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Chairman: Mr. RANA (Nepal)

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GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. ADNAN (Malaysia): I am pleased, Sir, to convey to you my warmest personal congratulations, and also those of my delegation, on your unanimous election as Chairman of this important Committee. You represent a country with which Malaysia has always had warm and friendly relations. Our congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau.

Since the signing of the Charter on 26 June 1945, the United Nations ha8 provided a focal point for the international community in its efforts to promote the maintenance of international peace and security through co-operation, the peaceful settlement of disputes and disarmament. By its very existence, disarmament has proven a major element of general security. It was only days after the signing of the Charter that the world entered the atomic age. That event confronted the United Nations with unprecedented problems of world-wide dimensions. However, the Organization reacted promptly to the new turn of events, which was bound to give the need for disarmament greater urgency and an enhanced place in the sphere of international politics and security.

The first plenary meeting of the General Assembly was held on 10 January 1946. The following day, the First Committee met for the first time, and the single disarmament item on its agenda, an item of transcendent importance, was entitled "Resolution regarding the establishment of a commission to deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy and other related matters". The very first resolution of the General Assembly, resolution 1 (I) of 24 January 1946, dealt with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy.

(Mr. Adnan, Malaysia)

The continuing process that began in January 1946 has made the First Committee the depository of vast collective expertise in the field of disarmament. Over the years the Committee has never failed to identify problems as they develop and to make appropriate recommendations for their solution. Through the General Assembly it has been a source of recommendations and directives to Member States, other deliberative disarmament bodies including the Disarmament Commission and various negotiating bodies, and the Conference on Disarmament. This concept of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament is based on a recognition of the fact that disarmament, in the nuclear age, stands at the heart of any long-term solution to the problem of maintaining international peace and security. As the General Assembly recognised at its 1978 special session on disarmament, existing stockpiles of weapons, in particular nuclear weapons. the constant build-up of arms and armed forces, and the endless competition for qualitative superiority pose incalculable threats to peace and, indeed, to the very survival of mankind. Hence, Malaysia continues to believe that it is imperative that international peace and security be sought through arms reduction, both within the framework of the United Nations, where all Member States can play an active role, and on a unilateral, bilateral or regional basis, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

During the past two years, and particularly in recent months, we have witnessed numerous and varied developments on the political and security levels. We have seen a transformation in East-West relations in the form of movement towards dialogue, coexistence and co-operation. While we laud this more positive phase in East-West relations, it is unfortunate that the process has not contributed much to the multilateral disarmament process. We therefore urge the parties concerned fully to exploit the forum8 for potential multilateral

(Mr. Adnan, Malavsia)

negotiations, particularly the Conference on Disarmament, in order to expedite the realioatioa of a global and comprehensive programme of disarmament.

Indeed, the rapid changes in the political climate should give us the impetus to create more favourable conditions for seeking universal agreement on the prevention of nuclear war. All wars, whether nuclear or conventional, should be prevented. A nuclear-war should never be unleashed. We hold the very strong view that while the nuclear-weapon States have the primary responsibility for preventing nuclear war all nations have a vital interest in the negotiation of measures for the prevention of such a nuclear war. Taking into account the uniquely destructive power of nuclear weapons and the catastrophic consequences a nuclear war would have for mankind, we believe it neither legitimate nor justifiable to invoke the United Nations Charter in au attempt to justify the use of nuclear weapons in exercise of the right of self-defence against conventional armed attack. We consider that the belief in the maintenance of world peace through nuclear deterrence is the most dangerous fallacy that ever existed. Pending the achievement of nuclear disarmament, the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons should be prohibited.

(Mr. Adnan, Malaysia)

Malaysia believes that comprehensive nuclear disarmament can be realised only if there is agreement on a comprehensive test ban. It is regrettable that, despite the recent upturn in the world political climate, there has been no let-up in the qualitative improvement in-nuclear weapons. Malaysia therefore holds the view that the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-weapon-test ban is an indispensable step towards nuclear disarmament and is of the highest priority, since it would stem both the qualitative sophistication of existing nuclear arsenals and the horizontal proliferation which would otherwise inevitably ensue. A step-by-step or gradual approach to the elimination of nuclear-weapons tests would not halt the modernization of nuclear weapons, but, rather, would legitimixe the holding of such tests.

Malaysia therefore welcomes the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee under agenda item 1, entitled "Nuclear test ban", by the Conference on Disarmament on 17 July 1990. We also note the decision of the Conference to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee at the beginning of the 1991 session, and we express the great hope that the re-established Ad Hoc Committee will lead to urgent concrete negotiations towards a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

My delegation would like to reaffirm its conviction of the paramount need for urgent multilateral negotiations on the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament through the adoption of concrete measures leading to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The negotiations on nuclear disarmament are of vital interest to us, because the existence of nuclear weapons in the arsenals of a handful of States and the quantitative and qualitative development of those weapons directly jeopardize the security of both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States. Though the prime responsibility for nuclear disarmament lies with the major nuclear-weapon States, all other States have their respective roles to play and must also take part in efforts to eliminate the nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Adnan. Malaysia)

To deny to the non-nuclear-weapon States the right to participate in the elaboration of nuclear disarmament measures would be morally indefensible, as well as legally incorrect. Given the interdependent and multifaceted nature of the security and threat perceptions, it is axiomatic that those issues should be addressed multilaterally.

Another matter of concern to my delegation is the expansion and modernization of naval forces by some States. This expansion, combined with the increased sophistication of sea-based weapons systems, the deployment at sea of nuclear weapons. both strategic and tactical, and the introduction of nuclear-powered submarines in different regions of the world, has given an alarming capability to the navies of a few such States. Since naval forces are an integral part of overall military structures, they should not be excluded from disarmament efforts. The widespread naval activities of nuclear-weapon Powers are a source of concern, since the mobility of naval forces allows for flexible and rapid deployment. My delegation wishes to express its satisfaction over the deliberations on naval armaments and disarmament that have taken place within the framework of the Disarmament Commission.

My delegation would like to reaffirm its abhorrence of the use of chemical weapons in regional conflicts and the proliferation of such horrendous weapons of mass destruction. Malaysia again joins in the demand of the international community for the elimination of such inhuman weapons through the conclusion of a comprehensive chemical-weapons convention. We are encouraged by the agreement in June between the United States and the Soviet Union to destroy their chemical-weapons stocks.

As an observer at the meetings of the Conference on Disarmament, we continue to monitor closely the progress of the negotiations On the projected multilateral convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production

(Mr. Adnan, Malaysia)

and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction. While we take note of the progress thus far, we are also concerned over the pace of negotiations and the very fact that time is against the negotiators. We would urge the parties concerned to show greater political will in order to remove the remaining obstacles, so as to make possible the early conclusion of the convention. Unilateral and bilateral measures, however welcome, are only temporary in nature and limited in their scope.

Malaysia continues to subscribe to the view that outer space is the common heritage of mankind and should therefore be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, to promote scientific, economic and social development that would benefit all countries. We believe that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, can contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and take immediate measures to prevent an arms race in outer space, in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international co-operation and understanding.

The time has come to abandon the use of force in international relations and to seek security in disarmament. There can be no real disarmament unless the basic principle of the Charter, enjoining Member States to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force, is firmly upheld. In a world where States do not feel bound, both individually and collectively, by that principle, the search for disarmament is not likely to bear fruit. Thus, if the First Committee is to be the key organ of the General Assembly on disarmament matters, it must also strongly sustain the Charter's rules on the non-use of force in international relations, The Committee should never lose sight of the fact that the role of the United Nations in disarmament is inseparable from the role of the

(Mr. Adnan, Malaysia)

United Nations in world affairs. It is of crucial importance for the cause of disarmament that the Organisation should be used effectively as an instrument of world peace.

Mr. PENNANEACH (Togo) (interpretation from French): Competence, a sense of moderation and diplomatic skill are, in my delegation's view, the personal qualities that have won for you, Mr. Chairman, the unanimous backing of the members of the First Committee in your guidance of our work. That consensus is also undoubtedly the result of the deep faith of your country, Nepal, in the promotion of peace, international security and disarmament as factors in human progress. Therefore, Sir, it is a pleasure for me to extend to you my warm congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee and to assure you of the close co-operation of the Togolese delegation as you carry out your important functions.

(Mr. Pennaneach, Togo)

I should also like to extend my congratulations and wishes for success to the other members of the Bureau.

For some time now we have been witnessing an acceleration of history that surpasses science fiction and could never have been predicted.

It is as though we were emerging from a long night of lethargy and hesitation to find ourselves entering a world in which tire virtues of dialogue and concertatioa and the ideals of peace, solidarity and co-operation will reign supreme. The spectacular upsets we have witnessed are less conducive to blissful euphoria than to a lucid vision of our world's future. We are faced with a fundamental question: how may we derive the greatest benefit from these profound changes so as appropriately tc meet the remaining challenges and new emerging demands, and build a new world order in which all nations, large and small, rich and poor, can live in full prosperity?

Contrary to the hasty simplifications of ideological hindsight that have emerged of late, the end of the cold war does not mark the victory of one camp over another, but rather the triumph of reason and the noble principles, ideals and objectives of the United Nations. This Organization has always sought to be the embodiment of the most noble and sacred aspirations of the peoples we represent.

Today, more than ever before, it is urgently necessary consistently to meet the new needs for the maintenance of peace throughout the world: first, by making rational use of the present political atmosphere of understanding and co-operation between East and West to remove the obstacles to the starting-up or acceleration of effort8 at arms limitation and disarmament and by to-orienting security policies towards defence; secondly, by revitalising the machinery for the collective security provided for by the Charter by assuring the primacy of law and continued

(Mr. Pennaneach. Togo)

and effective use of the United Nations enormous potential for action in the settlement and prevention of conflicts; thirdly, by the adoption of energetic measures to strengthen the central role of the United Nations in disarmament so as to revitalixe and expand the multilateral process of disarmament; and, fourthly, by ensuring the equitable distribution of peace dividends since it has become even clearer that we cannot build a world of genuine peace if we continue to maintain inequality and human degradation.

The recent developments in efforts at arms limitation and disarmament oblige us to act with prudent optimism and increased vigilance. One of the benefits of the continued rapprochement between the two super-Powers is that it gives rise to consistent initiatives which flow from their major responsibility in the field of disarmament.

In this regard we especially welcome the respect for commitments undertaken under the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, the INF Treaty: the signing of the verification Protocols of the Treaty of 1974 on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear Weapon8 Tests and the 1976 Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes, and the readiness of the two parties to ratify those Treaties; the determination of the two super-Powers to pursue their negotiations to conclude an agreement for a 50 per cent reduction in their strategic nuclear arsenals as well as to embark on negotiations likely to produce other reductions; and the agreement, concluded in June 1990, for the destruction of stocks of chemical weapons and a halt to the production of such weapons.

In pursuit of their disarmament efforts, the United States and the Soviet Union should promote dynamic interaction between their bilateral and multilateral negotiations, in particular as they relate to the future international convention on a total ban on chemical weapons, and on nuclear tests.

(Mr. Pennaneach, Togo)

The two countries should also attach particular importance to the establishment of conditions conducive to the expansion of nuclear disarmament negotiations to the other nuclear Powers, and to the inscription of naval disarmament on the agenda of multilateral negotiations. The arms race in space also should be dealt with appropriately.

It is encouraging to note the progress made in the two series of negotiations conducted within the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), in particular for a substantive and balanced reduction of conventional forces in Europe and the drawing up of new measures designed to increase confidence among States.

My delegation welcomes the decision taken by the member States of the CSCB to convene a summit of Heads of State and Government in Paris, and it hopes that that important meeting will foreshadow the establishment of a new partnership based on stability, security and co-operation in Europe that hence serves the cause of peace and international Security.

Only then will the Helsinki process strengthened by the Stockholm stage, go down in history as an outstanding example and a useful frame of reference for efforts at disarmament and the drawing up of confidence-building measures, in particular at the regional level.

To date, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has proved an effective instrument for the prevention, or at least the significant slowing-down, of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and is therefore a significant contribution to the maintenance of peace and international security.

The in-depth constructive dialogue that has resulted from the Fourth Review Conference of the NPT is commensurate with the commitment of all States parties to demonstrate scrupulous respect for the obligations undertaken, to strengthen the

(Mr. Pennaneach, Togo)

authority and the effectiveness of the Treaty and thus to consolidate the nuclear-weapons non-proliferation régime.

The understanding reached on marry important questions such as security guarantees, the safeguards system and the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be carefully preserved and used in the future.

(Mr. Pennaneach, Togo)

The relative failure of this Fourth Review Conference reflects the very widespread concern at the fact that the continuation of nuclear tests is a factor in accelerating the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons. Moreover, that set-back is a useful warning that the Charter should not be applied in a selective and discriminatory manner. In any Case, extention of the non-proliferation Treaty should not be a mere formality but rather the result of a renewed commitment to the adoption of urgent and specific measures to put an end to the horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons.

My country, which has always demonstrated its dedication to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to nuclear disarmament, will very soon sign the safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as well as the Protocol. The strengthening of the non-proliferation régime that we all ardently wish to see demands effective support for efforts and initiatives to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones.

In this regard it is important to ensure the application of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. The objective of this Declaration is compromised by South Africa's acquisition of a nuclear-weapon capability. Various types of pressure on the racist régime of South Africa should therefore be stepped up to make it accede unconditionally to the non-proliferation Treaty and submit all it8 nuclear installations to the IAEA safeguards.

The forthcoming amendment Conference of the partial test-ban Treaty will be another significant stage in the efforts to achieve a comprehensive ban on such tests and thereby the end of the nuclear-arms race. By associating itself with the initiative of this Conference my country intends to make its contribution to resolution of the deadlock that for several years now has existed in the work of the Conference on Disarmament on the nuclear-test ban. It is important that,

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thanks to the improvement in the international political atmosphere, and the lessons learned from the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the non-proliferation Treaty, the amendment Conference should be crowned with success*

Where are we going? We all know that, despite the progress that has been made in the area of arms limitation, the great Powers - the major players in the hellish game of the arms race - have in their arms stockpiles the wherewithal to incinerate our planet several times over. Hence the English expression "overkill".

The proliferation of nuclear weapons is not in the interests of mankind. It is very likely that, sooner or later, it will lead to a horrendous war sparked by a psychopathic tyrant. Thus, on the one hand, the cost of nuclear war is such that the game is not worth the candle and, on the other hand, there is a real danger of seeing mankind self-destruct. Nuclear war would thus lead to collective suicide, for, purely within the area of military strategy, man, through the combination of nuclear power and missile technology, has reeled dizzyingly far beyond the limits of the necessary and the reasonable. The deplorable Chernobyl accident demonstrated to the world the completely illusory nature of the notion that a defensive strategy could spare millions of civilian lives.

The revival of the prestige and effectiveness of the United Nations has resulted from a better grasp of the Organixation's enormous potential for action to uphold the primacy of law and to prevent and settle conflicts. While consecrating the validity and the justice of the principles and purposes embodied in the Charter, the universal Organisation's recent successes in the settlement of conflicts point to the imperative need to make full use of the machinery for collective security.

Significant, in this regard, are the consistency and solidarity demonstrated by the Security Council in its handling of the Gulf crisis, For the sake of the credibility, authority and effectiveness of the Council, it is essential that this

(Mr. Pennaneach, Togo)

positive and responsible attitude be maintained without discrimination and that it serve as a vehicle for the peaceful resolution of continuing regional conflicts. The extinguishing of hotbeds of tension will be a valuable encouragement to those engaged in efforts towards regional disarmament and to those trying to relaunch policies of economic development in the countries involved.

The invasion and annexation of Kuwait by Iraq are a reminder of the fragility of peace, and draw attention to the urgent need to control international arms transfers, especially to those regions that already have a heavy concentration of weapons and are subject to tensions.

Pending a general agreement on disarmament, agreement must be reached on the limitation of arms sales. It is high time that the logic of profit and the strategic calculations of individuals yielded to a global vision of the interests of regional and world security. My delegation supports the proposal to establish at the United Nations an international register of international arms transfers, in so far as that would be likely to promote openness and transparency and, therefore, to dispel distrust and suspicion.

The relative dynamism of bilateral negotiations in the disarmement field should not make us lose sight of the great importance of the multilateral aspect of disarmament. The present context of increased confidence in the universal Organization presents us with an opportunity to adopt practical measures to strengthen its pivotal role in the disarmament field. So far as disarmament is concerned, there can be no monopolyt security will be either global or non-existent and, therefore, disarmament will be either global or non-existent.

The consensus achieved at the last session of the Disarmament Commission on four important issues - the nuclear capability of South Africa; conventional disarmament; the Declaration of the 1990s a8 the Third Disarmament Decade; and the role of the United Nations in the disarmament field - is a positive development

(Mr. Pennaneach, Togo)

with regard to the stalemate of all types that has characterised consideration of those issues since they first appeared on the agenda several years ago.

The rationalisation of the work of this Committee should open the way to new consensus, which should facilitate the Committee's task and lay the ground for multilateral negotiations.

As the single multilateral negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament has an extremely important role to play in meeting Member States' legitimate expectations in the disarmament field.

With regard to the growing concern that is being voiced about nuclear tests and the need for a total ban on such tests, the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee presents a good opportunity to launch a genuine negotiating process.

It is important that, among other things, efforts to rationalise the work of the Conference on Disarmament should allow for more effective and active participation by Member States and ensure that their contributions to the debates are taken into account.

Finally, if the improvement in the international political atmosphere is to be reflected more clearly, and the need for efficiency met, the efforts at rationalising the work of the First Committee should proceed from a real political desire for constructive dialogue and rapprochement, as well as from respect for the legitimate and vital interests of States or groups of States.

(Mr. Pennaneach, Togo)

My delegation assures you, Mr. Chairman, of its full support as you carry out this sensitive but very necessary rationalisation exercise.

It is fitting that we pay a tribute here to the very useful work of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, under the highly competent leadership of Mr, Yasuki Akashi and with the dedicated assistance of his staff. The significant work carried out and the programme of work laid down for 1991 clearly show that the Department is determined to do its utmost to fulfil its obligations and, above all, to make the changes necessitated by the strengthened role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. If the Department for Disarmament Affairs is to continue to be one of the critical means for strengthening the role of the United Nations, it is absolutely indispensable that it have adequate human, material and financial resources.

It is also important to strengthen support for the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace, Disarmament and Development and, thereby, the role of the United Nations in the disarmament field.

My Government welcomes the establishment of the post of Director of the Lomé Centre and the appointment of a new Director. In keeping with General Assembly resolution 44/117 F of 15 December 1989, such decisions are likely to give fresh impetus to the operation of the Centre, which continue8 to demonstrate its ability to promote confidence-building measures at the regional African level. My country, which has the honour of acting as host to the Centre, will continue to contribute to the Centre's operation to the extent of its possibilities. In order for the Centre to carry out its mandate it must have available the necessary financial and material resources to better programme its activities. A new appeal for generous contributions to the Centre must therefore be addressed to those Member States that have not yet responded,

(Mr. Pennaneach, Togo)

At present, under the World Disarmament Campaign the regional Centres could usefully serve as units for raising public awareness of the changes that have taken place in international political relations and their impact on disarmament efforts and initiatives. The Centres should be better known; they should also disseminate throughout their regions any useful information likely to mobilize the world for total disarmament.

The improvement in East-West relations will not automatically lead to an improvement in the North-South dialogue. In this connection it is important to make certain that the end of East-West confrontation does not give rise to a North-South political and economic confrontation fed by the existing imbalances in international economic relations.

The equal distribution of peace dividends is another basic requirement in any effort to establish a new world order. It requires that specific attention be given to eliminating non-military threats to security. In the present case, that means that appropriate economic and political solutions must be found to the possible instability - and indeed breakdown - that threatens national sovereignty, social cohesiveness, the championing of human rights and the building of democratic societies, as a result of massive foreign debt, poverty, misery and environmental destruction in the developing countries.

Neither the disappearance of the iron curtain nor the partial progress made in the field of disarmament should allow us to forget the billions of human beings who are still living in abject poverty or the growing gap between North and South, The international community must do all in its power to narrow that gap so as to avoid the total marginalisation of the poor countries. Détente must become universal - in other words, it must go beyond East-West relations and encompass North-South relations. Here, we refer to the pressing need to implement the

(Mr. Pennaneach, Togo)

Programme of Action of the International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development,

In this connection I should like to emphasise that, based on available statistical data, a 10 per cent reduction in the annual military budgets of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the United States of America would allow for a doubling of the present amount - some $48 billion - of public development assistance supplied by countries of the West to the developing countries.

In a world in which ideological confrontation has ended, we find ourselves today more than ever before faced with historic opportunities to build a society of man like the one envisaged by the founding fathers of the world Organisation, a world in which respect for law leads to peace, a world in which those who want peace strive for it, a world in which the voice of weapons yields to the voice of negotiations and in which selfishness gives way to generosity, a world in which the spirit of conquest succumbs to love and solidarity.

Together, we must seize the opportunities offered by the present situation to embark upon an irreversible process to eradicate violence and injustice and to build for the third millenium a world in which peace and co-operation will be impregnable fortresses under whose protection mankind will enjoy equally shared prosperity. Only then shall we be able to make our planet a place of freedom and justice in which the unity of nations will be realized in full equality.

With that in mind, the pursuit and intensification of efforts and initiatives towards arms limitation and disarmament must proceed on the basis of a broader set of bilateral, regional and multilateral approaches and of the progressive elimination of both military and non-military threats to security.

(Mr. Pennaneach, Togo)

World peace, still so fragile today, must, if it is to be strengthened in a lasting way, needs a more sustained collective effort to extinguish all hotbeds of tension and to discourage and forestall regional hegemonic ambitions, in order finally to ensure the primacy of law, dialogue and concerted action, to establish the confidence needed for the elimination of means of mass destruction and for the substantive reduction of levels of axmaments and, lastly, to strengthen international economic co-operation. For it is indeed an insult to human dignity to see a great part of the world's resources squandered on ends as futile as the arms race.

Since the stakes are so high, let us begin here and now by taking steps to promote the dawning of a new world order that is truly consonant with the noble ideals governing our Organisation.

Mr. KORUTURK (Turkey): I should like to express the sincere congratulations of my delegation to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that your well-known wisdom and leadership, so ably demonstrated during your tenure as President of the Security Council, will guide the Committee's work through this session. I am also pleased to convey my delegation's congratulations to the other officers of the Committee.

In the past year, there have been dramatic changes in the political landscape of Europe that have deeply affected East-West relations. The increasingly positive trend in that relationship that was already discernible at the last session of the First Committee has been accentuated. Those momentous political changes were reflected in the Declaration issued in London last July by the summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. That Declaration was widely repotted as marking the end of the cold war.

The improvement of the political climate has given rise to significant Progress in arms control, particularly in Europe, and has influenced the global disarmament process in a positive way. The successful implementation of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - which eliminates a whole class of nuclear weapons, is of great significance in that respect. The conclusion of an agreement in the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) - possibly before the end of this year, as stated by the United States and the Soviet Union - which is expected to provide substantive reductions in the strategic nuclear forces of the United States and the Soviet Union, will represent another major achievement in the field of nuclear disarmament. Moreover, we know that the United States of America and the Soviet Union have agreed to engage in consultations about further negotiations on matter6 of strategic balance after the START treaty is completed. Finally, negotiations on the reduction of short-range

(Mr. Koruturk, Turkey)

nuclear forces are expected to begin between the United States and the Soviet Union shortly following the conclusion of an agreement on conventional forces in Europe.

We support the endeavours of the United States and the Soviet Union in various fields of arms control and disarmament. We recognize that nuclear disarmament is only one aspect of a larger general issue. We view arms control and disarmament as an integrated process encompassing all the multiple components of the military balance. Since we are seeking enhanced global security, disarmament efforts in both the nuclear and the conventional fields are of the utmost importance.

The objective of the Negotiation on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), in which Turkey takes an active part, is to strengthen stability and security in Europe through the establishment of a stable and secure balance at lower levels of conventional armed forces, including conventional armament and equipment, to get rid of imbalances detrimental to stability and security, and to eliminate as a matter of priority conventional capabilities for launching surprise attacks and for initiating large-scale offensive action. We look forward to a successful conclusion to that Negotiation.

Turkey attaches equal importance to the second set of negotiations in Vienna, between the 34 States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) on confidence- and security-building measures, which it views as an indispensable corollary to disarmament efforts. Indeed, any progress in the field of arms limitation is directly linked to the security considerations and perceptions of the countries concerned. The establishment of an environment of confidence among those parties is highly significant. Confidence- and security-building measures have a primary role to play in securing more openness, transparency and comparability in military matters, with a view to eliminating uncertainty and insecurity. The negotiations on confidence-building measures aim

(Mr. Koruturk, Turkey)

to develop further the regime of the 1986 Stockholm Document and to open up new areas of confidence building in order to promote further transparency and openness in the military field, so as to contribute to further reducing the risk of military conf rontatioa in Europe.

The fact that confidence-building measures are winning growing acceptance in the world is also shown by the commendable results already achieved on that issue in the framework of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. In that content, we welcome the publication by the Soviet Union of data on the numerical strength and the main types of armaments of the Soviet armed forces and the decision to submit this year, for the first time, figures on Soviet military expenditures in accordance with the United Nations Standardised Data Reporting System.

The timely completion of a CFE agreement for signature, as anticipated, at a CSCE summit meeting in Paris next month, together with the endorsement by that summit meeting of the progress in the negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures, will represent a vital part of a new concept of security relations in Europe, opening a new era of peace, security, stability and co-operation on a more solid and lasting basis.

The historical division of Europe may be finally overcome in accordance with the objectives of the Helsinki Final Act and through the CSCE process, which plays a fundamental role in the changes that we are witnessing. In that context, the unification of the German nation under the roof of a democratic and peaceful German State is bound to contribute to increased stability in Europe. Turkey believes that tangible progress in hilateral and regional arms control efforts will contribute to the advancement of the global arms control and disarmament process by improving the international climate.

(Mr. Koruturk, Turkey)

Against that background of momentous developments, the invasion and occupation of Kuwait by Iraq in August has caused world-wide indignation. The Security Council resolutions promptly adopted in the wake of the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait have clearly demonstrated the firm determination of the United Nations to establish the principle that such acts, which are contrary to modern norms of international behaviour, shall not be tolerated. In the framework of the First Committee, we express the hope that the crisis may soon be brought to an end, without further undermining the prospects for the preservation and expansion of the existing momentum in the arms control and disarmament process.

The parties to the non-proliferation Treaty recently held their Fourth Review Conference in Geneva. We consider the non-proliferation Treaty one of the most crucial multilateral disarmament agreements yet concluded, with more than 140 States party to it. By reducing considerably the risk of nuclear war, the non-proliferation Treaty has contributed to a great extent to international security and arms control. Turkey, as a party to the non-proliferation Treaty, holds the view that strict adherence to Treaty provisions by nuclear and non-nuclear parties alike is of vital importance. We note that the great majority of parties at the Review Conference recognized the contribution of the non-proliferation Treaty to international peace and security. They confirmed their commitment to the Treaty and expressed support for its objectives. It is all the more important that the non-proliferation Treaty be maintained and that the non-proliferation régime be even further reinforced. To that end, we urge the States that have not yet adhered to the Treaty to be more forthcoming in that respect. We welcome the recent accession of Mozambique and Albania to the Treaty.

We note with satisfaction that during the period from 1985 to 1990, which was under review at that Conference, concrete and significant progress has been

(Mr. Koruturk, Turkey)

achieved in the field of disarmament. Those efforts that I dwelled upon earlier in my statement, such as the INF Treaty, the upcoming START agreement, and all other current or anticipated measures aimed at reducing or limiting nuclear forces can be construed as major steps in the implentation of article VI of the non-proliferation Treaty.

The Review Conference also reaffirmed the role of the Treaty in promoting international co-operation on nuclear safety and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and underlined the importance of International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards in that regard.

(Mr. Koruturk, Turkey)

Although the Conference was not able to reach a final consensus on a concluding document, general agreement was obtained on most issues and much positive work was done at the Review Conference. In spite of the widely differing views on the issue of a comprehensive test ban, which blocked the way to a consensus on a final declaration by the Fourth Review Conference, we hope that the acknowledgement by the vast majority of States parties of the value of the non-proliferation Treaty on its own merits will eventually prevail and pave the way to a constructive process regarding the future extension of the Treaty beyond 1995.

Concerning the test-ban issue, we note with satisfaction that the Conference on Disarmament during its summer session finally succeeded, after several years, in agreeing on a mandate for an Ad Hoc Committee. We hope that this Committee, which has started its work under the chairmanship of Ambassador Donowaki of Japan, will be able to carry out substantive work on this issue. We wish to pay a tribute also to the Group of Scientific Experts, which has achieved considerable progress towards the establishment of a global network for the exchange of seismic data. That network will be an important element of the future verification system of a test-ban treaty.

In 1991 a Conference for the amendment of the partial test-ban Treaty will be held, on the initiative of a group of countries seeking to convert the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive one. We understand that this initiative reflects the frustration of many States regarding the efforts deployed by the depositaries to end test explosions; we know that the immediate results of their efforts were not encouraging, especially regarding short-term measures, However, we wish to emphasise that such activity must not lead to unnecessary confrontation, but should be used for constructive discussion.

(Mr. Koruturk, Turkey)

On the other hand, it is understood that the signing by President Bush and President Gorbachev, at their June summit in Washington, of two important verification protocols - one to the 1974 threshold test-ban Treaty and one to the 1976 Treaty on peaceful nuclear explosions - constitutes a first step towards the banning of nuclear tests. We hops that future negotiations will envisage further limitations on the number and yield of nuclear test explosions and ultimately bring to an end all nuclear testing.

We endorse the possibility of achieving a total ban on nuclear tests, and we think that the best way to attain this ultimate goal is by means of adopting a gradual, realistic, step-by-step approach, as in the negotiations already embarked upon by the United States and the Soviet Union. We are of the opinion that further reductions in nuclear arsenals will also pave the way to a comprehensive test ban.

The elimination of chemical weapons from the arsenals of the world remains an urgent task for the international community. Turkey attaches the utmost importance to the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention globally banning the development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical weapons under effective verification. We note with disappointment that this year's negotiations within the *Conference on* Disarmament recorded only limited progress towards the completion of such a convention. This is a regrettable situation, particularly in view of the expectations generated by the 1989 Paris Conference, which reiterated the unanimous will of the international community to finalise a global convention banning chemical weapons. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament will be able to overcome the difficulties and resolve the outstanding issues, particularly those related to the complex domain of verification, so as to conclude the negotiations as soon as possible.

(Mr. Koruturk, Turkey)

In this context, we welcome the new agreement concluded in June between the United States and the Soviet Union on the destruction of a large part of their chemical-weapon stockpiles. We express the hope that such bilateral steps will encourage the negotiations on a future convention under way in Geneva, as they cannot be a substitute for the multilateral effort still necessary to reach a global ban.

Furthermore, Turkey attaches importance to the Third Review Conference of the parties to the biological weapons Convention, to be held in 1991, and hopes the Review Conference will offer an opportunity for strengthening the authority of the Convention,

As in previous years. the issue of nuclear-weapon-free zones in certain regions of the world has been included in the agenda of the First Committee. In that regard, Turkey continues to support the establishment of such nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions where nuclear weapons do not exist, provided that all States concerned are willing to co-operate to this end on the basis of a freely concluded agreement. The creation of these zones should be conducive to preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and should contribute to stability in the regions concerned.

Although arms control and other security-building endeavours have been largely limited to Europe and have been dealt with in an East-West context, there is a growing need to spread these efforts to other regions of the world in order to reduce tensions and enhance stability at the global level. We appreciate the pioneering work conducted by the United Nations in this respect and welcome commendable initiatives such as the regional meeting on confidence-building measures in Asia held recently in Kathmandu.

(Mr. Koruturk, Turkey)

Moreover, we welcome the useful research work conducted within the United Nations framework on various issues of the disarmament agenda by study groups and groups of experts. We should like also to commend the Department for Disarmament Affairs for its valuable and indispensable contribution and the skilful assistance it provides to various activities in the field of disarmament.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasise that we support the efforts towards rationalization of the work of the First Committee and the Disarmament Commission with a view to achieving more effective results on the basis of a leaner, more flexible and more streamlined agenda. Turkey stands ready to contribute in a constructive spirit to these efforts and to the proceedings of the Committee.

Mr. JANDL (Austria): The First Committee has before it the report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (A/45/42), which is to be considered under agenda item 60 (a). I should like to make a few comments on this report.

The 1990 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission can be regarded as a historic one. Never before has the Connnission found itself in a position to finalise and adopt by consensus recommendations or sets of principles on four substantive agenda items. Furthermore, with regard to a fifth item, naval armaments and disarmament, the delegations participating in the deliberations reached a consensus on a comprehensive and substantive text reflecting their various positions. The discussions of a further issue, that of objective information on military matters, were in a preliminary stag8 and delegations held a very frank snd, hence, fruitful exchange of views which will enhance the future treatment of the issue.

Thus, the Austrian delegation would like to congratulate the Commission's Chairman, Ambassador Sutresna of Indonesia, and the various Chairmen of the subsidiary bodies most cordially on their success.

(Mr. Jandl, Austria)

Let me now be a bit more specific on the results. In contrast to the rather impressive outcome of the whole session, little was achieved with regard to the item dealing with nuclear disarmament. That issue has been on the Commission's agenda since 1979. Two draft sets of recommendations were produced, but only a limited number of paragraphs commanded consensus. The rest of the two texts has remained in brackets over the years, indicating disagreement among delegations. During this year's session the two papers were rid of elements that seemed to be outdated because they obviously no longer corresponded to the realities of the early 1990s. The remainder, as seen in the Disarmament Commission's report, actually reflects the status of the discussion and the various, sometimes conflicting, points of view of delegations,

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Since it was agreed that consideration of the item in its present form should he regarded as terminated, one has to find a different approach to tackle the question of nuclear disarmament in the future. Basically. it is quite obvious that the Disarmament Commission has to deal with nuclear disarmament in one way or another, because nuclear weapons pose the most dangerous threat to mankind and because nuclear disarmament must therefore remain the highest priority in the international disarmament debate. The exercise in the Disarmament Commission has demonstrated, however, that it is not possible to discuss the comprehensive and complex issue of nuclear disarmament unspecifically or generally. There are too many aspects and elements: the scope of questions relating to nuclear weapons is too wide. Rather, we should try to identify some very specific and exactly defined aspects of the broad field of nuclear arms reduction. Otherwise, discussions will once again not lead to tangible results.

After long and intensive debates, the Disarmament Commission was able to adopt recommendations on the problem of the nuclear capability of South Africa and on the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and the text of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade. For all three items it is true that a considerable number of States would have liked to see much stronger language and a firmer commitment to the substance of the respective items. Although the very fact that the Commission agreed on the texts is to be regarded as important, we should not forget the disappointment of many with respect to the contents.

Countries, like Austria, that show a particular interest in multflateralism and advocate a stronger United Nations position are not completely satisfied with the text of the recommendation on the role of our organisation and its various bodies, Since the adoption of the text in May this year much has happened in the international arena which has led to what some people have called the renaissance of

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the United Nations. Althouqh the events I am referring to did not happen in disarmament-related bodies, we hope that they will also have their impact on arms control forums. We feel encouraged by some delegations' statements in the First Committee that have shown an increased interest in multilateral endeavours. We therefore sincerely hope that all this will enhance the role of the United Nations and its various disarmament organs.

The debates on naval armaments and disarmament in the Disarmament Commission led to the elaboration of a Chairman's paper which stands out for its high quality and expertise. Although not all Member States participated in the relevant deliberations, many well-founded points of view are reflected. Thus the paper gives a useful survey of an issue that will increasingly gain importance.

Conventional disarmament has always been of the utmost interest to the Austrian delegation. We therefore highly welcome the adoption of a set of recommendations on this matter. Due to different, often divergent, opinions of various countries which sometimes reflect specific regional conditions, the discussions were not easy. Considerable obstacles had to be overcome. The outcome of the Disarmament Commission's session is therefore encouraging, and we feel that questions of conventional disarmament should be looked at more closely within United Nations bodies, bearing in mind, of course, also its interaction with the question of weapons of mass destruction. During the debate on conventional disarmament it became obvious that this problem and its possible solution are closely linked to the respective situations prevailing in the various regions of the globe, and that the specifics of given regions or subregions have to be taken fully into account. Otherwise, genuine results cannot be achieved.

Austria had the great honour to preside over the consultation group that dealt with objective information on military matters. According to the compromise

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reached at the beginning of the substantive session, the item, being on the agenda for the first time, had to be addressed in a preliminary way, with no negotiation of a text. Accordingly, the issue was discussed in an open and frank manner, and the deliberations led to the reflection of the various opinions on the subject. Delegations brought forward, explained and compared their positions on objective information on military matters, both generally and in their various aspects. I should like to emphasiae that this exchange of views was extremely fruitful, and of an outstanding intellectual level. It took place in a very productive and uncontroversial climate. Therefore, we feel that the deliberations form a very sound and solid basis for the future treatment of the item.

Looking ahead, we note that the Disarmament Commission will have a maximum of four agenda items on its working agenda for the 1991 substantive session. This was agreed upon in a reform package elaborated in the margins of last year's First Committee. The paper entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission*' (A/CN.10/137) contains a number of very specific measures designed to streamline the methods of work and therefore increase the Commission's effectiveness. Austria has always regarded the Commission a8 an extremely useful instrument, and has therefore always been interested in a substantive outcome of its endeavours. The reform adopted will certainly improve the way of dealing with the items, thereby increasing the chances of propitious results.

As members are aware, informal discussions under the aegis of the Commission's Chairman have been held during the past weeks and months and are being continued. The task of identifying four topics which enjoy the consent of everybody is very delicate and difficult. A number of proposals on the criteria that should govern the selection of the items have been put forward by some delegationas other delegations have already presented their ideas on concrete items. I shall not go

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into the details at this stage, but let me reflect some basic thoughts of my delegation on the composition of the Commission's working agenda for next year.

We fully subscribe to the idea that the agenda should have a broad basis, that it should strike a balance between the interests of various States or groups of States, and that the issues should be of global concern. Furthermore, duplication of the work of other disarmament bodies has to be avoided. The example of the item on nuclear disarmament, which I referred to earlier, has demonstrated that there is no prospect for items with too broad a scope. On the contrary, we think that the issues have to be exactly defined in order to provide the Commission with a specific mandate and in order to give delegations clear guidelines on what they should deliberate on.

According to the established compromise, objective information on military matters will be one of the agenda items for next year's session. After the solid background work done in May 1990 we hope that the deliberations will be fruitful and lead in the long run to a substantive set of principles or a recommendation on this important confidence- and security-building measure.

As I have already mentioned, one item dealing with nuclear disarmament has to be on the agenda. Obviously there is broad consensus on this. Informal consultations will have to identify a specific topic and to find a clear formulation of the item. Many interesting proposals have been made so far, and we think that delegations should be able to establish consensus on a particular formulation.

With regard to the third item, some delegations have proposed a topic dealing with the regional aspects of disarmament, As can be seen from recent events, regional situations can be of the utmost importance to all of us, since they have ramifications far beyond their immediate neighbourhood. The importance of regional

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questions in disarmament and security will increase and so will the need to address such matters. We have to take into particular account the vivid interaction between security and disarmament at the regional, subregional and global levels. We believe that arms-reduction efforts have to be pursued at the various levels and that they are of mutual influence. Thus regional disarmament steps interact with global measures and vice versa.

A set of basic guidelines or recommendations on the matter would, in the Austrian view, be a very useful document. The Disarmament Commission, being the deliberative body of the disarmament machinery, with universal membership, seems to be the adequate forum for this undertaking. Therefore, we strongly support the inclusion of a related item on next year's working agenda. The concrete formulation of this item should be identified in consultations between interested delegations.

With respect to the last, the fourth, item, many very interesting proposals have been presented. Among them we find several future-oriented subjects which are not yet treated in the various disarmament bodies, but which will gain increased importance in the future. We think that it would be more than adequate if the Disarmament Commission were to address particularly such forward-looking topics.

We note with special interest matters like the environmental aspects of armaments and disarmament, the question of conversion, or science and technology in its relation to security and disarmament. All of these possible items, and, of course, others which might be brought forward later, deserve our close attention, and should be carefully examined with regard to possible treatment in the framework of the Disarmament Commission. We certainly hope that consultations will soon lead to an agreement on one of these issues.

(Mr. Jandl, Austria)

It almost goes without saying that not every delegation can be completely and entirely satisfied with any composition of various items. Countries do have interests and opinions and, hence, legitimate preferences. This holds true in particular for such a sensitive matter as disarmament and international security. But we should not forget that general and complete disarmament should be the final goal of all our endeavours, in order to create a safer and more secure world.

That is why everybody has to give in a bit. It is obvious that some States will have to come a longer way than others; but, in the end, the selection of the items for next year's working agenda of the Disarmament Commission will be the outcome of a compromise. If all of us participate with good will and a co-operative spirit in the relevant consultations, we shall soon establish a reasonable compromise.

Let us not lose time. The earlier we know what the Disarmament Commission will do next year, the better we can prepare ourselves for our future task. As a representative of a country that has always shown a keen interest in the Disarmament Commission, I am firmly convinced that it is worth while.

Mr. AHSAN (Bangladesh): The Bangladesh delegation cannot but help feel a modicum of pride seeing you, Sir, in the Chair. It is not simply because you represent Nepal, a country with which we have the closest ties, but also because we know you to be a friend with vast diplomatic skills that lend our proceedings the certainty of success. Felicitations are also due to your colleagues in the Bureau who will doubtless render you any support you might require. We are heartened by the fact that we shall continue to be guided by the profound wisdom of Under-Secretary-General Yasushi Akashi, and are also pleased that our astute Secretary, Mr. Sohrab Kheradi, will, as before, assist us.

(Mr. Ahsan, Bangladesh)

We meet against a matrix of heightened hope. The Cold War has receded into history. In this era of neo-détente, super-Power rapprochement has witnessed confrontation transformed into co-operation. Discord has turned into dialogue. Mutual understanding has led to increasing interactions. A beginning has been made towards real disarmament, settlement of regional conflicts, and a joint search for viable solutions to global problems.

The world has undergone radical changes in the past year. Eastern Europe has moved in a positive direction. The reunification of Germany has opened up the possibility of a whole new European architecture. The establishment of political pluralism and emphasis on market mechanism holds better prospects for wider opportunities for-trade and investment, The declining influence of ideology on State policies is leading to greater tolerance for differing political, economic and social systems. The relationship between the Warsaw Pact and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) now hold promise for a more durable and stable European security régime with disengagement of forces, reduced nuclear arsenals and cut-backs in conventional arms. The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) appears to be advancing even further towards a new and innovative direction that could envisage a new security system for the whole of Europe.

There is, however, every reason for us to avoid a sense of complacency that might creep in if we are unwary. The emerging international security scene remains critically fragile. This has been demonstrated by the current sad events in the Gulf- St has brought into broad relief the instability and unpredictability of the world's shifting political, economic and security conditions. The situation is a crucial test of the confidence and viability of the rule of international law and global co-operation for the maintenance of peace.

(Mr. Ahsan, Bangladesh)

The end of the cold war has marked the collapse in the global structure of two competing Power blocs. New centres of economic and political power with new variables and alignments can emerge with as yet uncertain consequences. The evolving scenario is not unmixed with danger for weaker nations. A major anxiety is that it might undermine the security interests of many developing countries either through regional hegemonism or marginalization.

Several dangers are inherent in this situation. The Gulf crisis highlighted the incongruity of a situation where one category of weapons of mass destruction - that is, chemical weapons - is being perceived as a deterrent to the not so covert nuclear arsenal of Israel. This leads us to the overall issue of the arms race and its dangers. Despite Treaty reductions, vast numbers of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons remain. The over-kill factor still defines the nature of the threat to human survival. The arms race continues to be characterized by terrifying statistics of wasteful costs. Over a trillion dollars are spent annually on means of destruction. This is a sad anomaly in the light of the painful fact brought out in the recent World Summit for Children that 40,000 infants die every day of hunger, malnutrition and disease.

Hopes for a peace dividend remain uncertain. Means to regulate conventional arms transfer are beset with local and regional implications. Many developing countries continue to strain their scarce resources for the purchase of highly sophisticated weaponry. Arms producers relentlessly pursue their trade despite the costs or threats to peace. Weaker countries find themselves in a situation where they must perforce strengthen their capacities to meet minimum defence needs. Existing differences are aggravated by expanding knowledge on weapons technology, The philosophy of non-proliferation continues to be threatened by the fact that the quantitative arms race is being overtaken by qualitative competition among the big

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Powers. Super-Power detente, while reducing tension among major protagonists, might bring to the fore other differences that had been papered-over during the last four decades. Revival of dormant problems might sharpen the appetite of regional Powers for domination. There could arise, as indeed there has arisen, a tendency for the more powerful to try to re-draw established bordore.

All this does not mean we must throw up our hands in despair. On the contrar . New situations bring new challenges requiring new response. We must gear ourselves to redouble our efforts in the cause of peace and stability. The United Nations has doubtless a grave responsibility in this. This is one forum where nearly all States participate in the debate on how to make the world more secure. Bangladesh reiterates its desire to take part in this activity and to do so constructively. With this in mind, I should like to state our position on some of the agenda items at hand.

(Mr. Ahsan, Banaladesh)

My delegation believes that there should be adequate concentration on nuclear disarmament and that this subject should, indeed, have the highest priority. At the same time, we can ill afford to ignore the flip side of the coin. Attention should also be focused on measures for the limitation and reduction of conventional arms. Such measures must be pursued resolutely within the framework of progress towards general and complete disarmament. In this regard, the regional dimension must be emphasized.

For ourselves, we have rejected the nuclear alternative, as is demonstrated by our accession to the non-proliferation Treaty. We regret that the Fourth Review Conference, at its meeting in Geneva last month, was unable to reach agreement on a document. In Geneva, Bangladesh stressed the need for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to be strengthened through commitments to positive and negative security assurances, standardized and tighter nuclear-export regulations, and more effective International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. We support the call for nuclear-free zones. As President Hussain Muhammad Ershad stated at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly, the establishment of nuclear-free zones, as well as zones of peace, is among measures integral to a non-proliferation régime. We see Israel's and South Africa's acquisition of a nuclear capability as a cause for grave concern.

Bangladesh believes that a comprehensive test-ban treaty would narrow the arms competition by rendering impossible the further development of nuclear weapons. Producers, if any, of first-generation fission weapons without testing would be unlikely to use them, for fear of effective reprisals. A consensus appears to exist among scientists that laboratory simulations are insufficient as a means of predicting the effects of more advanced nuclear weapons.

A comprehensive test ban could satisfy those on many fronts. It would please the increasing masses of the global population who are rapidly becoming aware of

(Mr. Ahsan, Bangladesh)

the consequences of atmospheric pollution and the degradation of nature. Adequate security assurances to non-nuclear States would not only diminish their propensity to go nuclear but also buttress their sense of security. For these reasons Bangladesh is among the States that have requested a conference to convert the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Technological advance has made today's conventional weapons increasingly sophisticated. Precision-guided munitions are able to hit exact targets at enormous distances. The differences between these and some low-yield nuclear weapons in terms of destructive power and "kill probability" are disappearing. My delegation therefore reiterates that the maintenance of conventional capabilities in excess of legitimate security requirements can have destabilising ramifications for the region and the globe. We support - indeed, call for - arms reductions in a balanced and equitable manner so that, without genuine security needs being affected, stability is enhanced at lower military levels. Chemical weapons are horrendous instruments of destruction, and we hope soon to see an agreement banning them. However, any proposed measures ought not to constrain needlessly the nascent chemical industry in developing countries.

Bangladesh is deeply committed to the peaceful uses of the sea and its resources. We feel that naval build-up beyond perceived needs tends to spread apprehension and heighten suspicions. We therefore urge restraint in naval activities. The criteria for legitimate naval needs should be carefully formulated. Recognition should be given to the principle of weightage, with additional capability for weaker States. We agree that a multilateral agreement on the prevention of naval accidents is necessary. All these measures should be in harmony with, and not contradictory to, the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

(Mr. Ahsan, Bangladesh)

It was our abiding commitment to peaceful maritime activities that led us to call for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. How long must the proposed Colombo Conference remain an elusive goal? We urge the members of the Ad Hoc Committee to sink their differences and work towards our common purpose. We shall continue our search for a stable Indian Ocean régime that will be neutral, dimilitarized and denuclearized. Such a régime must be guaranteed through a collective security system so that great-Power withdrawal is not supplanted by any other form of domination that could imperil the security of the weaker littoral States.

For many developing countries, - our country included, the most crucial incentive in the field of disarmament is, of course, the link between disarmament and development. It is incongruous, indeed lamentable, that vast resources are channelled to purposes of destruction rather than towards rescuing millions from the morass of excruciatingly painful poverty.

In all this, as well as in the general area of disarmament, the United Nations must have a strengthened role. Recognition of this fact was underscored by States Members when they committed themselves to the Charter, which views the maintenance of peace and security as the principal purpose to which the United Nations devotes itself. Indeed, this purpose is to be achieved with the least possible diversion of the world's resources to the acquisition of armaments. The United Nations has an important contribution to make in encouraging agreements, as well as in the monitoring of compliance and verification. In this context, Bangladesh would be happy to play a role in the expanded Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, if called upon to do so.

(Mr. Ahsan, Bangladesh)

While on the subject, it would be remiss of me to fail to commend the activities of the three regional research centres. The one in Kathmandu, in which you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Akashi have been taking such a keen interest, has already done some very useful work. If properly equipped, it could go a long way in encouraging the confidence-building measures so badly needed in South Asia. As the first Secretary-General of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC), I have to say that it has been my experience that a small stsp in confidence-building would be a giant stride in the maintenance of peace in that part of the world.

For as long as war and conflict are not eliminated, the promotion of peace and security will continue to demand our attention. We shall need to continue to focus on peace-making and peace-keeping, But there is a growing realization that there must now be appropriate concentration on peace-building. This should not be confined to containing violence or resolving issues; rather, it should include steps to create the conditions in which to eradicate the root cause of war and conflict. Removing poverty, tackling indebtedness, reversing environmental degradation, combating drug abuse, and generally improving the quality of life for all should also come within its focus.

As the representative of a least developed country, I tend to think that empty bellies are a greater threat to stability than are guns. The evidence of history will show that I do not err in that belief. Contentment, not conventions, is what in the ultimate analysis will contain chaos. Let us base our actions on this simple but incontrovertible truth.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.