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Chairman: Mr. von WAGNER (Germany)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ITEMS (continued)

1. Mr. SHRESTHA (Nepal) said that despite the ending of the cold war, the world was now passing through an unpredictable and unstable phase in its development. The profound changes currently occurring confirmed that international security could no longer be viewed exclusively in military terms. The challenge before the international community was to eliminate the non-military threat to peace and stability, which had economic, social, ethnic and environmental dimensions.
2. Welcoming the reduction in military spending, he said that the resources thus released could be used to further international cooperation to eliminate the root causes of conflicts and tensions engendered by economic and social deprivation, particularly in the least developed countries.
3. Noting that disarmament was a long-term objective that required painstaking negotiations over many years, he recalled some important achievements in the field of disarmament, namely, the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter Range Missiles (INF), the Treaty between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START-I), the Treaty on Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START-II) and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Those achievements raised hopes for continued progress in disarmament.
4. In that context, a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty was of the highest importance. Welcoming the decision of the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations on that subject, his delegation noted that efforts to amend the partial test-ban Treaty could constitute an important aspect of that process. An early conclusion of a treaty on a comprehensive nuclear test ban would greatly promote the success of the 1995 Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.
5. His delegation commended the adoption by the Disarmament Commission of the Guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security. The development of confidence-building measures was an important contribution to arms control and disarmament at the regional level. The United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament were important forums for promoting regional approaches to disarmament. His delegation agreed with the view expressed by the Under-Secretary-General that those Centres should play an important role in resolving the new challenges before the United Nations. Commenting on the activities of the United Nations Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, which had already yielded results, he said that Nepal would continue to support the Centre in every way possible and urged other Governments and non-governmental organizations to do the same.

(Mr. Shrestha, Nepal)

6. His delegation appreciated the valuable assistance of the disarmament fellowship programme in training qualified diplomats and expressed satisfaction with the performance of the recently created United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. It also welcomed the Chairman's intention to continue efforts to enhance the effectiveness and streamline the work of the First Committee.

7. Ms. RIVIERA (Costa Rica) said that the recent developments in the field of disarmament called for renewed efforts by the international community. Negotiations and agreements in that field had been given new impetus which had strengthened the foundation for establishing a new world order based on peace, security and cooperation.

8. Regional disarmament was a priority that complemented efforts to ensure universal peace. She commended the work of the Security Commission in Central America which had been entrusted with defining ways of attaining regional disarmament with a view to concluding agreements in the field of security, verification and limitation of arms and armed forces in the region. At their eleventh summit meeting, the Presidents of the Central American countries had adopted the Tegucigalpa Protocol to the Charter of the Organization of Central American States (ODECA), in which the countries of Central America stated their intention to define a new regional security model based on a reasonable balance of forces and the strengthening of civilian government. Measures adopted to establish such a model were yielding positive results.

9. Her delegation was pleased to note the efforts of Nicaragua, which had greatly reduced the number of its military units and was implementing reforms and adopting laws to guarantee the subordination of the military to civilian government, was deploying efforts to disarm civilian groups and was destroying confiscated weapons. Her delegation commended the El Salvador agreements in which that country's Government had presented to the Secretary-General of the United Nations a plan for reducing its armed forces. Another important event was the agreement on "Procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America", signed in Guatemala, which stipulated procedures for disarmament and demobilization and provided for members of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) to take part in the legal and institutional life of that country. All those efforts undertaken in Central America could lead to a process of gradual demilitarization, transforming armed forces there into less expensive and more effective police units which could be called upon to resolve the serious problems of security engendered by crime, drug trafficking, terrorism and the arms traffic. Furthermore, those efforts could promote projects in the field of economic and social development. The significant reduction in military spending could liberate substantial financial, economic, technical and human resources to be used for the expansion of social services.

10. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms was an important disarmament mechanism at the international level, as it was aimed at ensuring greater access to objective and transparent information and promoting restraint where armaments were concerned. The Register could be expanded to include new measures that might regulate the production, sale, stockpiling, distribution, reduction, conversion and balance of arms and armed forces and also prevent

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(Ms. Riviera, Costa Rica)

illegal traffic in arms. It was essential to promote greater openness and transparency in relations between States by including in the Register objective information on States' policies, procedures and agreements at the national and regional levels in the aforementioned areas. Those elements could provide the basis for establishing a new model of international security which would promote a reasonable balance of armed forces and armaments and their reduction to a minimal level.

11. During the early 1990s, significant progress had been made in the area of nuclear disarmament. Costa Rica, which viewed the destruction of nuclear weapons as a major objective, commended the efforts of the President of the Amendment Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water aimed at the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. The Conference on Disarmament had adopted the decision to give its Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban a mandate to negotiate a treaty on a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. It would be advisable for those two forums to coordinate their efforts.

12. Another measure which had given impetus to efforts to prohibit nuclear tests was the global moratorium on nuclear testing which was now being observed on a voluntary and unilateral basis by the United States of America, the Russian Federation, France and the United Kingdom. Her delegation urged the international community to reaffirm its conviction that the conclusion of a treaty to prohibit that practice for all time was a priority goal and that such a treaty would provide an effective way to promote the objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Her Government believed that the convening of the 1995 Conference of States Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty would be of vital importance to the study of those aspects and it hoped that Conference would extend that Treaty for an indefinite period.

13. Educational and information-related activities in the field of disarmament were of particular interest to her delegation, on whose initiative the First Committee had adopted resolutions on the subject. That issue should be given greater attention, especially at a time when changes occurring in the world that promoted freedom, democracy, the respect and realization of human rights, disarmament and social development were creating the conditions for attaining that goal. The efforts being made by Member States, international governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions of learning to maintain peace and disarmament by supporting the activities of the United Nations disarmament education programme not only strengthened educational and information-related measures in the field of disarmament, they also supported the processes of arms reduction and disarmament and related agreements at the regional and international levels.

14. Mr. NKURLU (United Republic of Tanzania) said that despite encouraging and positive developments, such as those in the Middle East and South Africa, international security was still fraught with danger. Unexpected conflicts which had emerged since the demise of super-Power rivalry had resulted in the use of arms and the expenditure of enormous resources for the destruction of human life and property. The objectives of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms would be defeated if the major producers of armaments did not curb the temptation to export conventional arms. It was thus an appropriate

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(Mr. Nkurlu, United Republic of Tanzania)

time to re-examine the arms control and disarmament machinery and to update it to the realities of the post-cold-war era.

15. His delegation welcomed the conclusion by the Disarmament Commission at its 1993 session of the item on regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security and hoped that the role of the United Nations would be to strengthen the process of settling disputes at the regional level, taking into consideration the specific conditions and characteristics of each region. It was unfortunate that, owing to fundamental differences of perception between supplier and recipient States regarding the transfer of technology with military applications, it had not been possible to complete the item on the role of science and technology.

16. The signing of the Chemical Weapons Convention was a milestone in the process of eradicating weapons of mass destruction. It was to be hoped that when working out the modalities for the implementation of the Convention, the Preparatory Commission would avoid any ambiguities that might hamper the efforts of third-world countries to acquire material and technology for the development of their chemical industries.

17. At a time when the international community was on its way to implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention in an effort to eliminate one type of weapon of mass destruction, it was becoming increasingly difficult to justify the existence of nuclear weapons. It was absurd and contradictory for nuclear-weapon States to attempt to convince the international community that nuclear weapons had no military value while they continued to maintain massive stockpiles of nuclear warheads. The Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START-II) was welcome. However, no information was available regarding the fate of the nuclear warheads resulting from the dismantled weapons. The existence of fissionable materials, enriched uranium and plutonium in the contemporary world, which was fraught with ethnic, religious and territorial conflicts, posed a continuing threat to international security.

18. The denuclearization of the African continent was an integral part of the vision of a nuclear-free world. That goal was now within reach, especially after the South African regime had announced the destruction of several nuclear bombs it had produced. In that regard, the United Republic of Tanzania called upon that regime to comply fully with its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the safeguard agreements concluded with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

19. His delegation attached great importance to the 1995 Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which would provide an opportunity for States parties to correct the inequities inherent in the Treaty's discriminatory articles which allowed acquisition and proliferation of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States, while barring such action by non-nuclear States. His delegation urged that in the spirit of encouraging transparency, States that were not parties to the Treaty and non-governmental organizations be given observer status at the Conference. Where possible, decision-making during the Preparatory Committee sessions should be taken by consensus.

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(Mr. Nkurlu, United Republic of Tanzania)

20. A comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty was the only viable means of achieving the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. The decision by the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty was a welcome and timely event that coincided with the special meeting of the Amendment Conference of the States parties to the partial test-ban treaty which, in the view of his delegation, was the best forum to promote a speedy conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban Treaty. It was much easier to convert the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty than to negotiate a completely new instrument within the Conference on Disarmament. A comprehensive test-ban treaty was a crucial step in facilitating full compliance with the provisions of the non-proliferation Treaty. In that regard, his delegation fully supported President Francois Mitterrand of France in his appeal to nuclear-weapon States to ignore the recent explosion of a nuclear device and not follow suit, and it also supported appeals to the United States of America not to resume testing.

21. The goal of establishing the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace remained far from attainment. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean had spent two decades of strenuous deliberations to achieve the goal enshrined in the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, but had made little headway thus far. In June 1993, it had reviewed new alternative approaches in conformity with General Assembly resolution 47/59, yet unfortunately, for the third consecutive year, some members of the Ad Hoc Committee had not participated in its work. As a country bordering on the Indian Ocean, the United Republic of Tanzania was concerned at the persistent external military presence in the region, which, given the improved international situation, was out of place.

22. Mr. PAK Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the end of the cold war had aroused new hopes, but international efforts to eliminate all kinds of weapons of mass destruction and realize complete disarmament still encountered numerous difficulties. Despite some success in the international community's efforts to reduce nuclear weapons, there was still a lack of evidence that complete nuclear disarmament would follow. The outdated thinking which justified the possession of nuclear weapons as a deterrent to war remained unchanged, and the nuclear Powers had not expressed their political will to abolish those weapons unconditionally in accordance with the demands of a new era.

23. His Government's consistent position was that testing, production, stockpiling and the use of nuclear weapons should be banned and elimination of all nuclear weapons in all parts of the world completely eliminated. One of the most effective ways of achieving that goal was a general and complete nuclear-test ban. His delegation believed that the issue of eliminating nuclear weapons was not an issue of method and procedure, but was directly related to the will and determination of the nuclear States to dismantle all nuclear weapons unconditionally in accordance with the desires of mankind. The interest of the international community was currently focused on the question of extending the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1995. The purposes and substance of that Treaty should be fundamentally revised. The partiality inherent in it should be corrected so that nuclear and non-nuclear States could assume the same obligations, and the elimination of nuclear weapons should become one of its main objectives.

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(Mr. Pak Gil Yon, Democratic
People's Republic of Korea)

24. Control and reduction of conventional weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, was a critical issue. His delegation was concerned over the fact that even after the establishment of the Register of Conventional Weapons the export of arms to the developing countries had not decreased, while the technologies of sophisticated weapons continued to be transferred, and that the Register, rather than strengthening confidence, was further encouraging the arms race. In order to make it conducive to confidence-building it should provide for the prohibition of arms exports and the registration and phased withdrawal of arms and equipment in other countries.

25. The democratization and independence of international society were prerequisites to ensuring international security, peace and disarmament. But the destruction of the balance of power after the end of the "cold war" had produced tendencies to the monopolization of world politics and the principles of equality and impartiality were still absent in international relations, as could be seen from the tendency to put pressure on small countries. All countries were equal, regardless of their size and level of development. The world could never be peaceful as long as the international community allowed super-Powers "privilege" in international affairs and permitted intervention into the internal affairs of other countries. His delegation therefore supported General Assembly resolution 47/60 of 9 December 1992, which reflected the interest of developing countries in strengthening international peace and security and democratizing international relations.

26. With regard to the question of strengthening United Nations peace-keeping activities, it was his delegation's position that unless the Security Council and the United Nations were restructured democratically any proposal regarding that issue would be meaningless.

27. The maintenance of peace and security in the Asian and Pacific region was at present a fundamental condition for the maintenance of world peace and security. It was the most unstable region and residues of the "cold war" still remained there. His delegation's position on the question of security in Asia was that the countries and peoples of the region must solve their problems through their joint efforts. Foreign interference with and influence on the region should be eliminated. No country should be allowed hegemony in the region. In particular, Japan should gain the confidence of the peoples of the region by fully repenting of its past and giving up its ambition to become a military and nuclear Power.

28. One of the products of the "cold war" was the "nuclear issue" on the Korean peninsula. The only realistic way of solving that issue was the opening of negotiations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the United States. Any attempt to frighten the people of the DPRK by putting pressure on them with the excuse of the nuclear issue was anachronistic. In the second round of the talks between the DPRK and the United States held recently the principles for the resolution of the nuclear and bilateral issues between them had been established as well as practical measures to implement those principles. The DPRK's proposal to replace its graphite-moderated reactors with light-water-moderated reactors was the expression of its deep desire to put an end to the suspicion that it had nuclear ambitions, and it had been recognized

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(Mr. Pak Gil Yon, Democratic
People's Republic of Korea)

by the United States as a part of the final solution to the settlement of that question.

29. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 3390 (XXX) B of 18 November 1975, the "United Nations Command", which was a relic of the "cold war" on the Korean peninsula, should be dissolved. The Armistice Agreement should be replaced by a peace agreement. The United Nations should recognize that the time had come to put an end to that relic of the era of confrontation.

30. Durable peace and security on the Korean peninsula could not be separated from the question of reunification. In order to develop the North-South dialogue and bring into effect the "Agreement on reconciliation and non-aggression, cooperation and exchanges between the North and South", the outside interference and large-scale war exercises directed against the other party to that dialogue should be discontinued. That was the lesson to be drawn from the rupture of talks in the past. The whole process of achieving national reunification required that the Korean people should achieve national unity on the basis of the principle of independence. Differences in ideology, ideals and political systems of course remained within the nation, but those differences could be overcome easily on the basis of the nation's homogeneity. The 10-point programme for reunification put forward by President Kim Il Sung envisaged the establishment of a pan-national unified State in which the two regional governments of the North and South were represented on an equal footing; and the State should be an independent, peaceful, non-aligned and neutral one which did not lean towards any great Power. The creation of such a State would pave the way for ensuring peace, realizing denuclearization and disarmament and easing tensions on the Korean peninsula. The DPRK would continue its efforts to realize the country's reunification by promoting North-South dialogue in spite of the difficulties along the way.

31. Mr. BARBOSA (Cape Verde) said that deep transformations were continuing to take place in the world, such as the recently concluded agreement in principle between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the significant changes in South Africa. Unfortunately, however, together with those welcome changes there were also disturbing phenomena such as the spread of weapons and the eruption of armed conflicts. In his delegations's view, a new world order could only be established through a process of reflection and collective decision, the results of which should be in the interests of general progress. The dominant role in those efforts should be played by the United Nations.

32. After the initial period of enthusiasm and even euphoria brought about by the end of the "cold war", the task of strengthening international peace and security had become more complex and difficult. In view of the limited resources available to the international community, the accent should be placed above all on preventive measures and overcoming the conditions favouring instability and conflict. Clearing away those impediments was the necessary condition for more successful and more democratic development.

33. All the organs of the United Nations, including the First Committee, should help in defining the elements of progress and the negative factors in the

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(Mr. Barbosa, Cape Verde)

interests of eliminating the latter and widening and deepening the former. His delegation considered the Chairman's initiative concerning the continuation and deepening of the efforts to rationalize the work of the Committee very timely and was prepared to take part in those efforts. The success of that undertaking would depend to a great extent on how the rationalization of the First Committee's work was envisaged. In his opinion, analysis of the proposal made in the "Agenda for Peace" to deal with the problems of disarmament in conjunction with the new realities indicated that the central task at present was to increase the significance of disarmament and the effectiveness of the work of the United Nations in that field. To take those goals into account in deciding how to rationalize the work of the First Committee was the key to success. His delegation had taken note of the statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs announcing changes in the relevant units of the Secretariat intended to strengthen their ability to deal with the questions of disarmament and international security.

34. In spite of the persistence of some negative factors, the arms control and disarmament process had continued to move forward in 1993. The signature by more than 150 countries of the Convention on Chemical Weapons and the beginning of operations by the United Nations Organization for the prohibition of chemical weapons were important events. For the first time, the conditions were being created for the elimination of a whole class of weapons of mass destruction. Another important factor was the increased responsibility of Governments as evidenced, in particular, by the adherence to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of several nuclear Powers which had not previously belonged to it, and the increase in the number of members of the Treaty to 160.

35. Other noteworthy achievements included the signing in January 1993 of the START-II Treaty, the mandate given by the Conference on Disarmament to one of its Ad Hoc Committees to conduct negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty, and the consultations on the Amendment Conference of States parties to the partial test-ban Treaty. With regard to biological weapons, his delegation was pleased to note that the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts had concluded that a verification regime was possible that would have a direct bearing on efforts aimed at convening an international conference on biological weapons in 1994.

36. As to Africa, Cape Verde was both relieved and gratified at the news of the dismantling of the nuclear reactors in South Africa following that country's accession to the NPT in 1991, as well as the safeguards agreement it had concluded with IAEA. The position adopted by South Africa and the placing of the nuclear material released as a result of the dismantling under total IAEA control - which, in the view of Cape Verde, should take place as soon as possible - would hasten the introduction of a legal regime that would allow for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa on the basis of the treaty already drafted.

37. He welcomed the progress made with regard to non-proliferation and disarmament in Europe with the conclusion of the Treaty on Open Skies, in Latin America along the lines of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and in Asia. It must be admitted, however, that there was still much to be done before all the obstacles would be overcome and that there were a number of inconsistencies which, in the

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(Mr. Barbosa, Cape Verde)

view of Cape Verde, were quite unacceptable and which must be resolved. For instance, it was extremely important that the international community should be able to guarantee the practical implementation of the Convention on Chemical Weapons. Because of the number of difficulties that had arisen in the process of the ratification of the Lisbon Protocol, the START-II Treaty, the vital importance of which was generally recognized, had still not entered into force. His delegation hoped that such difficulties would soon be overcome. As the Gulf War and other relatively recent events had shown, the difficulties in ensuring effective monitoring of compliance with the NPT remained a matter of serious concern to the international community. It was important to adopt all measures aimed at strengthening the legal regime of the Treaty and ensuring compliance with it. Despite the progress made, which was reflected in the establishment by the General Assembly of the Register of Conventional Arms, much work still had to be done to ensure greater transparency in connection with that category of weapons.

38. Mr. JANSONS (Latvia) said that the preservation of Latvia's recently restored independence depended to a great extent on international security in the world as a whole and particularly in Europe. His country therefore paid great attention to issues relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, including disarmament matters. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remained the most important international legal instrument for the prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons, and Latvia believed that all States should comply with it. Latvia had no intention of possessing nuclear weapons and in principle supported the idea of an international convention on assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. It also looked forward to the indefinite and unconditional extension of the NPT in 1995.

39. Latvia welcomed the decision of the Conference on Disarmament to entrust its Ad Hoc Committee with a mandate to start negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. His delegation regretted that a nuclear test had been carried out recently by China, and hoped that would not prompt other nuclear-weapon States to resume testing. A major achievement, which testified to the interest of the international community in comprehensive disarmament, had been the completion and opening for signature of the Convention on Chemical Weapons.

40. Latvia considered transparency in armaments to be an extremely important confidence-building measure. In that regard, it welcomed the establishment of the Register of Conventional Arms, and believed that its gradual expansion would help to promote greater trust among countries.

41. The situation in the world had proved that disarmament must be considered in the broader context of international security. In that connection, Latvia supported the expansion of cooperation between the United Nations and regional security organizations and arrangements. In particular it welcomed the granting of observer status to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). There could be no doubt that the regional organizations could play an important role in early warning and the proper evaluation of situations. However, it was essential to draw a clear distinction between regional arrangements based on the sovereign equality of member States and those mechanisms where domination by one member could significantly determine the

(Mr. Jansons, Latvia)

outcome of measures adopted to maintain security. It was important that regional arrangements of the latter type should not be assigned peace-keeping functions.

42. In 1992, CSCE and the General Assembly had done much to resolve the problem of foreign military forces stationed in the Baltic States. However, that issue, which had been included in the agenda of the forty-eighth session, should not be the concern of those States alone, since it affected the stability of the region and international security as a whole. The presence of foreign military forces in Latvia undermined its social stability and adversely affected its ability to comply with international conventions in the field of disarmament. No State could feel safe while foreign military forces were stationed on its territory, without its required consent. Latvia believed that the swift, orderly and complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the Baltic States would make a significant contribution to the further strengthening of international peace and security in the region and throughout the world.

43. Mr. AL-ATTAR (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the experience of the cold war had shown that security could not be achieved through armaments, which merely served to undermine it. The only logical alternative was collective security through the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, above all nuclear weapons, the strengthening of confidence-building measures and the reallocation of resources to development.

44. Despite the many obstacles that remained on the path to general and complete disarmament, there had been significant achievements over the past few decades, the most notable being the Convention on Chemical Weapons. At the Conference of States Parties to the 1925 Geneva Protocol and Other Interested States, held in Paris in 1989, the Syrian Arab Republic had been the first to make a formal proposal that the Middle East should become a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction. Since his country believed that nuclear weapons were the most dangerous type of weapon of mass destruction threatening international peace and security, it was in favour of consolidating and building on the success of the Convention on Chemical Weapons by concluding a similar multilateral agreement on the prohibition of the acquisition, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons. In the post-cold-war era the international community was duty-bound to support genuine efforts aimed at the elimination of all types of nuclear weapons.

45. There had been high praise for the agreement reached in the Committee at the previous session concerning transparency in armaments and regional arms transfers. However, such measures could not be implemented in occupied territories, particularly when the occupying Power was capable of manufacturing and acquiring all types of weapons without any international control, while the territory under occupation was unable to receive the means for its self-defence, contrary to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. A case in point was the Middle East, where Israel still occupied Arab territories and was impeding a comprehensive political settlement in the area. Moreover, Israel stubbornly refused to apply the system of IAEA safeguards to its nuclear installations and continued to develop and upgrade its nuclear programme, which was targeted at strategic points in the Middle East.

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(Mr. Al-Attar, Syrian Arab Republic)

46. The main purpose of declaring the Middle East a zone free of all types of weapons of mass destruction was to relieve tension in the potentially explosive situation in the region caused by the continued occupation, to take practical steps towards disarmament which would extend to all States in the region without exception, and to enhance the prospects for the establishment of peace in the region. The initiative had, however, been rejected by Israel, which had not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The arms race in the Middle East could be curbed only by the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. The relevant measures must be comprehensive and fair and must be adopted on a non-discriminatory basis, under the supervision of the United Nations.

47. The Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament treaties, was daily becoming more important. The time had come to give serious consideration to the applications of States which had long sought membership of the Conference. His delegation hoped that the Conference would adopt the proposals on the matter before the end of the year and extend membership to those States which had applied. It welcomed the progress that had been made on nuclear testing at the latest session of the Conference.

48. The Syrian Arab Republic believed that the United Nations had a special role to play in all matters relating to disarmament. It hoped that specific measures would be taken to implement the provisions of the Charter in the interests of ensuring the sovereignty, territorial integrity and economic independence of States, putting an end to aggression and occupation, and securing for all peoples under foreign occupation the exercise of their right to self-determination and independence.

49. His country also believed it was necessary to enhance the efficiency of the First Committee by rationalizing its work. The Committee should devote particular attention to issues on which progress was possible. It should also undertake an overall scrutiny of all the draft resolutions before it and ensure their implementation.

50. His country had always supported United Nations resolutions and treaties on disarmament, particularly the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to which it was a party. In February 1992 it had signed a safeguards agreement under that Treaty. It was also a party to the Biological Weapons Convention and was ready to take part in any international efforts to eliminate all forms of weapons of mass destruction. It had high hopes for the establishment of a peace which would lead to the comprehensive and just settlement of conflicts throughout the world. It also looked forward to general and complete disarmament, genuine development for third world countries and the establishment of a system of international relations based on the primacy of international law, observance of the Charter, dialogue, conciliation and cooperation.

51. Mr. AL-BUAINAIN (Qatar) said that peace, security and disarmament and the peaceful settlement of disputes should be based on specific fundamental principles: peaceful coexistence, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and the prohibition of the use or threat of use of force. Due regard should also be paid to the right of all States to sovereignty,

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(Mr. Al-Buainain, Qatar)

independence and social and economic development in accordance with the Charter and the provisions of international law. On that basis his country sought to ensure the incorporation of those principles into the life of its region.

52. Qatar welcomed the progress achieved in the Middle East peace talks, which it had supported since 1991. It also welcomed the agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel and hoped that it would lead to similar progress on every aspect of a comprehensive, genuine and just settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict which would ensure the security of all parties. That might well help Israel to abandon its nuclear weapons and accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, thus opening up the possibility of turning the whole Middle East region into a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Qatar believed that all the States of the region would accede to the Treaty, thus ushering in the start of a new era - an era of peace.

53. The creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would bring benefits to the countries of that region at the social and economic level, too. Those portions of State budgets currently allocated to arms expenditure and the maintenance of substantial defence forces could, if a state of peaceful coexistence prevailed, be directed to the development of the social and economic spheres in the interests of future generations. Although it was aware that the disarmament process was complicated, his country joined other States in calling for priority to be given to nuclear disarmament and hoped that during the last decade of the twentieth century it would be possible to achieve the elimination of all forms of weapons which threatened human survival. It also hoped that the process could be accompanied by other measures to increase transparency and openness. It supported the idea of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, but urged that special efforts should be devoted to limiting the use not only of nuclear weapons but also of other weapons of mass destruction.

54. Given its geographical position, Qatar attached particular importance to the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. Together with the other States concerned, it supported the idea that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean should examine the Declaration with an eye to the changes that had taken place in the world since the end of the cold war and should direct its attention to regional and global efforts to guarantee peace and stability in the Indian Ocean region, with particular emphasis on social and economic factors.

55. Mr. DE ACHA PRADO (Bolivia) said that, although the cold war and the ideological confrontation between East and West had become a thing of the past, there remained many crisis points in the world and new conflicts were flaring up, with the result that the task of maintaining international peace and security was made somewhat more complicated than had formerly appeared. In that connection, he pointed out the need to strengthen the United Nations as an instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security and as an appropriate forum for the achievement of the aims set forth in the Charter. The importance of that task had been underlined at the Seventh Presidential Meeting of the Rio Group, held recently in Santiago, Chile.

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56. Pointing out some positive trends that had appeared on the international scene, he none the less expressed his concern that military expenditure remained as high as ever in comparison with the resources allocated to health and educational needs, particularly in developing countries. With regard to the importance of achieving transparency in arms transfers, he said that tighter controls in that field were essential.

57. With the formation of a new system of international relations, it was becoming increasingly clear that the concept of international security also included elements not directly connected with security; he had in mind the interrelationship between peace, development and democracy. To ensure international security, therefore, it was necessary to take measures to eliminate the social and economic causes of instability.

58. With regard to successes in the field of nuclear disarmament, he noted the decision by the Conference on Disarmament to start discussions on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. In that connection, he expressed the hope that, prior to the talks, the nuclear-weapon Powers would refrain from nuclear-weapons testing. Another important step in the disarmament process was the initiative taken by the United States of America to cease production of fissionable material.

59. With reference to the question of the extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, he said that the preparatory process for the NPT Review Conference should help to draw the various positions on the matter closer together, while the Conference itself should become the forum for the consideration of every aspect of non-proliferation.

60. With regard to the chemical weapons Convention, his country looked forward to its universal application on the basis of an effective and balanced verification system and called on countries which had not yet done so to sign the Convention as soon as possible.

61. His delegation attached great importance to the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields. It therefore considered it essential that international cooperation should be developed in the use of scientific and technical achievements for the resolution of problems related to disarmament. It also supported the development of environmentally safe methods of weapons disposal and stressed the importance of international cooperation in biotechnology and in projects aimed at meeting health, agricultural and industrial requirements.

62. At the Seventh Presidential Meeting of the Rio Group, the Latin American countries had declared their commitment to the achievement of international peace and security and noted the need to reallocate resources from the arms race to activities promoting peace and development. They had called for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, stressing in that connection the success of the Latin American countries in achieving the full implementation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and adherence to the chemical weapons Convention. Latin America should thus soon become a totally nuclear-weapon-free zone. His delegation considered it essential that similar zones should be established in

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other regions. That would represent a significant step forward in the globalization of the disarmament process.

63. Mr. HAN Toe Sung (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation did not agree with the remarks of the representative of New Zealand at the previous meeting regarding his country and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which it considered lacking in objectivity and provocative. The nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula was exacerbated by the stationing of nuclear weapons in South Korea, the unfounded suspicions regarding his country's intentions and the unsatisfactory position taken by certain officials in the IAEA secretariat. The representative of New Zealand had consciously ignored that fact and he called on him to take an objective approach to the issue, and not consider the nuclear question in isolation from all other issues.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.