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REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT

Working paper submitted by Czechoslovakia, Mongolia, Poland
and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic

To supplement document A/CN.10/94 of the Disarmament Commission, its authors submit the following considerations.

1. The attainment of a non-violent and democratic world free from nuclear weapons requires concrete and immediate disarmament measures. Genuinely equal and universal security can be guaranteed today not by the highest possible but by the lowest possible level of weapons and armed forces, with the complete exclusion of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction.

Arms reduction and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons constitute one of the central concerns of the United Nations. The Organization's aim of achieving security through disarmament can be attained only by collective action, both bilateral and multilateral, with the close co-operation of all States. The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament emphasized in its Final Document that all States have the duty to contribute to disarmament negotiations and the right to participate in them.

The socialist countries are convinced that the comprehensive system of international peace and security they have proposed will prove effective to the extent that the United Nations, its Security Council and other international institutions and mechanisms function effectively. Indeed, this system presupposes specific measures which would enable the United Nations, as the principal universal security organ, to ensure that security is maintained at a reliable level. Accordingly, there is a need for a decisive strengthening of the authority and role of the United Nations and its decisions and for the enhancement of its political, legal and moral status.
2. The implementation of effective disarmament measures must be promoted through more active work in the relevant international forums, above all the Geneva Conference on Disarmament.

An increase in the practical output of the Commission on Disarmament must be brought about. This could be done by stepping up its work and switching to a practically year-round schedule with two or three breaks. Agreement could be reached that the Conference's subsidiary organs - in line with its general mandate - would function not on an annual basis, but until their work is completed. Scientists and experts should also be more widely involved in studying the problems before the Conference. By agreement among the participants in the Conference, its meetings should be held at the level of Ministers for Foreign Affairs in order to give the necessary impetus to the negotiating process.

In the long term, the Conference could become a standing universal body for disarmament negotiations.

The main focus of the Conference's work must be the problems of halting the nuclear arms race. Its reputation must be enhanced as the main forum on nuclear disarmament, at which States will not simply exchange views, but take supremely responsible decisions.

The third special session of the General Assembly on disarmament should discuss all aspects of the work of the Conference on Disarmament with a view to increasing its effectiveness. The Geneva Conference on Disarmament must be transformed into a forum at which the efforts to move forward to a nuclear-free, non-violent world are internationalized.

3. The participation of the United Nations in solving the problem of eliminating nuclear weapons could be more effective if full use was made of the potential of the Security Council as the organ bearing responsibility under Article 26 of the United Nations Charter for formulating plans for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments. It would be desirable - following the necessary preparations - to convene a special meeting or meetings of the Security Council at the Foreign Minister level to discuss objectives and targets in the nuclear disarmament field. As well as dealing with issues of reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons and establishing the necessary conditions for this purpose, the proposed exchange of views could outline concrete measures which would have the result of freeing the world from nuclear weapons and affording universal guarantees that they would not be reintroduced.

4. Problems of the reduction of naval forces could be discussed at a special meeting of the Security Council.

5. It would also make sense to hold a meeting of the Security Council at the Foreign Minister level in conjunction with the opening of regular sessions of the General Assembly in order to review the international situation and undertake a joint search for effective ways of improving it.
In order to increase the effectiveness of the General Assembly's work, special sessions should be held more frequently on urgent political problems and individual disarmament issues.

The forthcoming third special session of the General Assembly on disarmament is destined to become an extremely important forum coinciding with a turning point in the development of international relations. As they go to the special session, the socialist countries are guided by a non-confrontational approach, and are open to new ideas and proposals, whatever their source.

7. As an important means of enhancing the role of the United Nations in the disarmament field, there must be undeviating compliance by Member States with the General Assembly's decisions on disarmament. This is an extremely topical issue, as is shown by the Assembly's adoption of resolution 42/38 J of 30 November 1987.

The socialist countries agree that it is important to adopt resolutions with general consent, and emphasize the need to enhance the morally and politically binding status of the important political instruments adopted in the United Nations on a consensus basis. Nor is it any less important to ensure that consensus is maintained at the stage of implementation of the resolutions, and that the consensus expresses a genuine readiness on the part of its participants to undertake measures in the disarmament field.

Opportunities exist for improving the organizational aspect of the adoption of General Assembly resolutions on disarmament and for rationalizing the work of the First Committee. It is important that the innovations adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-second session (resolution 42/42 N of 13 November 1987) should facilitate the drafting of effective resolutions and enable this principal organ of the United Nations to discharge to the full the responsibility incumbent upon it in the sphere of disarmament.

8. The United Nations can make an important contribution in particular, to the verification of compliance with arms limitation agreements. A mechanism for broad international verification of the implementation of agreements on détente, arms limitation and the military situation in regions of conflict should be established under United Nations auspices.

9. The socialist countries welcomed the results of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, and are in favour of the full implementation of its decisions.

The role of the United Nations in promoting development through disarmament should be strengthened. It would be useful to hold a discussion of the principles relevant to problems of disarmament and development at a special meeting of top leaders of the States members of the Security Council.

An international "Disarmament for Development" Fund, which would be a mechanism for transferring to the developing countries part of the resources which actually become available through disarmament measures, should be established. The socialist countries are prepared to join such a Fund.
10. The potential of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies, which brings together well-known disarmament experts from many States Members of the United Nations, should be more fully utilized. The Board could play a more significant role in carrying out studies on the problems of disarmament.

11. In so far as the Secretary-General of the United Nations acts as a representative of every Member of the Organization, all States should give him their maximum support and help him carry out his important mission. In particular, the Secretary-General can contribute to the strengthening of the authority of disarmament agreements currently in force and of future disarmament agreements, as is apparent from his role in monitoring the observance of the 1925 Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, and the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

12. The United Nations must play a unique role in determining both the basic guidelines for a nuclear-free world and specific ways of achieving that goal, including the creation of a suitable political climate based on confidence and mutual understanding, glasnost, openness and predictability in international affairs. The United Nations should look for innovative ways of finding points of contact between the positions of all groups of States, strive for a balance of interests and encourage joint efforts to ensure the consistent growth of the disarmament process.