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Fifteenth special session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOURTEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Thursday, 9 June 1988, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic)

later: Mr. ENGO (Cameroon)  
(Vice-President)

- General debate [8] (continued)

Address by His Excellency Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of the  
Republic of India

Statements were made by:

Mr. Engo (Cameroon)  
Mr. Adodo (Togo)  
Mr. Al-Shaali (United Arab Emirates)  
Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 8 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. RAJIV GANDHI, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will first hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of India.

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. I invite him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. GANDHI (India): Mr. President, may I begin by extending to you our warmest felicitations on your election as President of this vitally important special session of the General Assembly. Our deliberations will benefit greatly from the wealth of your experience and your deep understanding of the issues before us.

We are approaching the close of the twentieth century. It has been the most blood-stained century in history. Fifty-eight million people perished in two world wars. Forty million more have died in other conflicts. In the last nine decades the ravenous machines of war have devoured nearly 100 million people. The appetite of these monstrous machines grows on what they feed on. Nuclear war will not mean the death of 100 million people, or even 1,000 million people. It will mean the extinction of 4,000 million, the end of life as we know it on our planet Earth. We come to the United Nations to seek your support. We seek your support to put a stop to this madness.

(Mr. Gandhi, India)

Humanity is at a crossroads. One road will take us like lemmings to our own suicide. That is the path indicated by doctrines of nuclear deterrence, deriving from traditional concepts of the balance of power. The other road will give us another chance. That is the path signposted by the doctrine of peaceful coexistence, deriving from the imperative values of non-violence, tolerance and compassion.

In consequence of doctrines of deterrence, international relations have been gravely militarized. Astronomical sums are being invested in ways of dealing death. Ever new means of destruction continue to be invented. The best of our scientific talent and the bulk of our technological resources are devoted to maintaining and upgrading this awesome ability to obliterate ourselves. A culture of armaments and threats and violence has become pervasive.

For a hundred years after the Congress of Vienna, Europe knew an uncertain peace based on a balance of power. When that balance was tilted - or, more accurately, when that balance was perceived to have tilted - Europe was plunged into an orgy of destruction, the like of which had never been known before and which spread to engulf much of the world. The unsettled disputes of the First World War led to the Second.

Humankind survived because, by today's standards, the power to destroy which was then available was a limited power. We now have what we did not then have: the power to ensure the genocide of the human race. Technology has now rendered obsolete the calculations of war and peace on which were constructed the always dubious theories of the balance of power.

It is a dangerous delusion to believe that nuclear weapons have brought us peace. It is true that, in the past four decades, parts of the world have experienced an absence of war. But the mere absence of war is not a durable peace.

(Mr. Gandhi, India)

The balance of nuclear terror rests on the retention and augmentation of nuclear armouries. There can be no ironclad guarantee against the use of weapons of mass destruction. They have been used in the past. They could be used in the future. And, in this nuclear age, the insane logic of mutually assured destruction will ensure that nothing survives, that nothing lives to tell the tale, that there is no one left to understand what went wrong and why. Peace which rests on the search for a parity of power is a precarious peace. If we understand what went wrong with such attempts in the past, we may yet be able to escape the catastrophe presaged by doctrines of nuclear deterrence.

There is a further problem with deterrence. The doctrine is based on the assumption that international relations are frozen on a permanently hostile basis. Deterrence needs an enemy, even if one has to be invented. Nuclear deterrence is the ultimate expression of the philosophy of terrorism: holding humanity hostage to the presumed security needs of a few.

There are those who argue that since the consequences of nuclear war are widely known and well understood, nuclear war just cannot happen. Neither experience nor logic can sustain such dangerous complacency. History is full of miscalculations. Perceptions are often totally at variance with reality. A madman's fantasy could unleash the end. An accident could trigger a chain reaction which inexorably leads to doom. Indeed, the advance of technology has so reduced the time for decisions that, once activated, computers programmed for Armageddon, pre-empt human intervention and all hope of survival. There is, therefore, no comfort in the claim of the proponents of nuclear deterrence that everyone can be saved by ensuring that in the event of conflict, everyone will surely die.

The champions of nuclear deterrence argue that nuclear weapons have been invented and, therefore, cannot be eliminated. We do not agree. We have an

(Mr. Gandhi, India)

international convention eliminating biological weapons by prohibiting their use in war. We are working on similarly eliminating chemical weapons. There is no reason in principle why nuclear weapons too cannot be so eliminated. All it requires is the affirmation of certain basic moral values and the assertion of the required political will, underpinned by treaties and institutions which ensure against nuclear delinquency.

The past few years have seen the emergence of a new danger: the extension of the nuclear arms race into outer space. The ambition of creating impenetrable defences against nuclear weapons has merely escalated the arms race and complicated the process of disarmament. This has happened in spite of the grave doubts expressed by leading scientists about its very feasibility. Even the attempt to build a partial shield against nuclear missiles increases the risk of nuclear war. History shows that there is no shield that has not been penetrated by a superior weapon, nor any weapon for which a superior shield has not been found. Societies get caught in a multiple helix of escalation in chasing this chimera, expending vast resources for an illusory security while increasing the risk of certain extinction.

The new weapons being developed for defence against nuclear weapons are part of a much wider qualitative arms race. The development of the so-called "third generation nuclear weapons" has opened up ominous prospects of their being used for selective and discriminate military operations. There is nothing more dangerous than the illusion of limited nuclear war. It desensitizes inhibitions about the use of nuclear weapons. That could lead, in next to no time, to the outbreak of full-fledged nuclear war.

There are no technological solutions to the problems of world security. Security can only come from our asserting effective political control over this self-propelled technological arms race.

(Mr. Gandhi, India)

We cannot accept the logic that a few nations have the right to pursue their security by threatening the survival of humankind. It is not only those who live by the nuclear sword who, by design or default, shall one day perish by it. All humanity will perish.

Nor is it acceptable that those who possess nuclear weapons are freed of all controls while those without nuclear weapons are policed against their production. History is full of such prejudices paraded as iron laws: that men are superior to women; that white races are superior to the coloured; that colonialism is a civilizing mission; that those who possess nuclear weapons are responsible Powers and those who do not are not.

Alas, nuclear weapons are not the only weapons of mass destruction. New knowledge is being generated in the life sciences. Military applications of these developments could rapidly undermine the existing convention against the military use of biological weapons. The ambit of our concern must extend to all means of mass annihilation.

New technologies have also dramatically expanded the scope and intensity of conventional warfare. The physical destruction which can be carried out by full-scale conventional war would be enormous, far exceeding anything known in the past. Even if humankind is spared the agony of a nuclear winter, civilization and civic life as we know it would be irretrievably disrupted. The range, precision

(Mr. Gandhi, India)

and lethality of conventional weapons are being vastly increased. Some of these weapons are moving from being "smart" to becoming "intelligent". Such diabolical technologies generate their own pressures for early use, thus increasing the risk of the outbreak of war. Most of these technologies are at the command of the military blocs. This immensely increases their capacity for interference, intervention and coercive diplomacy.

Those of us who do not belong to the military blocs would much rather stay out of the race. We do not want to accumulate arms. We do not want to augment our capacity to kill. But the system, like a whirlpool, sucks us into its vortex. We are compelled to divert resources from development to defence to respond to the arsenals which are constructed as a sideshow to great Power rivalries. As the nature and sophistication of threats to our security increase, we are forced to incur huge expenditure on raising the threshold of our defences.

There is another danger that is even worse. Left to ourselves, we would not want to touch nuclear weapons. But when, in the passing play of great Power rivalries, tactical considerations are allowed to take precedence over the imperatives of nuclear non-proliferation, with what leeway are we left?

Even the mightiest military Powers realize that they cannot continue the present arms race without inviting economic calamity. The continuing arms race has imposed a great burden on national economies and the global economy. It is no longer only the developing countries that are urging disarmament to channel resources to development. Even the richest are beginning to realize that they cannot afford the current levels of the military burden they have imposed upon themselves. A genuine process of disarmament, leading to a substantial reduction in military expenditure, is bound to promote the prosperity of all nations of the

(Mr. Gandhi, India)

globe. Disarmament accompanied by coexistence will open up opportunities for all countries, whatever their socio-economic systems, whatever their levels of development.

The technological revolutions of our century have created unparalleled wealth. They have endowed the fortunate with high levels of mass consumption and widespread social welfare. In fact, there is plenty for everyone, provided distribution is made more equitable. Yet, the possibility of fulfilling the basic needs of nutrition and shelter, education and health remains beyond the reach of vast millions of people in the developing world because resources which could give fulfilment in life are pre-empted for death.

The root causes of global insecurity reach far below the calculus of military parity. They are related to the instability spawned by widespread poverty, squalor, hunger, disease and illiteracy. They are connected to the degradation of the environment. They are enmeshed in the inequity and injustice of the present world order. The effort to promote security for all must be underpinned by the effort to promote opportunity for all and equitable access to achievement. Comprehensive global security must rest on a new, more just, more honourable world order.

When the General Assembly met here last in special session to consider questions of disarmament, the outlook was grim. The new cold war had been revived with full force. A new programme of nuclear armament had been set in motion. As a result, during the years that followed, fear and suspicion cast a long shadow over all disarmament negotiations. Humankind was approaching the precipice of nuclear disaster.

Today, there is new hope for survival and for peace. There is a perceptible movement away from the precipice. Dialogue has been resumed. Trust is in the air.



(Mr. Gandhi, India)

How has this transformation occurred? We pay a tribute to the sagacity of the American and Soviet leaderships. They have seen the folly of nuclear escalation. They have started tracing the outlines of a pattern of disarmament. At the same time, we must recognize the role of countless enlightened men and women all over the world, citizens of the non-nuclear-weapon States as much as of the nuclear-weapon States. With courage, dedication and perseverance they have kept the candle burning in the enveloping darkness. The Six-Nation Initiative voiced the hopes and aspirations of these many millions. At a time when relations between the two major nuclear-weapon States dipped to their nadir, the six nations - Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and Tanzania - refocused world attention on the imperative of nuclear disarmament. The Appeal of May 1984, issued by Indira Gandhi, Olof Palme and their colleagues, struck a responsive chord. Negotiations stalled for years began inching forward. The process begun in Geneva has led to Reykjavik, Washington and Moscow.

We have all welcomed the ratification of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - concluded between General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan. It is an important step in the right direction. Its great value lies in its bold departure from nuclear arms limitation to nuclear disarmament. We hope there will be agreement soon to reduce nuclear arsenals by 50 per cent. The process should be carried forward to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Only then will we be able to look back and say that the INF Treaty was a truly historic beginning.

India believes it is possible for the human race to survive the second millenium. India believes it is also possible to ensure peace, security and survival into the third millenium and beyond. The way lies through concerted action. We urge the international community immediately to undertake negotiations with a view to adopting a time-bound Action Plan to usher in a world order free of nuclear weapons and rooted in non-violence.

(Mr. Gandhi, India)

We have submitted such an Action Plan to this special session on disarmament of the United Nations General Assembly. Our plan calls upon the international community to negotiate a binding commitment to general and complete disarmament. This commitment must be total. It must be without reservation.

The heart of our Action Plan is the elimination of all nuclear weapons in three stages, over the next 22 years, beginning now. We put this Plan to the United Nations as a programme to be launched at once.

While nuclear disarmament constitutes the centrepiece of each stage of the Plan, this is buttressed by collateral and other measures to further the process of disarmament. We have made proposals for banning other weapons of mass destruction. We have suggested steps for precluding the development of new weapons systems based on emerging technologies. We have addressed ourselves to the task of reducing conventional arms and forces to the minimum levels required for defensive purposes. We have outlined ideas for the conduct of international relations in a world free of nuclear weapons.

The essential features of the Action Plan are:

First, there should be a binding commitment by all nations to eliminating nuclear weapons, in stages, by the year 2010 at the latest.

Secondly, all nuclear-weapon States must participate in the process of nuclear disarmament. All other countries must also be part of the process.

Thirdly, to demonstrate good faith and build the required confidence, there must be tangible progress at each stage towards the common goal.

Fourthly, changes are required in doctrines, policies and institutions to sustain a world free of nuclear weapons. Negotiations should be undertaken to establish a comprehensive global security system under the aegis of the United Nations.

(Mr. Gandhi, India)

We propose simultaneous negotiations on a series of integrally related measures. But we do recognize the need for flexibility in the staging of some of these measures.

(Mr. Gandhi, India)

In Stage I, the INF Treaty must be followed by a 50-per-cent cut in Soviet and United States strategic arsenals. All production of nuclear weapons and weapons grade fissionable material must cease immediately. A moratorium on the testing of nuclear weapons must be undertaken with immediate effect to set the stage for negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

It is already widely accepted that a nuclear war cannot be won and must not be fought. Yet, the right is reserved to resort to nuclear war. This is incompatible with a binding commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons. Therefore, we propose that all nuclear weapons be leached of legitimacy by negotiating an international convention which outlaws the threat or use of such weapons. Such a convention will reinforce the process of nuclear disarmament.

Corresponding to such a commitment by the nuclear-weapon States, those States which are capable of crossing the nuclear weapons threshold must solemnly undertake to restrain themselves. This must be accompanied by strict measures to end all covert and overt assistance to those seeking to acquire nuclear weapons.

We propose that negotiations must commence in the first stage itself for a new treaty to replace the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which expires in 1995. This new treaty should give legal effect to the binding commitment of nuclear-weapon States to eliminate all nuclear weapons by the year 2010, and of all the non-nuclear-weapon States not to cross the nuclear weapons threshold.

International law already bans the use of biological weapons. Similar action must be taken to ban chemical and radiological weapons.

The international community has unanimously recognized outer space as the common heritage of mankind. We must expand international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. The essential prerequisite for this is that outer space be kept free of all weapons. Instead, there are plans for developing,

(Mr. Gandhi, India)

testing and deploying space weapons systems. The nuclear-arms race cannot be ended and reversed without a moratorium on such activity. It should be followed by an agreement to forestall the militarization of outer space. This is also an indispensable condition for attaining the goal of comprehensive global security based on a non-violent world order free of nuclear weapons.

The very momentum of developments in military technology is dragging the arms race out of political control. The race cannot be restrained without restraining the development of such technology. We need a system which fosters technological development but interdicts its application to military purposes. The arms-control approach has focussed on the quantitative growth of arsenals. The disarmament approach must devise arrangements for controlling the continuous qualitative upgradation of nuclear and conventional weapons. To achieve this purpose, the essential requirement is increased transparency in research and development in frontier technologies with potential military applications. This requires a systematic monitoring of such developments, an assessment of their implications for international security, and widespread dissemination of the information obtained. There is also need for greater international co-operation in research into new and emerging technologies for these technologies to open on new vistas of human achievement. Here let us recall the vision of an open world voiced by one of the most remarkable scientists of our time, Niels Bohr. In his Open Letter to the United Nations on 9 June 1950, 38 years ago today, he said:

"The very fact that knowledge itself is a basis for civilization points directly to openness as the way to overcome the present crisis."

(Mr. Gandhi, India)

By the closing years of the century there must be a single integrated multilateral verification system to ensure that no new nuclear weapons are produced anywhere in the world. Such a system would also help in verifying compliance with the collateral and other disarmament measures envisaged in the action plan. It would serve as an early warning system to guard against violations of solemn international treaties and conventions.

Beyond a point, nuclear disarmament itself would depend upon progress in the reduction of conventional arms and forces. Therefore, a key task before the international community is to ensure security at lower levels of conventional defence. Reductions must, of course, begin in areas where the bulk of the world's conventional arms and forces are concentrated. However, other countries should also join the process without much delay. This requires a basic restructuring of armed forces to serve defensive purposes only. Our objective should be nothing less than a general reduction of conventional arms across the globe to levels dictated by minimum needs of defence. The process would require a substantial reduction in offensive military capability, as well as confidence-building measures to preclude surprise attacks. The United Nations needs to evolve by consensus a new strategy doctrine of non-provocative defence.

The plan for radical and comprehensive disarmament must be pursued along with efforts to create a new system of comprehensive global security. The components of such a system must be mutually supportive. The participation in it must be universal.

The structure of such a system should be firmly based on non-violence. When we eliminate nuclear weapons and reduce conventional forces to minimum defensive levels, the establishment of a non-violent world order is the only way of not relapsing into the irrationalities of the past. It is the only way of precluding

(Mr. Gandhi, India)

the recommencement of an armaments spiral. Non-violence in international relations cannot be considered a Utopian goal. It is the only available basis for civilized survival, for the maintenance of peace through peaceful coexistence and for a new, just, equitable and democratic world order. As Mahatma Gandhi said in the aftermath of the first use of nuclear weapons:

"The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counter-bombs, even as violence cannot be destroyed by counter-violence. Mankind has to get out of violence only through non-violence."

The new structure of international relations must be based on respect for various ideologies, on the right to pursue different socio-economic systems, and the celebration of diversity. Happily, this is already beginning to happen. Post-war bipolarity is giving way to a growing realization of the need for coexistence. The high rhetoric of the system of military alliances is gradually yielding to the viewpoint of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Non-alignment is founded on the desire of nations for freedom of action. It stands for national independence and self-reliance. Non-alignment is a refusal to be drawn into the barren rivalries and dangerous confrontations of others. It is an affirmation of the need for self-confident co-operation among all countries, irrespective of differences in social and economic systems. Non-alignment is synonymous with peaceful coexistence. As Jawaharlal Nehru said:

"The alternative to co-existence is co-destruction."

(Mr. Gandhi, India)

Therefore, the new structure of international relations to sustain a world beyond nuclear weapons will have to be based on the principles of coexistence, the non-use of force, non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries, and the right of every State to pursue its own path of development. These principles are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, but they have frequently been violated. We must apply our minds to bringing about the institutional changes required to ensure their observance. The strengthening of the United Nations system is essential for comprehensive global security. We must resurrect the original vision of the United Nations. We must bring the United Nations in line with the requirements of the new world order.

The battle for peace, disarmament and development must be waged both within this Assembly and outside by the peoples of the world. This battle should be waged in co-operation with scientists, strategic thinkers and leaders of peace movements who have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to these ideals. We therefore seek their co-operation in securing the commitment of all nations and all peoples to the goal of a non-violent world order free of nuclear weapons.

The ultimate power to bring about changes rests with the people. It is not the power of weapons or economic strength which will determine the shape of the world beyond nuclear weapons. That will be determined in the minds and the hearts of thinking men and women around the world. For, as the Dhammapada of the Buddha teaches us:



(Mr. Gandhi, India)

"Our life is shaped by our mind;  
We become what we think.  
Suffering follows an evil thought  
As the wheels of a cart follow the oxen that draw it.  
Joy follows a pure thought  
Like a shadow that never leaves.  
For hatred can never put an end to hatred;  
Love alone can.  
This is the unalterable law."

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of India for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. ENGO (Cameroon): The Cameroon delegation would like, first of all, to join in the felicitations addressed to you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifteenth special session, the third devoted to disarmament. We renew our pledge to support your efforts, especially in our capacity as a Vice-President of this session.

The presence of our dedicated Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, always inspires feelings of hope. Permit us to welcome the quiet and effective diplomacy with which he pursues the cause of peaceful coexistence among peoples as well as the enhancement of the construction of the rudiments of international peace and security through this universal Organization.

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

Only a few months ago, the Secretary-General undertook an important working tour to the subregion of Central Africa. We had the pleasure of welcoming this noble agent of peace to our shores. Shortly before his departure he addressed the University Institute of International Relations, with students from across the African continent and elsewhere. In his message he was clearly heard to underline the degenerate nature of the arms race and to emphasize the vital role which disarmament can and must play in the drive for viable conditions of regional and global peace, security and development.

The Secretary-General spoke, as he undoubtedly knew, in a continent that continues to be bullied by circumstance to accept foreign prescriptions and concepts, many of which have tended to impede African fundamental freedoms and the pursuit of happiness; where the phenomenon of "state" has been institutionalized in continental organization, irrespective of the deemed prospects of viability that face small countries; a foreign concept that evolved elsewhere in despotism's quest for territorial jurisdiction has become a permanent feature in the African continent; a situation that has permitted anarchy and handicaps to complicate the task of modern African leadership in pursuing the doctrine of progress, as trustees of the ultimate realization of the hopes and aspirations that form an integral part of our civilization.

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

The Secretary-General, through fact-finding visits, knows Africa well now: a continent rich in natural resources but exhibiting hunger, poverty, pestilence and deprivation at their deleterious worst in the economic, social and political fields; a continent of the proud, but humiliated and exploited by threat and use of brute force of arms on the part of foreign adventurers, adventurers of an era in which heroism was determined, not by the attainment of the highest standards of enlightenment, but by the scale of conquest, of loot and damage primitively and indiscriminately inflicted on others; a continent whose peoples joined in setting forth the norms of justice, of freedom and of the dignity and worth of the human person; a continent which has given sustenance to the stability and thriving economies of many a great nation, but one which must, unhappily, accept only polite conversation in the discourse on its contemporary malaise.

Africa, which sacrificed the blood of millions of its sons and daughters on the side of fighters for freedom and democracy during the two global wars, saw the vanquished gratified by Marshall plans of recovery while our continent, Africa, became the ultimate victim of the devastations of those wars and of the ideological conflicts that were to follow.

Europe undertook to rectify the misgivings of its turbulent Middle Ages and of the armed conflicts of the first half of the twentieth century. Africa, honestly motivated, inevitably turned to Europe and the developed world of the North in search of clues, cures and redress. It has found that North too preoccupied with internal and external interests of its own to address our predicament in a meaningful way.

And so Africa's struggle against the lingering and long-term effects of the misgivings of others must remain isolated, or at best be attended by unimplemented resolutions of the international community. To complicate the situation further,

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

the political upheavals resulting from the two world wars radically dispersed the centres of power, and international relations became too complex to facilitate any rational foreign policy decisions. Self-determination did not, for many of us, arrive with the fortifying elements of independence and stability.

Africa has turned in desperation to this universal body in the hope that the world will at last come to understand the true nature of the interdependence and common destiny that cement our collective fortunes at the threshold of the twenty-first century.

The present plight of Africa, indeed of most of the so-called third world, must be seen to constitute a grave danger for even the richest and most powerful of the age. Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in the domain of armaments and regional armed conflicts.

It is anachronistic in this period in time to treat grave issues in Africa, most of which have a global issue base, without conscious recourse to a systematic study of the African's perspective. Guns and gunpower supplanted bows, arrows and javelins in the conquest of Africa centuries ago. Our continent has since been dragged into innovations in the sophistications of weaponry. There are nuclear weapons on that continent, and that is now common knowledge. Conventional hardware, both the new and the obsolete, deriving from foreign competition is merchandise for painful African consumption. In an induced false sense of security, we are compelled to buy arms from the rich nations and from unethical middle-dealers, diverting valuable resources to wasteful and unproductive ends. The unscrupulous among them would virtually promote conflicts to find ready markets.

Let no one forget that Africa provides no exception. The diminishing fear of actual nuclear warfare among those having the capability must not induce complacency, for it is often the small conflicts that spark major wars. The

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

introduction of nuclear and sophisticated conventional arms into the African environment could trigger armed conflicts beyond our continental borders. War is a condition of barbarism which has no rules and, unabated, no territorial limits.

These things must be said because the justification for African presence at these historic endeavours must be clearly known. The world must know the reasons why we cannot agree to being less than equal partners in any global discourse on peace, security and development, including the role of disarmament in these.

Africa's dilemma today stems from an accumulation of forlorn hopes: hopes for social progress and better standards of life in freedom; hopes for common human fellowship and solidarity, sustained by great visions of reconciliation and international co-operation following the horrors of major global conflicts and tensions; hopes inspired by persistent faith in a universal conscience manifested in the written word and peremptory ideals contained in the Holy Bible, the Koran and the esteemed political edifice we call the United Nations Charter; hopes for the peace and love they proclaim, dashed by the dissipation of universal values.

The Governments and peoples of Africa have had to learn a bitter contemporary truth. As the World Commission on Environment and Development put it,

"The Earth is one but the world is not. We all depend on one biosphere for sustaining our lives. Yet each community, each country, strives for survival and prosperity with little regard for its impact on others".

(A/42/427, chap. 1, para. 1)

International relations have a way of presenting to the naive sober forms that tend to hide wrong. No, my dear colleagues, it can no longer delude Africans about the nature of the major factors and actors at play in the international arena.

We shall not subscribe to refusing real options for future generations. We come in spite of setbacks, perhaps also because of them. With others, we have

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

entered the technological age with the same categories of concern about the future, but unlike most must remain greater victims because of an ever-increasing intensity of poverty, hunger, disease and underdevelopment. All this despite the comparative affluence of this modern generation.

We do not come here today to register complaints, nor to encourage the rendition of old themes of conflict and acrimony among sectors of the international community. We consider this session to be of such critical importance that we should like to ensure that the issue-related dimensions are clear in terms of both the complex subject-matter and the identification of the actual partners in the dialogue. It is imperative for all delegations to understand that we have not come to this important special session devoted to disarmament merely as an act of presence or in routine exercise of the right of participation.

This special session of the General Assembly presents an opportunity to contribute to the critical multilateral dialogue on an issue of universal interest and concern. It is also an opportunity to examine disarmament in its broadest dimensions. A discourse here cannot be productive without a review of what has provoked the acceleration of the arms race, including the acquisition and stockpiling of armaments.

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

There appears to be a universal consciousness of the devastating consequences of nuclear war for all mankind. The disastrous effects of local belligerencies, of regional conflicts as they are called, and of terrorism preoccupy present generations, perhaps more than the open global wars did in the first half of this century. Mere discourse on events only strengthens existing expertise on a familiar subject. We need to address their elimination by determining the solution to their causes.

Such a review must encompass the widest spectrum of causes and motivations. It would appear to us that a great deal of research into conditions of peace and security has been directed only to arms control and arms reduction. Inevitably the difficulty of determining various military and power balances plunges the negotiations into technical and strategic domains.

It is perhaps more productive to address the serious consequences of the growth of the military-industrial complex in arms-producing nations, drawing appropriate conclusions as to various perceptions of the national needs for such growth. There is sufficient evidence in the historic events of this century alone to help identify the broad underlying motivation of national decisions with regard to the acquisition or production of weaponry.

The objective here need not involve polemics or ideological confrontation. We must seek better alternatives for the attainment of international peace and security, alternatives to the deployment of weapons of conflict and of war.

Confidence-building measures, a critical phase in the process of constructing a hardly-existing peace must include incentives for the change of attitudes as well as of methods. A bland appeal to morality means little to those who see their national security interests seriously threatened.

(Mr. Engo, Cameroon)

Another important dimension would address consequential damages of arms acquisitions or stockpiling and the threat or use to which they are put. That would call for the examination of the non-military approach to security. In this regard the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States outlines Charter-oriented conditions of peaceful coexistence, fundamental principles which reject belligerency and war in international relations.

Important to the discourse on armaments here are the principles relating to the prohibition of the threat or use of force, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, the sovereign equality of States, the rights of peoples to self-determination, the pacific settlement of disputes and the duty of States to co-operate in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

Our concern and anxiety over the debilitating arms race, as well as our interest in the hopes and promises of disarmament, are thus founded on, and motivated by, concrete, realistic factors - the search for an end to war and an attack against the dangers posed to all nations, all regions and the world as a whole by poverty, ignorance and disease - for whether as a cause or as a consequence of conflict the arms race constitutes a major threat to peace and progress while disarmament stands at the epicentre of any serious effort to achieve international peace and security and socio-economic progress.

The problems and dangers wrought by the arms race are real and serious. For over four decades this Assembly, in 42 sessions and now in 3 special sessions, has unanimously and resoundingly condemned the arms race and called for disarmament.



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We do not recall that anyone - a representative of any nation - has every mounted this rostrum to declare the virtues and benefits of weapons or of the arms race. The international community is therefore solidly united in common opposition to a common problem, a problem the severity and universal reach of which have attained new and dangerous heights in the nuclear age.

Mankind is now at a particularly critical stage in its history. More than had been recorded over any previous period, four recent decades of incredible advances in science and technology have introduced mankind to superlatives of good as well as of bad. Life expectancy has improved considerably, thanks to scientific progress, yet all human life could be eliminated swiftly and completely from the face of the earth thanks to that same scientific progress.

We are approaching a new millenium. The risks and promises of science and technology will increase, not diminish. The challenge for mankind will be to cope with that progress in science and technology to ensure the continued survival of the human race.

This special session of the General Assembly offers us a valuable and auspicious opportunity to launch a new approach in the pursuit of security - not so much the traditional notion or concept of so-called national security but the more realistic concept of common or global security, for in our time and in the times ahead no nation or group of nations can in isolation from the rest of the world seriously hope to achieve its own security alone or at the expense of the security of others.

In calling for a fresh and new approach to the quest for security, one that recognizes the comprehensive and universal nature of the problem and of its solutions, we would wish also to emphasize the need to shift the nature of the international debate on peace and disarmament issues away from simply explaining and describing the evils and negative consequences of the arms race to providing

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concrete suggestions for resolving the problem. In other words, we believe that more attention needs to be taken from the dangers and turned to the alternatives to the present situation, from the gloom and doom of the irony of the arms race to the hopes and promises of non-military measures of security.

Important as it is to remind ourselves from time to time of the dangers of the arms race, we believe that special occasions such as the present special session should be used more to look for solutions, for alternatives to the present problem; solutions that would inspire and lead to concrete action for dealing with the very real effects and problems of the arms race.

My delegation therefore believes that the real justification and impact of this special session will come, not from its use as yet another forum for the ritualistic and formalistic restatement of the international community's well-known condemnation of the arms race and its attendant evils, but from our firm and unequivocal collective recommitment, in concrete terms, to such non-military measures and approaches to security as those provided under the Charter of the United Nations.

It is our firm conviction that the non-use or threat of the use of force in international relations, as well as the peaceful settlement of disputes among States as prescribed by the Charter, would do more to dry up and close the markets that provide hefty profits for the world's merchants of death than many treaties or conventions on arms limitation or arms reduction. That is because, in our view, the political will of States, freely and independently determined, to follow and practise a particular approach in the quest for peace, security and progress is more viable over the long term than the mere acceptance of a diplomatic or legal instrument.

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Having pointed out the limit of weapons as effective instruments of security, having convinced States and peoples everywhere that the arms race produces more evil than good, we should at the same time be able to prescribe realistic solutions and outline practical workable alternatives to the present unsatisfactory situation. The truth is that nations will be inclined to continue to hold on to a concept of security based on arms acquisition until an effective alternative approach has emerged.

The problems we are addressing here are quite simple and direct, and easy for everyone everywhere to understand. They are problems of life and death. That is all. Sometimes the esoteric language of the so-called disarmament experts and strategic thinkers tends to confuse and distract us and block our focus from the main issue, which is to prevent war and to seek peace and security through non-military means. As is often rightly observed, we have today not disarmament experts but experts on disarmament discussions. We may now understand a little more about the destructive power and potential of certain types of weapons, and we may even try to acquire a science-fiction-type of appreciation of the ghastly physical and environmental after-effects of nuclear war, thanks to the experts on nuclear winter. Such knowledge and awareness may be useful in fuelling the motivation machinery of Governments into considering effective action to prevent an outbreak of nuclear war. But my delegation believes that our primary attention should be directed to ways and means of making even the development of such weapons unnecessary, in particular by basing international relations firmly on a non-military plane.

It is not the technical name given to a particular weapon of mass destruction that matters; nor is the strategic justification or rationalization for its development and stockpiling going to minimize or otherwise affect its deadliness in

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the event of its use. Once these weapons are developed and stockpiled, for whatever reasons, they become serious problems.

Even the elaboration of legal instruments for control and limitation have tended to have less than intended value. The realistic limitations of such legal instruments in the event of the use, deliberate or accidental, of such weapons would remain a matter of grave concern. Certainly it continues to seriously preoccupy the vast majority of the international community that a small number of countries have developed and stockpiled weapons whose use, deliberate or accidental, could negatively affect the interests, indeed the survival, of the entire human race. Questions, both legal and moral, continue to be posed in desperation. Do the nuclear-weapon States, for instance, have the right, in the pursuit of what they consider to be their national interests, to affect the interests of other countries and indeed to threaten survival in global terms? Or should nuclear weapons be banned and outlawed completely? This approach to a grave problem only leads to polemics and a hardening of positions.

Interesting as such questions might be for lawyers and other legal practitioners, they may be of little practical value in relation to the life and death issues of the arms race and disarmament confronting political leaders and the public as a whole. It may indeed be asked whether it is necessary, possible or even realistic to believe that in the heat of war the nuclear-weapon States would refrain from using nuclear weapons just because such use would be unlawful under international law.

Alerting the world to the dangers of the arms race and actively pursuing disarmament agreements, treaties and conventions are major, indeed indispensable, measures in the quest for peace. But that may not be enough, because nations cannot seriously be expected to discard their weapons and implement general and complete disarmament if that means moving into a security vacuum. Therefore

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greater attention should be paid to effective mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes and for preventing, managing and resolving crises and conflicts through non-military means. Indeed the existence of an effective system of conflict resolution and the peaceful settlement of disputes in which the participating Governments have confidence could result in the reduction of the mistrust and suspicion that encourage arms acquisition.

Cameroon attaches importance to the disarmament debates and supports the various efforts, whether at the bilateral, subregional, regional or international level, aimed at promoting measures of arms restraint and disarmament. This derives from a deep-rooted, national commitment to peace. President Paul Biya has stressed on many occasions that there is no dispute that cannot be settled by peaceful means. Therefore we advocate an international order based not on force but on co-operation: an international order that would give peace a chance. From this perspective, therefore, we see weapons, whether they are conventional, chemical, radiological or nuclear, as impediments, threats and obstacles to the evolution and realization of such an international order of co-operation.

Disarmament, to be realistic and meaningful, must be seen as an integral part of an overall process or strategy for peace. We reaffirm our conviction that the Charter of the United Nations continues to provide an adequate and realistic framework for the building of such a peace strategy.

Mankind is today, in the nuclear age, faced with the pre-eminent fact that, if civilization is to survive, all countries and peoples everywhere must not only accept but indeed actively participate in the construction of an international environment that is fully cognizant of the imperative of common security. No strategy for peace in the nuclear age would be viable or lasting unless it not only realized but fully integrated the universal and global character of peace and

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security. It would thus be reckless, for instance, to claim that South Africa's possession of nuclear weapons was of concern only to African countries or only to the peoples of the subregion.

Indeed, just as the concept of national security interests has expanded in recent years to cover not only military but also such non-military factors and elements as socio-economic and environmental considerations, the concept of national security has itself, in the nuclear age, steadily given way to the more realistic notion of global or common security.

Security is just one of many global-level problems that are today better suited to the multilateral than the national approach in the search for solutions. National policies alone can no longer achieve the resolution of national problems. Increasingly the nation-State is being overshadowed by extraterritorial developments and transnational problems, requiring international rather than simply national solutions. We may recall that, while the Chernobyl nuclear accident took place in one country, its effects were transnational, and thus the Soviet authorities co-operated with other countries as well as international institutions in the search for solutions.

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Indeed, a variety of socio-economic, political, environmental and technological developments have combined in recent years to create an ever-growing list of common, world-wide problems requiring common, global solutions. Traditional inter-State diplomacy is therefore no longer adequate nor appropriate for solving problems that are more transnational and global than national. Interdependence is increasingly becoming a fact of contemporary international relations, and multilateralism is a realistic approach to managing the global agenda of interdependence and of transnational problems.

In an age of interdependence and of intercontinental ballistic missiles, our planet postulates a condemnation of its inhabitants to a common destiny. We are consequently persuaded to attach the utmost importance to the multilateral approach in the quest for international peace and security, including disarmament. Such an approach would help ensure that the interests and concerns of all countries are taken fully into account, especially since the life-and-death issues being considered, in particular in the discussions on nuclear disarmament, would affect the world as a whole. Cameroon therefore reiterates its proposal that nuclear disarmament negotiations among nuclear-weapon Powers should take place within the framework and under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council, a body charged under the Charter with the maintenance of international peace and security and a body the five permanent members of which are also the five nuclear-weapon States.

Whether it is a mere coincidence or more than that, the recent super-Powers summit meeting in Moscow, apart from the important issues it addressed and the hopes that it raised, also created another symbolic impact by taking place on the eve of the convening of the current special session. Both events have a mutuality of interests. The convening of the special session would have helped remind the super-Powers, if ever they needed to be so reminded, of the universal content and global reach and relevance of their decisions. The super-Power talks, in

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particular the hopes for further and more substantial measures of nuclear disarmament raised by the ratification of the INF Treaty, might help improve if not the substantive prospects at least the climate of discussions at the special session.

The international community of sovereign States, as well as international public opinion represented by hundreds of non-governmental organizations from around the world, are gathered here on the occasion of the special session. It is our wish to point to this fact as one of the reasons why we believe the United Nations remains the most appropriate forum for managing international strategy for peace, including disarmament.

The novelty of the United Nations may now have worn off, which may not be altogether a bad thing. Perhaps now we can view it realistically. Much of the early euphoria that attended the foundation of the Organization tended to raise expectations unrealistically. When the Organization could not solve all problems and end all wars, disappointment, even disillusionment, quickly followed. But it is important to bear in mind that the United Nations is only an intergovernmental body, not a supra-national or super-government. It controls no territory; it does not even have enforcement powers; it is only as effective as its Member States want it to be. Surely, it cannot solve all the world's problems.

However, it is important to recognize that in today's interdependent world few, if any, major global problems can be solved without the United Nations. The United Nations may not be perfect, but it is the only viable, universal forum for the multilateral consideration of solutions to our common problems. By its very nature it remains amenable to improvement with the changing times; and there lies its value and its power as a universal instrument for peace.



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Therefore, in our view one of the goals of the special session should be to adopt concrete and effective measures to enhance the role and effectiveness of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. That would constitute an important contribution to peace, because an effective United Nations in which Member States would have confidence might more decisively discharge its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In that process it would discourage States from seeking unilateral military solutions to their disputes.

Various existing disarmament mechanisms within or under United Nations auspices perform many useful roles in the quest for progress in this vital field. In the review of the role of the United Nations in this field at the current session it would be important always to bear in mind that the primary goal is to enhance the overall role of the Organization and make it more effective.

The machinery should be adequate and commensurate to the substantive goals that we have outlined in this field. The crucial credibility of the Organization in international public opinion can suffer if the machinery is either inadequate or if it is wasteful or unmatched to a clearly identified and attainable substantive objective.

In this connection, my delegation wishes to commend the Secretary-General and his staff for the very capable and effective manner in which the Secretariat performs its duties in the field of disarmament, despite the very limited resources available to it in that field. We would oppose any reforms which result in diminishing the capacity of the already under-staffed Department of Disarmament Affairs to perform the vital function which it has undertaken so far.

Ways and means of coping with conflict will remain a challenge to States and to the international community as a whole, even after the conclusion of the special session. That will be the situation well into the next millenium, less than twelve years hence. However, by developing and utilizing effective procedures for the

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peaceful settlement of disputes and by international relations outlined in the Charter of the United Nations, inevitable political and other differences and disputes among States can be contained and resolved without recourse to threat or use of force.

In this connection, we wish to lay particular emphasis on the importance and value of confidence-building measures in contributing to or facilitating the disarmament process, as an imperative means of reducing or eliminating the mistrust, suspicion, fear and miscalculation that encourage arms rivalry and the arms race among States.

For example, in our African region a number of very significant confidence-building measures which could improve the climate for constructive inter-African relations and solidarity have recently been realized. Some of these important developments include the normalization of relations between a number of African countries and the decision by others to resort to peaceful means in the search for solutions to long-standing disputes between them.

Furthermore, at our sub-regional level in Central Africa, the member countries of the Economic Community of Central African States have, with the co-operation and assistance of the United Nations, embarked on an important confidence-building process, aimed at enhancing through practical measures of co-operation mutual trust, security and development in our sub-region.

Such signs of progress in inter-African relations, if sustained, broadened and permitted to flourish without the often divisive interference of outside forces, would help contribute to reducing African tensions and hence the need for the countries of the region to continue diverting their already limited resources from vital development objectives to destructive military uses.

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We believe that, for genuine peace and disarmament to be realized in Africa, it is essential to eliminate from our southern subregion the apartheid system of internal repression, colonial domination of Namibia and external aggression against and destabilization of independent African front-line States. The apartheid system is an active despicable agent and the principal cause of war, conflict and instability in southern Africa. The eradication of the system would not only give peace and disarmament a chance in southern Africa and in Africa as a whole, it would indeed give concrete meaning and relevance to the very notion of peace, especially since generations of peoples in that part of the world have known nothing but the brutality of war and repression under the long reign of the apartheid régime. That then, should be our overall goal in the search for peace and disarmament, namely, that it should really make a difference for the better in the lives of the people of the world, by replacing fear with hope and war with peace.

We have, on occasion, appealed to the major Powers of the world to take seriously the explosive situation in southern Africa. We are particularly encouraged by recent trends among the super-Powers to make the resolution of certain regional conflicts conditions for resolving global problems. Heralds of return to peace in Afghanistan derive from such a stance. We hope that Namibia, Angola and Mozambique, innocent nations drawn irresponsibly by South Africa into unidentifiable conflict, will in fact appropriately be released by friends of freedom and justice from their present malaise. If a linkage were ever necessary in any discourse, it is the explosive human rights issue in southern Africa.

We welcome the recent pronouncements by the Soviet leader, Mr. Gorbachev, that the plight of our young nations is "a major world problem". President Reagan of the United States has made the issue of human rights a cardinal point in his foreign policy. We heard with some interest the declaration of Britain's Prime

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Minister, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher in welcoming the President to London, concerning human rights. These pronouncements by the leadership of this generation are most welcome, but Africans, especially the men, women and children who suffer death and destruction in southern Africa, expect to see these translated into reality on our continent. The resolution of regional conflicts can only come when the major Powers of the world resolve to end them.

There can be no peace while the foreign policy decisions of the economically and militarily powerful of the age undermine the principles of freedom and justice clearly enshrined in the Charter. There will be no peace, either for the victims or for those who refuse to use their power and influence to terminate the oppression and injustice. If we are to avoid conditions of war, we must consciously construct peace in a passionate resistance to every feature that degrades humanity. Our civilization demands it.

If it were only a question of the preservation of human life and the survival of this planet, it would be a comparatively simple matter. Fear provides enough conditioning to absorb the extremes of barbaric thought: man would not act if he knew it meant wiping out himself, his race and the alternatives to that choice. In any case, the Creator of this universe is highly unlikely to permit mortal beings to destroy his creation.

It is to the quality of life and the direction of our civilization as a generation that we ought to turn our energies. The reality appears to be that wars and events that are destructive of international peace and security have punctuated history from time immemorial. The world, regional or global, has survived crisis after crisis, conflagration after conflagration. What seems not to have survived is a steady advancement of man's effort to construct and to maintain conditions that enhance the destiny of peace, security and development - the great aspirations

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of the finest of human ideals. States and countries have always been delimited, altered and established as a result of the exercise of power. They rise and fall and are altered by man's ambitions. The human family remains and grows, the fate of individuals dictated by the ups and downs of life thus imposed, most of the time without regard for human well-being. Peace cannot endure under that scheme of things.

President Paul Biya of my nation, Cameroon, frequently asks his compatriots to determine the type of future they would wish for their children and for generations to come. The international community must develop and strengthen a universal conscience that can sustain visions of a far, far better world for contemporary men, women and children as well as for generations to come. We must make a conscious effort to make use of the misgivings of history, not to nourish the instincts of recrimination, but to develop antidotes to them. Let us with determination launch the beginnings of a broad global civilization, combining the highest sense of moral values and faith in each of our regional cultures.

We must strive for new forms of relationships among peoples and among nations, conscious of the geography of our exposure to common natural and man-made disasters; inspired by the chemistry of our mutual aspirations for peace, security, better standards of life and happiness.

Let us spend more time than we do in co-operation rather than in conflict, addressing great visions of the future, visions which recognize this planet as created and endowed with plenteous gifts and opportunities for the gratification of man.

Armament is a phenomenal instrument of war and belligerency. It is a drug which plagues nations and their leadership with addictions to illusions of security and of the fruits of power and victory. Let us make it clear to history that we need and want peace; that we need and want great nations; that we need and want

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great leaders inspired by visions of a new, just and safe world. Let us disarm and remove from our midst the curse of the instrument of conflict and of war.

Mr. ADODO (Togo) (interpretation from French): Mr. President, your unanimous election to preside over our work is a well-deserved recognition of your great diplomatic talents. My delegation will offer to you its full co-operation in the fulfilment of your heavy and delicate duties.

I should like to extend to the Secretary-General my country's appreciation for his tireless efforts in advancing the cause of peace and disarmament in the world.

My delegation commends the dedication, competence and effectiveness with which Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Akashi, manages the affairs of the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

(Mr. Adodo, Togo)

Having taken part in the preparations for this session, the Togolese delegation has had an opportunity to admire the expertise and tact shown by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for this third special session, Mr. Mansur Ahmad, to whom we extend our appreciation.

To make our world more stable, more secure and one in which war can be averted is, it seems to me, the aim towards which the General Assembly should direct its specific measures at this third special session. The present session is a new test of the will and ability of our Organization to promote international peace and security through disarmament. Threats to the survival of mankind have never been so grave and so clear as they are today.

Under cover of defending security, the human mind has devised the instruments of its own destruction, ignoring the ideals and principles that set forth the mission and vocation of the United Nations. It is now imperative for the survival of mankind that we advance rapidly towards disarmament by putting an end to the free for all contest to refine nuclear and conventional weapons technology.

A clear vision of the requirements of peace, security and solidarity among the nations that survived the disaster of the Second World War has endowed us with the United Nations, an irreplaceable instrument for preventing war and for providing for collective security and progress of mankind. The founders of our Organization had the merit of enshrining in our Charter the priceless lessons learned from the trial of the Second World War. While recognizing that Member States have a legitimate right to seek and ensure their security in the exercise of their sovereignty, they have set out provisions designed to limit armaments only to the requirements of national security. Significant in this regard is Article 26 of the Charter, which states:

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"In order to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources, the Security Council shall be responsible for formulating, with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee referred to in Article 47, plans to be submitted to the Members of the United Nations for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments."

Also significant is the first resolution on disarmament adopted on 24 January 1946. In that resolution, the General Assembly created a commission entrusted with the task of studying the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy. It received a mandate in particular to make specific proposals with a view to eliminating from national arsenals atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction. The creation of a number of specialized bodies designed to promote general and complete disarmament offers additional evidence of the interest accorded to this question by our Organization.

However, when examined more closely, the extent of the efforts exerted stands in sharp contrast with the slowness and relatively mild impact of progress achieved, because most of the agreements concluded in this field have had limited scope. Furthermore, the historic consensus achieved at the first special session devoted to disarmament was expected to inspire bold initiatives to put an end to the arms race or at least to limit its negative effects. Unfortunately, States continued to base their security on nuclear deterrence and strategic superiority, and thus military competition maintained by mistrust and the determination to achieve domination has since gained impetus. That is why we should not be surprised to find our world today confronted by paradoxes, such as the following: overarmament in the world and the persistence of insecurity; prevention of war in Europe and between the two super-Powers through nuclear deterrence and, at the same



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time, the maintenance of conflicts in the developing world prompted both by external interference and by the transfer of the East-West ideological clash, fuelled by a flourishing arms trade; the mind-boggling growth of arms expenditures together with the deteriorating underdevelopment and the total destitution in which the overwhelming majority of third world countries find themselves.

A few figures will illustrate these paradoxes. In the world today there are more than 50,000 nuclear warheads with the power equivalent to 1 million Hiroshima bombs, that is, much more than necessary for the potential targets. From 1978 to the present, annual arms expenditures have risen from about \$450 billion to more than \$1,000 billion, which is the equivalent to the total debt of the third world. Since the end of the Second World War, the developing world has been torn by 150 conflicts causing 20 million deaths. During the year 1986 alone, the year proclaimed by the United Nations as the International Year of Peace, there were 36 armed conflicts involving 5 million soldiers in 41 countries, distributed as follows: 4 in Asia, 8 in the Far East, 6 in the Middle East, 11 in Africa and 6 in Latin America. Among those 36 conflicts, 4 began in the 1940s, 7 in the 1960s, 17 in the 1970s, and 8 in the 1980s.

Some of these conflicts have led to the use of chemical weapons. The use of those weapons, contrary to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, is on the rise today. There is absolutely no doubt that such use is the most cowardly and ignoble means of warfare. It is particularly urgent in the view of my delegation to put an end to that practice by concluding an international convention banning chemical and biological weapons, accompanied by a vigorous verification mechanism.

These military factors which destabilize third world countries and encumber their development are compounded by other non-military threats, such as the continuing decline in export earnings, the suffocating weight of the debt, the dramatic reduction of financial flows to the poorer countries, the reverse transfer

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of financial resources, natural disasters, such as drought, desertification, invasions of locusts, of which many African countries are victims, and so forth, all of which bring in their wake famine and poverty.

As if that were not enough misfortune, corroborated reports have recently confirmed the existence of agreements under which African countries are to accept the storage of nuclear and industrial wastes on their territory. The underground disposal of these wastes in Africa dangerously threatens the ecosystems of the countries concerned and the health of present and future generations. That act is neither more nor less than a crime perpetrated against the continent and its inhabitants. Nuclear wastes are nothing less than a nuclear time bomb whose consequences are incalculable for the present and especially for the future. We address an appeal to the countries that have taken this road to turn back in the interests of our continent.

Still in Africa, the acquisition by South Africa of the nuclear capacity is a cause of real concern for my country. This reality is counter to the determination of the continent to become a nuclear-weapon-free zone in conformity with the Organization of African Unity Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa in 1964. South African overarmament is maintaining in that part of the continent a situation of permanent insecurity in the twofold desire to hamper the economic development of the region and to perpetuate the ignoble policy of apartheid and the illegal occupation of Namibia. As a result of the indivisibility of international peace and security, the promotion of disarmament cannot be a monopoly of the super-Powers. It concerns all States, large or small. It would be useful, in the framework of the world disarmament campaign, for the activities of regional centres for peace and disarmament to be strengthened. These centres should promote confidence between States and serve as a setting for the study of crisis prevention and management.

(Mr. Adodo, Togo)

For its part, Togo has the honour to host the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and we would wish all States of the continent to play a growing role in its activities.

In adopting the Final Document of the first special session, we expressed our concern at the danger that growing militarism in the world might get out of hand. We also expressed our common resolve to conduct unilateral, bilateral, regional or multilateral efforts to achieve ever lower levels of armaments without detriment to the security of any of the parties concerned.

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The relatively unsatisfactory results of the second special session had somewhat undermined the movement in 1978. It is desirable that this session give firm political support to recent disarmament initiatives. It is desirable also that it envisage measures to prevent outer space from becoming a new field of military confrontation. It is indispensable, in the interest of international security, that outer space be reserved exclusively for peaceful purposes.

We welcome the signing and ratification by the Soviet Union and the United States of the agreement eliminating intermediate and shorter-range missiles. This agreement is in itself a determining factor in the disarmament process. In our view, it presents two basic advantages. Firstly, it expresses a will for peace by the two super-Powers that has taken concrete form for the first time. Secondly, it confirms the priority attaching to nuclear disarmament.

We should also highlight the political importance of three other American-Soviet initiatives: the creation of a centre for the reduction of nuclear risks; the talks directed towards the reduction by 50 per cent of strategic arsenals, and, finally, the commitment for a phased negotiation for the banning of nuclear tests.

For this series of initiatives to have a lasting effect on the general and complete disarmament process, it is important that verifiable agreements should follow, and that the new dynamic of peace should lead to the gradual elimination of nuclear weapons, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and a settlement of regional conflicts. In the view of my delegation, the third special session should aim at achieving consensus on the following points: firstly, reaffirming the high priority attaching to nuclear disarmament and the primary responsibility of the two super-Powers without losing sight of the role of the other nuclear Powers or the importance of conventional disarmament as well; secondly, emphasizing the

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imperative need to promote dynamic interaction between bilateral and multilateral negotiations; thirdly, to begin negotiations aimed at achieving agreements for the complete prohibition of nuclear-weapons tests and the prevention of an arms race in outer space; fourthly, strengthening the role of the United Nations in disarmament, particularly by pursuing the World Disarmament Campaign and increasing political and financial support for studies on disarmament; fifthly, to create, under United Nations auspices, a multilateral centre for reduction and prevention of nuclear risks, and an international mechanism for the verification of arms control and disarmament agreements; sixthly, accelerating negotiations with a view to concluding an international convention containing a complete prohibition of chemical and biological weapons.

In addition, it is desirable that a number of priority actions be inscribed in the final document of the third special session.

Thus, the elimination of military and other threats to security should increasingly be buttressed upon respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter and proceed from the conclusion of international agreements, particularly for confidence-building between States, the prevention of acts of aggression and destabilization, the cessation of economic pressure designed to obtain political advantages, and the restructuring of the international economic system.

We should also follow closely the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

In this connection, my country firmly supports the idea of including in disarmament agreements provisions providing for the reallocation, for development purposes, of resources released through disarmament.

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The expansion of the Conference on Disarmament would respond to a desire expressed by a growing number of States to take active part in multilateral negotiations. The effectiveness of this organ would in no way be lessened by its expansion. On the contrary, the broadest possible representation of groups of States could only give the Conference on Disarmament a more solid basis for its

We must put an end to the arms race and progress toward disarmament or perish. That is the choice that we must face.

Why not choose to put an end to the arms race to enable man to live a truly free life, released of nuclear fear and of hunger, disease and poverty? Why not choose, on the occasion of this session, to roll back the risk of war and threats of force and further to expand the scope of action for peace?

Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic):

Mr. President, on behalf of the United Arab Emirates, it gives me great pleasure to convey to you our most sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Your election to preside over the deliberations of this important session reflects the confidence which the international community has in you after becoming familiar with your abilities and your wise conduct of the business of the forty-second session of the General Assembly.

It was only natural for the United Nations Charter to state in its Preamble that the primary purpose of the peoples of the United Nations is "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".\* It was also natural for the Charter to state

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\* Mr. Engo (Cameroon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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Emirates)

that in order to achieve this noble goal of the prevention of war and the establishment of peace, there are three priorities to which the peoples of the world should be committed: that is, to live together in peace as good neighbours and to unite their strength to maintain international peace and security, as well as the fact that armed force should not be used save in the common interest.

We wonder whether or not the current reality is in consonance with the hopes and dreams aspired to by the drafters of the Charter.

The answer lies in a study made by a research institution in Washington called "World Priorities". That study mentions that the stockpiles of nuclear weapons constitute a destructive power that is 26,000 times greater than that which was used during World War II. It also mentions that the United States and the USSR spend \$1.5 billion daily on arms, while 20 per cent of the children in developing countries die before the age of five, from hunger, malnutrition or disease. The study also mentions that 25 wars continue to rage in various parts of the world, and have taken a toll of at least 3 million people, four-fifths of whom are civilians.

If the manufacture and stockpiling of nuclear weapons is one of the most important and horrifying phenomena of the post-war era, another phenomenon, equally horrifying, is the striving by all States of the world, including poor third world countries, to acquire and build military arsenals. This has rendered the manufacture and trade of weapons more lucrative than ever before.

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Armaments and the acquisition of sophisticated weapons have become the malaise of our time that afflicts all societies. If some States have the economic and physical potential to acquire weapons, third-world countries subject their social and economic fibre to danger by diverting a substantial part of their national income to arms expenditure despite their dire need to devote those resources to socio-economic development. International conflicts, their regional dimensions and extensions have forced those States to divert a large part of their national income to armaments so as to maintain their independence and prevent intervention in their internal affairs by some major or regional Powers.

There is a very close link between the economic prosperity enjoyed by countries which manufacture and export arms and the misery suffered by parts of the third world, where regional conflicts generally take on an armed character leading to waste of the better part of the resources and potential of those States.

It is a matter of grave danger that some States should base their economies on the manufacture and export of weaponry, because that means necessarily that those States must create markets for their products by fanning the flames of regional conflicts and creating hotbeds of tension in third-world countries, to which arms are then exported.

The fact that third-world countries find themselves compelled to join the arms race adds yet another grave hurdle to the already long list of economic and social obstacles that they encounter. Therefore, the international community is called upon to give serious consideration to this problem. In particular, some major Powers are called upon to stop intervening in the internal affairs of other States and encouraging certain parties to regional conflicts.

Throughout history, regional conflicts have been one of the major causes of the eruption of world wars and the use of lethal weapons. There is a direct



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relationship between international détente and regional conflicts. This relationship is reflected in the success of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I) in 1978, while SSOD II in 1982 was unable to realize the hopes pinned on it owing to the dissipation of the atmosphere of détente between the two super-Powers.

The convening of the present special session comes at the time of a positive atmosphere in relations between the two super-Powers and the two military blocs to which they belong. In this atmosphere, it is hoped that the present session will review and develop the objectives mentioned in the Final Document of SSOD I in the light of current realities. It is also hoped that it will establish an integrated programme to achieve the objective of general and complete disarmament, and reaffirm the importance of multilateralism, the central role and primary responsibility of the United Nations in the disarmament process.

My country has supported the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and South Asia as a necessary step towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament. It is with great regret that we note the introduction of nuclear weapons into some of those regions by certain aggressive entities - such as Israel in the Middle East and South Africa in the southern part of the African continent. That action constitutes defiance of the international will, on the one hand, and a real danger to the other regional States, on the other.

If we link the aggressive policies and racist practices of those two entities against the countries and peoples of those regions to their acquisition of nuclear weapons, that would lead us to two possibilities: the first is that the African and Arab States would succumb to the nuclear blackmail practised by Israel and South Africa leading to social, economic and political crises in the two regions;

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the second is that the other States would seek to acquire nuclear weapons so as to achieve a strategic balance in order to maintain their security and independence, thus opening wide the door for the possibility of the eruption of a nuclear war with incalculable consequences.

It is therefore with all seriousness that we call upon the international community to make every effort to ensure that Israel and South Africa place their nuclear facilities under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We hold the States which continue to co-operate with those two entities in the nuclear field responsible for the results that might emanate from their continued refusal to place their nuclear facilities under international supervision.

Finally, my delegation, as a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and inspired by the basic principles of that Movement based on the concepts of collective peace, disarmament, the renunciation of ideological conflicts and positive neutrality, reaffirms anew that the atmosphere of détente in international relations must be used to intensify efforts to settle regional conflicts in order not to subject that détente to another set-back resulting from the continuation of those conflicts.

For the past 40 years, the problem of the Middle East has constituted a grave threat to international peace and security resulting from the non-recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. We all remember that in 1973, as a result of an ongoing war, one of the super-Powers placed its forces on a nuclear alert.

The continuation of the Iran-Iraq war, which has entered its eighth year, and the death and destruction left in its wake reaffirm anew the dire need to achieve a just, peaceful settlement of that war.

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Also, the continuation of the injustice resulting from the existence of the apartheid régime in South Africa, the occupation of Namibia, and the existing tension in Central America are all grave problems that we must work on if we want international détente to continue, if we wish this session to be successful, and if we are to achieve disarmament in an atmosphere of confidence in international relations in which the peoples of the Earth will direct their future efforts to establish a new régime in which all knowledge will be used for humanity's benefit, in the light of the fact that man is the method and the end.

Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand): My Government attaches great importance to the subject of disarmament and this third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In fact my Prime Minister, Prem Tinsulanonda, had hoped to come here personally to participate in the deliberations. Unfortunately, developments at home have prevented him from coming. Nevertheless, I am honoured to have been authorized to delivery the Prime Minister's statement to this Assembly. It reads as follows:

"Mr. President, I would like to extend to you our warmest congratulations on your unanimous election to chair this important General Assembly special session. The Thai delegation witnessed your impressive diplomatic skills when you presided over the forty-second regular session of the General Assembly. We are confident that under your able leadership the proceedings of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament will be concluded successfully.

"Under its historic mandate to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, the United Nations has been able to focus the attention of the world community on the problems and prospects of peace. The United Nations has helped to generate international multilateral consensus on the need to limit and ultimately to halt the arms race. The special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament have helped to build confidence among States. These sessions have provided the opportunity for the international community to reiterate its commitment to a world order where international problems are addressed and solved through peaceful and political means.

"We are all now on the threshold of a new era. There now appears to be wide acceptance that genuine, symmetrical and verifiable arms limitation leading to general and complete disarmament is the means to achieve international peace, harmony and security.

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"Recognizing the urgent need for genuine disarmament, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have been engaged in substantive arms limitation negotiations. We have seen the successful conclusion of arms control treaties. My delegation welcomes in particular the recognition by the super-Powers that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.

"My delegation would like to take this opportunity to congratulate President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev for having succeeding in exchanging the instruments of ratification of the INF Treaty during their fourth summit. Let us build upon this achievement.

"Sceptics may dismiss arms reduction negotiations as merely a convenient means for nuclear Powers to dispose of obsolete weapons and replace them with new and more destructive ones. There are those who have little faith in the nuclear disarmament process. For the sake of humanity's very survival, we must try to prove the sceptics wrong. We must not allow the possibility of achieving genuine nuclear disarmament to elude our grasp. In a world of nuclear weapons we do not have the luxury of learning from a mistake. We have no choice but to work together to achieve the common goal of disarmament as soon as possible, to buttress bilateral initiatives with multilateral efforts, to create an atmosphere in which agreements reached can be sustained and in which further progress can be made.

"A powerful momentum towards genuine disarmament seems to have been constituted. After years of confrontation, a turn for the better now appears possible. We have witnessed the signing and the ratification of the Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. This is a significant step in arms control. The Treaty will reduce significantly the element of threat posed

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to the citizens of Europe and Asia within the range of those missiles. The ongoing negotiations between the two super-Powers with a view to implementing a 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive weapons have strengthened further our sense of optimism. My Government welcomes the renewed flexibility demonstrated by both super-Powers towards achieving a new strategic arms treaty which will offer predictability and strategic stability, as well as the first-ever large-scale reduction in nuclear arms. In May this year, I as Prime Minister paid an official visit to the Soviet Union. During my discussion with the Soviet leadership, I offered my congratulations to them on the successful conclusion of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles with the United States. My Government also welcomes the significant breakthrough in the agreement on confidence-building Measures achieved at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. In addition, my delegation now looks forward to seeing the early adoption of the comprehensive test-ban Treaty.

"Although nuclear arsenals pose the gravest threat to the survival of humanity, we should not lose sight of the fact that conventional weapons have caused millions of deaths over the last 40 years. Today, conventional weapons continue to play a lethal role in armed conflict in many regions around the world. The general availability of these weapons makes it possible for some regional States to infringe the sovereignty and territorial integrity of others. The continued resort to force by one State against another, in violation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and international law, is totally inconsistent with what we are trying to accomplish here. The need for multilateral efforts in this area is apparent. Armed aggression and regional conflicts are the most serious obstacles to the limitation of conventional weapons.

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"In the field of disarmament, the efforts of the United Nations have not been limited to nuclear weapons. The General Assembly has envisaged also the elimination of 'all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction'. My delegation is therefore encouraged by the progress that has been made by the Conference on Disarmament on a draft convention on the elimination of all chemical weapons. Ultimate success in this area will depend on the will of nations involved to translate relevant principles and provisions into action.

"With reference to outer space, my delegation would like to reiterate our support for immediate steps to be taken to ensure that the exploration and use of outer space be conducted only for the common interest of mankind. My delegation supports the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in promoting ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful and scientific endeavours.

"Another vital aspect of the momentum towards disarmament that we are witnessing is the growing recognition of the linkage between disarmament and development. Here, my delegation notes with satisfaction that the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development has been one of the most successful in disarmament history. The historic Final Document firmly established the fact that disarmament and development are intimately linked and have mutual impact on security. We welcome the inclusion of this very important aspect of disarmament on our agenda. The United Nations should be allowed to play an active and constructive role in advancing the goal of disarmament in favour of development. As a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of international peace and security, the United Nations provides the best opportunity for global exchange of views to reach a workable consensus on this matter.

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"Consistent with our desire to work with the international community towards the attainment of durable global peace and prosperity, my delegation supports measures which would enhance international peace and security around the world. Those include the establishment of zones of peace in various regions. We welcome the entry into force of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in Latin America and the Treaty of Rarotonga in the South Pacific. We look forward to seeing the realization of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. In regard to South-East Asia, Thailand, as well as other members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), will continue to work for the realization of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in South-East Asia.

"In addition, the establishment of an effective and enforceable nuclear-weapon-free zone which binds all States in South-East Asia would constitute a significant step towards the promotion of regional peace and security. As an important disarmament measure sanctioned by the United Nations, such a zone would serve as a regional contribution by ASEAN to the efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament and as an effective measure for promoting peace and security in South-East Asia. However, ASEAN is mindful of the obstacle posed by the Kampuchean problem, which still remains unresolved, and of the growing super-Power rivalry in the region and would consider very carefully all the implications of such a zone, including the timing of its establishment. ASEAN would also take into consideration the problems and circumstances surrounding existing nuclear-free areas and environments, namely, Antarctica, Latin America, the South Pacific, the sea-bed and outer space.

"The process of nuclear as well as conventional disarmament is linked intimately to the maintenance of international peace and security. With this



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in mind, my delegation would like to see the United Nations establish and maintain regional mechanisms to serve as an early-warning system for the international community. Such a system would contribute to the United Nations' ability to monitor and facilitate the disarmament process. It would also enhance the ability of the United Nations to act early as a problem affecting international peace and security develops.

"The Member States gathered here certainly have a wide range of important issues on their agenda. Let us all work together to reinforce and increase the existing momentum towards general and complete disarmament. My delegation notes with satisfaction that the United Nations has accorded great importance to the subject of disarmament. The proceedings of the special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament provide a vital foundation for the international disarmament process. My delegation hopes that this third special session will give further impetus to and help strengthen this process.

"We should aim at a balanced, impartial and objective approach which would confirm the general policy goals of the international community. Our efforts need to be directed towards finding common ground acceptable to all Member States. In that way our efforts can reinforce the progress being made on disarmament and help to bring about an atmosphere more conducive to productive negotiations on the many issues related to international security.

"My delegation shares completely the view that bilateralism and multilateralism complement and support one another. It is certainly true that in our interdependent world neither approach can stand alone. The quest for disarmament is based on the profound aspiration of all peoples to live in peace, security and harmony. Let us all, therefore, work together to make

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certain that swords are indeed turned into plowshares. Let us make this dream come true before time runs out on us."

That concludes the statement of my Prime Minister, General Prem Tinsulanonda.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.