



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 34th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 48 TO 69 (continued)

CONSIDERATION OF AND ACTION ON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS ON AGENDA ITEMS 48 TO 69

Mr. MOLANDER (Sweden): I am speaking today to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.31 concerning the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, together with three Protocols on non-detectable fragments, on land mines, booby traps and other devices, and on incendiary weapons.

The adoption of that Convention on 10 October 1980 was the result of several years of preparation. The fact that it entered into force on 2 December 1983 - that is, only three years after its adoption - is a very encouraging indication of the desire of the international community progressively to develop international humanitarian law in this field and to give it effect. The draft resolution reflects the satisfaction felt at this positive development and also notes the possibility laid down in article 8 of the Convention of reviewing the scope and operation of the Convention and its Protocols and of the setting of further international standards relating to other categories of conventional weapons not covered so far.

(Mr. Molander, Sweden)

As of July 1987, the Convention and the three annexed Protocols have been acceded to by 28 States parties. According to the draft resolution, the General Assembly would urge States that had not yet become parties to the Convention and its annexed Protocols to exert their best endeavours to do so as early as possible, so that the instruments might ultimately obtain universality of adherence.

The sponsors of the draft resolution are the delegations of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Cuba, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Viet Nam, Yugoslavia and my own delegation, Sweden. On behalf of those sponsors I would like to express the hope that draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.31 will be adopted by consensus.

Speaking on behalf of my own delegation, I should like to make some further remarks. In our view, some categories of weapons, such as incendiary weapons, should be made the object of further specific restrictions. A category such as sea mines could, as has been suggested in the United Nations study on the naval arms race, be made the object of restrictions in a new protocol, possibly, but not necessarily, within the framework of the present Convention.

As pointed out by Sweden and Switzerland at the twenty-fifth International Red Cross Conference in 1986, and by the Swedish delegation in the First Committee last year, developments in laser technology should also be followed closely. There seems to be a risk of developing lasers for anti-personnel purposes on the conventional battlefield. It is already technically possible to develop and manufacture specific anti-personnel laser weapons, the main effect of which would be to blind the adversary's soldiers permanently. It can be argued that methods of warfare which are intended and may be expected to cause irreversible injury to the human eye are already prohibited under existing principles of humanitarian law. Those principles should be laid down in an international instrument in order effectively to prevent such methods of warfare. There is therefore a need to

(Mr. Molander, Sweden)

elaborate a prohibition on the use of battlefield laser weapons specifically designed for anti-personnel use. On the other hand, it is evident that anti-matériel laser weapons would not, as such, violate international standards, even if they were to have secondary anti-personnel effects.

Last year Sweden informally distributed a document in the Committee on, inter alia, the laser issue. We intend this year to distribute a follow-up paper focusing on laser as a battlefield weapon. This document will shortly be made available to members of the Committee. We hope that it will contribute to the continued discussion on the possibilities for a further development of international humanitarian law.

Mr. MORRISON (Canada): It is my honour to introduce today draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.32/Rev.1, entitled "Chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons". The following 23 Member States have joined Canada and Poland in sponsoring this text: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the German Democratic Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

Submission of this draft resolution is not merely a ritual procedure, repeated year after year with minimal changes. Consensus is a considerable achievement on an issue of such significance to the global community. There have been modifications to the draft resolution, which I shall discuss shortly, that take account of significant and hopeful developments over the past year.

The modifications reflect successful efforts on the part of the sponsors in reducing the number of draft resolutions in the First Committee relating to the negotiations of a chemical-weapons convention, thus considerably reinforcing this important goal and sending a stronger message to the Conference on Disarmament on

(Mr. Morrison, Canada)

the urgent need to complete this work. In this respect I would like to express the heartfelt gratitude of my delegation, particularly to the delegation of Poland, which has co-operated very closely with Canada on this draft resolution, as in previous years, and which is a relationship of which Canada is very proud. We would also like to thank the delegation of the German Democratic Republic and that of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for their generous co-operation and for the spirit of compromise they have shown in this process - and, indeed, our thanks go to all others who have participated in our discussions and negotiations.

This draft resolution gives a positive indication of the deep concern shared by Member States over the existence of chemical weapons and the continuing possibility of their military use. As a reflection of that concern, the General Assembly would, according to the draft resolution, urge the Conference on Disarmament to give a high priority to negotiations on the elaboration, at the earliest possible date, of a convention on the destruction of, and on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of, all chemical weapons. While success in that urgent task will require resolving many remaining complex and highly technical matters, we are certain that, with the requisite effort, the negotiators will be able to reach satisfactory results. Indeed, those negotiations involve much more than technical questions, and that is why the draft resolution has such significance. It reaffirms the world community's dedication to achieving the elimination of such weapons of mass destruction from the face of our shared planet.

You will have noted that three new paragraphs have been included at the end of the preamble to the text. According to those paragraphs the General Assembly would note its recognition of the efforts made by Member States that demonstrate a

(Mr. Morrison, Canada)

determination to conclude an effective convention. It would express the wish to encourage Member States to take further initiatives to promote openness in the negotiations and to provide further information, thus contributing to an early completion of a convention.

There have been important developments at the chemical-weapons negotiations at Geneva in consideration of the verification provisions of a convention. In the past, delegations have pointed out the necessity of a strict observance of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the 1972 Convention. I would again emphasize the importance of observing strictly those two instruments, violations of which carry grave implications for us all. While the Protocol has no provisions for verification of allegations of use of chemical weapons, its moral stature and legal stature are not weakened thereby, nor is the obligation of strict adherence to it. What does stand out, however, in this context is the need for effective verification provisions in the convention now being drawn up. I am pleased to note that this has been generally agreed at the Conference on Disarmament, and there are encouraging signs that this goal will be achieved.

(Mr. Morrison, Canada)

It is the firm conviction of my delegation - we regard it as essential - that the effectiveness of the Conference on Disarmament be demonstrated. Disarmament affects and must benefit all of us by contributing to stability. We welcome most warmly recent progress in the disarmament field between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It is of crucial importance that the multilateral dimension of disarmament also prove its value.

It is the belief of all the sponsors that this resolution will continue to enjoy the unanimous support of the First Committee. Adoption by consensus will demonstrate firmly our commitment to the goal of eradicating chemical weapons and send a vital message to our colleagues in the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. HALACHEV (Bulgaria): My delegation would like to introduce, under agenda item 62 (e), the draft resolution entitled "Confidence-building measures at sea" contained in document A/C.L/42/L.64, which is sponsored by the German Democratic Republic, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Bulgaria. In submitting the draft resolution, the sponsors proceeded from the following basic considerations.

The issue of naval armaments and naval disarmament has been on the agenda of this Committee for several years now. Much useful work has been done so far. For the third consecutive year the Disarmament Commission, at its 1987 substantive session, addressed this issue in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. The detailed and substantive discussion in the consultative group, under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Alatas of Indonesia, was one of the positive results of the session. The discussion provided a good basis for further consideration of the question within and outside the United Nations, including in the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Halachev, Bulgaria)

The sponsors are of the opinion that the discussion and identification of possible naval disarmament and confidence-building measures should take a more concrete direction. The understanding reflected in the report of the Consultative Group was along the same lines. The United Nations study, along with other documents, replies and comments of Governments, as well as later proposals, provides an adequate basis for moving ahead from what was accomplished this year, in order to enable the Commission to submit recommendations on this question. This opinion was actively supported by the majority of member States at the last session of the Commission.

Bearing in mind this assessment and the current stage of consideration of the issue of naval armaments and disarmament, the sponsors deem it necessary for the Disarmament Commission, as reflected in operative paragraph 1,

"... to continue at its 1988 substantive session the consideration of the question, ... with a view to facilitating the identification of possible measures in the field of naval arms limitation and disarmament, as well as confidence-building measures, taking into account the security interests of all States, and to submit a report on the subject, including findings and recommendations, as appropriate, to the General Assembly at its forty-third session". (A/C.1/42/L.64)

This is along the same lines as the other draft resolution on agenda item 62 (e) entitled "Naval armaments and disarmament" contained in document A/C.1/42/L.40, which we fully support.

At the same time, we note the wide concurrence of views in the Disarmament Commission that

"at the present stage confidence-building measures of various kinds, both in the global and in the regional context, would be more amenable to further consideration and possible negotiations in appropriate forums". (A/C.1/42/L.64)

(Mr. Halachev, Bulgaria)

This wording, contained in the third preambular paragraph of our draft resolution, reproduces the relevant part of the working paper by the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission on agenda item 8 of the Commission (A/CN.10/102), which met with the approval of all delegations participating in the substantive consultations. We were glad to note that the same opinion was explicitly stressed in the statements of a number of delegations during our debate this year in the First Committee. Fully sharing such a realistic approach, the sponsors of the draft resolution propose, in operative paragraph 2, that the Disarmament Commission,

"as part of the consideration of the question of naval armaments and disarmament, ... devote more attention to the identification, at an early stage, of specific confidence-building measures at sea which might be generally acceptable and which could become subject to consultations and eventual negotiations". (A/C.1/42/L.64)

In doing so, we take into account, first of all, the objective fact that the area of confidence-building measures at sea is one in which there exists an opportunity to reach early and generally acceptable agreements. We also note the growing awareness of Member States of the importance which confidence-building has in strengthening security and stability and in creating favourable conditions for progress in the field of disarmament, including naval disarmament - both nuclear and conventional - which remains the principal objective.

The draft resolution under consideration is not intended as a departure from the general and comprehensive approach to the question of naval armaments and disarmament. The draft has been submitted on the understanding on the part of the sponsors that it will complement the draft resolution entitled "Naval armaments and disarmament" under the same agenda item.

We are convinced that the adoption of this draft resolution by the General Assembly will contribute to elaborating specific recommendations in the Disarmament Commission.

The co-sponsors would like to express the hope that their draft resolution will receive the broadest possible support in this Committee.

Mr. DJOKIC (Yugoslavia): I should like to introduce two draft resolutions, one on the "Implementation of the recommendations and decisions of the tenth special session" devoted to disarmament, contained in document A/C.1/42/L.70, and the other on the "Report of the Conference on Disarmament", contained in document A/C.1/42/L.69. I shall first introduce draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.70.

(Mr. Djokic, Yugoslavia)

Next year, 10 years after the first special session devoted to disarmament, the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is to take place. It will provide us with an opportunity to take stock of the international community's efforts in the field of disarmament over the past decade, to see how far we have succeeded in achieving the goals we set ourselves in the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament, to support bilateral and multilateral negotiations on various disarmament issues, and, most important, to agree on a specific programme of action aimed at halting the arms race, particularly the nuclear-arms race, and at commencing the process of genuine disarmament. In these tasks we should proceed realistically, bearing primarily in mind the international community's vital interest in speeding up the process of disarmament; in that way we should be helping to strengthen international peace and security and to resolve problems of economic and social development, particularly that of developing countries.

At this year's session of the General Assembly we are discussing disarmament issues in conditions somewhat more favourable than those that have prevailed over the past several years. Very important in that respect is the agreement in principle between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America on the elimination of medium-range and shorter-range nuclear missiles. The signing of an agreement on the elimination of those types of weapons, at the forthcoming summit between the two leading nuclear Powers, should mark the beginning of the process of genuine nuclear disarmament and should have a positive impact on the overall negotiations in the field of disarmament. Also important is the progress achieved at the Conference on Disarmament towards concluding a comprehensive convention on chemical weapons. Positive results have also been

(Mr. Djokic, Yugoslavia)

achieved at the Vienna follow-up conference of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. We cannot but give all those accomplishments our whole-hearted support and encouragement.

At the same time, however, the fact remains that contemporary international relations continue to be burdened with numerous negative tendencies. We are witnessing the continued use of force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, as well as threats, pressure and military intervention against independent countries. The economic and social situation, particularly in developing countries, is deteriorating, with an immediate negative impact on stability and security in the world. The arms race continues unabated, and military expenditures are on the rise. We are facing a real danger that the arms race will be extended into outer space. The world is becoming an ever less safe place for man to live, and the odds in favour of survival are growing ever shorter.

At the first special session devoted to disarmament, the General Assembly adopted a Final Document containing the fundamental elements of the international community's strategy in the field of disarmament. The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.70 continue to believe that that Final Document provides a valid, comprehensive basis on which the international community can launch action towards halting and reversing the arms race, and that the realization of those goals has not ceased to be our most important and urgent objective. They are also convinced that it is now necessary - precisely because of the recent positive trends - to give a new push to disarmament talks, particularly those on nuclear weapons, so as to speed up the process of negotiations and achieve even more important results with respect to halting the arms race and bringing about genuine disarmament.

(Mr. Djokic, Yugoslavia)

Those are the most important goals the sponsors of the draft resolution had in mind. They earnestly hope that the draft resolution will encourage disarmament negotiations on all levels: in the United Nations, at the Conference on Disarmament, and on the bilateral and regional levels.

The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.70 - Algeria, Bangladesh, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Madagascar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Romania, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Tunisia, Venezuela, Viet Nam and Yugoslavia - on whose behalf I have the honour to introduce the text, are convinced that, with those goals in mind, it will be given the broadest possible support.

I now have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.69, on the report of the Conference on Disarmament, on behalf of a group of sponsors consisting of Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Romania, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Sweden, Tunisia, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zaire and Yugoslavia.

The sponsors attach the greatest importance to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. They are convinced that in the present circumstances, when new prospects for resolving the substantive issues of disarmament are being opened, the Conference on Disarmament is gaining ever greater importance as the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. The Conference should be most directly involved in negotiating the priority issues of disarmament, such as halting the arms race, nuclear disarmament, the prevention of nuclear war, a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

(Mr. Djokic, Yugoslavia)

However the reports which the Conference submitted to the General Assembly this year show that that is not yet the case. Despite all the efforts of the great majority of its members, the Conference this year was again unable to initiate substantive negotiations on the most important disarmament issues. Thus, yet another session has passed without concrete agreements.

That state of affairs cannot but cause concern among those of us who sincerely wish to see a much faster solution of the key issues of disarmament. We cannot acquiesce in the fact that, owing to the selective approach of some of its members to the questions it can and should discuss, the Conference is in effect being denied the possibility of fulfilling its mandate and of participating most directly in resolving the priority issues of disarmament. Nor can we accept the reasoning that the successful completion of bilateral negotiations on certain disarmament issues is the prerequisite for conducting multilateral negotiations on those issues. Bilateral negotiations cannot and should not exclude multilateral negotiations; if anything, the two should encourage and complement each other.

The sponsors of the draft resolution are gratified to note that this year the Conference on Disarmament has again made important progress in the negotiations on chemical weapons. They hope that the Conference will continue its negotiations with ever greater resolve and that it will soon be able to complete the immense and complex work related to the formulation of a comprehensive convention on chemical weapons.

The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.69 have no motivation other than their sincere wish to give full support to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, to stress the Conference's great importance and its role in the

(Mr. Djokic, Yugoslavia)

negotiating process, and to encourage the Conference to address itself to the negotiations on the priority issues of disarmament it has on its agenda. They are therefore convinced that this year the draft resolution on this subject will again be given the broadest possible support.

Mr. NIEJWENHUYS (Belgium) (interpretation from French): Today I should like briefly to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/42/L.47, which has been sponsored by a large number of countries representing an extremely broad geographical and political spectrum and deals with the question of regional disarmament, which is item 63 (a) of the agenda.

This draft is in line with previous resolutions adopted by consensus, starting with the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly, and here I refer to resolutions 37/100 F, 38/73 J and 39/63 F. Those resolutions were preceded by a memorandum introduced by Belgium at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The regional approach to disarmament was conceived in order to encourage and promote specific efforts at disarmament or arms limitation in the context of limited geographical areas which would be likely to promote the progressive achievement of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Of course such efforts could hardly develop or be successful unless they were supported at the outset by the States directly concerned or gained their support later. This is the prime basic rule in the regional approach to disarmament, as referred to in document A/C.1/42/L.47, and in our view, this rule remains essential.

Resolution 39/63 F requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-second session a report on the status of the implementation of the previous resolutions, that is, 37/100 F and 38/73 J.

It is useful to recall that resolution 37/100 F expressed the hope that when the situation in the region made it possible, Governments should hold consultations in order to agree on appropriate regional disarmament measures that could be taken at the initiative and with the participation of all States concerned.

(Mr. Nieuwenhuys, Belgium)

That resolution also went on to encourage Governments to consider the possible establishment or strengthening at the regional level, where appropriate, of institutional arrangements conducive to promoting the implementation of such measures.

Resolution 37/100 F also requested Governments and existing regional institutions to report to the Secretary-General on steps taken along these lines and also requested the Secretariat and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to assist States and regional institutions requesting assistance.

The present draft resolution which I have the honour to introduce notes the publication, on 28 August 1987, of the report on regional disarmament requested of the Secretary-General by resolution 39/63 F. It bears the symbol A/42/457 and I am glad here to express our thanks for the quality of the work done and the excellent contributions made to it by various countries.

This report gives an account of the regional dimension in activities pursued by the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

The report also contains substantive contributions made by a number of Governments which have shed light on what has been achieved and what is under way with regard to confidence-building measures concerning arms and armed forces or to arms limitation or disarmament.

It can be seen that the idea of regional disarmament is making headway and that it is quite capable of being specifically applied in various parts of the world in order to contribute towards strengthening peace there. It is something that undoubtedly should be borne in mind in the light of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which is specifically referred to in paragraph 7 of document A/C.1/42/L.47.

(Mr. Nieuwenhuys, Belgium)

I would venture to hope that this draft will be as well received as our previous resolutions on the subject have been and that it can be adopted without a vote.

Mr. DJIENA (Cameroon): My delegation wishes to express its views on agenda items 62, 63 and 66.

While no one can deny that ongoing negotiations at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels lie at the heart of the arms control and disarmament process, the United Nations has a continuing potential to dislodge barriers to progress. We should like to stress that whatever the forum, a fundamental prerequisite for progress towards arms control and disarmament is the development of confidence, and confidence can be achieved only on a step-by-step basis, although the process may often appear slow and difficult.

The signing of an intermediate-range nuclear forces agreement in principle between the two super-Powers is in itself a commendable effort that will begin a process of building confidence, proper in East-West relations, and will also contribute to the improvement of the international climate. We shall follow closely the proposed 7 December summit between the United States and the Soviet Union.

(continued in French)

While substantial verifiable and balanced reductions of military arsenals constitute a decisive phase in the disarmament process, it is nevertheless still true that the development of measures designed to promote confidence among States and strict respect for agreements already signed are constant elements in this process and no genuine progress can be achieved in the quest for disarmament, security and development unless States display sufficient political will to enable them to harmonize their policies and conduct at the international level. In this connection, the constant promotion of measures designed to guarantee confidence and

(Mr. Djiena, Cameroon)

security is an essential condition for the establishment, especially at the regional level, of a climate of peace that is indispensable for the development and prosperity of each of the States concerned.

The immediate objective sought first of all should be the reduction, or even the elimination, of sources of tension and of the mistrust inherent in the military activities of one's neighbours. Certain factors are indeed sources of misgivings that can only fuel the arms race. This is why the development of confidence appears as an absolutely crucial element both in the prevention of conflicts and in the attainment of the objective that we are all seeking, namely, fewer weapons and more development everywhere.

(Mr. Djiena, Cameroon)

Here it is appropriate to emphasize that the adoption by the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), at its twenty-third session, of resolution 164 concerning the Lomé Declaration on Security, Disarmament and Development in Africa and concerning the Programme of Action for Peace, Security and Co-operation is eloquent testimony to Africa's attachment to the peaceful settlement of disputes, the reduction of armaments and the promotion of socio-economic development. We firmly believe that such regional arrangements make a substantial contribution to the promotion of confidence, security and development.

It is in that spirit that my country, Cameroon, has sought the assistance of the United Nations, in the context of the relevant General Assembly resolutions, in the identification and implementation of a set of measures designed to promote and strengthen peace, security and development in the Central African subregion. In my delegation's view, the project is designed to prevent conflicts, to establish a subregional machinery for the settlement of disputes, and to consolidate and strengthen security and good-neighbourly relations among the States of the subregion, thus facilitating the attainment of the objectives of peace and progress assigned to the economic community of Central African States, which includes, in addition to the People's Republic of Angola, which has observer status, the following 10 States: Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, the People's Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, the Central African Republic, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, and of course your country, Mr. Chairman, Zaire.

We have been encouraged by the broad support already given by many countries and by the competent United Nations organs to this project, whose implementation has been entrusted to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, at Lomé, Togo. We hope that the United Nations and other countries will continue to support the Central African States in their pursuit of disarmament

(Mr. Djiena, Cameroon)

objectives, as well as in their endeavours to achieve security and development at the subregional level.

I should like to present our observations on the work of the recent sessions of the two multilateral bodies of our Organization entrusted with deliberations and negotiations on disarmament, namely, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament.

At its last session the Disarmament Commission made little genuine progress, despite intensive negotiations among all member States. That situation was due not only to the complexity of the subjects under consideration but also to the lack of political will on the part of States, in particular with regard to such major issues as the reduction of military budgets, naval disarmament, conventional disarmament, which consumes some 80 per cent of world expenditure on armaments, and the question of South Africa's nuclear capability.

With regard in particular to South Africa's nuclear capability, my delegation believes that there can no longer be any serious doubt. The Disarmament Commission will therefore be in a position at its next session to adopt in its entirety the document that has been before it for consideration for many years now. The draft resolution submitted on this question by Madagascar on behalf of the African States deserves the support of the international community.

With regard to the question of verification, my delegation has, since the fortieth session, been a sponsor of resolutions 40/152 O and 41/86 Q, entitled "Verification in all its aspects." Those resolutions were initiated by Canada and adopted by consensus. We have also submitted to the Disarmament Commission a working paper, A/CN.10/97, on this issue, which is a major element in the implementation of agreements on arms limitation and disarmament. The important report adopted by the Commission on this subject, under the chairmanship of

(Mr. Djiena, Cameroon)

Ambassador Douglas Roche, should be considered a basic document in future negotiations on the subject.

The report of the Conference on Disarmament was submitted to the Committee on 13 October by Ambassador Pierre Morel. We note with satisfaction that there has been a distinct improvement in the working atmosphere in the Conference. Nevertheless, my delegation would hope that, despite the consensus rule applied in the Conference with regard to both procedural issues and substantive questions, the Conference on Disarmament will be able to rise to the urgent challenges facing it in its dual capacity as a political organ and a multilateral negotiating body.

We are, of course, aware that progress has been made in drawing up a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. We give due weight to the readiness of the two super-Powers with regard to visits to destruction sites for chemical weapons and to inspections of military facilities. However, we must state here once more that for years, notwithstanding the negotiations and other consultations that are taking place, the Conference on Disarmament has not produced any significant result. That situation is a source of deep concern to my delegation, which notes with bitter disappointment the fact that the positions of that body's members have remained unchanged on three essential questions: the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the security of non-nuclear-weapon States and the elaboration of a comprehensive programme of disarmament.

My country will continue to follow with interest the work of the Conference, which, as we have already stated, is the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. We shall continue to make our modest contribution towards strengthening the efficiency of that body, as well as towards increasing its membership pursuant to the recommendations contained in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

(Mr. Djiena, Cameroon)

Lastly, I should like to emphasize, as many previous speakers have before me, that the role of the United Nations in arms control and disarmament is unique and irreplaceable. It is up to Member States to ensure that this will always be the case.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.