

(U Maung Maung Gyi, Burma)

meetings over a longer period than at present. It is certainly not for lack of time that the Committee has been unable to make much headway in its work. Future consideration could be given to the question of the duration of annual sessions on the basis of the volume of work of a substantive nature.

For reasons already well known, the summer session of the Committee will be of a shorter duration than is usual and it is not expected that we can do much in so short a time. However, it is encouraging to see that the Committee has managed to adopt its programme of work within a shorter time than usual, and this, to our mind, is a good augury.

There is universal consensus that general and complete disarmament should be the ultimate goal if we are to eradicate for all time the twin threats that most seriously menace mankind, namely, the scourge of war and the threat to human survival posed by nuclear weapons. There is, therefore, no greater task for this multilateral negotiating body than to have as the foremost item on its agenda a programme for the ultimate attainment of general and complete disarmament. For this reason, the comprehensive programme of disarmament must continue to be the means through which the goal of general and complete disarmament must be reached. Our past inability to draw up a comprehensive programme is, without doubt, due to the fact that we have not been able to reconcile our views as to the principles on which the programme should be based. We therefore feel that a meeting of minds with regard to the principles of stages, time-frame, measures and commitment must be reached before we can carry out the next round in the drafting exercise.

With the rapid rate of advance in the development of space technology, the arms race now threatens to enter the realm of space. It is, therefore, urgently necessary to prevent outer space being used for warlike purposes before it is too late, as the consequences of such use are likely to have a destabilizing effect on earth itself. This delegation, therefore, supports the consideration of this item within a working group as first suggested by the delegation of Sweden during the last session.

The Working Group on Chemical Weapons which met in advance of this summer session made a good start under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Sujka of Poland. There are indeed ample grounds for optimism that progress can be made even in the short time we have during this summer session. It is important to note that in dealing with chemical weapons we are dealing with a real disarmament measure on weapons of mass destruction the use of which could have devastating consequences on the civilian population also. Negotiations in the past have made considerable progress on the scope and definition as well as the nature of the convention. We hope that there will be a narrowing of differences between the two sides on the issue of verification and compliance in the light of fresh developments at the second special session, and this is a hopeful sign.

Limitations of strategic armaments have suffered a severe set-back with the setting aside of the SALT II Agreement. New concepts and doctrines are being advanced which appear to make it permissible to use nuclear weapons by underrating the possible outcome of their use. Despite the seriousness of the situation, this Committee is still unable to deal effectively with measures on nuclear disarmament, and efforts for the creation of a working group have not been possible as the rule of consensus is being used in a spirit that was not intended. No doubt, bilateral discussions are necessary between the great Powers which possess an overwhelming preponderance of these weapons. But at the same time the multilateral aspects of dealing effectively with them should not be ignored. The nuclear menace is a matter of universal concern and as such needs to be dealt with from the point of view of its multilateral aspects