



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ZACHMANN (German Democratic Republic)

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OBSERVANCE OF DISARMAMENT WEEK

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

OBSERVANCE OF DISARMAMENT WEEK

The CHAIRMAN: Today the First Committee is holding a special meeting in observance of Disarmament Week. In so doing, we continue a tradition that was established by the General Assembly at its First special session devoted to disarmament.

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to welcome to the Committee on this occasion His Excellency Mr. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, President of the General Assembly at its forty-first session. Let me, Sir, on behalf of the entire Committee and on my own behalf, congratulate you not only on your election as President of the General Assembly at this year's session, but also on the consummate diplomatic skill and great effectiveness with which you are fulfilling the high responsibilities entrusted to you.

I also have the distinct honour and pleasure of welcoming to the First Committee His Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, Secretary-General of the United Nations. On behalf of the entire Committee and on my own behalf, I extend to you, Sir, our sincere congratulations on your reappointment as Secretary-General. I am confident that your vast knowledge and experience and your tireless dedication to advancing the cause of peace and the noble objectives of the United Nations will help enhance the role of the Organization in resolving the pressing problems facing mankind.

At a time when the arms race is continuing unabated and when mankind is threatened with the extension of the arms race into outer space, the original aims of commemorating Disarmament Week - namely, to make the world public aware of the increasing dangers of war and to generate widespread public understanding of and active support for the objectives of arms limitation and disarmament - are more timely and relevant than ever before.

(The Chairman)

At its fortieth session the General Assembly proclaimed 1986 the International Year of Peace. In the process of implementing that decision, we have witnessed manifold and far-reaching initiatives by States to ensure conditions of peace and security in the world and to save future generations from the scourge of war.

(The Chairnanj

The observance of Disarmament Week provides an opportunity for all Member States of the Organization as well as for all people to recall their joint commitment to preserve peace on our globe, to ban the danger of nuclear annihilation of mankind and to promote détente as well as trust and peaceful co-operation among all peoples and countries.

The meeting of the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States of America in Reykjavik earlier this month was undoubtedly a major political event. It was an important step in a complex and difficult dialogue. This has been recognized by Member States during our deliberations in the First Committee. Although they expressed regret that the meeting did not fulfil expectations, nevertheless, they also expressed sincere hope that the prospects for a historic breakthrough that emerged will continue and that the progress achieved at that stage will be further elaborated in the framework of bilateral negotiations.

It is my belief that the results of the Reykjavik meeting provide a significant impetus for the multilateral disarmament process and should, therefore, also encourage us here to conduct our deliberations in a businesslike and constructive manner. I am happy to note that in the course of our debates Member States have already expressed their willingness to do so.

The proposals and ideas that have been put forward clearly show the readiness and determination to seek possibilities for the settlement of those questions that are important for a viable and secure Future for humanity. Among such proposals, I may mention those related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space and its termination on earth) a call for the immediate cessation of all nuclear-weapon tests) measures for conventional disarmament; the elaboration of a global ban on chemical weapons as well as the achievement of regional disarmament measures.

(The Chairman)

On the occasion of Disarmament Week, we should rededicate ourselves to our common responsibility and commitment to bolster the unique role of the United Nations in ensuring peace, achieving arms limitation and disarmament and strengthening the security of all States as well as to promote public awareness, understanding and support for the realization of those vital goals.

It is now my pleasure to call upon the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury.

Mr. CHOUDHURY (President of the General Assembly): I welcome this opportunity to address the First Committee at its special meeting dedicated to Disarmament Week. This observance affords us the opportunity to reflect on the state of this armed world in which we live, and the continuing accumulation of lethal weapons and destructive potential.

Ever since the very first General Assembly session, the subject of disarmament has received continuous attention at the United Nations, yet the attainment of a world free of arms seems now more remote - and indeed, Utopian - than it did four decades ago.

Even so, the developments over the last year, and especially the last month, give reason for hope. Thinking back to October 1985, at the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, I recall the many sombre statements that were made on the lack of progress in the field of arms limitation and disarmament. There seemed to be no movement, no advances on the issues under negotiation.

Since that time, much has happened, both in multilateral and bilateral forums, which has given momentum to the arms limitation process. In November 1985, the leaders of the two most powerful States engaged for the first time in six years in direct discussion. Subsequently, 1986 has witnessed a measure of progress in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, particularly on the question of chemical

(The President of the
General Assembly)

weapons. The Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention had a positive outcome and the Conference on Disarmament in Europe successfully concluded its work in Stockholm. Earlier this month, at the meeting between General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan in Iceland, proposals were made that were more far-reaching than any put forward in recent years.

The international community has expressed its disappointment at the fact that no agreement was reached in Reykjavik, that the fleeting opportunity to reach a truly historic accord was not jointly seized. Nevertheless, the existence of political will to conclude an agreement was clearly demonstrated, and it is vital that the momentum created must not be lost. I call upon the Soviet Union and the United States to ensure that the proposals which are still on the table are further negotiated, and I trust that they will lead to mutually acceptable positions and, finally, to signed agreements.

We all have a stake in disarmament. We all wish our children and grandchildren to grow up in a peaceful world without fear of armed conflict, war or a nuclear holocaust. Agreements to limit and reduce arms are one step, but we should also look to a world in which resources now squandered on the arms race are used to enhance the world, instead of endangering it, to improve the quality of life on Earth, instead of destroying it.

Such vision does indeed exist, though it does not always prevail. The International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, which was to take place last summer, is part of that vision of a world in which disarmament, development and security are but different facets of one issue. It is my hope that the holding of the conference can indeed be agreed upon at this session of the General Assembly.

(The President of the
General Assembly)

The new momentum gained on **all** the **issues** on the disarmament agenda **needs** to be sustained; and the **Member States** represented in the **First Committee** **have** an important role to play in this respect. **Disarmament Week** was created to **"foster the objectives of disarmament"** - what better way than by showing a **spirit of pragmatism** and compromise, by a willingness to confront the substantive **issues** and **address** specific issues that stand in the way of **progress**.

It **seems Utopian** to think of a world without weapons. But it is not utopian to want to live in a world with fewer weapons, to live in a world which does not spend **some \$900 billion** per year on **armaments**, but that spends it on **more** human and **worthy** causes.

Achieving **meaningful arms limitation agreements** is no easy task. It can **only** be the result of complex **negotiations**, of political give-and-take and, finally, of taking that extra step necessary to overcome the last obstacle that may stand in the way of an accord. **The** responsibility for this also **lies** with you, the representatives to the **First Committee**. I hope that you will discharge this task and this responsibility to the best of your **conscience**. That **is** the **spirit** in which, I believe, Disarmament Week should be **observed**.

The CHAIRMAN: It is my pleasure now to call upon the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Perez de Cuellar.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: When I addressed this Committee last year on the occasion of Disarmament Week, I linked this observance to the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. That occasion saw many expressions of support for the Organization and renewed commitment to the objectives for which the United Nations was founded, including disarmament and arms reduction. Now it is once again time to undertake a review, to look at the progress - or lack of it - that has been made in the disarmament agenda. This review assumes an added dimension during the International Year of Peace, as 1986 was proclaimed by the General Assembly, for disarmament and peace are inextricably linked.

Eight years have passed since the establishment of Disarmament Week by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament. The objective of eliminating nuclear weapons and restraining the conventional arms race is still far from being attained. Achievements in this field have, during these years, been too few, despite the increasing awareness of the grave danger and economic disadvantage inherent in the present course of arms accumulation. In addition to quantity, the quality of armaments is becoming ever more refined and sophisticated, due to technological developments that were unimaginable just two or three decades ago.

We must remind ourselves time and again that the world in which we live is threatened with the possibility of annihilation. Must the survival of the world hang indefinitely by a fragile thread? Must we live in a world where the shadow of a nuclear catastrophe is ever present, where badly needed human and material resources are diverted from more useful and urgent needs?

(The Secretary-General)

In 1978 the General Assembly proclaimed that mankind was confronted with a choice: halt the arms race and proceed to disarmament or face annihilation. We cannot but choose the first course of action, but this implies the need for positive action. Negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on the complete prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons have been productive. The Second Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Weapons concluded its work successfully.

These signs of progress helped to set the scene for the recent meeting in Iceland between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States. The nuclear-weapon States, especially the two most powerful, have an awesome responsibility towards humanity, and the international community has a right to expect that no opportunities will be missed to achieve concrete results. The meeting in Reykjavik was one such opportunity. It proved that high-level dialogue can result in dramatic initiatives, that major shifts are possible on issues long the subject of indecisive negotiations.

It is now, I believe, clearer than ever that, with the necessary resolve, possibilities for significant progress on arms limitation and, indeed, reduction do exist. I consider this a hopeful development. We have seen that compromise can be visualized and defined, that differences can be reconciled.

Progress is needed not only in the nuclear field. A reduction in conventional armaments is important in many respects - not least because of its relevance to the elimination of nuclear weapons. In this connection, the agreement reached in Stockholm on confidence-building measures in Europe is most welcome. While it entails no reduction in weapons, it can encourage the greater trust which such reduction requires.

(The Secretary-General)

Disarmament Week **was** established to foster the objectives of disarmament. The need is now **greater** than ever to **recognize** the **common** interest in a safer world that must bring **nations** together in fruitful negotiations. We must devote our **efforts** to the gradual reduction of armaments, both **nuclear** and **conventional**. The difficulty and complexity of negotiations must not be **allowed** to turn **nations** from this objective which is shared by all the peoples of the world. In this Week we give special emphasis to disarmament, but it must remain a major, universal concern every day of the year.

The CHAIRMAN: I call upon the **representative** of Benin, who will speak on behalf of the Chairman of the Group of African states.

Mr. SOGLO (Benin) (interpretation from French): It is a great honour for me to represent the Group of African States on such a special *occasion* as the observance of Disarmament Week.

It is highly significant that, according to the annals of our Organization, the first resolution adopted by the General Assembly, in 1946, dealt with disarmament, particularly the peaceful uses of atomic power and elimination of nuclear weapons. The world was **emerging** from the most devastating war in history, and Hiroshima and Nagasaki had just given the whole world the apocalyptic and terrifying spectacle of the effects of nuclear war.

That bitter lesson, unfortunately, was not very well learnt, and the myth has persisted that national security is a function of the number of megatons one possesses. There is a ceaseless accumulation of weapons, a ceaseless quest for more and more refined weapons and a growing world arsenal that is already over-supplied with devastating weapons. The so-called balance of terror brings with it a more and more devastating and costly arms race. From the four corners of the world there have been legitimate appeals and protests against this suicidal race.

(Mr. Soglo, Benin)

Therefore the observance of Disarmament Week is an opportunity for reflection on the deepest aspiration of mankind, namely, peace, whose essential components are disarmament, security and development. This three-sided relationship of disarmament, security and development, recognized for a long time by our Organization, represents a principal prerequisite for a stable world, to which the African States attach special importance. We can only regret that the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, which was to have been held in Paris this summer, ultimately did not take place.

There is no need to recall that Africa was the first to adopt a regional position on an important disarmament measure, namely, on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. It was the first unilaterally to renounce the right to acquire nuclear weapons. In 1964, at their first summit meeting, the African Heads of State or Government adopted the famous Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. By resolution 2033 (XX), of 3 December 1965, the General Assembly took note of that Declaration and called upon all States to respect it. Unfortunately, the apartheid régime, strengthened by the complicity of Western Powers, went against the common will of the African States to make their continent a denuclearized zone. The nuclear capacity of racist South Africa constitutes a threat to peace and security not only in the region but throughout the world.

Therefore it is an imperative duty of the international community, and especially of those that are accomplices, to exert upon the racist Pretoria régime sufficient pressure to lead it to renounce its nuclear capability and to ensure that it complies with the Non-Proliferation Treaty and places all its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. That is the only assurance of peace and security for our continent.

(Mr. Soglo, Benin)

We will continue to believe in Africa's wisdom in taking that decision, the more so since we feel that the colossal sums invested in the endless arms race are precious resources that could help us to emerge from our state of underdevelopment.

It is regrettable that \$1 trillion should be wasted every year for the refinement of weapons of war and engines of destruction, whereas populations in Africa, Asia and other parts of the world are dying of hunger, millions of human beings are deprived of essential needs, and the great majority live below the recognised health standards.

This is the place once again to congratulate ourselves for the happy initiative of the United Nations Regional Centre for Disarmament in Africa, located in Lomé, Togo. Unfortunately, to enable that Centre to attain the goals set - promotion of the objectives of peace, disarmament and development in the region - necessary resources must be rapidly supplied to it.

We hope that the observance of Disarmament Week will not become a sterile ritual which we repeat year after year. On the contrary, we hope that it will contribute as concretely as possible to promoting the aims of peace and security in the world.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Permanent Representative of Japan, His Excellency Mr. Kiyoaki Kikuchi, Chairman Of the Group of Asian States.

MR. KIKUCHI (Japan) : It is a great honour for me to address the First Committee on behalf of the Group of Asian States on the occasion of Disarmament Week. Today, as we begin the commemorative meeting, it is quite fitting to recall that at the first special session devoted to disarmament in 1978 the General Assembly decided to designate the week of 24 October, the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, as Disarmament Week. Its dual purpose is, first, to create an atmosphere conducive to progress towards disarmament and, secondly, to increase public awareness of the dangers of the arms race.

(Mr. Likuchi, Japan)

In the eight years that Disarmament Week has been observed the world's stockpiles of armaments - conventional and nuclear - have Continued to grow; but, at the same time, I believe it is safe to say that the world's public is more acutely aware than ever before of the dangers inherent in the arms race, and its calls for disarmament are growing louder and more unified with each passing day. The members of the Asian Group Commend the United Nations for all its efforts towards disarmament, including those made in the First Committee, at the two special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. We believe that Disarmament Week is also serving a useful purpose in providing a forum in which international public opinion can participate in this Organisation's disarmament efforts.

This year the First Committee Commenced its debate the day after the meeting between the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union in Reykjavik ended. The entire world watched that meeting with great interest in the hope that a disarmament agreement would be reached. Although a conclusive agreement was not attained at that meeting, we are encouraged that considerable understanding over a wide range of issues emerged between the two leaders. We hope that the two super-Powers will make use of every opportunity to continue their dialogue and negotiations so as to make real progress towards disarmament.

At the same time I think it should be emphasised that all of us, as members of the international community, have important roles to play. One area in which we can all make contributions is the dissemination of information on disarmament. Indeed, as stated in the 1978 Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament;

(Mr. Kikuchi, Japan)

"Member States should be encouraged to ensure a better flow of information with regard to the various aspects of disarmament to avoid dissemination of false and tendentious information concerning armaments, and to concentrate on the danger of escalation of the armaments race and on the need for general and complete disarmament under effective international control." (S-10/2, para. 105)

A world made safer through disarmament is a goal shared by all States, developed and developing, large and small, nuclear and non-nuclear, market-oriented and planned economy. Disarmament Week provides the Member States with an excellent opportunity to rededicate themselves to United Nations efforts to enhance international peace and security through the achievement of general and complete disarmament.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, His Excellency Mr. Anatoly Gurinovich, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The current Disarmament Week is being held in the International Year of Peace and this makes it particularly significant. In 61 countries, including all the socialist States, International Peace Year Commissions have been set up and they have done a great deal to implement the United Nations recommendations on the International Year and to ensure the right of peoples to live in conditions of peace and freedom.

The States on whose behalf I am speaking have done and are continuing to do everything possible to put an end to the arms race on Earth and prevent it in Space. The unilateral obligation undertaken by the USSR not to be the first to use

(Mr. Curinovitch, Byelorussian SSR)

nuclear weapons remains valid, as is the Soviet moratorium on all nuclear tests introduced on 6 August 1985 - although the United States is carrying out nuclear-weapon tests. The USSR is also honouring its pledge not to put anti-satellite systems in outer space. A stage-by-stage programme has been worked out and set forth for the total elimination of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction everywhere by the year 2000. Proposals have been put forward for substantial reductions in armed forces and conventional armaments from the Atlantic to the Urals, on the establishment of zones in Europe free from nuclear and chemical weapons, and for the strengthening of security in other parts of the world. It has been proposed that the United Nations should start work on a comprehensive system of international peace and security which would regulate relations between States in the military, political, economic and humanitarian fields. The socialist countries take into account the positions of various groups of States and are doing everything possible to narrow the differences on specific disarmament problems.

(Mr. Curinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

At the Soviet-American summit ~~meeting~~ held at the proposal of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the desire and readiness were expressed to take radical steps to achieve nuclear disarmament and to prevent the extending of the arms race into outer space.

Today, hearing in mind that during the general debate at plenary sessions, and in the course of the current discussion of disarmament issues in the First Committee Of the General Assembly at its forty-first session, the delegations of our Group of States have spelled out in detail the contents of those and other proposals and have demonstrated their timeliness and constructiveness, there is no need to dwell in any detail on our position. It is well known.

We reiterate our commitment to dialogue and to the search for agreement based on the fact that there are no weapons that the States of the socialist community would not be prepared to limit or ban on a reciprocal basis with effective verification.

May I now turn briefly to the organizational aspect of Disarmament Week, held within the framework of the United Nations. Unquestionably it is a good idea to have a special meeting and for it to be addressed by the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairmen of the regional groups. All speak of the desire for peace and the need for disarmament, but clearly that is not enough. We should all give some thought to what specifically can be done during that Week. Without claiming to have a full answer, I would suggest that the following possibilities be considered for the future.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

The five nuclear Powers should perhaps meet during one of the Weeks to discuss what could and should be done to strengthen peace and disarmament.

Member States of the United Nations should make statements concerning the unilateral obligations they have assumed.

The representatives of public organizations fighting for peace and disarmament who have in actual deeds proved their dedication to those goals should be enabled to take part in the events held within the framework of Disarmament Week.

Exhibitions and the screening of films devoted to the struggle for peace and disarmament should be arranged.

Holders of United Nations disarmament fellowships should be involved in all these events.

The publication of special editions and information on disarmament issued by the Department of Public Information should be timed to coincide with the Week.

The resources of United Nations Radio and other information services should be used more actively during the Week to disseminate ideas of peace and disarmament.

Information from specialized agencies and other appropriate bodies within the United Nations system about their role and plans for the future in the field of strengthening peace and for disarmament should be brought to the notice of the United Nations General Assembly.

Consultations on these and other possible proposals should be held within the framework of the United Nations Commission on Disarmament at its 1987 session.

These suggestions are certainly not meant to imply that actions of this kind should be undertaken only during Disarmament Week. We should always be at pains to undertake such actions. But something must be done to prevent Disarmament Week from being reduced to the mere hearing of speeches. It should be followed up with practical deeds and fresh momentum.

(Mr. Gur Inovich, Byelorussian SSR)

of course, what is needed to that end is new political thinking by all of us, as well as new approaches and a willingness to move from words to action. so we call on all the participants in this solemn meeting to act so that, our next meeting, in 1987, will carry more weight and contribute, in the interests of mankind and for the benefit of all peoples, to the implementation of measures to end the arms race, hr ing about disarmament and ensure peace and security.

As is demonstrated by the communiqué issued by the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Minister6 of the Warsaw Treaty member States held in Bucharest on 14 and 15 October 1986, the socialist countries believe that

"the fundamental issue of our time is the strengthening of peace, curtailment of the arms race, and above all the nuclear-, rms race, and elimination of the danger of nuclear catastrophe".

The socialist countries are doing their very best to build a world without wars and without weapons.

Phe CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of Mexico, His Excellency Alfonso Garcia Robles, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American States.

Hr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): In observance of this week, which has been designated Disarmament Week, it would seem appropriate to review, albeit briefly, some of the most salient contributions of the Members of the United Nations in this sphere.

In doing so with regard to the States belonging to what is known as the Latin American and Caribbean Group, of which my country is a member, I believe that in the first place mention must be made of the instrument officially known as the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America, which is known also under the much shorter title of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, named after the auarter of Mexico City in which the instrument was signed on 14 February 1967.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

Thanks to that Treaty, to which 25 States are now parties, Additional Protocol II of which has been signed and ratified by the five nuclear-weapon States to which it is addressed, the first zone free of those terrible weapons of mass destruction has now been established in territories that are densely populated.

It is a Treaty based on the principle of the total absence of nuclear weapons, a Treaty whose principles and purposes are summed up in its preamble in the following terms:

"That the military denuclearization of Latin America - being understood to mean the undertaking entered into internationally in this Treaty to keep their territories for ever free from nuclear weapons - will constitute a measure which will spare their peoples from the squandering of their limited resources on nuclear armaments and will protect them against possible nuclear attacks on their territories, and will also constitute a significant contribution towards preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and a powerful factor for general and complete disarmament, and

"That Latin America, faithful to its tradition of universality, must not only endeavour to banish from its homelands the scourge of a nuclear war, but must also strive to promote the well-being and advancement of its peoples, at the same time co-operating in the fulfilment of the ideals of mankind, that is to say, in the consolidation of a permanent peace based on equal rights, economic fairness and social justice for all, in accordance with the principles and purposes set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Charter of the Organization of American States." (A/C.1/946, pp. 4-5)

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

A similar meaning, at the international level, attaches to the contribution made by the Latin American and Caribbean countries at the first and second special sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted to disarmament which, as we know, took place in 1978 and 1982 respectively.

In the elaboration of each and every one of the parts of the Final Document - Introduction, Declaration, Programme of Action and Machinery - of the first of the special sessions I have just mentioned, the contribution of those countries played an important role in both the expression of alarm that:

"the continued arms race means a growing threat to international peace and security and even to the very survival of mankind.

(resolution S-10/2, para. 2)

and in the explicit recognition that:

"The hundreds of billions of dollars spent annually on the manufacture or improvement of weapons are in sombre and dramatic contrast to the want and poverty in which two thirds of the world's population live." (para. 16).

Hence it can be said that:

"There is also a close relationship between disarmament and development. Progress in the former would help greatly in the realization of the latter." (para. 35).

The same applies to the statements that:

"The cessation of nuclear-weapon testing by all States . . . would be in the interest of mankind" (para. 51)

and that:

"The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned constitutes an important disarmament measure" (para. 60)

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

as well as to the declaration that :

"The United Nations. . . has a central role and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament" (~) and to the definition of the organization and mandates of the First Committee of the General Assembly and of the organ now known as the Conference on Disarmament. and of the Disarmament Commission.

The contribution of the States to which I have been referring made it possible, in my opinion, for the Assembly unanimously and categorically to reaffirm at its second special session in 1982 the validity of its decisions adopted four years previously at the first special session.

We should mention also, since this was due to the initiative of a Latin American State, Mexico, the launching of the World Disarmament campaign on 7 June 1982 by a unanimous decision of the Assembly and which, since then, has been led by the Secretary-General of the Organization in a manner ensuring in all regions of the world:

'the widest possible dissemination of information.. . on questions of arms limitation and disarmament, and the dangers relating to all aspects of the arms race and war, in particular nuclear war." (A/S-12/32, annex V, para. 4)

It is true that the Assembly on that occasion did not succeed in adopting a document on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament, but it is equally true that the Latin American and Caribbean States, as may be seen in the appropriate document, reaffirmed:

"their determination to continue to work for the urgent conclusion of negotiations on and the adoption of the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament, which shall encompass all measures thought to be advisable in order to ensure that the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control becomes a reality in a world in which

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

international peace and security prevail, and in which a new international

- ConoWic order is strengthened and consolidated. . (A/S-12/32, para. 63).

I should add in this connection that I have had the privilege of presiding since 1980 over the subsidiary body of the Conference on Disarmament entrusted with the preparation of that Programme.

Finally, I should like to mention that the group of six Heads of State or Government of five different continents, which since 1984 has been endeavouring to contribute to the achievement of disarmament and the strengthening of peace, includes among its leaders no less than two Latin American Presidents - those of Argentina and Mexico - something which is an implicit recognition of the valuable contribution made by the countries of this region to the cause of disarmament, whose • XCwtiOnal importance, as I said at the outset, we have sought to highlight through the establishment of Disarmament Week, which we are observing here.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, His Excellency Ambassador Hans Werner Lautenschlager, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Mr. LAUTENSCHLAGER (Federal Republic of Germany): I am greatly honoured to be able to address the First Committee on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States today, on the very special occasion of the culmination of Disarmament Week. It is a particular privilege for me to do so at a time when the International Year of Peace is drawing to a close and when the recent American-Soviet meeting at Reykjavik has created prospects for hold new disarmament initiatives on an unprecedented scale.

The decision to proclaim the week commencing 24 October as a period to be dedicated to the objectives of disarmament dates back to the first special session devoted to disarmament, in 1978. Since that time our Organization has annually

(Mr. Lautenschlager, Federal
Republic of Germany)

commemorated Disarmament Week, with the purpose of increasing public awareness of the dangers and burdens of the arms race and with the objective of creating an atmosphere conducive to progress towards disarmament.

We seem to have come nearer to achieving at least one of those objectives during this year's Disarmament Week: looking at the content of media messages around the world we can safely claim that disarmament has become the very centre of public interest. Indeed, reports on ongoing events, commentaries, and news analyses all revolve around the prospects for progress in disarmament.

This year's discussion in the General Assembly and its First Committee continues to centre on the indisputable fact that weapon stockpiles, nuclear or conventional, remain much too large all around the world. However, encouraging developments have taken place over past years. In bilateral negotiations between the major military Powers the gap between the positions of both sides is narrowing. Recently the European States, the United States and Canada agreed in Stockholm on a set of effective and verifiable confidence building measures that for the first time include mandatory on-site inspections. This outcome of the Conference on Security and Confidence Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe will contribute to the security of all States in the region and will facilitate further steps towards arms reductions and disarmament.

A similarly positive climate prevailed during the Second Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling Of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, held at Geneva during the month of September. It proved possible to strengthen significantly the régime of the Convention by agreeing on a comprehensive set of confidence-building measures opening the prospect for future improvement in the field of verification of compliance with the Convention.

(Mr. Lautenschlager, Federal
Republic of Germany)

Ray I conclude by expressing, on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, its firmly held view that the United Nations provides a unique public forum for presenting the views of its Members on the vital issue of disarmament and that the States members of the Group remain mindful of the role which the United Nations can play in promoting an exchange of ideas in support of the disarmament process. This forum has already done much to shape public opinion world-wide about the necessity of disarmament and arms control, thus furthering the awareness that the maintenance of peace and security is the most important aim we are all striving for. Disarmament Week gives us yet another opportunity to rededicate ourselves solemnly to this noble goal.

The CHAIRMAN: We have thus come to the conclusion of this meeting, which has been devoted to the observance of Disarmament Week.

The next meeting of the First Committee will take place tomorrow morning at 10.30. I should like to inform members that the following delegations have placed their names on the list of speakers for that meeting: the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Austria, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Venezuela, the German Democratic Republic and Australia.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.