VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 26th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. WEGENER (Federal Republic of Germany) 
           (Vice-Chairman)

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STATEMENTS ON SPECIFIC DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS AND CONTINUATION OF THE GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. LAKHOUT (Morocco) (interpretation from French): Since this is the first time I have spoken in this Committee, I should like on behalf of the Moroccan delegation to convey to the Chairman, our congratulations on his election to guide the work of this Committee. We wish him every possible success in his important task. At the same time, we assure him of our full co-operation and readiness to contribute to bringing about a successful conclusion of our Committee's work.

During its thirty-eighth session the General Assembly adopted, on the recommendation of our Committee, no less than 60 resolutions on disarmament. This unprecedented amount, together with the growing number of related matters which have been referred to the First Committee in recent years and at the current session, might lead one to believe that the work on disarmament in this Committee is the epitome of efficiency, seriousness and progress.

Nevertheless, when we look at both the agenda of the Committee at its present session and the report which was submitted this year by the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole multilateral negotiating organ of the General Assembly on disarmament, we must note - except for certain purely formal additions and modifications - the total absence of any tangible result from the consideration of the disarmament questions, and perhaps even some retrogression in the study of some of these questions.

The paralysis of our Committee and its inability to fulfil its role, the increasing number of hotbeds of tension throughout the world, the exacerbation of those which already exist, the gradual return to a policy of force on the part of the great Powers in many respects reminiscent of the period of the cold war which we thought had been ended once and for all, the absence of any political will on the part of a number of States, particularly those that wield major influence in the restructuring of international relations in the contemporary world - all are factors which engender lethargy if not despair.
The centre of this debate - at this stage of our work - does not concern the technical and juridical means which should be used in order to bring about the limitation or reduction of certain categories of arms. It is rather, we believe, in the choice, undoubtedly a difficult one, between guaranteeing security in a state of constant anxiety, a determination to take extraordinary defence measures for protection, and the feeling that humanity could better ensure its security by controlling the will to create ever-more powerful elements for its arsenals. Nevertheless, unless humanity is resolved to take a completely optimistic view of its destiny, the lessons of recent years especially - which have been characterized by an unparalleled increase in the gap between strengthening all sorts of means of destruction and the intensity of international efforts to reduce those armaments - give us reason to believe that, unfortunately, today there are more threats to wipe each other out than courage and responsibility for dialogue.

The risk of nuclear war which only yesterday some thought impossible is today more than evident, and an international society that has reached a degree of progress, culture and enlightenment should not allow its survival or annihilation to depend on the behaviour and judgement of a certain number of fallible persons in a few States.

Given such a situation, in an area as important as disarmament, we can but insist on the conduct of negotiations, both multilateral and bilateral; we must work towards making the present system of international negotiations, that is, the Geneva Conference on Disarmament more effective and, at the same time, request the two super-Powers to continue their two series of negotiations by subsequently including in them any matter whose discussion seems to have become an important element of international action on disarmament matters. As was so correctly underlined by the Secretary-General this year's report on the work of the Organization:

"This is a field in which it is essential to utilize the full potential of multilateral and bilateral negotiations, both to improve mutual understanding of the reasoning behind military postures and negotiating positions and to reach substantive, balanced arms regulation and disarmament agreements."

(A/39/1, p. 3)
My delegation, along with some others, has had occasion to recall in this Committee that direct confrontation between the major Powers will necessarily lead to growing mistrust and the resort to force in order to make their own interests prevail. We have also indicated what the role of small States should be in the face of such a situation and particularly what results have been achieved in the field of international relations thanks to the action of those States that have made an effective contribution to reducing divergencies of view and to replacing confrontation by dialogue.

We also believe that it is thanks to those States and their patient efforts that we can today welcome the fact that there are ongoing multilateral negotiations on disarmament which, for some years now, have been yielding relatively encouraging results or which, at any rate, have led the international community from profound anguish to profound hope.

Morocco, which has participated in the work of the Conference on Disarmament - the former Committee on Disarmament - is well aware of this weighty responsibility, and I wish to once again assure the Committee that we will spare no effort to make a positive contribution in this forum at all times.

The report submitted by the Conference this year, in document A/39/27, deals with the main topics that were considered during the two previous sessions. Among a certain number of important issues, the question of creating four ad hoc committees and defining their mandates, as well as the need to reach a consensus on them, posed a considerable obstacle to progress in the work of the Conference.

Rigid adherence to the rule of consensus - which was the subject of amendments presented in 1982 by the Group of 21 - made it impossible to carry out an in-depth consideration of subjects of such paramount importance as the prohibition of nuclear tests, the cessation of the arms race, nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

With regard to the prohibition of nuclear test, my country, which signed the partial nuclear-test-ban Treaty in 1963, also underlines the need for the conclusion of a comprehensive treaty banning such tests in all environments for all time. We deplore the fact that, although this question has been considered by our Organization for more than 25 years now and has been the subject of more than
40 General Assembly resolutions, it has not yet been given all the attention it deserves. My delegation is convinced that there has been neither arbitrariness nor undue haste in submitting a mandate which would have made it possible for the Conference on Disarmament at its last session to begin, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/62, the negotiation of a treaty whose conclusion has been awaited for so long. That is why we hope that the General Assembly will be able at the present session to reach a consensus in the form of a single resolution requesting the Disarmament Conference immediately to undertake multilateral negotiations on a treaty on this subject and to do everything in its power to ensure that the Conference can transmit to the General Assembly at its fortieth session the text of a complete treaty.

A realistic and courageous approach should also be observed in considering the matter of the prevention of nuclear war. The vast majority of the international community, Governments and peoples have witnessed in recent years the emergence of various factors pointing to the imminent danger of a generalized nuclear holocaust. The main role in this field should be played by a limited number of States whose responsibility for what is happening now or for what could happen in the future need not be demonstrated.

The non-aligned countries have on frequent occasions publicly voiced their opinions and concern on this matter and the most recent manifestation of this anxiety, which is completely justified, can be seen in the appeal of 22 May 1984 by the Heads of State or Government of six countries, representing five continents, namely, Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania, as follows:

"The people we represent are no less threatened by nuclear war than the citizens of the nuclear-weapon States. It is primarily the responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States to prevent a nuclear catastrophe, but this problem is too important to be left to those States alone." (A/39/277, p. 4)

I shall not dwell on this question in greater detail. My country's position is well known and has been broadly set forth this year in the Group of 21 at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. Nevertheless, we wish to emphasize that we find unacceptable that the security of all States and the very survival of mankind should be at the mercy of the security interests of a few nuclear-weapon States.
Morocco, which is a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and a signatory of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, has always held that generally speaking, measures to prevent a nuclear war and in support of nuclear disarmament must necessarily be mindful of the security interests both the non-nuclear-weapon States and the nuclear-weapon States. In this respect we have always reiterated the obligation incumbent upon the nuclear-weapon States to guarantee the security of non-nuclear-weapon States by the adoption of an international instrument drawn up by common consent and containing effective international provisions to shield all non-nuclear-weapon States, without any discrimination, from the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

The question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space continues to arouse the interest of my delegation. Our concern with respect to this matter is further justified by the fact that recent progress achieved by mankind in the conquest of outer space has, unfortunately, gone hand in hand with the intensification of efforts by certain Powers to utilize outer space for military purposes.

The growing utilization of satellites already in orbit to house guiding and navigation systems for weapons of mass destruction and the enhancement of entirely new types of outer space weapons make the consideration of this question even more urgent. This urgent need is all the more justified because these various plans, apart from constituting another major step forward in the overall arms race, involve, according to various estimates, immense expenditures which will certainly adversely affect the economic structure of even the economically advanced countries and have disastrous consequences for the world economy, particularly for the developing countries.
That is why my delegation believes that the two major nuclear-arms Powers are duty-bound to work without awaiting negotiations on this subject. Nevertheless, and in view of the experience acquired in the course of bilateral negotiations on other disarmament matters, we believe that bilateral efforts would by no means be prejudicial to any multilateral action in the context of the Conference on Disarmament, particularly by the creation, at its next session, of an ad hoc committee whose mandate would be to undertake negotiations in order to conclude an agreement on this matter in accordance with the resolutions of the General Assembly and paragraph 80 of the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament.

Other matters were the subject of detailed consideration on the part of the Conference on Disarmament at its previous session. High priority was given in particular to the negotiations on the total prohibition of chemical weapons. A great deal of useful work was accomplished by the Ad Hoc Committee which was set up to deal with this question, despite numerous complex technical problems involved in the matter. My delegation nevertheless has the impression that prospects exist for an agreement on the complete and definitive prohibition of chemical weapons, even if a large number of important problems regarding verification still remain to be settled.

The numerous sets of negotiations which are under way at present on certain partial aspects of disarmament must not forget that primary attention should be given to the question of general and complete disarmament. The solutions which have been brought to bear separately on particular aspects of the arms race only deal with the interests of the nuclear Powers, whereas international tension, lack of security and threats to sovereignty and freedom throughout the world are largely due to the conventional arms race.

There are more countries concerned over the danger of that kind of war than those concerned by a nuclear war. What I mean is that those who possess nuclear power are, after all, so limited in number that they can carry out direct discussions concerning their interests, whereas the immense number of problems which give rise to disputes in the rest of the world are not amenable to settlement solely by halting the arms race.
(Mr. Lakhouit, Morocco)

It was with this in mind that we were among the first to draw the attention of the United Nations to the need to proclaim certain regions of the world as denuclearized zones. We are delighted that the countries of Latin America long ago succeeded in signing a Treaty establishing the denuclearization of the Latin American continent, and we hope that the other regions will follow that example. I am thinking particularly of the region of the Middle East and the African continent, which has not yet in practice been recognized as a denuclearized zone, although as early as 1963 the Africans, supported by the majority of the Members of the United Nations, succeeded in having a number of resolutions adopted on this question.

Morocco will continue, within our Organization, to bend every effort to see to it that an international commitment is assumed to ensure the effective respect, by the largest possible number of States, of the declaration of the denuclearization of Africa. Equally, we continue to advocate the creation of zones where an arms balance must be ensured, because we note that, in the third world particularly, the need for the arms race deriving from the existence of disputes among countries in particular regions constitutes a serious handicap to mobilizing all the potential available for economic and social development in our countries.

We are aware that to implement the principle of channelling savings by the big Powers arising from disarmament to the development of the rest of the international community, it is all the more imperative to exercise sufficient self-control in order to avoid taxing limited resources with the burden of an arms race that will lead we know not where.

These are the general comments which my delegation wished to make on certain questions on the agenda of our Committee. We reserve the right to revert to some of these questions in more detail in the weeks to come.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Morocco for the kind words he addressed to the Chairman.

Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure to congratulate you upon your election to the chairmanship of this important Committee, which deals with issues of maintaining world peace and security and world disarmament. My country's delegation has great confidence in, and appreciation of, your ability to steer the affairs of our Committee towards the positive results for which we yearn. I also congratulate the other officers of the Committee on their election.
I also wish to associate myself with the preceding speakers in expressing my most sincere condolences to the delegation of India over the most tragic loss the whole world has suffered on the tragic death of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

This is the fourth time that I have been given the opportunity to speak to this Committee as a representative of my country, Kuwait. Each time I find myself unable to overcome the disappointment that overwhelms me when I review the agenda of the Committee, and when I look at the progress which has been achieved during every session on the long path we are traversing here, which has come to be the focus of our attention as well as that of all the peoples of the globe. Most candidly, I say that the number of resolutions adopted by the Committee is increasing year after year. While their content does not change, we find that stagnation is impeding progress in their implementation. I may not even be exaggerating if I say that some countries act contrary to those resolutions, whose wording they helped to frame as well as in urging countries to approve them. International trust is in a continuous decline. Armaments, in all their aspects, are increasing continuously. In the midst of that, the people's hopes and aspirations are in vain, their sweat is wasted and the moans of the hungry, the sick and the needy are lost amidst the din of international warmongering and the race to create zones of influence.

The best example of what I say is that if we were to compare the statements which we have heard to now with the statements delivered during past sessions, we would find a great resemblance. If there is any difference among them, that difference is represented by an increase in sadness and disappointment, which can be read between the lines of those statements.

Kuwait notes that the areas of tension in the world are increasing year after year and that they are expanding in both quality and quantity. The foreign military involvement in most of these areas tends to inflame the situation further. While new conflicts and wars evolve, the flames of the old ones are ceaselessly burning. All of that arises as a result of the use of force and the threat of force in international relations, through overt or covert military intervention.
Never before has the world lived in greater anxiety than what it is experiencing now as a result of the arms race, especially the nuclear-arms race, which threatens, by its scope, to annihilate mankind and civilization. Never before in the history of mankind has it happened that such valuable and huge resources were invested in armed forces and armaments in the world at a time of peace. Never before have such large numbers of scientists and experts participated in research on the production of more sophisticated methods and machines of death and destruction. Never before has there been such indifference about the policies of the major Powers and the consequences and the current and future impacts of that fierce race, especially when the world is undergoing a deteriorating economic situation in which the area of poverty and destitution is increasing.

It is a painful irony of fate that armament expenditures are increasing at a phenomenal rate, at a time when the amounts spent on development programmes - whose basic target is the human being, the most precious of the creatures and the most deserving of investment - are declining.
Some countries are forced into that winding road as a result of regional conflicts exploited in order to enlarge and exacerbate them. Consequently, those countries are compelled to procure arms to defend their independence and protect their resources, to which end they allocate increasing funds from their budgets at the expense of the prosperity of their peoples and the peoples of the area.

From that fact springs the international responsibility, which consequently necessitates a common effort to reduce and eliminate the international conflicts, reduce the military budgets of the nuclear and militarily developed countries and assign that surplus to developmental purposes, in particular in the third world countries.

The arms race among the major Powers has begun to spread and include all kinds of nuclear and conventional weapons, in addition to new methods of total destruction, such as chemical and bacteriological weapons. The race has started to spread to wider areas on earth, in the atmosphere, in the oceans and in outer space. That race has in its course uprooted those political, technological and psychological barriers in international relations which had stood in the face of the shift from the use of conventional weapons to nuclear weapons. All this drives us onto a course that paves the way for the breakout of nuclear war.

The increased inclination of the two super-Powers to use outer space for military purposes and produce weapons and advanced satellites to be launched into space truly adds a dangerous and extremely costly dimension to the arms race. Kuwait shares with the international community its deep concern and supports the call for additional legislative measures to prohibit an arms race in outer space. In this respect, we look forward to serious negotiations in the Committee on Disarmament.

We note with regret that the two super-Powers are claiming that the policy of deterrence which they are pursuing and in accordance with which they are stockpiling nuclear and conventional weapons will ensure peace and security for them and the world as a whole. We completely disagree with this assertion. So far and for 40 years, that policy has been capable only of creating more apprehension and distrust between the two conflicting parties. A large number of small and big wars have broken out and led to the destruction of immense resources, as well as claiming millions of human beings as victims as a result of that policy of deterrence.
Kuwait maintains that world peace and security will not come about without a sincere adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter, international laws and norms and the principle of true non-alignment. The concept of peace and security in the world must also be looked at as a collective international responsibility without being exploited as a bridge for interference in the affairs of others or for using force, violence and aggression as a means of solving disputes, and without resorting to expansion and annexation at the expense of others.

If I am called upon to give examples of the aforementioned, I find myself, from practical experience and international conviction, pointing to two régimes and focusing on them in particular, namely, Israel for its aggressive and expansionist policy, and South Africa for its racist and imperialist policy. What is common to these two régimes is their nuclear capability and co-operation, which one day might cause a world catastrophe whose extent is known only to Allah, glory be to Him. It has become clear that those two régimes cannot live in normal conditions or in a world where peace prevails.

The procurement of nuclear weapons by those two racist régimes, in occupied Palestine and southern Africa, has breached many of the United Nations resolutions that call for the declaration of Africa and the Middle East as nuclear-weapon-free zones and is considered a threat to the peoples of the two areas because of the aggressive and non-peace-loving nature of the two racist régimes. Israel has clearly demonstrated its aggressive and expansionist approach, not just by its occupation of lands and the displacement of peoples, but even by attacks on economic targets as exemplified by the Israeli bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactors that was planned for strictly peaceful purposes under the full guarantees of the International Atomic Energy Agency as regards its peaceful use. Moreover, the Israeli threat to repeat the bombing still stands despite the many international resolutions calling for the cessation of such threats.

Pursuant to the principle of preserving peace in the area and maintaining it free of nuclear threat, Kuwait has agreed in past years and agrees at this session to the proposal on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East provided that this proposal leads to the elimination of the Israeli nuclear danger and preserves for the nations of the area the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, as specified by the Non-Proliferation Treaty
and the Final Document adopted by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament. Kuwait attaches special importance to this matter because it owes its existence to a non-renewable natural resource, as a result of which it is unable to avoid resorting to modern technology to compensate for what it loses of that non-renewable resource.

Kuwait also sees in the good model embodied in the Treaty of Tlatelolco establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America an example that can be followed not just in the Middle East, but even in Africa and South Asia.

After concluding our general debate in this Committee we will not learn anything new that we did not know before to illuminate the road before us and lead us to our goals. Everything has been said and various matters repeatedly and frequently emphasized, but what we really lack is the following:

First, genuine initiatives on the part of all our countries, particularly the super-Powers, to whose spirit and letter we adhere in order to refrain from pursuing any act leading to the continuation of arms and military escalation.

Secondly, genuine initiatives for taking all necessary measures to promote and reinforce a real dialogue among nations directed towards settling international disputes in accordance with international law and covenants.
Thirdly, genuine and daring initiatives for easing the acute international tension, help the world to remove the clouds and psychological atmosphere replete with risks which overshadow the relationship between the Eastern and Western camps and in their place establish a climate of trust and tranquillity.

It is Kuwait's view that one of the most important elements of the enforcement and success of those initiatives is the creation of a world public opinion which knows the nature and dimension of the danger confronting us. Kuwait, along with other peace-loving nations, has therefore contributed to financing the World Disarmament Campaign under the auspices of the United Nations. That Campaign aims at informing, educating, mobilizing the support of world public opinion and intensifying its efforts towards the objectives of disarmament.

We are all called upon to act together so as to guarantee a better tomorrow for our children, a tomorrow not disquieted by a phantom war or an arms threat but a tomorrow pervaded by the warmth of peace and the strength of goodness, justice and love.

Mr. Hohenfellner (Austria): Today my delegation would like to elaborate on agenda item 47, entitled "Urgent need for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty".

Austria, situated at the very heart of Europe, the continent with the greatest stockpiles of nuclear weapons, is profoundly concerned about the nuclear-arms race. Without underestimating the quantitative element of the nuclear-arms race, one of the greatest problems for world security is the continuing modernization of nuclear arsenals. It has a profoundly destabilizing effect on the security of all States. One of the most important tasks that we face today is therefore to slow down and halt the qualitative nuclear-arms race.

In the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty, the nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty undertook to seek to put an end to any test explosion of nuclear weapons for all time; they also stated their determination to continue negotiations to that end. That commitment was reaffirmed in the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty. Yet no real negotiations are being conducted on a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Without a test ban the risk that we will be faced with the proliferation of nuclear weapons is increasing day by day. The threat to peace and stability in different parts of the world will then be further increased. A major step in curbing the qualitative arms race and preventing a further spread of nuclear
weapons should therefore be a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Such a treaty would effectively hinder the development of new nuclear warheads, since it is nearly impossible to produce new kinds of warheads without a minimum number of tests. Whereas it may be possible to test various parts of a nuclear warhead, the proper functioning of such weapons can be controlled only by test explosions. A comprehensive test-ban treaty could, on the one hand, prevent horizontal proliferation and, on the other, vertical proliferation by halting the development of new nuclear-weapon systems and at the same time put an end to the qualitative improvement of existing nuclear warheads.

Since 1945 the world has witnessed approximately 1,500 nuclear explosions carried out for testing purposes. All measures so far undertaken to bring nuclear test explosions to a complete halt have been unsuccessful. The 1963 partial test-ban Treaty prohibited atmospheric tests but did nothing to bring about a substantial reduction of the overall number of nuclear explosions; on the contrary, the number has even increased considerably. According to information gathered by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 50 underground nuclear explosions took place in 1983 alone. We are told that continuing those tests is indispensable so as to find ways of increasing the efficiency of already existing nuclear weapons and to develop new weapon designs. Nevertheless, my delegation assumes that the tests carried out so far should have provided ample information, and thus the idea of abandoning them should be discussed as a priority matter.

After the regrettable breakdown of the trilateral talks in 1980, the Conference on Disarmament now carries on the important task of seeking an urgent solution to this problem. In spite of tremendous efforts in this field the outlook remains rather gloomy. As a comprehensive test-ban treaty is the touchstone of the willingness of the super-Powers to pursue real nuclear disarmament, the present absence of substantial negotiations can only be deplored. As the goal of such a treaty should be obvious, a further delay owing to procedural questions should not be tolerated.

It goes without saying that verification will constitute an important element of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. It will be essential to elaborate technological methods – for instance, seismological supervision – whereby compliance or non-compliance with the agreement can be unmistakably identified.
Austria has been actively participating in the group of seismological experts for many years now. It should be noted that that group has achieved notable progress in preparing a mechanism to exchange seismological data to help to verify underground tests. However, discussion of the issue of verification should not only focus on the eventual monitoring capabilities of a given system but should approach the question from all aspects. The main purpose of any verification system should be to deter the parties to a comprehensive test-ban treaty from engaging in clandestine activities, to provide confidence that the treaty obligations are being observed and to counteract unfounded suspicion relating to natural occurrences. It will therefore be necessary to include provisions that make detection and identification of explosions of high yields large enough to develop new nuclear weapons highly probable, as complete certainty will be difficult to achieve.

Let us not overlook one very simple fact: even the most elaborate verification system will in no way be able to replace what is needed most of all for the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, that is, the restoration of mutual trust between the two nuclear-weapon super-Powers. An adequate system of verification would indeed have an important role to play in complementing such an agreement and should be operational before the entry into force of such a treaty. However, in our view, it will not be possible to substitute mutual trust for verification altogether.

Finally, my delegation wishes to refer to the five-continent peace initiative of 22 May 1984 by the Heads of State or Government of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania. Austria fully endorses the concept outlined in the declaration as the most reasonable line of action to be followed by the nuclear-weapon States, that is, to halt — as a first step towards genuine nuclear disarmament — all testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems.
(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

We should not cease to repeat here time and again that it is the responsibility of the nuclear Powers, and especially of the two Powers controlling by far the largest nuclear arsenals, to take the necessary first steps. In the view of the Austrian Government, at least a treaty banning the testing of all nuclear weapons with the exception of those of very small yield could be concluded immediately. We hope that the nuclear Powers may find it possible to show the necessary political will to reach agreement on such a treaty, which would greatly inhibit the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call upon the representative of Ghana, Ambassador James V. Gbeho, the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, to introduce the report of the Commission.

Mr. GBEHO (Ghana), Chairman of the Disarmament Commission: I wish to introduce the report of the Disarmament Commission, in my capacity as the current Chairman of that Commission. The report (A/39/42) is the result of the Commission's deliberations on the various disarmament subjects on its agenda during the 1984 substantive session. As in previous years, the report contains four sections, including the part on conclusions and recommendations, which duly reflect the work of the Commission in 1984.

As colleagues already know, the 1984 session was organized in accordance with the mandate of the Disarmament Commission as set forth in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, as well as the guidelines set by the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth sessions of the General Assembly in resolutions 37/78 H and 38/183 E. In those resolutions the Commission was requested to direct its attention at each substantive session to specific subjects and to make concrete recommendations on such subjects to the subsequent session of the General Assembly.

After arduous deliberations during its 1984 session, the specific recommendations made by the Commission to the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly were adopted by consensus, as noted in paragraph 22 of the report, and are those adopted by each of the four working groups as a contact group, which took charge of the substantive items of the agenda.

Despite the fact that recommendations were drafted in as concise and action-oriented a manner as was possible under the circumstances in which the Commission operated, the Commission nevertheless encountered difficulties in trying
to bring about a substantive outcome and also in attempting to conclude consideration of some items on its agenda which had indeed been with the Commission for years. I do not wish to pin-point those difficulties in detail, but neither will I fail to place the blame for the lack of progress squarely on the present international situation, which is characterized by tension among the super-Powers especially. The work of the Commission and the results recorded in the report are indeed a true reflection of the status of international relations at this time.

Unfortunately, it is a situation in which the strained relations have been employed by one side to outsmart or indeed humiliate the other side and not necessarily to assuage the anxieties of the millions who live under the threat of a nuclear holocaust. It is also a situation in which one side has had to oppose the other in all aspects just to delay the conclusion of the consideration of issues. In this connection, I cannot but point out that if the Commission is to contribute effectively in the future towards the search for disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, all States, especially the two super-Powers and their allies, will have to endeavour substantially to improve their relations with one another.

The Disarmament Commission, the deliberative body in the field of disarmament, was revived in 1978 at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament as a universal forum designed to provide guidance by the entire community of nations on the various important and pressing disarmament issues confronting mankind, particularly on questions such as those relating to nuclear weapons and the prevention of nuclear war. In the last few years, therefore, the Commission has performed an invaluable task in advancing and promoting the objective of arms limitation and disarmament by formulating recommendations on specific questions. I refer specifically to the following: first, the elaboration of the elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament in 1979; secondly, the elements of the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade in 1980; thirdly, the elaboration of guidelines for the study on conventional disarmament in 1982; and, fourthly, the elaboration of an effective follow-up on recommendations and proposals contained in the report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues entitled "Common security" (A/CN.10/38).
In addition, the Disarmament Commission has devoted a great deal of its efforts in the last few years to the following matters: first, the elaboration of guidelines for nuclear disarmament, particularly the effective elimination of the danger of nuclear war, and a general approach to negotiations on nuclear and conventional disarmament; secondly, the elaboration of basic principles for the reduction of military budgets; thirdly, recommendations on the question of South Africa's nuclear capability; fourthly, the elaboration of guidelines for appropriate types of confidence-building measures and for the implementation of such measures on a global or regional level; and fifthly, consideration of proposals concerning the relationship between disarmament and development.

During the 1984 session the Commission was able to make partial progress on all those items. However, as members of the Commission are aware, some of those questions have remained one year after another on the agenda of the Commission without the prospect of any conclusion being reached. I have already alluded to the fact that the prevailing international climate has contributed to such an outcome; therefore, the efforts undertaken during recent years to strengthen the Commission's role and to improve its capacity to deal effectively with the questions within its purview must be further pursued, so that the Commission may serve as an effective mechanism for the promotion of the negotiating process on urgent and vital disarmament issues, particularly nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war, with which the survival of all mankind is very closely associated.

With that concern in mind and without advocating an entirely new approach and procedure in the work of the Commission, I would like to reiterate my concluding remark at the last meeting of the Commission's 1984 substantive session on 1 June this year, that the Disarmament Commission might wish to consider as an objective the preservation of any consensus reached.
In order to achieve this the international community could, in accordance with its mandate, focus on specific and limited items so as to be able to make concrete recommendations, even if on an interim basis, to the General Assembly. I make this suggestion in all earnestness since the Commission is in dire need of a success story. It is my conviction that the credibility of the Commission and of all multilateral and bilateral efforts in the field of disarmament will continue to suffer considerably unless the present trend of negative results is soon reversed. It seems an incredible waste of time and resources to meet every year just to oppose any agreement whatsoever on any issue.

Finally, I wish to say that I am much indebted to all delegations, and particularly to the officers of the Commission, to the chairmen of the various working groups and to the indefatigable members of the Secretariat for their invaluable co-operation and assistance in fulfilling the guidelines set by the General Assembly in order to reach the conclusion of the Commission's 1984 session.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.