopes that the People's Republic of China and France will be associated before long with international disarmament negotiations.

21. In general, my Government agrees with the points made by the representative of Canada during his intervention [*1987th meeting*], in particular when he stressed that any world disarmament conference should be properly prepared through prior consultations, if it was to achieve the purpose of acting as a catalyst to further progress on disarmament, rather than contributing to confusion. Like others, we would favour the holding of a conference within the framework of the United Nations and take it for granted that any world disarmament conference must be definitely assured of the participation of all important countries, in particular the nuclear-weapon States.

22. Furthermore, we felt that the representative of Egypt made a constructive proposal [*1985th meeting*] when he suggested that the Secretary-General be asked to obtain the views of Member Governments on the place, timing and agenda of the conference and to report to the next session of the General Assembly.

23. My Government is certainly ready to participate in such consultations with the Secretary-General and other Member Governments, with a view to reaching general agreement on the question of convening a world disarmament conference, as well as on the modalities of such a conference.

24. The forthcoming visit of Mr. Kosygin to Norway—a visit that we are indeed looking forward to—will give my Government an opportunity for further discussions of the Soviet proposal.

25. The slow progress in arms control negotiations that we are witnessing is a constant source of frustration. We ought to keep in mind, however, that we are living in a world community which displays sharp conflicts of interest, aims and aspirations, and where sufficient consensus about principles of peaceful, organized coexistence and co-operation simply does not exist.

26. Crucial to the success of any world conference would be the degree of mutual confidence and political goodwill existing when the conference is called together.

27. The recent enormous underground nuclear explosions in the United States and the Soviet Union have caused widespread fear of possible damage to the world environment, although no severely detrimental effects have yet been reported. But the risks of such effects were certainly present. Furthermore, these large tests have given another unfortunate boost to the missile race. The real national security interest of the major nuclear Powers should lie in the direction of restricting and limiting nuclear armaments, not in developing new ones.

28. At other times minor leakages have been occurring from underground nuclear explosions and radio-active materials have been drifting across national borders, thus constituting a breach of the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty.¹ From time to time, non-signatories to the partial test-ban Treaty directly cause radio-active pollution of the atmosphere. In the view of my Government, an agreement to cease nuclear weapons testing in all environments, prior to a world disarmament conference, would be a welcome sign of serious intent with regard to the achievements of a conference.

29. Mr. ECOBESCU (Romania) (*interpretation from French*): The debate on a world disarmament conference, to which my delegation attaches particular importance, should provide an opportunity at this stage for a thorough analysis, in order to decide what practical steps can be taken to meet the urgent needs in the field of disarmament.

30. The lengthy discussions and negotiations have not resulted in specific disarmament measures that nations and world opinion have expected throughout the whole post-war period and for which they are now calling more vigorously.

31. If we look back over the activities undertaken by the main bodies competent in this area, we may find them very instructive in this regard.

32. The General Assembly has undeniably been the forum where every year the great majority of States have spoken out against the arms race and called for disarmament. As a result of the contribution of Member States, the General Assembly has adopted many resolutions and other important documents, the strict implementation of which would undoubtedly have led to effective progress toward the major objectives of disarmament. Unfortunately, for reasons which are well known to all, most of those documents have yet to be given effect. The time has perhaps come to undertake an over-all evaluation of the way in which the provisions of such documents are implemented.

33. We are also obliged to note that problems of enormous importance for the safeguarding of peace and the strengthening of general security have not been the subject of thorough and effective consideration by the General Assembly. Thus a halt in the manufacture of nuclear weapons and the reduction and destruction of stockpiles of such weapons have never been placed on the Assembly's

¹ Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 480 (1963), No. 6964).

agenda as separate items. Other measures, such as prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and the abolition of military bases in the territory of other States, have disappeared from the General Assembly's agenda without ever being resolved. Questions relating to general disarmament, although they have long been on the agenda, have shown virtually no progress.

34. Contempt for the right of all States to participate in the debate and solution of the problems facing mankind has also done grave damage in the area of disarmament—an area in which the General Assembly's capacity for action, like that of the Organization as a whole, has been seriously curtailed.

35. The Geneva disarmament Committee—created a decade ago—has done only too little to carry out the mandate assigned to it, which was to take effective measures for disarmament and to prepare a draft treaty on general and complete disarmament. The various agreements concluded in recent years, which obviously have their importance, in no way affect the arms race, the manufacture and existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons and other types of weapons and have not reduced the danger of war.

36. This is a situation in which we cannot help feeling grave concern. Our concern is all the greater because, while the discussions on disarmament have proved ineffective, the arms race and military expenditures have undergone a giddy escalation.

37. An over-all view of the present dimensions of the arms race and of world military expenditures as well as of their profoundly harmful effects is provided in the extremely valuable report [A/8469 and Add.1] submitted to the Assembly by the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2667 (XXV), adopted last year on the initiative of Romania and 23 other countries.

38. The statistics given in the report show that, because of the considerable material and human resources it absorbs, military competition is an ever-growing burden on all nations and has a negative impact on the results of their peaceful work for economic and social progress. The report points out the disquieting fact that in the course of this century the volume of resources used for military purposes has increased at least twenty-fold. In the last decade alone about \$1,900,000 million have been wasted on armaments.

39. If firm steps are not taken as a matter of urgency to put a stop to the arms race and bring about disarmament there is a danger that military expenditures will increase in the period 1971-1980 by another \$750,000 million. Is mankind, in the Disarmament Decade and the Second United Nations Development Decade, to allow about \$2,650,000 million to be squandered on the manufacture and improvement of means of destruction?

40. Even more serious, the arms race is a continuous source of tension, mistrust and conflict, a direct threat to world peace and security.

41. Weapons have been and continue to be used by imperialist and reactionary circles as instruments in the

service of the policy of force and aggression, as instruments for exerting pressure and threats against the independence and freedom of nations and their sacred right to independent existence and development as well as against national liberation movements.

42. The arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race, is thus a thoroughgoing anachronism which has extremely grave repercussions on the life and labour of peoples and is a flagrant contradiction of the forward march of society and of the positive trends which are emerging in international life, of the steps taken or being taken towards an improvement in the political climate and *détente*, towards strengthening the security of States and their co-operation. Another anachronism, an aftermath of the cold war period, is the maintenance of opposed military blocs which, far from being a means of consolidating security, is a factor tending to create hostility and suspicion and an obstacle to the normal process of rapprochement, fruitful co-operation and good understanding among peoples. It is another anachronism that, almost 25 years after the end of the war, there are still troops and foreign military bases maintained in the territory of other States.

43. The peoples who must endure the ever-growing burden of enormous military expenditures and who know that it is they, were there to be another world conflagration, who would have to pay an inconceivable tribute of blood, demand that action should be taken as decisively as necessary before it is too late, in order to bring about disarmament. The highest interests of all nations of the world, as well as those of international peace and security, dictate imperatively that there should be a considerable increase in the efforts to bring about disarmament, that a new and more effective impetus should be given to negotiations to halt the arms race and that practical measures should be taken to reduce and gradually eliminate the armaments in national arsenals.

44. The most urgent task, which accordingly should be given absolute priority, is the abolition of nuclear weapons, which represent the greatest danger to all mankind.

45. In the view of my delegation, this session of the General Assembly has the very responsible task of marking a turning point in its manner of tackling and treating disarmament questions.

46. This new stage that the present session is called upon to inaugurate must be radically different from the long and sterile period which preceded it, and in contrast to the specific features of the preceding phase, the essential features of the new stage could be summed up as follows: an all-out effort at negotiation; a frontal attack on the main problems, going beyond general discussion; and adoption, without further delay, of specific disarmament measures.

47. A major move in this direction is the proposal to convene a world disarmament conference as the main forum for discussion and negotiation with a view to achieving the major objectives of disarmament.

48. My delegation, which has always been in favour of a world disarmament conference, would like to express its satisfaction and once again to welcome the idea of

organizing such a meeting, an idea which has come this year before the General Assembly in the form of a distinct agenda item included on the initiative of the Soviet Union [see A/8491].

49. We are happy to note that, as has emerged from our work thus far, the concept of a world conference which has been gaining ground for some time and has been the subject of several proposals, now commands wide support among States.

50. Accordingly, we feel that it is time to take a decision to convene the conference and to begin practical preparations for it. The debate now taking place should in our opinion contribute to better knowledge and a rapprochement of the views of States concerning the conference. The draft resolution which we shall adopt at the close of the discussions should be a generally accepted document which can lay a favourable basis for further efforts in this direction.

51. In its approach to questions concerning the world disarmament conference, my delegation proceeds from the consistent position of principle of the Romanian Government to the effect that no problem, regardless of its nature, concerning the fate of peoples can be resolved only by some States or by certain groups of States.

52. Experience has taught and continues to confirm that all countries, by virtue of the principle of equal rights, sovereignty and national independence, have the right and duty to participate in the consideration and solution of the major problems of our time, among which disarmament occupies a place in the forefront.

53. If they are to be viable, the agreements that are concluded must, above all else, strictly respect the legitimate interests of the peace and security of all peoples, as well as their inalienable right to a free and independent existence.

54. On the basis of this position of principle my delegation feels that all countries, whether or not they are Members of the United Nations, must take part in the preparations for the world disarmament conference.

55. Since there is no reason why one particular State or another should be denied its right to participate in the conference, there is no justification for restrictions or differentiation as to the participation of countries in the organization or holding of the conference because of their size, their degree of development or other criteria. It is our firm belief that any State—large or small, nuclear or non-nuclear, Member or non-member of the United Nations—is in a position to contribute to actualizing the noble purposes of the world disarmament conference. The contribution of all is essential if the success of the conference is to be assured. That will require a political will and spirit of co-operation and the utmost receptiveness to considerations, proposals and suggestions from all sides, in the quest for solutions which can command a general consensus.

56. Both the preparatory work and the substantive proceedings of the conference should be governed by the basic

principle of the equality of rights of States, with all the consequences that flow from it.

57. Concerning the role of the world conference, my delegation shares the view that it must not be limited to a mere general discussion of disarmament or to endorsement of agreements achieved outside the conference. We therefore view the conference as a universal forum, which will discuss the problems fully and in a spirit of utmost responsibility with a view to arriving at effective disarmament measures.

58. Like many other delegations, we consider that we must be very clear as to the aims of the conference, which should be reflected accordingly in the agenda to be agreed upon by the States.

59. Romania believes that the conference should focus its attention on the cardinal problems involved in stopping the arms race and bringing about general disarmament, particularly those relating to the prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons.

60. We should remember that the essential aim envisaged in resolution 1 (I) of the General Assembly, which was adopted more than 25 years ago, namely, the elimination of nuclear weapons from national arsenals, has not been achieved. Neither should we forget that the task of drafting a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, laid down by the Declaration of the General Assembly of 24 November 1961,² has not been carried out either.

61. The vital interest of all mankind in preventing and eliminating for all time the danger of a thermonuclear war requires that the problems of nuclear disarmament such as the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, the creation of nuclear-free zones backed by appropriate safeguards, an end to the production and testing of nuclear weapons, the reduction and elimination of all stocks of such weapons and their means of delivery, should be considered and resolved as a matter of priority at the conference we are now considering.

62. We are of course aware that there are forces which view the prospects for disarmament as a danger to their narrow interests. That is precisely why it is urgently necessary for public opinion and all those in positions of responsibility, as well as those who wish to save lives, to raise their voices and act with determination to impose the prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons, to impose disarmament. There is no plausible reason for eschewing a direct approach to all these problems which is the only way to bring about effective results in the field of nuclear disarmament. Any attempt to stall the negotiations on this subject would be impossible to explain to the peoples of the world.

63. As my delegation has already had an opportunity to state, at this session particularly, Romania believes that it would be of the utmost importance for promoting an easing of tension, confidence and co-operation among all countries

² Declaration on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons (resolution 1653 (XVI)).

to carry out partial measures such as freezing and reducing the military budgets of all States; firm commitments undertaken through agreements on non-recourse to the threat or use of force, non-interference in any form and in any circumstances in the domestic affairs of other States; the renunciation of military manoeuvres on the territory of other States; a prohibition of the establishment of new military bases or the installation of new nuclear weapons on the territory of other States; the abolition of military bases in the territory of other States; the withdrawal of troops within national frontiers and the dissolution of military blocs. We shall have an opportunity to refer in greater detail to all those problems in our statement in the First Committee.

64. In view of the scope and the urgency of disarmament as well as the many measures to be adopted, my delegation is in favour of stepping up the efforts of the United Nations in this area.

65. My delegation is convinced that, now that the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations have been restored, the Organization is in a better position to discharge its responsibilities in the matter of disarmament, as well as in regard to other international issues. In this context I wish to reaffirm my country's determined support for full and complete universality in the United Nations. A solution to the problem of universality in our Organization would undoubtedly have a positive impact on the effectiveness of disarmament efforts.

66. In our opinion the United Nations and all its agencies must act more effectively to ensure the triumph of the cause of disarmament, in order to provide the framework within which all States can make an active contribution to this major aspiration of mankind.

67. The General Assembly must consider the problems of disarmament more closely and more specifically and persevere in its attempts to secure tangible results.

68. Similarly, we believe that it is for the United Nations, whose primary objective is the maintenance of international peace and security, to assume a special role and responsibility with regard to the convening of the world disarmament conference, an action from which it cannot be dissociated. The United Nations will have to make a major contribution to the preparation and organization of the conference and to its successful proceedings.

69. My delegation shares the view of delegations that have suggested that the Disarmament Commission should be reactivated. We have arrived at an altogether anomalous situation whereby this important body of the United Nations, to which all Member States belong and which was created because of the need to ensure the participation of all in the discussion and solution of disarmament problems, has not met since 1965. We do not believe that there can be any justification for the continuance of this anomaly, for the Disarmament Commission being kept in a state of complete inactivity.

70. Further effort and clearly increased yield are two of the essential duties that the Geneva Disarmament Committee should fulfil without delay if it is to meet the

requirements of a world which is deeply concerned at the headlong increase in the arms race, and respond to the repeated calls for action which have been addressed to it, as well as to the will of the peoples. In order to do this it is necessary for the Disarmament Committee to reflect present realities and to provide an adequate framework enabling all countries concerned to participate in its discussions. It is also essential that it should expand the sphere of its concern and focus its attention on problems affecting the substance of disarmament.

71. The United Nations Secretariat, which has great experience and competence in this area, can and must increase its contribution, particularly in the preparation of studies, news, and collections of documents relating to various aspects of disarmament which would be useful both in informing world opinion and in the disarmament negotiations themselves.

72. Regarding the preparations for the World Disarmament Conference, it seems to us essential that an appropriate organizational structure be set up well in advance. To this end we might consider setting up a special committee, a solution which, for that matter, has been advocated by several delegations. The preparatory work could also be done, however, within the framework of the Disarmament Commission. My delegation takes a positive view of either of these possibilities. The main thing is that, whatever formula is adopted it should ensure the participation of all States on an equal footing.

73. My delegation is convinced that in the final analysis the success of the world disarmament conference will depend on the political will of States, on the determination of Governments to co-operate and to begin taking specific disarmament measures. At the same time, we are convinced of the particularly important role of world opinion in all nations because their interests and their legitimate aspirations place them firmly on the side of disarmament.

74. Before concluding, my delegation would like to reaffirm the decision of the Socialist Republic of Romania to continue working with determination to bring about the ideals of peace, security and world progress for the attainment of disarmament. In this spirit, my country looks forward to making its contribution jointly with all other socialist countries and all the States of the world to the preparation and convening of the world disarmament conference.

75. Mr. AGUILAR (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): For the delegation of Venezuela as well as for the other delegations who have participated in this general debate, it is obvious that the irrational arms race of nuclear and convention weapons which is being carried out on earth creates a danger for international peace and security and has grave and harmful social and economic consequences. The facts contained in the Report prepared by the Secretary-General [A/8469 and Add.1] on these consequences, and the information we have from other equally authorized sources, eloquently speak for themselves on the magnitude and gravity of the problem. Some of the speakers who preceded me have quoted most impressive figures, and it is not appropriate to repeat them or mention others which equally demonstrate the situation which now prevails in the world in regard to weapons.

76. It is also obvious to my delegation that this intolerable situation requires concerted action by the international community to halt and reverse the course of this arms race and finally achieve the goal of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

77. The question before us, given this state of affairs, is to determine which are the means and procedures which will be adequate to attain the best results in the shortest possible time.

78. The Soviet Union, on whose initiative this item has been included in the agenda for this session, considers that the most effective means of attaining the objectives we seek is to convene a world disarmament conference. In the draft resolution contained in documents A/L.631 and Add.1 submitted by the delegation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on 21 September last, this initiative is given concrete form. Furthermore, in the statement made at the 1978th plenary meeting held on 3 November, the representative of the Soviet Union, Mr. Malik, explained to us in a clear and detailed manner the purposes and objectives of a conference of this kind, its composition and the manner in which it should be convened, as well as the role which the United Nations organization would have in this respect.

79. This idea is not a new one, as was noted by Mr. Malik himself and other speakers who recalled the decisions taken in this regard at the Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, which met at Cairo in October 1964; resolution 2030 (XX) of the General Assembly; the declaration of the Third Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Lusaka in September of 1970; and the declaration made recently by the representatives of the same countries at the meeting they held in the city of New York in September last.

80. Our position in regard to this idea is known. Venezuela voted in favour of resolution 2030 (XX). In the records of the 1378th meeting of the First Committee, held on 19 November 1965 there is a very clear statement in support of this initiative made by the then delegate of Venezuela, Mr. Sosa Rodríguez. The reasons stated at that time continue to obtain, and we are therefore inclined to consider favourably the proposal which is now submitted to us for our consideration.

81. We must at once define our position in regard to some specific aspects of the proposal.

82. In the first place, we agree that this conference should be open to all States without any exception at all. We have always maintained that the question of disarmament, which is closely linked to the strengthening of international security and the development of peoples, as is affirmed in the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security which was adopted last year in General Assembly resolution 2734 (XXV), is not nor can it be a subject for the exclusive competence of the great Powers. All States, whatever their territorial size, their population, their degree of development or their military or economic power, have a legitimate interest in participating actively in disarmament

negotiations. Of course, responsibility—and I underline “responsibility”—for the success of those negotiations lies primarily with the super-Powers and the great military Powers.

83. It is fitting to make it clear that when we speak of the participation of all States without any exception, we mean of course all those who meet the generally accepted criteria of exercising effective jurisdiction over a given population and a given territory, whether or not they are Members of the Organization or of the specialized agencies, and quite independently of whether they are recognized or considered to be such by all other States.

84. We are not unaware that one of the obstacles to the convening of a conference of this kind might be precisely the participation of a given State whose very existence is recognized by some and denied by others. But we believe that it is worth while making an effort to give a really universal character to so important an enterprise.

85. Obviously, along this same line of thinking, the success of the proposed conference will depend in particular on the participation of all the military Powers and, most especially, on the participation of the nuclear Powers. In this connexion we have heard with great interest the very clear and categorical statement made by the delegation of Sweden [1989th meeting], to the effect that the participation of all important States is so decisive in its opinion that for that delegation it is equivalent to a *sine qua non* condition to judge of the desirability of this initiative.

86. Secondly, we agree with the view expressed by the delegations of Yugoslavia and Canada [1987th meeting] that this conference should be held under the aegis, and within the institutional framework, of the United Nations.

87. Under express provisions of the Charter, the Organization has very clear and definite responsibilities in regard to disarmament. The United Nations was created “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”. Its fundamental purposes, its reason for being, is the establishment of true and lasting peace on earth. To attain this objective it naturally has a very clear responsibility in regard to disarmament. Article 11 of the Charter expressly establishes the competence of the General Assembly to consider the general principles for co-operation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles which govern disarmament and the regulation of armaments, and to make recommendations regarding such principles to Members or to the Security Council, or to both. The representative of Finland, Ambassador Jakobson for his part reminded us [1989th meeting] of the role of the Security Council on the subject under Articles 26 and 47 of the Charter.

88. On the other hand, there is nothing to prevent the General Assembly from deciding, if it so wishes, that all States without exception shall be invited to a world disarmament conference held under its auspices.

89. We also have serious reservations about the idea of making the conference “a permanent international forum functioning over a period of time”—I am quoting literally from the statement made by the representative of the Soviet Union, Mr. Malik.

90. In this connexion we endorse the very relevant observations made by the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania when he said in regard to this problem: "But what role, if any, would be left to the United Nations General Assembly in these matters?" And later on: "It is the view of my delegation that we should be cautious here lest we establish a permanent or semi-permanent institution, which could turn out to be either a rubber-stamp, a white elephant or a rival to the United Nations." [1989th meeting, para. 60.] Equally relevant is the argument of that and other delegations that the permanence of an institution of this kind might mean that we would have to live with the idea of a perpetual arms race.

91. As we see it, the holding of a world disarmament conference is fundamentally intended to draw the attention of the international community to the magnitude and the gravity of the problem, and to determine general lines of action in this field.

92. As was stated by the representative of Ghana, Ambassador Akwei in this Assembly:

"Thus, we envisage a conference which will set to work immediately to devise a blueprint for the Disarmament Decade we are supposed to be engaged in. My delegation has never understood how we can proclaim a decade of disarmament without setting any guidelines or targets for the achievement of the goals of that decade. This was not how we approached the Second United Nations Development Decade. For this we had a realistic and well-conceived strategy. A similar strategy is needed for the Disarmament Decade if the decade is to be taken seriously. Unless, as my delegation stated in the First Committee at the twenty-fourth session, such a strategy is 'seen from an over-all point of view, reflecting the universal will and purpose of mankind, spread over an identifiable period of time and involving commitments by all concerned—both nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon Powers—over nuclear and conventional weapons, we shall be indulging all our lives in organized deception for which the people of the world will never forgive our generation'." [1985th meeting, para. 67.]

93. We completely agree with those views, and in the statement which we made in the general debate on disarmament at the 1711th meeting of the First Committee we insisted that it was necessary to have a strategy for the Disarmament Decade too.

94. The application of the principles and programmes for action to be decided on by this conference, and the strategy adopted by the conference, should in the opinion of our delegation be entrusted to permanent United Nations organs. We have to think in terms of a subsidiary organ of the Assembly, able to continue the tasks of the present Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, with the participation of all the nuclear Powers and the major military and economic Powers, with adequate representation of the main geographical areas and the various political positions or stands. That organ, with the present title, "Conference of the Committee on Disarmament", or with another title if that is considered necessary, would report annually to the General Assembly or to a revitalized

Disarmament Commission made up of all States Members of the United Nations, which could meet periodically. Finally, the world disarmament conference could meet whenever the General Assembly considered that there were reasons to convene it and whenever political circumstances were propitious for it.

95. If the great majority of States Members, among them and very particularly the five nuclear Powers, accept the idea in principle of convening a world disarmament conference, the next step might be, as some delegations have suggested, to request the Secretary-General to send a detailed questionnaire to all States Members of the Organization, requesting opinions on, among other things, the composition, nature, programme of work, date, duration and seat of this conference.

96. To conclude this statement, we should like to say quite frankly that the few results obtained so far in regard to disarmament are due fundamentally to the mutual distrust between States, particularly between the super-Powers, as was stated in the general debate by the representative of Ireland [1987th meeting]. In this regard it is very significant that, in the second preambular paragraph of the draft resolution contained in documents A/L.631 and Add.1, submitted by the Soviet Union, we read that "the further stockpiling, development and perfection of armaments are . . . intensifying"—and I underline intensifying—"distrust in relations among States". The arms race actually intensifies the distrust which already exists. As long as this distrust is not dispelled, results will continue to be scanty, whatever the means or procedures used.

97. Mr. GARCÍA ROBLES (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): If the situation today in regard to disarmament is compared with the one which obtained as a result of the ending of the Second World War 26 years ago, it is inevitable to conclude that very little headway has been made on the road to disarmament.

98. There is no comfort in the knowledge that among the thermonuclear weapons the one which is usually considered "normal" today is the 20-megaton bomb, that is to say, a bomb equivalent to 20 million tons of dynamite, developing an explosive energy a thousand times greater than that of the bomb which was dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945. Nor is there any comfort in knowing that the total of these bombs and others stockpiled in the arsenals of the nuclear Powers is such that, according to the authorized estimate of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute they represent today the incredible amount of about 15 tons of dynamite per inhabitant of the earth, or about 60 tons per person if the distribution is limited to nationals of countries members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and of the Warsaw Pact. Nor can we view with serenity the fact that in spite of the ban under the Moscow Treaty, nuclear tests, even though mainly underground, far from declining have risen substantially, since the yearly average number of those nuclear tests between 1945, when the first was carried out, and August 1963, when the Moscow Treaty was signed, was 27.9, while the average number between October 1963, when that instrument came into force, and 1970 has risen to 45.5. It is disquieting to read in authenticated reports that the sums squandered for military purposes throughout the world,

which in 1962 amounted to approximately \$120 thousand million, have been estimated at approximately \$204 thousand million for 1970, an increase of 70 per cent in less than 10 years.

99. To these facts, which I have just mentioned and which so eloquently speak for themselves, and are but the result of any objective analysis of the existing reality, we must add the concurring judgement of the experts. Thus, for example, the first conclusion of the recent report of the Secretary-General, prepared with the co-operation of eminent qualified consultants, in compliance with General Assembly resolution 2667 (XXV), could not be more alarming. The report states:

“From time immemorial States have relied on military forces to further their interests and enhance their security. Today is no exception. But with the acceleration of technological change, the perils which military expenditures have brought in their wake have become so acute that it is no exaggeration to say that the arms race has finally provided man with the means to putting an end to his species. That is the most obvious of its consequences. Political wisdom has so far averted this final disaster. It cannot, however, insure against military miscalculation or against human or technical error, both of which could lead to the same fearful end. This is the first thing that must be concluded about the consequences of the arms race. The threat of ultimate disaster it has generated is by far the most dangerous single peril the world faces today—far more dangerous than poverty or disease, far more dangerous than either the population explosion or pollution—and it far outweighs whatever short-term advantage armaments may have achieved in providing peoples with a sense of national security.” [A/8469, para. 112.]

100. That is why Mexico, which has endeavoured to give factual evidence for its special interest in all that pertains to disarmament, has always been in favour of proposals designed to provide strong encouragement to the work normally being done in this field under the auspices of the United Nations. Hence in 1957 my delegation voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 1011 (XI), in which it was decided, *inter alia*, to consider the desirability of convening “a general conference on disarmament”; and eight years later we also voted in favour of resolution 2030 (XX), of 29 November 1965, in which the General Assembly pronounced itself in favour of “the convening of a world disarmament conference to which all countries would be invited”.

101. It was precisely because of the importance which we attach to the question which we are now examining that, as will be recalled, at the 1978th meeting we ventured to suggest the postponement of the debate on this item for a few days so as to enable the representatives of the People's Republic of China to participate; at that time their arrival seemed imminent.

102. The unanimous welcome accorded to our suggestion proved that we were not mistaken in judging that the delay which we proposed would contribute to creating conditions more propitious for obtaining a fruitful result in the deliberations of the Assembly on this item.

103. However, the fact that for the past week we have had the good fortune to have among us the representatives of the People's Republic of China should not lead us to the mistaken conclusion—and this is something I wish to emphasize—that the mere presence of that great nation is in itself a panacea.

104. We consider, on the contrary, that it is imperative for us to strive to define the main requirements that must be fulfilled in order to ensure the success of a world disarmament conference. In the view of my delegation, those requirements are the ones which I shall now venture to state, and I shall try to do so as accurately as possible since their basis seems to us to be axiomatic.

105. In the first place, we believe that the convening of the conference should be preceded by careful preparatory work, since the meeting of the conference will arouse in world public opinion expectations which must not be disappointed.

106. As for the draft agenda for the conference, probably the comprehensive programme of disarmament submitted to the Assembly on 1 December 1970 in a letter from the delegations of Ireland, Morocco, Pakistan, Sweden, Yugoslavia and Mexico,³ to which resolution 2661 C (XXV), of 7 December of the same year refers, might facilitate its elaboration very substantially. However, with regard to other complex aspects of the preparatory work, it will be necessary to adopt far more concrete provisions than those contained in the draft resolution submitted by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which makes no provision for any international machinery or system to which would be assigned the responsibility for that task, which is so essential from every point of view.

107. A second and no less important requirement is that both the preparatory work and the conference itself should take place within the framework of the United Nations organization.

108. Indeed we cherish the conviction that, with the seating of the representatives of China in the United Nations, the Organization can now speak on behalf of more than 95 per cent of the world's population and we must from now on proscribe all those methods which would ultimately lead to a weakening of the United Nations.

109. Similarly we attach the greatest importance to the fulfilment of a third requirement, which consists in the necessity for all the nuclear Powers and all other States that may so desire to participate in the conference, whether or not they are Members of the United Nations. We are convinced that there is no obstacle whatsoever to full participation by States which are not Members of the United Nations, on a footing of absolute equality with States which are, in the world disarmament conference, even though that conference may be, like the one on trade and development, a United Nations conference. There is no provision whatever in the Charter that directly or indirectly precludes such participation; on the contrary, provisions

³ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fifth Session, Annexes*, agenda items 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 93 and 94, document A/8191.

such as the one in Article 93, which expressly provides that a State not a Member of the United Nations may be a party to the Statute of the International Court of Justice, prove by analogy, in our opinion, the soundness of what I have just asserted.

110. A fourth and final requirement, which also seems to us to be essential, is that the world disarmament conference must avoid having any adverse effects on the functions in the field of disarmament proper to the General Assembly as the supreme deliberative body, and to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament as the negotiating body, even though, of course, as I shall explain later, the Conference should be subject to urgent reorganization.

111. I have deliberately refrained from referring to the Disarmament Commission, since my delegation believes we should avoid all unnecessary proliferation of bodies that would, basically, entail a duplication of functions. Accordingly, we feel that in due course a choice will have to be made between the conference and the Commission, because we really cannot conceive it to be useful to keep in existence, even on a purely theoretical basis, two bodies having identical objectives and whose membership is also nearly the same.

112. Recapitulating what I have just said, I would say that my delegation is convinced that the resolution we adopt on the present item should contain unambiguous provisions on at least the following four points: the need for thorough preparatory work; the need for both that work and the conference itself, to take place within the framework of the United Nations; the need for all nuclear Powers and all States that may so desire, whether or not they are Members of the United Nations, to participate in the conference; and the need for preventing the conference from having adverse effects on the attributes which, in the matters with which it will be dealing, are incumbent upon the General Assembly and the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

113. The foregoing considerations, together with those stated here by many other representatives who have spoken before me, doubtless make it advisable for the sponsors of draft resolution A/L.631 and Add.1 to enter into the necessary consultations with other delegations for purposes of incorporating in the draft whatever changes may seem advisable so that it may, as they no doubt desire, be adopted unanimously.

114. Among such changes, I shall confine myself to mentioning here, by way of illustration, the adoption, for what might be called the preliminary preparatory stage—that is to say, between the present session and the twenty-seventh session of the Assembly—of a procedure offering greater guarantees of effectiveness or any other guarantee, than the very vague procedure outlined in the draft resolution. In this connexion, my delegation would be inclined to favour the formula mentioned at the 1985th meeting by the representative of Egypt, Mr. El-Zayyat, supported at the 1989th meeting by the representative of Sweden, Mrs. Myrdal, a procedure, as will be recalled, that would consist in requesting the Secretary-General to ascertain the opinions of all Member States concerning the numerous points which it would be desirable to specify by common consent prior to the convening of the conference,

and to submit to the Assembly a report on the matter for consideration at our meetings in 1972.

115. Among these points, my delegation believes that of necessity one must include the question of defining the role to be played at the next stage of the preparatory work by the Disarmament Commission or the Committee on Disarmament, or both.

116. Since we have mentioned the latter, which is also referred to expressly in operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, it seems to me very appropriate to add that, as a matter of the utmost urgency, without any delay, in order to make the most of the short time still remaining of the twenty-sixth session, the representatives of the five nuclear Powers, who, fortunately, are represented in this Assembly, should start talks on the subject. These talks should be directed towards arriving at a recommendation, which should be submitted by joint agreement to the General Assembly, regarding the changes which it may be immediately appropriate to make in the Committee on Disarmament, both in its composition and in its procedures, so that it will have the active participation of all these Powers and so that, at the same time, it may be able to function more effectively, adhering more closely to the fundamental principle of the sovereign equality of States.

117. With respect to composition, my delegation believes that with the entry of the People's Republic of China in the Committee, its membership could also be appropriately increased—to 30, for example.

118. As regards procedure, possibly the first reform should consist in abolishing the undesirable practice of co-chairmanship, which, in the light of new circumstances, would no doubt have to be considered to be obsolete, and replacing that with a system which might be either the annual election of a chairman, as occurs in various United Nations organs, among them the International Law Commission, or the monthly rotation of members as chairman, as is the case in the Security Council. Specific suggestions regarding other desirable procedural changes are to be found in the working document which the delegation of Mexico submitted to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament on 5 March 1970.⁴ Among the changes proposed there, I shall limit myself to mentioning that of giving the Secretariat of the Committee, which is made up of international officers of the United Nations Secretariat, greater participation in preparing the reports of the Committee itself.

119. To go back to what I said a few moments ago regarding the recommendation that the five nuclear Powers could submit to the General Assembly by way of the First Committee, it is worth while to recall resolutions 1660 (XVI) and 1722 (XVI), which gave rise to what has been called the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, and resolution 2602 B (XXIV), in the preparation of which my delegation had the good fortune to participate actively two years ago, whereby that Committee received its present title and enlarged its membership to 26.

⁴ *Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for 1970, document DC/233, annex C, sect. 6.*

120. Both in order to make use of the time that is necessary to carry out this most important task, which we believe cannot be postponed, and in order that consultations can be held to prepare a revision of the draft resolution contained in documents A/L.631 and Add.1 and its adoption, which we hope will be unanimous, my delegation is convinced that upon concluding the general debate on this draft resolution it would be indispensable to adopt a procedure analagous to the very wise one which has been followed in the First Committee on the item on the strengthening of international security, namely, to postpone voting for the time that may be necessary to attain the purposes which I mentioned earlier and which I venture to hope are shared by all delegations here represented.

121. Indeed, I believe that nothing should make us lose sight of the fact that at this time the immediate objective of the greatest importance must be to ensure the participation

in all our future work on disarmament of the two nuclear Powers which have so far not participated. The statements made by their representatives from this rostrum warrant optimism. Let us remember that on 15 November the head of the delegation of the People's Republic of China stated that "It is understandable that the people of the world long for disarmament and particularly for nuclear disarmament" [1983rd meeting, para. 210] and that the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations emphatically affirmed three days later, on 18 November, that "France does not intend to let any opportunity pass to reopen the discussion on disarmament. Events prompt us to seize this opportunity once again. China, a nuclear Power, now has a seat among us. And the presence of China is an invitation to us to discuss disarmament". [1989th meeting, para. 24.]

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.

