Letter dated 15 May 1981 from the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations and the Ambassador of Sweden to the Committee on Disarmament addressed to the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission

We have the honour to transmit, herewith, a working paper on principles which should govern further actions of States in the field of freezing and reduction of military expenditures and to request that it should be issued as a document of the Disarmament Commission.

(Signed) Teodor Marinescu
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Socialist Republic of Romania to the United Nations

(Signed) Curt Lidgard
Ambassador of Sweden to the Committee on Disarmament
Working paper on principles which should govern further actions of States in the field of freezing and reduction of military expenditures

In its resolution 35/142 A the General Assembly requested the UNDC to identify and elaborate on the principles which should govern the further action of States in the field of the freezing and reduction of military expenditures, keeping in mind the possibility of embodying such principles into a suitable document at an appropriate stage.

The adoption of these principles could represent a practical contribution of the United Nations to the efforts to create the necessary conditions for negotiations of agreements to freeze, reduce or otherwise restrain military expenditures.

The principles should reflect the common understanding of States as to their objectives in the field of freezing and reducing military expenditures. They should also define concrete ways and means to reach these objectives, taking into account political and security concerns of States. The elaboration of such principles could contribute to the efforts to narrow down the different approaches in this field and to create confidence among States and thereby to promote their political will to start negotiations on the freezing and reduction of military expenditures. The principles should be negotiated with the participation of all States and adopted by consensus.

The nature of the document to be negotiated should be established at an appropriate moment with the agreement of all States. In the view of Romania and Sweden the document could have the form of a United Nations declaration.

The basic ideas provided for in this document are taken from the final document of the First Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, adopted by consensus, as well as from other United Nations documents.

It is recalled that the elaboration of a set of general principles to govern the conduct of States in this field should be regarded as complementary to ongoing United Nations efforts to settle unresolved problems relating to a system for reporting and comparing military expenditures, including adequate verification measures acceptable to all parties, with the objective of facilitating progress towards freezing and reducing military expenditures. The reaching of an agreement on these problems at the SSOD II would constitute an important United Nations achievement.

Desiring to contribute to the process of identification and elaboration of the principles which should govern the activities of States in the field of freezing and reducing military expenditures, the delegations of Romania and Sweden hereby submit the following draft to the Disarmament Commission.
The General Assembly,

Convinced that the accumulation of armaments, in particular nuclear weapons, constitutes a continuous threat to peace and international security and thereby also the independence of States, stimulates the use of force and the threat thereof in international relations and endangers the very survival of mankind,

Profoundly concerned about the constant acceleration of the arms race and military expenditures which, besides their potential threat to international peace and security, absorb enormous human and material resources, constituting thus a heavy burden on the economies of all States,

Reaffirming the provisions of the Final Document of the First Special Session devoted to disarmament, which states that the gradual reduction of military budgets on a mutually agreed basis, for example, in absolute figures or in terms of percentage points, particularly by nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States, would be a measure that would contribute to the curbing of the arms race and would increase the possibilities of reallocation of resources now being used for military purposes to economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries,

Convinced that agreements or other measures should be resolutely pursued on a bilateral, regional and multilateral basis with the aim of strengthening peace and security at a lower level of forces, by the limitation and reduction of armed forces and armaments, taking into account the need of States to protect their security and the need to ensure balance at each stage and undiminished security of all States,

Recalling its resolutions 34/83 F, 35/142 A on the necessity to give new impetus to the efforts to reach agreements to freeze and reduce military expenditures, as well as its resolutions 33/67 and 35/142 B on the continuation of the process of examining certain technical aspects concerning the comparability of the military expenditures and measures to verify future agreements in this field,

Desiring to contribute to creating the necessary conditions for substantive progress towards genuine negotiations with a view to reaching agreement on the freezing and reduction of military expenditures,

Solemnly declares the following

1. Concerted efforts should be made with the objective of concluding international agreements to freeze and reduce military budgets, including adequate verification measures acceptable to all parties. Such agreements should result in genuine reductions of armaments and armed forces of States parties with the aim of strengthening international peace and security at the lowest possible level of military forces and armaments;

2. Pending the conclusion of agreements to freeze and reduce military expenditures all States should exercise self-restraint in such expenditures;
3. The freezing and reduction of military expenditures should be implemented in a balanced and equitable manner in order to ensure the right of all States to undiminished security;

4. In view of the special responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States and their decisive role in determining the pace of the arms race, the freezing and reduction of military expenditures should begin with them;

5. Human and material resources released through the reduction of military expenditures should be reallocated for economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries;

6. Agreements on reduction of military expenditures would be facilitated by the elaboration of agreed methods of comparing military expenditures between different periods of time and between different countries;

7. The identification of armaments and military activities, which will be the subject of physical reductions within the limits provided for in any agreement to freeze and reduce military expenditures, should be established by every State party to such agreements;

8. Agreements on the freezing and reduction of military expenditures should be subject to strict and efficient verification. The agreements to freeze and reduce military expenditures should therefore contain adequate measures of verification, satisfactory to all parties, in order to ensure that the provisions are strictly applied and fulfilled by all States parties;

9. Unilateral measures, such as decisions of Parliaments or Governments, concerning the freezing and reduction of military expenditures, especially when they are followed by similar measures adopted by other States on the basis of mutual example, could contribute to favourable conditions for the negotiation and conclusion of international agreements to freeze and reduce military expenditures;

10. The United Nations should play a central role in orienting and stimulating the negotiations on freezing and reducing military expenditures and all member States should co-operate with a view to solving the problems implied by this process;

11. This declaration should be regarded as a firm political commitment to start negotiations on the freezing and reduction of military expenditures as soon as possible.