

STATEMENT BY

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PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT  
IN THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE FORTY-FIRST SESSION  
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

New York

29 October 1986

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first to extend to you sir my warmest congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. The guidance that you have already provided to the Committee during this Session attests to the wisdom of the General Assembly in choosing you for such a difficult task.

I have asked for the floor, as President of the Conference on Disarmament, before the Committee starts its consideration and action upon draft resolutions, in order to introduce the Annual Report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly on its 1986 Session. The Report of the Conference is contained in document CD/732, which has been circulated as supplement number 27(A/41/27) of the official records of the General Assembly. I do so in the hope that the Annual Report of the Conference will assist the First Committee in its deliberations on the draft resolutions submitted to it which are relevant to the future work of the Conference.

Allow me to refer briefly to the contents of the Report which I am introducing today. Members will find in paragraphs 7 and 10 the Agenda for the 1986 Session of the

Conference, as well as the programme of work for the first and second parts of the annual session. Views expressed in the Conference on Disarmament on substantive questions on the Agenda appear under the relevant sections of the Annual Report.

In the case of the first three items on the Agenda, relating to a nuclear test ban, cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament and prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters, the Conference continued during 1986 its efforts to find an appropriate organizational arrangement to deal with them. Although no agreement emerged on the establishment of subsidiary bodies under those Agenda items, much thought and effort were devoted to achieving such agreement. It should be noted in this connection that the Conference was able at least to agree on the holding of a series of informal meetings on the substance of item 2, entitled "Cessation of the Nuclear Arms Race and Nuclear Disarmament", and that discussions held at those informal private meetings are also reflected in the Annual Report under the section dealing with the Agenda item. This is a new development which made possible an in-depth consideration of the subject and ensured that all members of the United Nations would be duly informed of those discussions.

Negotiations on a chemical weapons ban are continuing at an increasing pace. Progress has been achieved and differences significantly reduced. Of course, there are still a number of important issues to be resolved, but there is a momentum which should not be lost. The consultations to be held later this year in Geneva, as well as the additional work scheduled for January 1987, may ensure that the momentum is maintained and further areas of agreement are developed.

Agenda item 5 was considered mainly by an Ad Hoc Committee, which held an in-depth discussion on a number of questions relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. As a result of the debates, there was general recognition in the Ad Hoc Committee of the importance and urgency of preventing that arms race and a readiness to contribute to that objective. It was recommended to the Conference that the Ad Hoc Committee be re-established with an adequate mandate at the beginning of the 1987 Session.

Views and positions on the question of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons continued to differ and additional efforts are needed if the present stalemate is to be overcome.

Work also continued in connection with a radiological weapons ban, but that is also a question where differences of views continue. The competent Ad Hoc Committee, however, conducted useful work in terms of the mandate entrusted to it and the Conference should consider at the beginning of the 1987 Session the recommendation to re-establish it, so that the subsidiary body may consider the ways and means of how best to proceed further.

During the 1986 Session, the Ad Hoc Committee on the comprehensive programme of disarmament concentrated its work on certain outstanding questions relating to the programme, especially those concerning disarmament measures. The areas of agreement have been enlarged but work remains to be done on some questions such as stages of implementation and timeframes. As the Conference was expected to submit to the General Assembly a complete draft of the programme at the present Session, it has been agreed that work on the elaboration of the programme should be resumed at the beginning of the 1987 Session with a view to completing the task of the Conference during the first part of its annual session.

The Conference also considered during its 1986 Session the expansion of its membership. As noted in paragraph 16 of the Annual Report, the Socialist Group and the Western Group announced that their candidates for membership were Viet Nam and Norway respectively. The Conference has agreed to further intensify its consultations with a view to taking a positive decision at its next annual session on the expansion of its membership and will inform the Forty-Second Session of the General Assembly concerning this matter.

Before concluding, may I emphasize that the work of the Conference does not proceed in a vacuum. As we all know, disarmament is a very difficult subject, on which the prospects for progress are heavily influenced by the international climate. The Conference cannot be content merely to reflect that climate however. It must help lead the way by improving it. In the circumstances, it is difficult to refrain from expressing the wish that the Conference had done more and the hope that we will do better. Yet the progress achieved in some areas, although not as great as one would wish, should not be under-estimated. If on some Agenda items the Conference has been unable to move beyond the pre-negotiating phase, the work done up to now can prove to have been vital when

conditions are ripe to move to concrete negotiations. As the current President of the Conference on Disarmament, I do hope that next year the Conference will be able to concentrate more on substance. By so doing we could lay the foundation for future agreements which are essential to international security and, consequently, of concern not only to the members of the Conference, but to the whole membership of the United Nations. All of us here today, share with the Conference on Disarmament a heavy moral duty, not only to the Governments we represent but to all the peoples of the world.

As President of the Conference on Disarmament, I am fully prepared to engage in any consultations which might advance the work of the Conference during the coming year.

In closing, I wish to thank the members of the Conference on Disarmament for their friendly co-operation in the preparation of this Report. On their behalf, I express our thanks to the invaluable assistance throughout the year extended by Ambassador Komatina, Ambassador Berasategui and all the members of the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament, who gave such outstanding support, advice and guidance to the Conference, most particularly in the preparation of the Report of the Conference.