Statement by Poland in connexion with the completion of the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament

When the decision to hold the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was taken in 1976 and we were entrusted with the preparations for it, we all realized the magnitude of the task before us. Today, when the fifth and last session of the Preparatory Committee is about to be concluded, I believe it is appropriate to say that behind us is a serious and time-consuming effort of amalgamating ideas and proposals contained in numerous working papers jointly or individually submitted by different States in search for a highest common denominator of our respective positions. We have succeeded in agreeing upon a number of significant issues, also with regard to the ultimate objective of all our endeavours - general and complete disarmament under effective control, as well as concerning the basic priorities and important principles which should guide negotiations and decisions in the field of disarmament. These principles, when adopted and strictly adhered to by all States, may greatly facilitate the process of disarmament negotiations.

We have also succeeded in reaching agreement on a number of questions of organizational and procedural nature.

At the same time, however, we have encountered difficulties in drafting some parts of the final document, particularly those concerning certain specific measures on arms limitation and disarmament as well as on ways and means of their implementation. This will have to be resolved at the special session itself.

Apart from the results we have achieved so far, one of the most valuable assets of our work has been strict adherence to the principle of consensus as the only acceptable and effective method of taking decisions on disarmament, since

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* Circulated at the request of the Chairman.
the latter relate directly to the most sensitive sphere of national security, where nothing can be imposed against the will of States involved and every undertaking, in order to work, has to be mutually agreed.

Acceptance of this principle is, in our opinion, the determining factor of success of the special session. We therefore rest convinced that in order to live up to the expectations linked with the forthcoming General Assembly on disarmament, every effort has to be made at the special session to find generally acceptable solutions of the remaining problems. For as we have pointed out time and again, it is only general agreement that can secure the viability of disarmament measures and ensure their practical implementation.

Another significant prerequisite for the success of the special session is respect for the principles agreed upon in the draft Declaration on Disarmament, notably the principle of undiminished security and not seeking unilateral advantages by any party to disarmament negotiations.

Judging by experience gained in different fora of disarmament negotiations, in which Poland has always taken an active part, the paramount condition for progress in this field is the political will of States to reach agreement. We understand and fully share ourselves the impatience felt by those delegates who in the course of our deliberations and outside them indicated that the pace of disarmament negotiations lags far behind the growth rate of armaments and, particularly, of the technological arms race, which is one of the most dangerous phenomena of our time. We profoundly believe, however, that the pace of negotiations can indeed be accelerated and more tangible results can be obtained by further strengthening and making more effective use of the existing organs of disarmament negotiations, first of all of the CCD.

In our view, therefore, one should be very cautious about undertaking changes in the existing structure and procedures of the CCD, which could undermine its effective functioning as a valuable forum of multilateral negotiations in the field of disarmament. By the same token, neither proliferation of organs dealing with disarmament can add momentum to the disarmament process; it can only result in undue duplication and dispersion of efforts, whereas what we need is their concentration on most crucial and urgent issues.

Poland, together with other socialist States, has always been consistently and actively involved in efforts towards ending the arms race and promoting disarmament. We have advanced numerous constructive initiatives of our own and lent support to other realistic proposals which, in our judgement, could best contribute to complementing political détente with that in the military field.

We believe that the necessary conditions exist today for bringing about quicker and more substantial progress in the field of disarmament. We strongly hope that the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly will significantly contribute to facilitating such progress. On our part we shall make every endeavour to ensure its successful outcome.
However, if these hopes are to become a reality, it is necessary for all States to show a constructive approach to the negotiations and refrain from actions which may in any way be detrimental to efforts in the field of disarmament. To create favourable conditions for disarmament negotiations implies an imperative that all States refrain from developing new weapons of mass destruction which could trigger off another spiral of technological arms race with grave consequences for world peace. In this context, it is of primary importance that the plans to develop, produce and deploy nuclear neutron weapons be finally and unequivocally abandoned.

In conclusion, we express our appreciation and deep gratitude for the excellent way you have presided over our deliberations. We also address similar sentiments to our hard-working Rapporteur and the staff members of the Secretariat at all levels and posts, so ably headed by Dr. Rolf Björnerstedt.

It is our profound hope that the constructive atmosphere which has prevailed during the consecutive sessions of this Committee, will also characterize the climate of the special session and that the latter will have a lasting and positive impact upon the disarmament process.