



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 19TH MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VRAALSEN (Norway)  
(Vice-Chairman)

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Organization of work

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 39 to 57, 133, 136, 138 and 139 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. IJEWERE (Nigeria): The current session of the General Assembly provides the First Committee with yet another opportunity to address issues which have traditionally come to be assigned to it in the expectation that it will endeavour to discharge its functions faithfully and in the interests of world peace and security.

It is a fitting tribute to our Chairman's country, Ghana, a progressive African State which has always stood in the vanguard of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the just cause of peace, as well as our Chairman's immense qualities and capabilities, that he has been unanimously elected. He can rest assured that the Nigerian delegation will extend to him its fullest co-operation in the discharge of his difficult task. We take this opportunity also to extend to the other officers of the Committee our best wishes for their successful tenure.

(Mr. Ijewere, Nigeria)

As my country's representative in the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva, it is with great pleasure and delight that I extend to my senior colleague and friend Ambassador Alfonso Garcia Robles of Mexico warmest congratulations on the occasion of his winning the much coveted Nobel Peace Prize. I have had the privilege of knowing Ambassador Garcia Robles in person for the past 16 years, and throughout this period he has never wavered in his total commitment to the cause of world peace and development. Disarmament negotiations are characterized by many frustrating moments, but if I may I would advise that he continue to stay the course.

On behalf of my delegation I would also extend felicitations to the co-recipient of this distinctive award, Madame Alva Myrdal of Sweden. Madame Myrdal has made many inspiring and monumental contributions to the cause of world peace, and the award to her of the Nobel Peace Prize has not come too soon.

After the hopes raised in some areas of disarmament negotiations at the end of the first special session on disarmament in 1978, we found that at the end of the second special session on disarmament, in July of this year, there was nothing to write home about. The impressive demonstration organized by the non-governmental organizations was certainly an achievement in so far as it underlined the serious concern shown by the general public about the arms race. But demonstrations took place because the ordinary man in the street -- and many who are not so ordinary -- felt alarmed at the lack of progress in disarmament negotiations and the ominous threat of nuclear holocaust.

At times one wonders how we have come to the sad situation in which we find ourselves in the world today. Nothing seems to be moving in the right direction. In disarmament negotiations, we are stalled, in the search for global economic negotiations, there is no purposeful movement; in UNCTAD, there is little progress, and we have been told also that the United Nations will have to reduce, in some cases drastically, some of its vital economic assistance programme. It appears that the reason for all this is that some powerful States are holding the rest of mankind to ransom unless the whole world is recreated in their own image and in accordance with their own set of values.

(Mr. Ijewere, Nigeria)

These are difficult times, but they are also times for great deeds. Let us hope that historians will not condemn our generation for misusing the fruits of science and technology that seem to have been generously placed at its disposal.

We share the view expressed by the Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, when, in Geneva on 12 February of this year, he said that "the control of nuclear weapons is the key to the possibility of peace". In fact the international community has long accepted this view and has for well over a quarter of a century shown continuous interest in the nuclear problems, in the form of protest marches and over 40 resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations. At the thirty-sixth session the General Assembly adopted resolutions 36/84 and 36/85 on the subject of a nuclear test ban. Resolution 36/85 reaffirmed the role of the Committee on Disarmament in the negotiation of a treaty prohibiting nuclear testing. The priority that the international community has accorded a nuclear test ban as the first step towards nuclear disarmament cannot therefore be over-emphasized. But how have the nuclear-power States responded to this?

One of the major nuclear Powers, in a spirit of cynical defiance, has embarked on a huge programme of nuclear-weapons development, which of course implies nuclear-weapons testing. Two nuclear-weapon States, apparently exasperated by the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament, have decided to withdraw until further notice from negotiations on nuclear test-ban treaties. We wish to appeal to those two nuclear-power States, as we did before, to reconsider their decision. We would also wish to point out that a situation in which some Powers can wine and dine at the nuclear table all the time while denying others even a cup of tea cannot serve the cause of a nuclear test ban or nuclear disarmament. As long as this state of affairs persists the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will remain ineffective because it will be looked upon as an instrument of discrimination, creating a system of nuclear apartheid.

What are the reasons for the nuclear impasse? Again, part of it can be found in the statement of Dr. Rostow, to which I referred earlier. Having stressed the linkages between the international situation and disarmament negotiations, he went on to say:

(Mr. Ijewere, Nigeria)

"It is clear that any consideration of the complete cessation of nuclear explosions must be related to the ability of the Western nations to maintain credible deterrent forces."

We agree that there is some merit in the nuclear-deterrence argument in so far as one can in part attribute to it the absence of a major war since the Second World War. But must peace be the product of the balance of terror? The balance of terror, to our mind, cannot provide the basis for genuine and lasting peace because it depends almost entirely on the vagaries of the advance of technology rather than on mutual confidence and an acceptable code of conduct, two vital elements which we believe can be achieved only by negotiations. A reliance on deterrence, with all the inherent risks, can make sense only if there is no viable and less risky alternative for the achievement of peace. We believe that there is a viable alternative to the balance of terror. It is the will, the political will, to negotiate within the framework of the United Nations system and in accordance with the spirit of the Charter. If the United Nations has become somewhat ineffective in this regard, it is because the big Powers have made it so. It is they who can make it what it was meant to be - an instrument of peace, stability and progress in the world. If international peace and security is to be meaningful, the perception of security has to be broadened to take into consideration the stability of all nations irrespective of their regions.

Having expressed our views about the nuclear arms race, it is natural for my delegation, which represents a non-nuclear State that is also a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to say a few words about the arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons - the so-called negative security assurance. We, the nuclear have-nots, feel that the least moral obligation owed to us by the nuclear Powers is an unconditional guarantee of freedom from nuclear attack and nuclear blackmail. This will not only contribute to world peace; it will also dissuade many from the search for nuclear independence.

(Mr. Ijewere, Nigeria)

It is sad to note that no progress has been made regarding this matter, and as a matter of fact the subject was hardly discussed during the summer session of the Committee on Disarmament. Disagreements centred on the interpretation of what constitutes security interests and the evolution of common formulas acceptable to all parties. Stated differently, the two problem areas are: which non-nuclear-weapon States should be eligible for assurances from the nuclear-weapon States; and under what circumstances will nuclear-weapon States withdraw their assurances?

It is the view of my delegation that nuclear-weapon States should give unconditional assurances to those non-nuclear-weapon States that have undertaken firm commitments not to develop, produce or acquire nuclear weapons. As regards those countries outside the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, conditional assurances could be given to them by way of the non-first-use of nuclear weapons. Whatever be the case and notwithstanding the unhelpful attitude of some nuclear-weapon States, it is necessary that this matter be brought to a satisfactory conclusion as soon as possible because further delay would pose a serious threat to the Non-Proliferation-Treaty régime.

The serious concern shown by the international community in general in regard to the problem posed by the production, development, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons is derived from the fact that, next to nuclear weapons, chemical weapons are the most dangerous weapons of mass destruction. It was not surprising, therefore, that the Ad Hoc Working Group on this subject held a total of 26 meetings in Geneva within a space of less than two months. However, again, nothing by way of concrete progress was made, because the issues relating to scope and verification remained a major stumbling block. My delegation's position regarding the scope of a future convention on chemical weapons is that it should contain a provision aimed at a comprehensive ban of chemical weapons. It is also our view that there should be a prohibition of use. We believe this would not detract from the 1925 Geneva Protocol but rather strengthen it by the addition of measures of verification.

(Mr. Ijewere, Nigeria)

On the issue of verification, it is our view that there should be provision for both national and international means of verification, although, from the point of view of developing countries, greater emphasis ought to be placed on international means because the vast majority of humankind live in developing countries and they do not possess the technology for national technical means of verification.

My delegation's views on the issue of radiological weapons are derived from our abhorrence of any weapons of mass destruction, the production of which, we believe, constitutes a prostitution of God's gift. The convention on radiological weapons should contain explicit clauses for the pursuit of negotiations on nuclear disarmament similar to paragraph VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, relating to the obligation of the nuclear-weapon States to undertake negotiations on nuclear disarmament. Any future convention should also recognize the inalienable rights of all States to develop and apply nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Since the conclusion of the second special session on disarmament, consideration of the important subject of a comprehensive programme of disarmament has been held in abeyance. This is largely due to the present world political climate, which has made any serious discussion of such an important matter inadvisable. It is hoped that this period of inaction will provide the opportunity for reflection on the part of all concerned and that, when discussion is reactivated, the political will to negotiate will be demonstrated.

The process of the strategic arms limitation talks (SALT) has been seen by many delegations, including mine, as a useful modality for defusing tension in the inter-State relations between the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as a contribution to the promotion of détente and mutual confidence between the East and the West. We also see it as a measure of arms control between the two military super-Powers. It was on that basis

(Mr. Ijewere, Nigeria)

that we welcomed SALT I in 1972 and SALT II in June 1979. However, the failure thus far to ratify SALT II has dealt a major blow to the bilateral efforts of the two super-Powers to address purposefully and on a continuing basis the ever-spiralling arms race, for which they bear and retain vicarious responsibility. It is our submission that the ratification of the SALT II treaty should be accepted by both the United States and the Soviet Union as lending credibility to their avowed intention to pursue efforts aimed at curbing and reversing the arms race.

We note with interest the initiation of the United States-Soviet Union negotiations on theatre nuclear arms, which started in Geneva in November last year, as well as their commencement on 29 June 1982 of negotiations on the reduction of strategic arms. We continue to nourish the hope that these talks will result in a significant reduction of nuclear weapons.

Within the same perspective has been the question of the regional approach to disarmament. While such an approach thus retains some validity and usefulness because of the concentration of arms in certain geographical regions, we have always felt that a regional approach must not dilute the common purpose of a global approach or seek to compartmentalize the disarmament effort. In this context, we have followed, with diminishing interest and qualified enthusiasm, the interminable talks which have been going on in Vienna for almost a decade now on mutual and balanced force reductions in Europe. These talks have remained a palpable secret, much to the consternation of the world community, which is eager to know the status of the talks, as well as the constraints which have stood in the way of reaching an agreement. Security in Europe must be seen as an integral part of international security. To that extent it is legitimate that the international community should not be kept in the dark for too long concerning the progress or lack of it in those talks. In short, we should like to suggest that the parties to the negotiation might see the merit of taking the international community somewhat into their confidence by opening up to it in some respects but without prejudice to the parties' concern for security in their region.

(Mr. Ijewere, Nigeria)

The militarization of outer space has continued to be a matter of concern to all. The extension of the arms race into outer space, which has been projected and defended as essential to their defence by certain States, represents a development which can be neither justified nor sustained on legal or moral grounds. The concept of outer space as a common heritage of mankind requires that it be explored for the benefit of all. This was the essence of the Treaty on outer space of 1967. In other words, the exploration and use of outer space must be devoted solely to its peaceful purposes. The recently concluded Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space equally drew attention to the concern of States that human life, the environment and ecology would be destroyed if outer space became a battlefield or an area of competition and confrontation instead of one of co-operation. In anticipation of the work of the Committee on Disarmament, to which the General Assembly has referred this subject for consideration, we venture to suggest that that Committee should proceed forthwith to set up a working group on the subject at the earliest possible date but not later than its next spring session. The issue is too important to drag on indefinitely.

(Mr. Ijewere, Nigeria)

As part of the effort to mobilize world public opinion in favour of disarmament through such means as disarmament education, information and training, the General Assembly at its tenth special session established a United Nations Fellowship Programme on Disarmament. Its purpose was to encourage expertise in the field, particularly among developing countries. The implementation of the programme thus far attests to its acceptance as an investment in human development by an ever-increasing number of States. On the basis of the growing support for and enthusiasm over the programme, my country, through its Foreign Minister, was encouraged to propose at the twelfth special session of the General Assembly a modest expansion of the programme by increasing the number of annual awards from 20 to 25. We are confident that on the basis of objectivity, balance and equitable geographical distribution, as well as on the basis of the guidelines approved for it by the General Assembly at its tenth special session, the programme will continue to respond to the wishes of the General Assembly and to the expectations of Member States.

I cannot end these brief remarks without reference to developments in Africa, where, as far back as 1964, a collective decision was taken by the Organization of African Unity to have the entire continent free from nuclear weapons. That decision remains in effect, but its objective has been put in jeopardy by the development of a nuclear capability by the apartheid régime of South Africa, which has continued to be helped by the active collaboration of certain Western countries, Israel and others who had somehow succeeded in posing as our friends all along.

We must remind these countries that their obligations under the United Nations Charter to help promote the cause of peace and international security are at variance with their current posture of flagrant disregard of international concern in the matter and the legitimate rights of African countries to live in peace within secure borders. The General Assembly must seek through the Security Council and along the lines of the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter to adopt effective mandatory and collective measures to give effect to the desire of African countries to have their continent free from nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Ijewere, Nigeria)

Finally, my delegation would like to say a few words in regard to the review of the membership of the Committee on Disarmament. It will be recalled that the Final Document of the tenth special session contained the following guidelines:

"For maximum effectiveness...(the negotiating body)...for the sake of convenience, should have a relatively small membership"

(A/RES/S-10/2 para.113)

and that there is a :

"...continuing requirement for a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of limited size taking decisions on the basis of consensus."

(Ibid. para.120)

While acknowledging the validity of these guidelines, my delegation also recognizes the legitimate concern of non-member States over the success of disarmament negotiations and their right to participate in multilateral negotiations.

We therefore welcome the interest shown by a number of Member States seeking to become members of the Committee on Disarmament. But it is our view that the present size of the Committee is adequate for purposes of negotiation, the more so since the Committee has not recorded any significant progress since its establishment four years ago. It is our view that the lack of concrete achievement is not due to lack of ideas, or the small size of the Committee, but to other factors. However, we would not object in principle to a modest expansion of the Committee which would take account of the needs to maintain geographical balance and the positive contributions of non-member States.

Mr. SUBRAMANIAM (Malaysia): May I at the outset offer the sincere felicitations of my delegation to Mr. Garcia Robles of Mexico and Mrs. Alva Myrdal of Sweden on the award to them of the Nobel Peace Prize of 1982 in recognition of the efforts they have made in the cause of disarmament.

In this century alone mankind has fought two major wars, affecting in varying degrees most countries of the globe. We have also witnessed the outbreak of lesser wars in South-East Asia, the Middle East and the South Atlantic, to name just a few, which threatened to embroil parties to the conflict in clashes of unprecedented dimensions. The enormity of destruction, the needless waste of human lives, the pain and agony resulting from these horrendous experiences, for a while evoked renewed commitments among the international community to scorn war as a recourse in resolve future conflicts. But as memories of these catastrophic reminders recede into the background, the international situation is again besieged by a state of uncertainty, confusion, suspicion and antagonism stemming from a feeling of insecurity, unaccommodating self-interest and rivalry for political dominance.

The fragility of the current world atmosphere is a compelling reason for us to take stock of the situation to avoid plunging into another abyss of catastrophe. It has been stressed by numerous speakers on this subject that if all this power of destruction came from human intellect, surely that intellect can create something more compassionate and benevolent. My delegation would like to associate itself fully with these sentiments, which deserve the attention of those who are genuinely concerned about the catastrophic effects of a nuclear war.

As we advance into the 1980s, we further witness a deterioration of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union over Poland, the Middle East, Kampuchea, Afghanistan, Namibia and over a series of other problems. The world today, because of the rivalry for supremacy between the two Powers, faces an ever greater danger, particularly because the struggle is being pursued in an already volatile global environment. Without appearing to be alarmist, my delegation would like to stress here that the present international situation, characterized by the intense rivalry between the two super-Powers in pursuit of their global objectives, has brought the world closer to the brink of an open confrontation.

(Mr. Subramaniam, Malaysia)

Recently, the second special session on disarmament was convened in New York with a view to finding an acceptable formula towards a comprehensive disarmament which could pave the way for lasting world peace. While lofty ideals and high-sounding principles were expressed to reflect the weighty positions of Governments and their desire to put an end to the arms race and to establish a world that would no longer be threatened by a holocaust of destruction, the session did not succeed in achieving its desired objectives. My delegation is therefore compelled to register its disappointment over this. As a small country which has been a cockpit of conflicting power imperatives, Malaysia does not subscribe to the tenet that peace and security can be sustained only by the precarious balance of mutual armed deterrence, which guarantees neither permanent peace nor continued survival. Disarmament is indeed the most vital necessity of our times, for in this age of nuclear weapons of mass destruction mankind must either disarm or perish.

The issue of disarmament is not only a concern of the super-Powers; it is the concern of all nations. World military spending on the average exceeds \$500 billion a year. This figure illustrates the distortion in priorities in a world where two-thirds of the population live in hunger and poverty. In view of the deep-seated mistrust and suspicion among nations, as well as the existence of various international problems, disarmament cannot be unilateral, nor can it be achieved overnight. Only a step-by-step approach with balanced mutual objectives, for both the heavily armed and the relatively unarmed States, can be feasible and effective. Despite the failure at the last special session on disarmament, renewed efforts must be made to generate greater political will among States and to spur them on to work out an orderly programme of disarmament to ensure peace and stability and guarantee the continued survival of the human race.

My delegation views with concern the alleged reports of the use of chemical toxins in Afghanistan, Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea. As members are aware, my delegation supported the establishment in 1980 of a Group of Experts to ascertain the veracity of the allegation. We hope that, with the renewal of its mandate last year, the Group will be able to continue its investigation and finally to come up with a more definitive

(Mr. Subramaniam, Malaysia)

conclusion. My delegation is happy that this Committee will continue to give the question of chemical weapons top priority with a view to achieving general disarmament in this field. This would include measures to curb attempts to produce new types of chemical weapons, and to destroy existing stockpiles.

Malaysia has always supported the idea of establishing zones of peace in various regions of the world. Such zones will create conditions conducive to peace and stability and eliminate super-Power rivalries for spheres of influence, thus preventing potential regional conflict. Moreover, such moves will certainly pave the way for regional co-operation in fields of economic and social development. This regional concept of disarmament will complement the goal of disarmament undertaken at various international forums. Mindful of this fact, Malaysia and other partners of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) will continue to pursue the realization of the zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in South-East Asia, which provides the basic framework for ensuring peace and stability in the region.

The goal of establishing a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean also offers countries in the region concerned prospects of increased stability and security. My delegation fully supports all efforts to bring about an early realization of this proposal. In this connection we regret that the Conference on the Indian Ocean was not held last year. Although there is still a divergence of views on the concept of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, we believe that this divergence could be narrowed down through a spirit of compromise. At the same time, the littoral and hinterland States themselves must exercise the necessary restraint and responsibility not to act in a manner inconsistent with the spirit of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. We hope that the rescheduled Conference on the Indian Ocean in 1983 will produce positive and constructive results.

In conclusion, I should like once again to remind members of the urgent need to work towards achieving the objectives of disarmament. We have no other choice. The immense power of nuclear weapons and the accuracy with which they can be targeted guarantee that nuclear war, if it comes, will produce devastation

of unprecedented proportions. It is worthwhile to remember that in a nuclear conflict there would be neither victor nor vanquished. There would only be total annihilation.

Mr. MARTYNENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Today the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR would like to set forth its viewpoint on a number of specific problems relating to the limitation of the arms race and disarmament.

The course of the discussion in the First Committee convincingly demonstrates the growing concern and alarm at the real threat of a nuclear war. In this connection we feel that it is very important that the thirty-seventh session of the Assembly should adopt specific documents giving a new and powerful impetus to the prompt solution of problems of the limitation of the arms race and disarmament. There is now more than ever a need for practical measures to avert the threat of a nuclear catastrophe and to move towards real disarmament.

(Mr. Martynenko, Ukrainian SSR)

It is only fitting that this year these questions should have been the focus of consideration in many international forums, primarily that of the second special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. The Soviet Union and the countries of the socialist community attended the session on disarmament and have come to the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly with a wide range of constructive proposals designed to eliminate the nuclear threat and halt the arms race.

These proposals encompass a broad spectrum of questions of the highest priority, such as the programme for nuclear disarmament, the prohibition of nuclear-weapon testing, the prohibition of nuclear neutron weapons, the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons, the non-stationing of weapons of any sort in outer space, and many others.

The delegations of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries have resolutely advocated the intensification of the work of all international bodies which are conducting, or are supposed to conduct, negotiations for the prompt attainment of concrete results and the resumption of suspended negotiations and the commencement of new negotiations capable of lessening the global threat posed by the arms race.

Unfortunately, the second special session failed to adopt concrete decisions on all of these important questions because of the unwillingness of the United States and a number of its allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to agree to the adoption of practical disarmament measures. The United States and its allies did not put forward any concrete proposals for real disarmament and avoided specific and businesslike consideration of the proposals of the socialist and other countries.

The United States has replaced the discussion and adoption of real disarmament measures by mere talks about disarmament. In practice the United States is continuing its policy of achieving military supremacy by developing and introducing new systems of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, and is actively making preparations for the deployment in western Europe close to the borders of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries of new missiles capable of making a first nuclear strike.

(Mr. Martynenko, Ukrainian SSR)

All of this is taking place under cover of fabrications about the Soviet threat and strident anti-Soviet propaganda. It is well understood that these actions by the United States are nothing other than the preparation of the material basis for the well-known American doctrines and concepts justifying the use of nuclear weapons. Such doctrines and concepts, as was rightly observed by the representative of Sweden, seriously poison the international political climate.

In the general debate my delegation pointed out that the United States has broken off a number of important negotiations on the question of arms limitation and disarmament and avoided such negotiations in the Committee on Disarmament. We get the very distinct impression that the United States does not find these negotiations, and particularly disarmament measures, to its liking, because they would impede the implementation of its unprecedented build-up of its military arsenals.

This policy undermines the only real basis for the solution of the accumulated problems through negotiations based on mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality of rights and lawful interests of all countries. Such a policy is diametrically opposed to the cause of peace and security, which requires a different approach and, above all, a sense of real responsibility for the fate of the world.

In a communiqué of the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Treaty countries held in Moscow from 21 to 22 October, emphasis is laid on the following:

"The cause of peace and security urgently demands the manifestation by all States of a true sense of responsibility and the political willingness to reach constructive agreements on current international issues, the renunciation of any desire to attain one-sided advantages, and strict compliance with the generally recognized norms and principles of international law, as enshrined in agreements and treaties. For their part, the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty have never sought and do not now seek to achieve unilateral military advantages."

(Mr. Martynenko, Ukrainian SSR)

Now more than ever before it is necessary that all States show the political will and a sincere desire to unite their efforts to bring about the normalization of the situation and to arrest the nuclear threat. This can be done only by lowering levels of military confrontation and by the adoption of real disarmament measures, particularly in the nuclear field. This is precisely what is being proposed by the Soviet Union and the socialist countries in their concrete initiatives calling for the elaboration, adoption and stage-by-stage implementation of a programme of nuclear disarmament, from the cessation of the development of new systems of nuclear weapons to the gradual reduction of stockpiles and, eventually, their complete elimination. These proposals cannot give rise to any doubts in the minds of those who are truly interested in the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear arsenals. Of course, in the process of negotiations all delegations can make their counter-proposals in due course.

It is highly important, in our opinion, that the priority of nuclear disarmament has been unanimously recognized in the concluding documents of the first and second special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. None the less, proposals on the commencement of concrete negotiations for the cessation of the production of nuclear weapons and the reduction of stockpiles and, eventually, their complete elimination are continuing to this very day, and the establishment of an ad hoc working group of the Committee on Disarmament on that subject is still being blocked.

When we consider how these proposals are qualified as untimely, unsuitable and not in keeping with the security interests of the United States, and so on, we are entitled to ask: when will they become appropriate or timely? The emergence of new and ever more modern types of weapons of mass destruction is dangerous, in that any control over the arms race may be lost and this could lead to a nuclear conflict. So timeliness ceases to have any sense in this context.

(Mr. Martynenko, Ukrainian SSR)

It is in the spirit of the well-known Pentagon nuclear doctrines that the representative of the United States in the First Committee has virtually been justifying the need for the existence of nuclear arsenals. As far as the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests is concerned, he simply dodged the issue altogether and let it be understood that the United States would continue such testing. This is nothing other than a challenge to the decisions of the United Nations and a renunciation of the obligations assumed by the United States under international treaties.

Efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons are also being undermined by the fact that the United States is trying to forge an artificial link between disarmament problems and questions which have no relation to them at all, including those questions which have to do solely with the internal affairs of sovereign States.

Furthermore, we must also point out that the decisions of the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly on the prohibition of the nuclear neutron weapon and the non-stationing of nuclear weapons on the territories of States where there are no such weapons at present have been completely ignored. The United States recently adopted a decision to double the arsenal of neutron weapons intended for use in Europe. It is essential that the Committee on Disarmament work out as soon as possible a convention on the prohibition of the production, stockpiling, deployment and use of this barbarous weapon, the emergence of which is significantly lowering the threshold of nuclear war. Too many weapons of mass destruction and sophisticated means of delivery have already been accumulated in the world. It is essential to dismantle this monstrous machine of nuclear destruction. That is the only way to rid the world of this deadly threat. The dismantling must be carried out promptly, starting with the gradual reduction of levels of military confrontation. To ensure this effective concrete measures are necessary which will truly lead to nuclear disarmament.

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR calls upon the General Assembly and all delegations to take a responsible approach to this question and adopt decisions on concrete practical measures to bring about the immediate preparation and stage-by-stage implementation of a programme of nuclear disarmament. We also call upon the Committee on Disarmament to initiate immediately relevant negotiations to this end.

The first step in that direction would be a simultaneous cessation or freeze of the production and deployment of nuclear warheads and their means of delivery and of fissionable materials for the manufacture of nuclear weapons. It is essential also that we speed up the search for a solution of the question of security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States.

In our view, the best solution in that sphere would be the conclusion of a relevant international convention. In this respect, we wish to stress that the Soviet Union's commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons applies to all countries of the world without exception.

The solution to the problem of the prohibition and elimination of another type of weapon of mass destruction - chemical weapons - is long overdue. The Soviet proposal incorporating the basic provisions of a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and their destruction contains a great number of new elements, among them the matter of monitoring compliance with the future convention. We feel that the necessary conditions now exist for a decisive step forward in the direction of the solution of this question. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR was pleased to note the great amount of work done this year by the Committee on Disarmament and its Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Sujka of Poland, towards the preparation of a text of a draft convention; we hope that this work will be continued and successfully completed in the near future. Considering the particular importance and urgency of the problem of eliminating chemical weapons, it is imperative that everything be done to bring about its successful completion.

Unfortunately, not all delegations involved in the negotiations are displaying a constructive attitude or a desire to achieve a draft convention as soon as possible. The actions of the United States Administration - the large-scale build-up and renewal of chemical arsenals, the production of binary chemical weapons, the billions of dollars appropriated for the development of new types of chemical weapons and the unilateral breaking off of Soviet-American negotiations - create serious obstacles to progress towards the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons.

(Mr. Martynenko, Ukrainian SSR)

It is therefore highly relevant now to bring up the matter of the need for all States to avoid taking actions that would complicate negotiations on this important problem. It is particularly important in this respect that States should renounce the production and deployment of binary and other new types of chemical weapons, and the stationing of chemical weapons on the territory of other States. It is particularly urgent that these measures be implemented now, before the rapid development of science and technology has led to new types of chemical weapons, which would create insuperable difficulties for monitoring compliance.

My delegation considers that the General Assembly can make a substantial contribution to the solution of the question of the elimination of chemical weapons by appealing for an intensification of negotiations on that question in the Committee on Disarmament, for the resumption of the suspended Soviet-American negotiations and for the prohibition of the production and deployment of binary and other new types of chemical weapons, as well as the stationing of such weapons in the territory of other States.

Prime importance is also being gained by the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This has been confirmed by discussions in the First Committee. The threat of the militarization of outer space has grown, particularly in the recent past. In the fiscal year just ended, the amounts allocated by the United States to military outer space activities significantly exceeded the allocations for peaceful activities. Moreover, a further substantial increase in military space programmes is planned. On the orders of the Pentagon, work is proceeding rapidly on preparations for the use in outer space of laser and particle-beam weapons, of space mines, and of command stations and other military systems. The inclusion in the first-strike potential of direct outer space weapons is also being discussed. We must not allow outer space to become a new arena of the arms race; we must do everything we can to ensure that it remains an arena of peaceful co-operation only.

The way is cleared to this by the Soviet Union's proposal regarding the conclusion of a treaty on the prohibition of the stationing of weapons of any kind in outer space. Unfortunately, because of the negative position of a number of States, the Committee on Disarmament was unable even to establish an ad hoc working group on the question. The resolution of this important

question has been complicated by the unilateral suspension by the United States of the Soviet-American negotiations on anti-satellite systems. It is essential now that everything be done to activate negotiations in the Committee on Disarmament on the non-stationing of weapons of any kind in outer space and on the resumption of the suspended negotiations. The General Assembly can and must contribute to this process.

We are faced with broad problems such as that of the renunciation of the use of technology for war. The United States press reveals that a considerable amount of research is being done on the creation of a so-called third generation of nuclear weapons and of other weapons based on the latest state-of-the-art computer and scientific technology, for use both on earth and in outer space. The rapid pace of progress in this field threatens to lead to the emergence of qualitatively new and far more dangerous and destructive weapons than before. It is now time to resolve this problem swiftly and effectively by calling on experts and scientists; it is the duty of all delegations to show a realistic understanding of this question and to activate negotiations in the Committee on Disarmament regarding the elaboration of international agreements on the prohibition of the development and production of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction. The Assembly could give impetus to the prompt solution of this problem by calling on all States to renounce the military use of the latest scientific and technological discoveries and accomplishments. We are convinced that this would promote progress towards the curtailment of the arms race in general.

Another important problem concerns the limitation and reduction of conventional weapons and armed forces, a matter which was raised by many delegations in their statements. Regarding practical measures for the resolution of this problem, we would emphasize that the attainment of an agreement not to increase conventional weapons and armed forces, beginning at an agreed point - in other words, an agreement on a freeze - would be an important concrete step towards their subsequent reduction. Initially, such an agreement could encompass all the permanent members of the Security Council and other militarily important States.

(Mr. Martynenko, Ukrainian SSR)

Military activity at sea is another highly relevant matter at present. In a memorandum presented at the second special session devoted to disarmament, the Soviet Union made a number of concrete and realistic proposals concerning the limitation and reduction of the level of military presence and activity where the possibility of the outbreak of conflict is greatest. Joint consideration by States possessing powerful naval fleets of the question of their limitation and reduction would be appropriate.

A real contribution to the cause of disarmament would be the adoption of practical measures for the freezing and reduction of military budgets, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace in various parts of the world, the prohibition of radiological weapons, the strengthening of the non-proliferation régime, and the preparation for and convening of a world disarmament conference. The Assembly could thus make its contribution to finding genuine solutions to these problems and could give new impetus to ongoing negotiations, help in the resumption of those which have been suspended, and initiate new negotiations on the whole gamut of disarmament problems. Businesslike negotiations, along with the desire and political will for the settlement of problems, are necessary for the resolution of any disarmament question.

One thing is needed now: that we move from words to concrete measures for the limitation of the arms race and for genuine disarmament. Only in that way, and not through endless organizational projects and restructuring, which merely divert attention from the substance of the problem and give the illusion of progress, will it be possible effectively to solve disarmament problems.

Mr. SYLLA (Senegal) (interpretation from French): Permit me first of all to associate myself with previous speakers in expressing to Mr. Gbeho the warmest congratulations of the delegation of Senegal on the occasion of his election as Chairman of our Committee. May I also congratulate the other officers of the Committee. I should also like to assure the Chairman of the complete readiness of my delegation to do all it can, within its modest capacity, to contribute to the success of his task.

Let me avail myself of this opportunity to convey our sincere congratulations to the two winners of the Nobel Peace Prize, Ambassador Garcia Robles and Mrs. Alva Myrdal, while expressing the hope that that high distinction may serve as a source of inspiration to those generations to which the two people thus honoured will hand on the torch of the fight for the peace and security of nations.

As preceding speakers have pointed out, if the debate on disarmament is to be objective and realistic, it must be brought back into the context of the international situation. In that respect the background against which our work is being carried out does not encourage much optimism.

The persistence and multiplication of centres of tension in the world, the heated language, and the chilling of attitudes between ideological blocs certainly do not constitute an ideal climate in which to make progress in disarmament.

Indeed, disarmament cannot be dissociated from the security of States which is threatened in different parts of the world by armed aggression and foreign interference, and the clash of national, ideological or even religious ambitions.

In the new emerging cold war atmosphere that is being created, the central axis of conflict, which for a long time has been shifting towards the third world, is turning some regions into a tilt-yard for local wars, frequently brought about and maintained by external Powers which, while they thus drag the whole of mankind into the perilous arms spiral, often use those conflicts to achieve their geo-strategic objectives and at the same time to test new techniques of destruction.

Thus even today, for millions of human beings in the Middle East, in southern Africa, in South-East Asia, the purpose of the United Nations, which was

(Mr. Sylla, Senegal)

created precisely "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", is still but a dream to be realized, an ideal to be achieved.

Thus nuclear over-armament, the end of which has first priority in the disarmament negotiations, is not the main cause of international tension, even if it constitutes an additional destabilizing factor. It is above all the reflection of that tension in a world in which peace through the rule of law, which was at the root of the creation of the United Nations, has not always been a guarantee of international security. Quite to the contrary, peace through terror appears to have replaced the rule of law in a scene dominated by conflict between powerful interests and ideologies, where the credibility of our Organization is constantly losing ground and collective security provisions can hardly ever be implemented.

We, the small countries, who feel deprived of every means of defence or real protection, are deeply concerned at this new state of international near-anarchy, to use the language of the Secretary-General's report (A/37/1). We shall have an opportunity to revert to this question when our Committee opens the substantive debate on the proposal by the delegation of Sierra Leone - which we applaud - asking for the inclusion on our agenda of an item on implementation of the provisions of the Charter on collective security for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We do not meet merely to deplore a failure or to accept a fatality, but rather to search for ways and means of achieving true progress, first and foremost in the field of nuclear disarmament. Everything, or almost everything, has already been said about the danger for mankind of the nuclear arms race. Years ago priorities were defined, a programme of action outlined and appropriate mechanisms set up. If little or nothing has been achieved in this field, it is because the political will to make real progress is still lacking.

Not only have the countless resolutions of our Organization on the subject not been implemented, but there is a continual increase of destructive power in those very countries to which our Charter entrusted the task of maintaining international peace and security.

(Mr. Sylla, Senegal)

Unfortunately, as regards this question so vital for the future of the world, the small countries have no other recourse than to try and convince the great Powers that they have in their hands the key to our common destiny. However loudly we speak out, we cannot be sure of being heard, far less heeded. All we can do is hope that by appealing directly to national and international public opinion, through the launching of a world disarmament campaign, we shall succeed in triggering a militant collective effort capable of exerting the necessary pressure to compel the various Governments to give proof of greater involvement in the negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

But while we wait for new disarmament measures to be adopted, it seems to us that we could at least devote our energies to expanding those which have already been the object of international agreements. I am referring here to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The virtual unanimity of the developing countries in signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty and thus formally renouncing a sovereign right, gives them every right to ask the nuclear Powers in exchange to undertake to give them secure guarantees against the use of such weapons. The form of that commitment, whether it be a treaty, a convention, or some arrangements, does not appear to us to be of special importance. Above all, it should embody clear-cut guarantees as regards the security of non-nuclear-weapon States, who must be freed from any fear of aggression or the threat of aggression with such weapons.

We are all the more concerned about this question since no one today doubts that on the African continent the racist Pretoria régime has acquired the secret of the atomic weapon, thus calling into question the 1964 Declaration of the African Heads of State and Government, which made of our continent a nuclear-free zone. We believe that the nuclear Powers must play a decisive role in eliminating that threat. In our view they should, through precise and constraining commitments, guarantee respect for the non-nuclear status of Africa by abstaining from transferring any nuclear technology to South

(Mr. Sylla, Senegal)

Africa until the latter signs the Non-Proliferation Treaty and places its facilities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This would not be too dear a price to pay to maintain the benefits of the non-proliferation régime, above all in view of the possible consequences for international peace and security of an atomic weapon in the hands of the Pretoria leaders, whose racial policy, as everyone knows, threatens to result sooner or later in an unprecedented explosion.

(Mr. Sylla, Senegal)

The horrors of a future nuclear war should not lead us to forget the horrors of conventional wars, which are very real in our world today. While the fear of failing to survive a nuclear holocaust continues to prevent an atomic confrontation, vast quantities of highly sophisticated conventional weapons are being widely used, with devastating effects, as we have again seen this year.

The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament clearly defined the approach that we should take to the reduction of conventional weapons and armed forces. It laid down the responsibility of States possessing the largest nuclear arsenals for beginning or continuing negotiations in that field in conditions guaranteeing everyone an equal right to security. In certain regions, notably in Europe, negotiations are proceeding with a view to reaching agreements aimed at the self-limitation, if not the reduction, of conventional military forces. However, although they constitute a very important aspect of the disarmament endeavour, conventional weapons are not today the object of any multilateral negotiations under the aegis of the United Nations. We hope that the study that the General Assembly at its last regular session requested the Secretary-General to carry out will pave the way for such negotiations.

The second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament failed by a wide margin to respond to our legitimate hopes of it. Not only were we unable to agree on a comprehensive disarmament programme, which was the main purpose of that session, but we were even unable to complete the proposed agenda. We believe that some of the questions which were referred to the current session are worth mentioning here.

First, there is the follow-up to the study of the relationships between disarmament and development. Everyone acknowledges today that the easing of tensions in the third world implies taking into account the imperative need for development. More important, one of the greatest dangers to peace and security - the gulf between the rich and poor nations - far from closing, continues to grow, irretrievably, casting into Sisyphean despair so many peoples which are nevertheless making such laudable efforts to break out of their difficult situation.

(Mr. Sylla, Senegal)

Even if the recommendations in the report of the study are no panacea, their implementation would represent a big step in the right direction, promoting solidarity rather than mistrust, to the benefit of international security. Therefore, we cannot but applaud Sweden's initiative in proposing the inclusion of this question as a separate item on our agenda. We shall support any effort to implement the relevant recommendations in the report.

Next there are the problems relating to the verification and control of the implementation of disarmament agreements. That question has become an alibi for refusal to pursue disarmament negotiations, each party wishing to assure itself in advance of respect by the other of the agreements to be concluded. However, so long as that hypocrisy prevails over control and inspection the objective of disarmament will remain a pious hope. It was this concern that led the General Assembly to have a study carried out on the creation of an international satellite monitoring agency. The study submitted to us last year provided positive conclusions on the possibility of setting up the proposed agency and on the services that it could render both in respect of verification of observance of disarmament agreements and control of crisis situations in the world.

My delegation hopes that that proposal will be thoroughly examined during the current session, because it believes that the establishment of the agency, without prejudice to the temporary solutions that might be found, would represent an effective response to our fundamental concerns - general and complete disarmament brought about in a progressive, controlled manner.

Finally, in addition to those matters, we should like the General Assembly during this thirty-seventh session to take specific measures on a number of questions linked with the institutional aspects of disarmament. With particular reference to the Committee on Disarmament, we hope that a decision will be taken to enlarge its membership, bearing in mind on the one hand the need to increase its effectiveness and on the other the legitimate interest shown by certain countries in becoming members.

(Mr. Sylla, Senegal)

Those are the general remarks that my delegation wishes to make at this stage of our discussions. When the time comes we shall, of course, speak in more detail about some of these questions.

Mr. WOOLCOTT (Australia): As this is the first occasion on which I have spoken in the First Committee, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, on your election. May I ask you to pass on to the Chairman my congratulations on his election, especially as we were friends and colleagues in the past, when I had the privilege to serve in Ghana. I should also like to congratulate the other officers of the Committee.

You preside over the First Committee, Sir, at a time which could be a watershed in the life of the United Nations. The peoples of many countries, including Australia, have been frustrated, disillusioned and disappointed by the lack of progress in disarmament. Moreover, they feel sickened by the wasteful and unprecedented application of financial and technical resources to the manufacture of weapons in a world which still needs so much.

However, we hope that disappointment at the meagre achievements of the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament will be translated into a renewed commitment to work in every way possible to bring about balanced and verifiable reductions in the level of arms, and to set the world on a steady course towards our common, long-term goal of complete disarmament.

The Secretary-General's report has focused attention on shortcomings in the international community and our ways of behaving towards each other. This is nowhere more graphically seen than in the increasingly frequent recourse to arms in settling international disputes. However, so long as nations feel threatened by each other, so long as there is mistrust about each other's intentions, so long as there is uncertainty about each other's military capabilities and, above all, so long as nations continue to resort to the use of arms to settle their international disputes, there can be little disposition among Governments to disarm.

Australia has committed itself to co-operate fully with the other members of the international community in the search for alternative ways of ensuring national security. At the same time, we are prepared to play our full part in the multilateral process of arms limitation and reduction.

(Mr. Woolcott, Australia)

The second special session showed that there is no sweeping or simple solution to the complex questions of disarmament. Progress means painstaking, step-by-step work to negotiate agreements between nations to reduce existing arms levels, to prevent further escalation and to eliminate those weapons systems which are universally held to be obnoxious.

The Australian Government believes that the international community, while not losing sight of the wider objectives, must now concentrate its efforts on those practical measures of disarmament where progress is possible.

Let us all, especially the super-Powers, make a renewed and genuine effort to put aside rhetoric and propaganda about disarmament and seek practical progress in areas where such progress can be made. We recognize the harsh fact that a fundamental condition for any real progress in disarmament is that the super-Powers - the United States and the Soviet Union - must be prepared to reach some agreed understandings on mutual disarmament. But this does not mean or imply that other countries should turn away from the issue in despair and leave it to the super-Powers. On the contrary, the major, the middle and the smaller countries should all leave the super-Powers in no doubt about their obligation to the international community as a whole and to present and future generations.

Australia believes that the most hopeful developments in 1982 have been the opening of the START talks between the United States and the Soviet Union and the opening of the bilateral negotiations on the reduction of intermediate-range nuclear forces. We recognize the extremely important role of bilateral negotiations between the super-Powers in achieving meaningful arms reductions, and we earnestly call upon both parties to pursue these negotiations vigorously, mindful that they are negotiating, in the long run, not merely on behalf of the populations of their own respective countries. We believe that these two sets of negotiations currently represent the best and most realistic prospect of moving towards real reductions in the level of nuclear arms in the short and medium term, and we urge these countries to broaden their dialogue on nuclear matters.

(Mr. Woolcott, Australia)

Australia believes that a matter of highest priority on the disarmament agenda is the need to conclude a fully verifiable comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. My delegation will once more this year be active in promoting a resolution on this subject. We hope that all delegations will feel able to support us. We have been heartened at the work done on the subject in the Committee on Disarmament's Working Group this year. We hope that the start which has been made will be built upon in the coming year and that the Committee will be able to begin work on other aspects of the treaty as soon as possible. We note too that the representative of the United States has said that the comprehensive test-ban treaty remained a long-term disarmament objective of the United States of America.

A comprehensive test-ban treaty represents the best way of curbing not only vertical but also horizontal proliferation and is in the view of my delegation potentially the single most effective disarmament measure which the international community could adopt at this time. My delegation will be speaking more fully on the subject of the comprehensive test ban later in our general debate.

It is significant that work on a comprehensive test ban in the Committee on Disarmament has started with the question of verification and compliance. Verification mechanisms are an essential part of the conditions for creating confidence, which must be an inherent part of every international disarmament treaty. The days of unverifiable agreements are over. We are living in a world where technology has revolutionized verification, making it less intrusive and more acceptable. Technology is becoming more sophisticated and more flexible. But notwithstanding such developments there will still be areas where on-site inspections will be necessary to maintain the climate of confidence and trust. My delegation welcomed the indication in the draft chemical warfare convention presented to the special session by the Soviet Union that verification was also seen by that country as an essential part of modern disarmament treaties.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is the main international instrument regulating nuclear activities. Well over 100 non-nuclear-weapon States have now acceded to the Treaty and have thereby entered into an international legal commitment not to acquire nuclear weapons. Australia welcomes recent

(Mr. Woolcott, Australia)

accessions to the Treaty and looks forward to its universal acceptance. The nuclear non-proliferation régime can and should be strengthened. Australia respects the right of States to protect their legitimate security interests, but we believe that the spread of nuclear weapons leads to situations of insecurity and dangerous instability. Australia considers we must all continue to strive for universal adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Another area where some progress has been made, and where we would hope more is possible, is in the field of chemical weapons. There is universal abhorrence of the indiscriminate effects of the use of chemical weapons and a clear need to negotiate a convention to ban them completely. Australia was active in promoting the establishment of the United Nations Special Expert Group to Investigate Allegations of the use of Chemical Weapons, and we look forward to receiving the Group's report on its return from its latest fact-finding mission. During the Group's work the need has become clear for the establishment of an effective mechanism for the rapid investigation of allegations of the use of chemical weapons if countries are to be effectively discouraged from using them. My delegation will be glad to work with others interested in this subject to try to work out at this session of the General Assembly the best way of achieving such a mechanism.

Australia is a country which is also keenly interested in the peaceful exploitation of the possibilities offered to mankind by the use of outer space. We are concerned at indications that others may wish to use outer space for warlike purposes. That is not to say that the military use of outer space is inherently or inevitably evil. We recognize the irreplaceable value of the use of satellites, for example, in monitoring compliance with arms control treaties. But we do not wish to see outer space used for any aggressive military purposes, and my delegation will be active during this session of the General Assembly in seeking practical ways of keeping the arms race out of outer space.

Another area where practical measures to reduce international tension and increase international security are possible is the Indian Ocean. Australia, much of whose coast is washed by the waters of the Indian Ocean, is an active member of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, which is charged with investigating the creation there of a zone of peace. The creation of a zone

(Mr. Woolcott, Australia)

of peace involves the development of a complex web of interdependent relationships. It involves developing such a network of interdependence in economic, social and trade terms that the upsetting of the delicate balance by recourse to arms would become unthinkable. In the development of such a system the countries of the region have a vital role to play, but the role of countries outside the region geographically who are yet active in it must also be linked to the fate of the area.

My delegation has proposed to the Ad Hoc Committee this year that, as part of the preparations for the Conference on the Indian Ocean, to which we are committed as a step towards the creation of the zone of peace, it should give attention to the development of such a network. It is the view of the Australian delegation that there is still considerable work to be done in trying to harmonize the views of delegations and in making proper preparations for a successful Colombo Conference.

(Mr. Woolcott, Australia)

I have dealt at some length with the areas of work in the First Committee to which the Australian Government attaches most importance. There are other areas of work where progress of a practical nature may also be possible, and we shall be glad to work with others on them. Such subjects include the reduction of military budgets, radiological weapons, confidence-building measures and the reduction of stocks of conventional weapons.

In his statement to the General Assembly recently the Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Street, endorsed the Secretary-General's report and agreed with the urgent need for the United Nations to become more effective, more efficient and more responsive to the situations it faces, if it is to regain or even maintain its credibility as an important force in international affairs.

Australia believes that the United Nations must have a vital role to play in the process of disarmament and arms control. We all share a collective responsibility for peace in the world and, however essential negotiations between two or more countries may be on particular issues, it is important that the voices of all be heard and that all countries be able to participate actively in the search for a safer and more secure world. The multilateral disarmament deliberative and negotiating organs of the United Nations have a very important role to play in this search. It is essential not to devalue them but rather to work to make them more effective.

We agree with those who have already complained that the First Committee is becoming increasingly unwieldy. We think that it is time for the First Committee to reassess critically its own methods of work. We suggest that one or two meetings in our programme this year be set aside for an informal exchange of views on how our methods of work could be improved and that we then ask the Secretary-General, with the help of his assistants in the Centre for Disarmament, to prepare a report, based on these exchanges and on any additional ideas. The Secretary-General could circulate the

(Mr. Woolcott, Australia)

report to Member States in time for them to consider the matter in their capitals and then communicate their views to him. He could then circulate them so that at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly we should be better placed to consider seriously practical means of making our work in this Committee more effective.

I have outlined some of the more important areas of the work of the First Committee as my delegation sees them. We conduct our work here at the United Nations under the gaze and on behalf of the peoples of the world. They fear not only for their own safety but for the safety of the next and future generations and indeed for the very survival of our planet. We must face our tasks soberly and realistically. We should resist the temptation to seek short-term national advantage and score propaganda victories. It is not enough to say to our peoples, "We have proposed a certain number of new disarmament initiatives", when those so-called initiatives sometimes amount to no more than manoeuvres in a propaganda war or conditional declarations of good intent made in the full knowledge that the terms proposed are unacceptable to others, that they will not be taken up and that the proposer's sincerity will not be put to the test.

The credibility of the United Nations, and of the First Committee, is seriously devalued and undermined by the ever-increasing proliferation of resolutions. What is required is less rhetoric, fewer resolutions and more serious efforts to make practical progress in the truly vital area of disarmament. Australia stands ready to play its part in this slow, frustrating, yet essential and continuing, endeavour.

Mr. FONSEKA (Sri Lanka): At the outset let me congratulate Ambassador Gbeho, the Permanent Representative of Ghana, on his election as Chairman of this important First Committee. My good wishes are extended to him both as a friend and as a colleague, and I assure him of my delegation's co-operation with him in the work of the Committee.

(Mr. Fonseka, Sri Lanka)

My good wishes also go to the other officers of the Committee. I am particularly glad, Mr. Vice-Chairman, to see you presiding over our proceedings this morning.

At a time when disarmament is admittedly in the doldrums, we were given a glimmer of hope by the well-deserved award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Mrs. Myrdal and Mr. Garcia Robles in recognition of their enduring efforts in the cause of disarmament and for keeping alive our own faith. My delegation joins the many in congratulating them and their countries, Sweden and Mexico.

The year 1982 may well go down as one of the more discouraging, if not disillusioning, years for disarmament. Barely four months ago the second special session on disarmament literally collapsed, with no result except for that last day's document proffering at most a grudging reaffirmation of the Final Document of the first special session of 1978. During the second special session on disarmament there was perhaps a muting of the matter of responsibility for the arms race. The differences were partly submerged by the widespread clamour among very ordinary people that they would not submit their own and future generations to the horrors of a nuclear war. That brief respite seems to be over, and the disarmament atmosphere has entered a melancholy phase with the leaders of great countries resuming the rhetoric of charges and countercharges, with the attendant apportioning of blame. That has become evident again during the past two weeks.

A glance at the report of the Committee on Disarmament, particularly its table of contents, reveals much the same. This is not intended to minimize or discount the value of the work of the Committee, of which Sri Lanka is also a member. It is said rather in appreciation of the reality that the Committee could do no more than record its patient efforts and the limited results achieved, some of which, one is constrained to say, are a reversal of the slender hopes that emerged at the end of the first special session on disarmament.

(Mr. Fonseka, Sri Lanka)

First on the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament has been the question of a nuclear test ban. I do not wish to submit members of this Committee to another recital of unfulfilled expectations. While the trilateral negotiations were under way during a period of four years, both the Committee on Disarmament and this Committee had been urging the submission of a draft treaty by the trilateral parties. The response was, to say the least, inadequate and, partly in order to fulfil the Committee on Disarmament's own mandate as the single multilateral negotiating forum, it urged the setting up of a working group. That working group, with a mandate restricted to verification and compliance, was precluded from dealing with a treaty as such and was obliged to call a halt to its work. We have again been told last week that at least one of the trilateral negotiating parties regards a comprehensive test ban as a long-term objective, a proposition that hardly accords with having been an active negotiator in the preceding four years.

(Mr. Fonseka, Sri Lanka)

Another reason advanced for deferring a comprehensive test ban is that two of the nuclear-weapon States are not parties to any ban and have dissociated themselves from the negotiations so far. We are obliged to say that the non-participation of two nuclear-weapon States could not be regarded as a cogent reason because that situation prevailed right throughout the trilateral negotiations, which were presumably undertaken notwithstanding. To urge this as a reason now can be no more than an afterthought. It is hardly a substitute for the political will without which there can be no treaty, whether on a comprehensive test ban or on any other question.

The Assembly and this Committee have before them a resolution and the draft of a treaty proposed by the Soviet Union calling for an immediate cessation and prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, including a moratorium on peaceful nuclear explosions. Considering the impasse we have reached, this Committee should give that proposal its most careful consideration. We would like to think that the Soviet Union would make every effort to accommodate other views so as to enable this initiative to attract the widest possible support. The draft of the treaty would be for the Committee on Disarmament to negotiate, taking into account this text, other existing proposals and future initiatives.

The nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament remain high on the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament and had first priority in the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament. Time and again we are told that the justification for nuclear weapons is the deterrence factor, which in turn keeps the peace. This has again been stated as the basis on which negotiations for the reversal of the nuclear arms race can take place. Both at the second special session on disarmament and in the general debate this year we pointed out that the nuclear deterrent had been sustained not at the progressively reduced level envisaged, but rather at an accelerated and competitive level of nuclear destructiveness. That has been the experience of 30 years, and the only plausible conclusion is that security through the nuclear deterrent and the reversal of the nuclear arms race are incompatible.

(Mr. Fonseka, Sri Lanka)

It is increasingly evident that the two main protagonists in the nuclear arms competition are unable to agree on what constitutes parity. An assertion of parity by one brings a prompt retort by the other that the first has attained superiority and the race is resumed. Here we would wish to draw attention to a statement by the Roman Catholic Bishops of the United States, made public last week, which raises serious doubts about the concept of deterrence and goes on to say:

"We cannot approve of every weapons system, strategic doctrine or policy initiative advanced in the name of strengthening deterrence".  
(The New York Times, 26 October 1982, p. A22)

The same statement supports an immediate and verifiable freeze of nuclear weapons as well as immediate bilateral verifiable agreements to halt nuclear tests, together with the production and deployment of new nuclear weapons.

While on the subject of nuclear weapons, we cannot pass without comment over the subject of the declaration of the non-first-use of nuclear weapons. Such a declaration was first made by China and then during the second special session on disarmament by the Soviet Union. This latter has been discounted on the grounds that declaratory statements have little value, being unverifiable and unenforceable. Besides, by implication such a declaration is said to reserve the right to use conventional weapons. If that be the case, perhaps the answer would be a similar declaration, time-bound if need be, by the other nuclear-weapon States, linked in turn to prompt negotiations on conventional weapons between the two major alliances. Not only would that be an appropriate response, but it would also remove the oppressive shadow of the threat of a nuclear war. Support for such a declaration of non-first-use of nuclear weapons comes from four United States personalities who at an earlier time were directly responsible for or closely associated with the defence and the national security of the United States.

(Mr. Fonseka, Sri Lanka)

These remarks commenced with a reference to the report and agenda of the Committee on Disarmament. Negotiations in other areas show that there too the Committee has reached a similar impasse. Arrangements to provide non-nuclear-weapon States with assurances against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons, also known as negative security guarantees, had reached another blind alley and further work had to be deferred until the nuclear-weapon States revised their policies. No comment is necessary on the fate that overtook the comprehensive programme of disarmament, to which the majority of States outside the two main military alliances had attached such importance. The second special session on disarmament referred it back to the Committee on Disarmament for the submission of a revised draft to the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

This recital of disappointments might be concluded with a reference to some measure of progress, small though that may be, and that is in regard to chemical weapons. The Committee on Disarmament has indeed undertaken some of its most intensive work on a chemical weapons convention. The report of the ad hoc working group reveals the areas that have been covered, together with the participation of a competent group of experts. Even though a convention may be some time away, the members of the Committee on Disarmament and the participating experts have earned our appreciation, particularly since these results come at a time that has been the nadir of disarmament.

In the general debate we spoke of the urgency of at least trying to insulate the relatively uncharted area of outer space against military use, that is, to ensure that it should be regarded as the common heritage of mankind and preserved exclusively for peaceful purposes. We quoted from an address to the second UNISPACE conference in Vienna last August given by the President of Sri Lanka, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene. He said:

"It would be man's greatest injustice to man, man's greatest insult to science to view outer space as another arena of conflict, another medium of mutual destruction." (A/CONF.101/10, pp. 154, 155)

(Mr. Fonseka, Sri Lanka)

That plea could not have come any sooner and there is reason to believe that we are already going beyond competition as if a conflict using outer space is inevitable. We say this, not that we are privy to any special knowledge, but basing ourselves on material published just two weeks ago. The magnitude of the funds allocated and the experiments being undertaken demonstrate that there is a decidedly military emphasis rather than emphasis on peaceful exploration, which had previously been the focus. This view is further strengthened by the approaches adopted by different interests, as reflected in the deliberations of the Committee on Disarmament. Rather than striving for negotiations to prevent the extension of an arms race to outer space, some would have us focus attention on devices of an aggressive or offensive character, such as an anti-satellite system, though, of course, this is to be within the ambit of agreements aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space. We have no quarrel with this but, rather, with the scheme of priorities or the emphasis given to an aspect which can be identified primarily with military objectives. As we said in the General Assembly, the Sri Lanka delegation will join those whose first interest is the preservation of outer space for peaceful purposes and the prohibition of its use for military or hostile purposes.

Openness, transparency, verification and compliance are all facets of the same argument or complaint that has been repeatedly voiced. With our own limited knowledge, we had thought that at least verification and compliance had become less of a problem following major advances in satellite monitoring, as well as other techniques making possible cross-checking and comparison of information. Apparently this is not the case. We must therefore say that there is more than a little value in this contention. The facility for obtaining information for public expression of different and dissenting views is by no means universal. At the second special session on disarmament we supported the proposal for a World Disarmament Campaign for the reason that information on the consequences of the arms race should have the widest possible dissemination beyond geographical and political frontiers to reach people everywhere. It must be said that my delegation's views and assessments here are based largely on the

(Mr. Fonseka, Sri Lanka)

availability of and access to differing views from one side. It is hardly conceivable that there is only one view on the other side. And, if that should be the case, there must be access to such differing views.

We spoke in the general debate on the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace - an objective for which we have striven for over a decade. In this Committee it is not yet time to speak of the outcome. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean expects to bring a consensus draft resolution before this Committee. Sri Lanka, as Chairman of that Committee, can only appeal to all its members to demonstrate a measure of understanding and flexibility which will make possible the holding of the Conference on the scheduled date. To say anything more would be to prejudge the negotiations that are still under way.

A number of delegations which have already spoken have in different ways referred to the frustration they have encountered during this Committee's deliberations. They have spoken of the escalating plethora of draft resolutions which go unheeded year after year and their continued readoption with some variations. Others have asked us to pay heed to the realistic or feasible and urged that this preoccupation with draft resolutions be avoided. My delegation appreciates the validity of this contention, but here we have to ask what the majority or the great majority of the members of the Committee could do in the present circumstances. It is no revelation to say that any progress in disarmament is hardly possible so long as the two principal parties are so far apart and their exchanges in continuous discord. The choice for the other members of this Committee is either to align themselves on one side or the other or to remain muted observers. We are indeed observers, but to remain silent is no way to help them or to help ourselves. Many of the draft resolutions that emerge from this Committee, though perhaps not always contributing to harmony, remain the only form in which the observer can express himself. We shall of course take cognizance of the view of our fellow members that a multiplicity of draft resolutions is not synonymous with solutions.

Mr. KESSELY (Chad) (interpretation from French): Sir, like those who have spoken before me, I should like to be allowed to depart from our rules of procedure and convey to you, and thereby to your country, the sincere congratulations of my delegation on your election to the chairmanship of our Committee. Your personal qualities, strengthened by the ideals and peaceful tradition of your country, will make it possible for us to do useful work. We also wish to congratulate the other officers of the Committee, and my delegation assures all of you of our full support in your difficult task.

I should like to take this opportunity to convey the heartfelt congratulations of Chad to two champions of peace, Mrs. Alva Myrdal of Sweden and Ambassador Garcia Robles of Mexico, who have rightly been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

In 1978, at this time of the year, the international community felt a sense of optimism because the disquiet and apprehension which had been felt so oppressively throughout the world seemed to have been lifted. Was it because a special session had just been laying the foundations for real disarmament? Or was it because the various negotiations which were then taking place on the non-proliferation, whether vertical or horizontal, of weapons led us to glimpse a ray of hope?

Today it is a feeling of insecurity, of the collective suicide and imminent total annihilation of our planet which moves us. We live with the spectre of a general nuclear war, as described in the film, "In the Minds of Men", which was shown here on 26 October. The thought of a nuclear holocaust is a constant source of concern to those who are aware of the danger, and there is no shortage of reasons for such a feeling.

First, the major negotiations on disarmament have been broken off. I have in mind the trilateral negotiations between the United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet Union on nuclear tests, the first results of which were communicated to the Committee on Disarmament in 1980. I also have in mind the negotiations on anti-satellite systems for the purpose of preventing the militarization of outer space. We might also mention that the bilateral American-Soviet negotiations which started in November 1981 on intermediate-range nuclear forces and, in June 1982 on strategic nuclear weapons have been marking time.

(Mr. Kessely, Chad)

The second special session on disarmament has been a deplorable failure and the reason is that the nuclear-Powers were unwilling even to hear of a comprehensive programme of disarmament, although it was provided for in the Final Document of the first special session.

The development and improvement of new theories and doctrines of nuclear war helped strengthen this feeling of insecurity. The doctrines of first nuclear strike and limited nuclear war, are now being supplemented by that of protracted nuclear war.

Parallel with these theories there is an acceleration of the development and production of new types of weapons, particularly neutron weapons and space weapons, anti-satellite weapons, particle-beam weapons, lasers used as anti-satellite weapons and against ballistic missiles.

Chad is a small country and does not claim to be directly concerned at the same level as the great Powers by nuclear-weapon negotiations. As a member of the international community, however, we are greatly concerned by a space war. This concern is all the more legitimate, in that my country is a member of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

Chemical weapons are not lagging behind and are now being used as a matter of course on a massive scale against certain peoples who are struggling for their freedom. The most common forms are picric acid, asphyxiating gases, mycotoxins of the trichothecine family, commonly known as "yellow rain". The latter are the most horrible because the person or animal in the target zone quickly succumbs after a brief attack involving vomiting blood, diarrhoea and coughing.

Conventional weapons are also being shipped daily to the third world where they contribute to spreading panic and desolation in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Chad delegation is better placed than many to speak of conventional weapons, because they have been introduced on a massive scale into our national territory in recent years, where they have had disastrous consequences.

(Mr. Kessely, Chad)

As if that were not enough, this sense of insecurity and collective suicide is being further intensified by the delay in the ratification of the SALT II agreements which were only recently being presented as having been accepted by all, and particularly by the super-Powers concerned.

It is no coincidence that this freeze should come along at a time when the decisions to deploy new medium-range missiles in highly sensitive zones is being taken.

The refusal to co-operate and to come to a mutual understanding has again conferred on the Powers their right to acquire and use weapons in pursuit of their selfish security interests. That is why we are faced with the dilemma of disarmament or systematic self-destruction.

The elements in favour of the process of disarmament are lacking, although it seems that the super-Powers are of more or less equal nuclear military capacity. This would create very favourable conditions for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon freeze, which is a prerequisite for talks on a quantitative and qualitative reduction of these weapons.

My delegation endorses the phrase from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Constitution which says:

"It is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."

(UNESCO Manual, p. 1.)

In order to accomplish this, priority must be given to the following:

First, a disarmament programme must be set up through education and communicated to all countries. Its essential element must be instruction in the horrors of war from the primary grade onward.

Secondly, encouragement should be given to the World Disarmament Campaign launched at the opening meeting of the second special session on disarmament, the success of which depends largely on the size of the voluntary contributions made to it.

Thirdly, the United Nations Centre for Disarmament merits reorganization with a view to an in-depth study of the mind of man.

## ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: Before I adjourn the meeting I should like to state that the Committee has considered the question of the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions under all disarmament items and it has decided to recommend that the deadline should be Wednesday, 17 November at 1 p.m. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee agrees to this suggestion.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with the Committee's timetable and programme of work, the Committee will begin the consideration of and action upon draft resolutions on 5 November. In order to utilize fully the time available to us I invite members of the Committee to inscribe their names on the list of speakers which is now open.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.