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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 6th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. RANA (Nepal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 66 (continued) AND 155

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS

The CHAIRMAN: The first speaker is the representative of Romania who, in his capacity as current President of the Conference on Disarmament, will introduce the report of the Conference.

Mr. CHIRILA (Romania), President of the Conference on Disarmament (interpretation from French): First of all, Sir, permit me as current President of the Conference on Disarmament to congratulate you warmly on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. Your personal and professional qualities will guarantee the success of the Committee's deliberations. Our consultations and exchanges of views during your visit to Geneva last August, accompanied by the Secretary of the First Committee, Mr. Kheradi, reinforce that conviction.

I have asked to speak in my capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament in order to introduce the report of the Conference on its 1990 session.

The year 1990 was marked by basic, unprecedented changes on the international scene. With respect to the Conference on Disarmament, there are further signs of heightened interest by the international community. I need only mention, for example, the sizeable number of government representatives who addressed the Conference or sent messages to it.

The report of the Conference on Disarmament on this year's session was issued as Conference document CD/1039 of 30 August 1990, and has been published as Supplement No. 27 to the Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session (A/45/27).

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The document, which summarizes the debates and negotiations of the 1990 session, is the result of numerous, sustained consultations and important informal work to harmonize positions and reach consensus.

Chapter II of the report concerns the organization of work. The Conference was in session during 1990 from 6 February to 24 April and from 12 June to 24 August. The chapter contains a summary of various questions, notably the agenda and the programme of work for the session, the participation of member States in the proceedings of the Conference, the chairmanships, the participation of non-member States, the expansion of the membership of the Conference, and its improved and effective functioning. I wish to draw attention to the decision adopted by the Conference (CD/1036), contained in paragraph 17, dealing with, among other things, the amendment of certain rules of procedure and a simplification of some aspects of the Conference's work.

I wish in particular to point out that future annual sessions of the Conference will be divided into three parts, rather than the two that have been the rule so far, without affecting their total length - that is, 24 weeks.

The chapter also deals with measures adopted by the Conference relating to the financial situation, as well as communications from non-governmental organizations.

Chapter III concerns the substantive work of the Conference during its 1990 session. This part of the report summarizes the deliberations on various agenda items as well as the positions advanced by groups and delegations on the various questions considered by the Conference.

During the session the Conference established organizational frameworks to deal with each of the agenda items. The most noteworthy fact was the re-establishment, after long informal consultations conducted by Ambassador Donawaki

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of Japan and his predecessor, Ambassador Yamada, of the Ad Hoc Committee to deal with the first agenda item, "Nuclear-test ban". The Committee's re-establishment, after a seven-year interruption of its work, was welcomed with satisfaction as an important step to prepare the ground for subsequent consideration of such an important problem. The Ad Hoc Committee agreed that the substantive work on this agenda item should be continued at the 1991 session of the Conference. We should give our full attention in the future to working for the maintenance and, if possible, the consolidation of the consensus on the establishment and functioning of the Ad Hoc Committee on that first agenda item, "Nuclear-test ban". I hope that the consultations held between sessions, particularly with the contribution of Ambassador Donawaki of Japan, will create the conditions in which that goal may be attained.

The Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic events continued its consideration of the Group's second technical test (GSETT-2). The test was deemed to be of particular importance, and it was recommended that other States participate in it. The participation of individual members of the Group of Experts in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban was appreciated, and it was the general view that the Ad Hoc Committee should continue to meet with experts in the Group.

The convening of special informal meetings on agenda items 2 and 3, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament" and "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters", made possible a more structured debate in the Conference on these problems. The substantive discussion of those questions is reflected in the relevant parts of the annual report.

The most burning issue in the Conference continued to be the negotiations on the conclusion of a multilateral convention on the complete and effective

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prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction. Although, in the general view, the real consensus in the international community had not been translated into a desirable substantial progress in elaborating the draft convention, the quality and quantity of the work put into the matter, as well as the clarification achieved on an increasing number of key problems in the convention, give reason to hope not only that consensus will be consolidated, but that the Conference will soon be able to speed up negotiations with a view to concluding the convention in the near future.

Many delegations believe that a political initiative in the form of a session of the Conference at the foreign-minister level could make a big contribution to that. I wish to emphasize that the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, ably chaired by Ambassador Hyltenius of Sweden, will resume consultations open to all from 26 November to 21 December this year, and will hold a short session from 8 to 18 January next year.

The deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee dealing with agenda item 5, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", are reported in paragraphs 116 to 118. The debate consisted essentially of an exchange of views on the Committee's programme of work. The Committee continued to consider existing proposals and to give preliminary consideration to new proposals and initiatives. It was agreed that substantive work on this agenda item should be continued at the next session of the Conference. In its conclusions, which appear in paragraphs 63 to 65 of its report, the Committee recommended that it be re-established at the beginning of the 1991 session.

In paragraphs 19 and 20 of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-Nuclear-Weapon States Against the Use or

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Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons, dealing with agenda item 6, the Committee recommends that the Conference continue to pursue ways and means to overcome the difficulties encountered in the efforts successfully to conclude the negotiations on this matter. It was also agreed that the Ad Hoc Committee should be re-established at the beginning of the 1991 session.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons, dealing with agenda item 7, whose work is reflected in paragraphs 122 to 126, continued to consider two groups of questions - the prohibition of radiological weapons in the traditional sense and issues relevant to the prohibition of attacks against nuclear facilities. As can be seen from the Committee's conclusions and recommendations, contained in paragraph 10 of its report, the work of the Ad Hoc Committee during its 1990 session contributed further to the clarification of different approaches on radiological weapons, and it recommended that the Conference re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee at the beginning of its 1991 session, with the annexes to its report forming the basis for its future work.

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As is stated in paragraph 133, concerning the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament, it was agreed that the organizational framework to deal with this agenda item will be considered at the beginning of the 1991 session.

As I conclude my presentation of the report of the Conference on Disarmament, I should like to emphasize above all the positive atmosphere that reigned at the 1990 session. The present ongoing dialogue in international relations, particularly with regard to disarmament and the political settlement of many conflicts, contributed to that constructive atmosphere in the Conference as well as to a demonstration of a greater sense of responsibility. Developments in the national policies of various countries and the reappraisal of political, strategic and military concepts can provide an impetus for the Conference's efforts to carry out its task while at the same time strengthening its role as a negotiating body. The decisions adopted at the 1990 session to enhance the functioning and efficacy of the Conference by adjusting its work to conform to the new international facts are a step in that direction. This effort should be intensified in order to improve the functioning of the Conference in all respects, and more committed political will must also be shown.

The increased interest in the work of the Conference is reflected in the growing number of States not members of the Conference - 39 - that participated in its work, the larger participation of statesmen in plenary meetings, the many messages addressed to the Conference by Governments, and the important proposals submitted under various agenda items. All these factors support the view that the Conference's efforts will lead to more meaningful progress in the future.

Of course, the annual report of the Conference that I have just presented is a reflection of the collective effort of the members of the Conference to express

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their determination to overcome differing views and to ensure movement towards increased agreement not only on the way disarmament is perceived but also on the need for a common co-operative effort in the specific sphere of multilateral disarmament negotiations.

I should like to express again my thanks to all the members of the Conference, to the Chairmen of the ad hoc committees and to the Secretariat as a whole, very competently led by the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Komatina. Their co-operation was very valuable to me in carrying out my task - as always, a delicate one - of preparing the annual report.

In conclusion, I express the hope that the experience we have gained and the positive results we have achieved at our session this year, as well as the debates and recommendations of the General Assembly, will provide the bases for more meaningful progress in future work of the Conference on Disarmament, in keeping with the times and the demands of international life.

Mr. DONOWAKI (Japan): Mr. Chairman, my delegation wishes to join others in extending to you, Sir, sincere congratulations on your election as Chairman of this important Committee. My delegation is convinced that, under your able guidance and with your skill, the Committee will be able to fulfil its task successfully. We wish to extend our congratulations also to the other officers of the Committee on their election.

During the course of the year since we met at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly we have witnessed enormous changes in the international situation, changes that are taking place at bewildering speed. We are now entering a crucial era of transition as we search for new world order. The cold war between the East and the West is becoming a thing of the past. The process of dialogue and

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co-operation instead of confrontation that began in Europe has expanded to other regions as well and now shows signs of spreading world-wide. However, in spite of such a bright prospect, the collapse of peace in the Gulf region following the unforgivable Iraqi invasion of Kuwait amply demonstrates that the post-cold-war era on the eve of the twenty-first century is replete with dangers and uncertainties.

Of ever greater urgency today is the question of how to structure, maintain and strengthen global arrangements against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as of missiles and other delivery vehicles for such weapons. It is for this reason that arms control and disarmament have become the concern not only of the military super-Powers or of the Eastern and Western military blocs, but of all regions and all nations.

In this connection, Japan wholeheartedly welcomes the recent remarkable achievements in the field of arms control and disarmament between the United States and the Soviet Union as well as in Europe - such as the smooth implementation of the Treaty on the elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles (INF Treaty), the progress in the strategic arms reduction talks (START), the signing of the United States-Soviet agreement on the destruction and non-production of chemical weapons, the progress in the negotiations on conventional armed forces in Europe and on confidence- and security-building measures, and so forth. Japan strongly hopes that these achievements will have a positive influence on the ongoing multilateral talks and negotiations on arms control and disarmament being pursued in other international forums such as the Conference on Disarmament.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons provides a very important legal framework in ensuring the compatibility of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons with the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and, consequently, in

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securing the safety of the world. Japan believes that each State party to the Treaty should faithfully abide by the obligations of the Treaty in all of its three aspects - namely, non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The fourth Review Conference of the parties to the Treaty achieved something significant by carrying out in-depth deliberations in all those three areas. In this sense, the review was more thoroughgoing than any of those carried out at the three previous Review Conferences, although, regrettably, the final declaration of the Conference was not adopted by consensus, despite the tireless efforts of delegations attending the Conference during the course of meetings night after night.

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In the second main committee of the Conference, which dealt with concrete measures for non-proliferation, the need for the further strengthening of the non-proliferation régime was commonly recognized and various concrete and constructive proposals were made both in the area of the control of exports of nuclear materials and equipment and in the area of the safeguards régime. Among them, the unqualified obligation of States parties for the conclusion and the entering into force of an NPT-type safeguards agreement has been confirmed. A consensus has been reached to require the application of full-scope safeguards as a necessary condition for the transfer of nuclear materials and equipment to non-nuclear-weapon States.

In the third main committee, which dealt with the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, it was emphasized that measures should be taken to give preferential treatment to the developing States parties to the Treaty. Also, the strong interest of the international community in the safety of nuclear installations was shown.

Furthermore, in the first main committee, which dealt with nuclear disarmament, a broad, common understanding was reached with respect to the question of non-proliferation under articles I and II of the Treaty. Meaningful progress was also achieved in the discussion of the question of the security assurances to be offered to non-nuclear-weapon States.

As a whole it may well be concluded that the Fourth Review Conference succeeded in preparing a useful basis for the 1995 Treaty extension conference. The participation for the first time, as observers, of the People's Republic of China and France was another noteworthy event from the viewpoint of enhancing the universality of the Treaty. Naturally, Japan takes the view that the nuclear-non-proliferation Treaty should be extended well beyond 1995 and Japan will spare no effort in strengthening the NPT régime.

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In view of the sincere desire of the Japanese people that a nuclear tragedy should never take place again, Japan has over the years been exerting considerable efforts to ensure the achievement of a nuclear test-ban. Therefore, Japan cannot but express its deep regret that underground testing of nuclear explosions is carried out every year.

A comprehensive test-ban is an important issue in the field of nuclear disarmament. Recognizing that the question of a comprehensive test-ban is intricately interwoven with the very basis of the national security of States, Japan believes it important to make steady, step-by-step progress toward the achievement of such a test-ban as part of an effective process of nuclear disarmament.

It is from this viewpoint that Japan welcomes in particular the re-establishment by the Conference on Disarmament this year of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban in order to resume substantive work on this agenda item after a lapse of seven years. Also in this connection Japan highly appreciates the flexibility demonstrated on this question by the various States concerned.

It is Japan's earnest hope that the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban will be re-established at the beginning of the 1991 session of the Conference on Disarmament under the same mandate as it has had this year, in order to continue substantive work on a nuclear test-ban. Japan for its part is determined to continue to make positive contributions to the work. Furthermore, Japan strongly hopes that all the nuclear weapon States will participate in the work of the Committee.

The establishment of a global system for detecting seismic events will be indispensable to the achievement of a comprehensive test-ban. In this regard Japan highly appreciates the useful work being undertaken by the Group of Scientific

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Experts within the Conference on Disarmament and urges as many States as possible to participate in the Group's second large-scale technical test.

As for the partial test-ban Treaty Amendment Conference, to be held in New York in January next year, Japan regards this Conference as providing another opportunity to discuss various ways to achieve a comprehensive test-ban. In view of the widely held interest in this question - evidenced at the latest NPT Review Conference - Japan hopes that the discussion at the coming Amendment Conference will turn out to be as constructive as possible by way of co-operation and mutual understanding between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. It is from this viewpoint that Japan will participate in the Conference. At the same time, Japan wishes to reiterate that the most realistic way to arrive at the goal of a comprehensive test-ban is through a step-by-step approach to the question in the Conference on Disarmament, which is the only multilateral negotiating body on questions of arms control and disarmament.

Furthermore, Japan welcomes the signature of verification Protocols to the United States-Soviet threshold test-ban Treaty and peaceful nuclear explosions Treaty and the subsequent ratification of the Treaties and Protocols. Japan is eagerly waiting for the United States and the Soviet Union to proceed - as soon as possible - to the next intermediate stage of negotiations in accordance with the full-scale and stage-by-stage approach agreed upon by all countries in September 1987.

In view of the growing concern about the use and proliferation of chemical weapons, the early conclusion of a verifiable and universally adhered-to convention on the comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons has become a matter of great importance and urgency. As a major concrete step towards this goal, in June this year the United States and the Soviet Union concluded a bilateral treaty by which

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the two nations undertook to destroy most of their chemical weapons and to cease their production. Japan sincerely welcomes this development.

In the wake of last year's January Paris Conference and September Canberra Government and Industry Conference on the prohibition of chemical weapons, expectations were high that substantial progress would be made in the negotiations on the convention in the Conference on Disarmament. Unfortunately, however, the negotiation has been stalled on several crucial questions, such as that relating to verification. As is often the case the final stage is the hardest negotiators have to face. It is at this stage that differences in positions which have not been fully addressed come to the surface. It is at this stage also that strong political will on the part of States parties to the negotiations becomes indispensable in order to achieve a breakthrough.

The negotiations for the conclusion of the chemical-weapons convention are unique in that their aim is to conclude a truly epoch-making, multilateral disarmament convention with an unprecedentedly wide scope. In the course of the negotiations we are required to take into account all the other existing arms-control and disarmament treaties and conventions, while at the same time we ought to make headway in surpassing all of them.

One of the most significant aspects which characterizes these negotiations is the question of a verification régime as envisaged in the convention. It would naturally be too much to expect to establish a 100-per-cent-foolproof verification mechanism. Therefore, what is important today is to produce as soon as possible a draft convention that contains a verification mechanism which is both effective and reasonably reliable, taking into account the cost-benefit aspect of such a mechanism as well as the experiences of national trial inspections conducted by a number of States.

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Japan wishes to take this opportunity to reaffirm that it neither possesses nor intends to possess any chemical weapons and to announce its intention to become - together with other States - one of the original signatory States to the convention upon the successful conclusion of the negotiation.

The United Nations is the most important universal organization of the family of nations in today's world and the First Committee of the General Assembly continues to play its important role as a forum where views representing the sincere aspiration of all nations to a world free of armaments are brought together and frankly debated.

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This year the Conference on Disarmament came to agree upon certain specific measures to improve and enhance its functioning. In addition, the United Nations Disarmament Commission adopted a set of important rationalization measures. Japan hopes that the First Committee, for its part, will also endeavour, as it did last year, to reduce the number of draft resolutions to be adopted. With due regard to the changing international situation, every effort should be made to avoid the adoption of too many draft resolutions, to merge similar draft resolutions and to adopt them by consensus whenever possible. In this way, the messages coming out from this Committee, to be conveyed to the international community, will become clearer in their meanings and will no doubt gain greater importance.

There is also another important area of United Nations activities related to disarmament. This year, under the sponsorship of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, a regional meeting on Confidence Building Measures in the Asia-Pacific region was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, and a conference entitled "New Trends in Science and Technology: Implications for International Peace and Stability" was held in Sendai, Japan. Both of them were extremely successful in promoting international understanding of disarmament problems through the participation of experts from different professions and through the exchange of views from a broad interdisciplinary perspective. Japan intends to continue to contribute to such United Nations activities in co-operation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs. Yet another example of United Nations activities is the report on the question of verification submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly. Japan intends to give serious consideration to the recommendations contained in that report. Moreover, Japan hopes that the ongoing study by a group of experts on the question of the transfer of conventional weapons will produce useful conclusions.

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There is no doubt about the very important role arms control and disarmament can play for the peace and stability of the world. At the same time, in the real world, we have to realize that there is no magic wand that can bring about an instant Utopia. Rather, we have to tackle each of the issues patiently and realistically, while at the same time taking into account carefully the security requirements of nations. Only through such an approach will we be able to make progress towards the achievement of a workable and verifiable system of arms control and disarmament.

In the years since the Second World War, Japan has been guided, under its Peace Constitution, by the solemn resolve of its people not to become again a military Power menacing its neighbours, but rather to contribute to the stability of the world through peaceful means. Thus, Japan has been abiding by its three non-nuclear principles and enforcing strict arms export restrictions. It is from this same viewpoint that new draft legislation, entitled the "United Nations Peace Co-operation Law", is under consideration in the Diet. As was stated by Mr. Nakayama, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, in his statement to the General Assembly on 25 September, the aim of the legislation is to enable Japan to assume greater responsibilities regarding United Nations activities for preserving international peace and security, and to participate in international efforts in support of those activities.

I should like to conclude my statement by reiterating that Japan will continue to work together with all other States and, in particular, with the United Nations, as the most important organization of the family of nations, for the cause of international peace and security.

Mr. HOU Zhitong (China) (interpretation from Chinese): At the outset, please allow me to express, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, warm

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congratulations to you - a prominent representative from China's friendly neighbouring country - on your election as Chairman of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its current session. I am convinced that with your rich experience and outstanding diplomatic ability you will fulfil your noble mission with efficiency. I also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau upon their election. I can assure you that, under your chairmanship, the Chinese delegation will co-operate closely with the Bureau and with other delegations. Meanwhile, I would like to take this opportunity to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Taylhardat, for his remarkable contributions.

This year marks the beginning of the 1990s and the Third Disarmament Decade. Looking back on the 1980s, the world witnessed an extraordinary historical period. Thanks to the joint efforts of the people of all countries, some progress was made in the course of the Second Disarmament Decade, the force for disarmament and peace has been strengthened and military confrontation reduced. At present, the world is undergoing profound changes. Germany has achieved its unification, regional co-operation has increased and the trend towards multipolarization is developing more markedly. However, in the present-day world, many political, economic, national and other contradictions still exist and power politics are yet to be eliminated from the historical arena. In some regions, tense and complex situations have emerged. The world is at a juncture where the old world pattern is being replaced by a new one. The establishment of a new international political order on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence has become the demand of our time.

In recent years, new progress has also been achieved in the field of disarmament. The United States and the Soviet Union have reached agreement in principle on the partial reduction of strategic nuclear weapons, and have agreed to

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stop producing and to start reducing their chemical weapons. Negotiations on the reduction of conventional forces in Europe are expected to make headway. In the multilateral domain, the international community has also made a number of major efforts and has achieved a number of encouraging results: negotiations by the Conference on Disarmament on a convention on the general prohibition and thorough destruction of chemical weapons are continuing in depth; the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban has been re-established after a suspension of seven years; the rationalization of the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission has achieved initial results and the Commission reached consensus on some questions which had remained unsolved for many years; and the numerous non-aligned and neutral States have made unswerving efforts and put forward many constructive suggestions and proposals in the First Committee and other multilateral agencies and meetings with a view to putting an end to the arms race and to promoting disarmament. The Chinese delegation welcomes these developments.

Meanwhile, we cannot but note that the world is still far from tranquil and the cause of world turbulence has yet to be removed. Given the ongoing arms race and arduous disarmament task, the international community needs to make more vigorous efforts. Even the super-Powers themselves have to admit that their nuclear and conventional arsenals, which are the largest in the world, are capable of destroying the world several times over. At the same time, multilateral disarmament, for well-known reasons, has not proceeded as expected, many just aspirations and reasonable demands of the international community have not received due attention and the important role of multilateral disarmament agencies has often been overlooked or played down. The process of disarmament is still being obstructed by the tendency to shift disarmament responsibilities and to alter disarmament targets.

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China has always pursued an independent foreign policy of peace and has made unswerving efforts to maintain world peace and promote the development of all countries. China has consistently opposed the arms race, stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear, space, chemical and biological weapons and for a drastic reduction of conventional weapons. China has adopted an active and constructive attitude on questions of arms control and disarmament and taken on its own initiative a series of practical actions in disarmament.

The Chinese Government has always attached great importance to questions of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war and has never evaded its responsibilities. China declared solemnly on the very first day that it came into possession of nuclear weapons that at no time and under no circumstances would China be the first to use nuclear weapons. China has undertaken not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-free zones. At the Fourth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held not long ago, China once again reiterated this commitment.

It is the consistent view of the Chinese Government that, pending the realization of the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, all nuclear-weapon States should undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstances, and undertake unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-free zones. Therefore China is in favour of the conclusion of an international agreement on the non-first use of nuclear weapons and the elaboration of an international legal instrument against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons vis-à-vis the non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-free zones. This position was reiterated by Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen in his recent statement at the current session of the General

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Assembly. We hope that the aforementioned proposals made by China will receive a positive response from all the other nuclear-weapon States.

Undoubtedly, nuclear disarmament remains at the top of the disarmament agenda. The Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade, a document worked out by the Disarmament Commission this year, emphasizes that in the nuclear field we must continue urgently to seek early reductions in, and the eventual elimination of, nuclear weapons. The key to realizing this objective lies in the hands of the super-Powers which possess the largest nuclear arsenals. They must discharge in real earnest their special responsibilities by taking the lead to halt the testing, production and development of nuclear weapons and drastically reduce at an early date all types of nuclear weapons deployed at home or abroad. This will create conditions for convening a broadly representative international conference on nuclear disarmament with the participation of all nuclear-weapon States. Resolution 44/116 D on the question of nuclear disarmament, which was adopted, again by consensus, by the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session, embodies the common aspirations and demands of the international community in this regard. Such aspirations and demands will, we hope, be reaffirmed by the Assembly this year. In this connection China would welcome the accelerated negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union and the conclusion of a positive agreement. We also believe that world peace is indivisible, that the security of all countries and regions are of equal importance. Therefore, all bilateral and multilateral agreements on arms control and disarmament should contribute to the maintenance of the peace and security of the whole world and should not jeopardize the security interests of other countries and regions. The troops thus reduced should be demobilized and the armaments thus cut should be destroyed without being transferred to or redeployed in other regions. Such a step will be welcomed by the peoples of the world.

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The recently held Fourth NPT Review Conference was an important conference convened against the backdrop of dramatic changes on the international scene. It reflects the legitimate desire of the vast number of non-nuclear-weapon States for a comprehensive ban on nuclear weapons and for a nuclear-free world. The Chinese Government sent a delegation to the Conference as an observer, a move that reflects our positive approach to the question of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear-weapon proliferation and indicates the importance China attaches to the Review Conference.

For the purpose of safeguarding world peace, security and stability, the Chinese Government follows a consistent policy not to advocate, encourage or engage in nuclear-weapon proliferation and not to help other countries develop nuclear weapons. On international co-operation in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, our Government has adopted an active, prudent and responsible approach. As a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), China faithfully abides by the statutes of the Agency. In its nuclear exports, China makes it a requirement that the importing State accept IAEA safeguards, and we have given assurances that China's nuclear imports are for peaceful purposes. China and the IAEA have signed an agreement according to which China voluntarily places some of its nuclear facilities under the Agency's safeguards. By so doing China has contributed its share to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Moreover, we are of the view that the prevention of nuclear proliferation itself is not the ultimate goal but a step in the process of effecting a complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. If one were to impose, under the excuse of preventing nuclear proliferation, all kinds of limits on the legitimate activities of non-nuclear countries in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy while evading his own responsibility for nuclear disarmament, such practice would

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naturally arouse the resentment of the non-nuclear countries at large and undermine the non-nuclear proliferation régime.

China understands the desire of the numerous non-nuclear-weapon States for a nuclear-test ban at an early date, and we stand for the objective of a total nuclear-test ban in the context of complete nuclear disarmament. China took an active part in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban, which was re-established by the Conference on Disarmament in 1990.

China has all along supported the establishment of nuclear-free zones and zones of peace by the countries concerned in various regions on the basis of their own accord through negotiations. We maintain that all nuclear-weapon States should respect the status of nuclear-free zones and undertake corresponding obligations as this represents an effective measure that contributes to the security and stability of all regions and promotes nuclear disarmament. Based on this principled stand, China signed and ratified the relevant protocols under the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the South Pacific Nuclear-Free-Zone Treaty.

China has always been of the view that it is also imperative that the drastic reduction in conventional armaments be carried out along with vigorous efforts to promote nuclear disarmament. As is rightly pointed out in the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade, we must strive for cuts in weapons and troops throughout the world, in particular in areas with the highest concentration of armaments such as Europe. For this, the big Powers possessing the largest and most sophisticated conventional arsenals bear a special responsibility. In this connection we welcome the positive momentum and progress in the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union and in the negotiations on conventional armed forces in Europe (CFE) talks, and we hope that these negotiations will result in early agreements on a drastic reduction of conventional

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armaments, for this will not only serve the interests of stability and security in Europe but also help enhance the security of all countries, thus having a positive impact on conventional disarmament in other regions. In order to safeguard international peace, security and stability, all States should refrain from seeking armaments exceeding their defence requirements and no country must in any way be engaged in armed aggression or intervention against other countries. While keeping the necessary defence capabilities, it is important for all countries to promote conventional disarmament through practical action.

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The negotiations on a convention on the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of chemical weapons are proceeding in depth. They have become a focal point in the work of the Conference on Disarmament, attracting widespread attention within the international community. Thanks to the active participation and concerted efforts of Member States and an increasing number of non-members, the negotiations have covered a lot of ground. However, some serious differences and difficulties still remain.

It is widely believed that whether and when a breakthrough can be made hinges to a great extent on whether the countries with colossal chemical arsenals command enough political will to discharge their special responsibility in practical terms. The United States and the Soviet Union have now committed themselves to halt the production of chemical weapons and gradually to reduce their chemical arsenals. That is a welcome step. At the same time, the international community demands their unconditional assurances on the non-use of chemical weapons and the unconditional, early and total destruction of all their existing chemical arsenals and production facilities. It should be emphatically pointed out that the complete prohibition and total destruction of chemical weapons is the fundamental objective of the convention and the only basis for negotiations. This is the key to the success of the negotiations.

As a non-chemical-weapon State and as a victim of chemical weapons in the past, China has always stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of chemical weapons and for an early realization of a world free from chemical weapons. We have actively participated in negotiations on the convention in the Conference on Disarmament and are keen to see an early conclusion of an authoritative, universal and effective international convention that can stand the test of time. With this in mind, we are in favour of the establishment under the

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convention of an effective, rational and viable verification régime, including challenge inspection, with a view to preventing both violations of the convention and abuses of verification. In this regard it is necessary to give full play to the leading role of the convention's organization. Attention should also be given and solutions found to such important issues as assistance, undiminished security and old chemical weapons.

Peace and development are the aspirations and goals shared by all people in the world, and the question of disarmament has a direct impact on world peace and on the security of all countries. That is why we have always held that all countries in the world - big or small, strong or weak - should have an equal right to participate in the deliberation, negotiation and resolution of disarmament issues. The question of disarmament should not be monopolized by a few big Powers without the participation of other States. The legitimate interests and just demands of all countries should be fully respected. While bilateral disarmament efforts are necessary in their own right, they cannot replace multilateral disarmament efforts of a regional or global nature. The important role of multilateral disarmament machinery should be brought into play to a greater degree. To that end the rationalization of the work of the Disarmament Commission has this year been crowned with initial results. In his report on the work of the Organization the Secretary-General commended the reform and stated:

"The time is ripe to consider streamlining the work of other disarmament bodies as well. This is necessary for enabling the Organization to cope with issues requiring a concerted international effort." (A/45/1, p. 20)

We are in favour of any proposal that helps enhance the status and role of the multilateral disarmament machinery.

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The people of the world still face a long, uphill path in working for the maintenance of peace and for disarmament. Our world is one of new challenges and at the same time of promising opportunities. At this session of the General Assembly the Chinese delegation will take part in the work of the First Committee with a positive and pragmatic approach and a constructive attitude of co-operation. This year we will once again submit draft resolutions on nuclear and conventional disarmament issues respectively. Both issues are important objectives of the Third Disarmament Decade. We wish to enjoy the continued co-operation and support of all delegations. The Chinese delegation will also seriously study and actively support other draft resolutions, suggestions and ideas advanced by various parties that are conducive to peace, security and disarmament. We are ready to join other delegations in contributing to the success of the work of the First Committee at this session of the General Assembly and to progress in disarmament.

Mr. NAIMI-ARFA (Islamic Republic of Iran): I should like at the outset to express my delegation's great pleasure at seeing you, Mr. Chairman, presiding over the work of the First Committee. I am confident that under your leadership and with your diplomatic skills the Committee will achieve concrete results with respect to the mandate entrusted to it. May I also to join previous speakers in extending our warmest congratulations to the other officers of the Committee. I should also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the senior advisers and to the Secretary of the First Committee.

The profound understanding of the concept of universal disarmament continues to take on new dimensions. In this context the broad international partnership that exists signifies that there is now a very favourable atmosphere for the taking of effective and all-inclusive measures. Control of the arms race should be a principal objective and be given top priority in international endeavours aimed

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at disarmament. We note with a sense of satisfaction that the remarkable developments in East-West relations, the tumultuous changes in Europe, particularly the historic event of the reunification of Germany, the progress in negotiations on conventional disarmament and the current promising negotiations within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe have all provided an auspicious opportunity for the realization of mankind's aspirations to eliminate the stockpile of nuclear armaments and other weapons of mass destruction as well.

Today, the fundamental changes in military doctrines and the forging of such new ideas as, inter alia, the doctrine of collective security are being raised and discussed in the international arena. In this connection one cannot over-stress the fact that other doctrines, such as the deterrence doctrine, have simply bolstered the logic of acquiring more advanced and sophisticated weapons. We firmly believe that the insistence of most of the major nuclear Powers on pursuing the step-by-step approach in the process of bilateral or multilateral arms control negotiations is neither consistent with the desires of peace-loving nations nor likely to prevent the qualitative improvement of nuclear and chemical weapons. That erroneous attitude, which has prevented international disarmament efforts from leading to the expected genuine and concrete results, may cause the aforementioned opportunity to slip away and, consequently, have grave and detrimental consequences that can endanger international peace and security.

Contrary to the prevailing climate of optimism that prevails in various forums and circles at the entry by the international community into a new era of co-operation and détente, conflicts and armed struggles, especially in the Middle East, where my country is located, are creating serious uncertainties in this

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connection. The Iraqi aggression against and occupation of Kuwait, leading to a vast military build-up and the presence of foreign forces, have escalated the already tense situation in the Persian Gulf area and will make the process of the proliferation, acquisition and modernization of weapons all the more probable.

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It is to be noted that poverty-stricken economies, conditions of insecurity, racism and disrespect for the rights of nations, together with hegemonic policies of the big Powers, are all factors that may cause new wars to break out. Perhaps in such an atmosphere to talk of disarmament without paying due attention to the deep roots of trends towards militarism will not contribute to finding an overall and comprehensive solution to this problem. Yet, in spite of this daunting outlook, we are not disappointed at international efforts for disarmament. In fact, although efforts in past decades have not been marked by remarkable success in terms of eliminating war and aggression, it is our sincere hope that by taking resolute decisions on disarmament and adopting effective measures to eliminate the most inhuman weapons, we shall be in a position to build a secure world free from aggression and war.

The scourge of nuclear weapons, whose use in the past led to the plight and suffering of thousands of human beings, remains a serious threat to the very existence of mankind. The most significant legal instrument adopted so far at the international level to control and check the nuclear-arms race is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Even though this Treaty, as a political decision and as a legal commitment, is valid for a large number of nations, and even though, thanks to it, the proliferation and development of nuclear arms have been somewhat controlled, its failure to deal with the issue of the qualitative growth of the nuclear-arms race is an alarming fact for our world today and its exclusion of those countries with a potential for producing nuclear arms raises serious doubts in certain countries as regards its viability.

The discriminatory implementation of the NPT has allowed certain countries, particularly the Zionist entity and South Africa, which are themselves elements of insecurity and instability in the Middle East and southern Africa, to embark on the

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development of nuclear weapons free from the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

It was against that background - only some of whose elements I have highlighted here - that the Fourth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons failed to reach a consensus on a final document of the Conference.

My country, all of whose activities have been placed under the IAEA safeguards system, firmly believes that it is only by placing the nuclear facilities of those countries capable of developing nuclear weapons under the IAEA verification system that the way will be paved for preserving the NPT, and diminishing and eventually eliminating the increased incentives for acquiring nuclear weapons.

I reiterate that such measures are specially important in crisis areas like the Middle East. It has been exactly in accordance with this policy that my country, which proposed to the General Assembly in 1974 the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, has during the course of many years been firmly determined and fully prepared to work to that end. In this context, we look forward to the consideration of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/45/435, concerning the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We are confident that the efforts of expert consultants appointed by the Secretary-General to identify effective and verifiable measures to facilitate the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East - measures described contained in the aforementioned document - would constitute a sound basis for an in-depth and comprehensive consideration of the issue in the future.

Another significant issue within the framework of nuclear disarmament deals with security guarantees to be given to non-nuclear countries by nuclear-weapon States. Such guarantees should include the non-use of nuclear weapons against

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those countries. Even though this subject has been discussed at the Conference on Disarmament for many years, no concrete results have so far been registered.

Naturally, unilateral security guarantees envisaged by Security Council resolutions cannot be sufficient. It is obvious that such guarantees will make an important contribution to the elimination of the incentive for acquiring nuclear weapons. But for the Treaty to be permanently preserved and faithfully observed, it is essential to work for the elimination of its shortcomings.

The NPT's neglect of the issue of the qualitative growth and expansion of the nuclear⁶-arms race constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security. It is for this reason that a nuclear test-ban has found its special place among disarmament issues. Unfortunately, despite many efforts, nuclear tests continue, unabated, and the international community has so far been unable to resolve this issue within the framework of a series of practical measures. We are pleased, of course, with the decision of the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban and to define its mandate, but we believe that more immediate steps should be taken to overcome the time-consuming efforts involved in achieving a nuclear test-ban.

The partial test-ban Treaty was in itself an effective and useful measure. It imposed verification on nuclear tests, especially in outer space and underwater, and eventually averted the major dangers to mankind; but the fact that it did not include underground tests, which constitute the larger part of nuclear testing, means that mankind must still face this danger.

In this context, the collective endeavours of the parties to this Treaty to convene a conference to amend the Treaty and transform it into a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty is worthy of attention and appreciation. The Islamic Republic of Iran hopes that the conference, which is to convene in New York in January 1991 in accordance with the relevant resolution of the General Assembly,

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will be able to undertake all necessary measures for the adoption of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. The co-operation and collaboration of all nuclear Powers is essential if these international efforts are to have any concrete effect. But these efforts and their success should not be conditioned on the consent of all nuclear countries. The expansion of international co-operation and of co-ordinated measures that will lead to, among other things, an increased awakening and awareness of world public opinion will clear the way for more resolute and comprehensive measures. Therefore, one can have considerable hope that there will at least be a serious incentive for this amendment conference to ensure a deeper understanding of the threats and dangers of nuclear testing and to lay the necessary groundwork to prohibit it.

The danger that chemical weapons pose for international peace and security is well known. In light of the experience of the last 10 years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has actively and diligently pursued the ideal of chemical disarmament. The bitter experience of the use of chemical weapons in recent years has caused deep concern within the international community. This concern is reflected in the international conferences and forums convened to study this subject and requires even greater efforts than those initiated in the past in international organizations to ensure the elimination of the use of chemical weapons. Thus, the determination of States to eradicate this danger has given rise to a new phase. Negotiations on chemical-weapon disarmament are now continuing in the Conference on Disarmament, in whose deliberations the Islamic Republic of Iran participates actively. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the convention on chemical weapons should be well defined and marked by provisions for strong enforcement machinery, in order to preclude any possibility of political misuse. The best means for making the convention universal are guarantees that it will lay the necessary groundwork for the elimination of chemical weapons, thus ensuring the

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security of countries that do not possess such weapons, and that the major Powers will not insist on maintaining certain quantities of their chemical weapons as a security stock, in contradiction with the concept of the total elimination of chemical weapons.

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The convention should have built-in provisions to block self-serving, political manoeuvres. It should be possible to enforce verification systems in the absence of political manipulation, especially if the convention has been violated. Punishments and assistance programmes should be automatic; furthermore, applying punishment or assistance measures should not only be deterrents to the use of chemical weapons, they should also prevent any party violating the convention from achieving its goals.

Another point that merits close attention is that the provisions of a convention should not impede technological advancement on the part of Member States in the chemical field. Indeed, as a quid pro quo for committing themselves to abiding by the convention, Member States should be granted aid in the field of industrial chemistry.

It is our sincere hope that a chemical weapons convention, if it is strong enough and provides sufficient guarantees, will create a solid enough political will on the part of the countries of the world to lead to the total elimination of this category of weapons of mass destruction. We should not need to point out that, pending the conclusion of such a convention, all States must abide by their international commitments under the 1925 Geneva Protocol: the international community should adopt immediate and effective measures to prevent any violations.

There has been no progress of note in naval disarmament. Rather, we are witnessing a constant expansion of the arms race at sea. Nuclear warships and submarines are potential sources of major dangers: in this respect, the security of coastal States demands special attention.

The Persian Gulf, as one of the most strategic international waterways, is important for many countries, and the security of coastal States and the prevention of military confrontation in this vitally important region deserve full

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attention. The Islamic Republic of Iran, with the longest coastline on the Persian Gulf, calls for international forums to give the issue of naval disarmament extensive consideration; this should include more careful attention by the Disarmament Commission. Naturally, when waterways adjacent to the territorial waters of coastal States are freely used by foreign warships, those States feel justifiably insecure.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, a country fully aware of its vital and sensitive role in the Middle East, has made public its support for disarmament and stands ready to work more energetically towards this end. I hope that with greater efforts on the part of the international community and given the necessary groundwork for advancing the cause of disarmament, mankind will be able to witness a world free of anxieties concerning the threat or use of offensive destructive weapons, and a world in which peace and amity will prevail in the relations between States.

Mr. NYAKYI (United Republic of Tanzania): Let me, at the outset, say how pleased I am to see you preside over the work of our Committee. Your election is a recognition of your outstanding diplomatic skills and your wide-ranging experience in the affairs of the United Nations. On behalf of my delegation, I extend to you our warmest congratulations. My felicitations go also to the other officers of the Committee.

Since our last session, the international community has witnessed dramatic and significant changes in the world political arena - significant, not because we have as a result of them come any closer to a peaceful world, but because these changes bring new challenges and opportunities. With the dawning of the 1990s has come the end of the cold war and the inception of a new era of co-operation and understanding between nations which in the past were ideologically opposed.

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Ideological confrontation between East and West is now a thing of the past. The dismantling of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent reunification of Germany are major landmarks in the improving relations between East and West.

In the field of disarmament, the thawing of relations between the two super-Powers over the past year has inspired heightened expectations for a breakthrough in the efforts to reverse the arms race. The momentum generated by the signing of the INF Treaty has slowed down, but it can still be felt: super-Power summits have now become regular phenomena. The signing - at the Washington summit in June this year - of the bilateral agreement on the destruction of the super-Powers' chemical weapons attests to the new spirit of the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union as they assume their responsibility to rid the world of their deadly weapons.

Nevertheless, it is regrettable that the summit left several matters hanging in the balance, pre-eminent among which is the urgent need to agree on a reduction in strategic forces. Even though negotiations were pointing to a 30 per cent reduction, in the end agreement eluded the two leaders.

The agreements so far concluded by the two super-Powers constitute only partial measures, which have served only to consolidate their monopoly of lethal weapons. Their agreements, above all, ensure that their military might is not compromised in any way, and so, welcome as they are, they do not make our world any safer to live in. The dread of the horrible consequences of a global war with the current level of world armaments has not been diminished by the rapprochement between the super-Powers. If the current crisis in the Gulf has demonstrated anything, it is that the risk of unleashing another world war is no longer a hypothetical one. The Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the

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Organization, submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, rightly surmises that

"... to claim that we have navigated the rough waters and are now sheltered from the unexpected would be naive and dangerous ... many challenges have to be squarely addressed before the present positive trend can be deemed irreversible and indeed world wide". (A/45/L, p. 18)

For the security of nations to endure, due regard should be given to the emerging political trends that have rendered certain defence doctrines irrelevant. I cannot do better than to quote from the statement by the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, at this current session of the General Assembly, in which he said:

"Even in the past the doctrines of the "balance of terror" and "nuclear deterrence" were questionable means of maintaining the security of the world. In the new conditions of today they have simply become irrelevant."

(A/45/PV.6, p. 48)

It is therefore a fallacy and an illusion that peace can be achieved through a strategic balance of deadly weapons, particularly nuclear weapons.

We are encouraged by the progress made in Vienna on the negotiations within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe on the reduction of conventional forces in Europe. We believe that the treaty will, when signed, go a long way towards drastically reducing conventional forces in Europe, the region with the highest concentration of armaments.

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It is paradoxical that, despite their professed commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the major nuclear Powers have significantly halted neither the vertical nor the horizontal proliferation of these weapons. While some of the nuclear Powers have sheltered their ambitions under the umbrella of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the proliferation of nuclear weapons has continued, with the qualitative and quantitative improvement of their arsenals. Their reluctance to enter into serious negotiations for a comprehensive test ban, among other things, must cast doubt on their commitment to observe the non-proliferation régime. Reports that the Fourth Review Conference foundered on the question of a comprehensive test ban are a matter of serious regret to my delegation.

An agreement to halt nuclear testing is the surest way to check the escalation of the arms race, to sustain non-proliferation and to avert the risk of a nuclear war. International security cannot be guaranteed by merely reducing the number of those who control those arms. It is unrealistic to ask others to rely for their security on the good faith and whims of the big Powers - which is what the major nuclear-weapon States seem to suggest. If the Non-Proliferation Treaty is to endure, the nuclear-weapon States, particularly those that are parties to the NPT, must abide by their Treaty obligations to halt and reverse the nuclear-arms race.

Tanzania's support for, and its participation in, all initiatives that seek to achieve a total ban on all nuclear tests have been motivated by its strong conviction that the nuclear-arms race cannot be halted or reversed without a comprehensive test ban. For the same reason, we look forward to participating actively in the forthcoming Partial Test Ban Treaty Amendment Conference, to which Tanzania has pledged its full support.

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The acquisition of nuclear weapons by any State is bad enough because it adds to the threat of a nuclear war; the acquisition of a nuclear-weapons capability by the South African racist régime is a frightening nightmare. While it has not been disputed by any party that South Africa has the capability to manufacture nuclear weapons, efforts to deter this régime from expanding its nuclear-weapons programme have, unfortunately, been thwarted by those collaborating with the régime. Instead of applying pressure on countries that present no nuclear threat - countries that have no nuclear capability and no ambitions to accede to the NPT - the major nuclear-weapon Powers should be confronting South Africa, which is the real threat to peace and security in the region. I cannot resist the temptation to quote one scholar, who recently described the Non-Proliferation Treaty in the following terms:

"It works best where it is needed least, and it does not work at all where it is needed most."

We welcome the positive outcome of the discussion, by the Disarmament Commission at its 1990 session, on the question of South Africa's nuclear capability. It may be recalled that a solution had eluded the Commission for over a decade. It is our hope that the recommendations of the Disarmament Commission will positively influence our present debate.

We also look forward to the Secretary-General's report on South Africa's nuclear-ballistic-missile capability - a report that the General Assembly requested in resolution 44/113 B.

As in the past, the report of the Conference on Disarmament is a disappointment to many of us. The report raises some hope of progress with regard to the consideration of some of the priority items on the agenda of the Conference. One such item is that relating to a nuclear-test ban. At long last,

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there was consensus on establishing an Ad Hoc Committee to deal with the issue. However, this positive development in the work of the Conference on Disarmament diminishes as one continues to read the report. For example, the Committee was given no negotiating mandate. Moreover, at the conclusion of the session, agreement could not be reached for renewal of the Committee at next year's session of the Conference.

My delegation is equally disappointed and dismayed at the failure to conclude a multilateral convention to ban chemical weapons, despite the hopes raised at its last session for a major breakthrough. It is a matter of regret that negotiations have been hamstrung with technical excuses.

It was expected that the signing of the bilateral agreement on chemical weapons by the United States and the Soviet Union would facilitate the conclusion of the negotiations in Geneva. Unfortunately, these expectations have not been realized. While we welcome - indeed, encourage - the bilateral negotiations, we must stress that they should not be allowed to replace or supplant the multilateral negotiations. The central role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament cannot be overemphasized. In this connection I wish to pay tribute to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and his staff for continuing to uphold and to strengthen this role.

Another issue that deserves our attention is the extension of the arms race into outer space. Here again the Conference on Disarmament - the only multilateral-disarmament negotiating body - has had its work stalled by those who have, in effect, put their narrow self-interest above the interests of humankind. Outer space, recognized in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty as the common heritage of mankind, is now in danger of becoming a new arena for the arms race. Outer space belongs to us all and should therefore be used for the benefit of humanity as a whole.

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I wish now to touch on another very thorny issue of particular interest to the people of the Indian Ocean region. For nearly two decades the Indian Ocean States have sought to implement the 1971 Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. Our efforts to convene an international conference in Colombo, which would pave the way for the implementation of that Declaration, have unfortunately been persistently frustrated by the major Western maritime Powers. Out of their selfish security interests and those of their allies, these Powers have continually undermined the work of the Ad Hoc Committee entrusted with the preparation of the Conference.

The easing of East-West tension should have facilitated implementation of the Declaration. In this connection, the withdrawal by the major Western maritime Powers from the Ad Hoc Committee is totally at variance with the mood of the times. This has further undermined the work of the Committee. In the wake of the Iraq-Kuwait crisis and the consequent military build-up in the Gulf, which is an integral part of the Indian Ocean, the hopes for the establishment of a zone of peace have been further shattered. The vulnerability of the littoral and hinterland States is self-evident.

There has been one positive development relating to the Declaration. We welcome the adoption and signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of the Organization of the Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Co-operation (IOMAC), at Arusha, Tanzania, in September this year during the IOMAC II Conference. Among other things, the Agreement opens up new avenues for peaceful co-operation between States in the region. This, in essence, represents a major confidence-building measure in the region, which for years has been dominated by tension emanating from super-Power military rivalry. We hope that all Indian Ocean States will sign the Agreement as a matter of priority.

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As they have evolved, disarmament agreements have increasingly been made conditional upon agreement on reliable verification measures. The emerging attitude has been that there can be little hope of maintaining confidence in compliance without reliable verification - even though foolproof verification is unattainable. For the super-Powers the guiding principle in their negotiations has been "trust but verify". While we do not dispute that notion we believe that in the past the major hurdle has been a lack of political will. As the Agreement on intermediate- and shorter-range nuclear forces (INF) demonstrated, where political will exists agreement on verification can easily be reached.

We welcome and commend the efforts of the Group of Experts on verification, whose comprehensive report on the role of the United Nations in verification is before the Committee. My delegation will make its views known on the substance of that report at a later stage in our deliberations.

Even if all weaponry were to disappear from the face of the Earth, the lives of millions of people in many parts of the world would still be threatened by endemic disease, hunger and malnutrition. One of the major dividends of disarmament would therefore be the opportunity to use the resources released through disarmament measures to alleviate poverty and thus to ensure sustainable development.

We all have a stake in the survival of the human race. By working for peace, disarmament and universal security we shall be working for a safer future for ourselves and for future generations. The world community has responded with unprecedented unity to the crisis in the Gulf. We hope the newly found unity of

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the international community, especially among the permanent members of the Security Council, will be deployed to confront the many unresolved crises still facing the world today. The United Nations was born of war. The elimination of armaments was and must continue to be one of the primary tasks on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.