Conclusions of the third substantive session of the Disarmament Commission on agenda item 4 (a) and (b)

Working paper: Yugoslavia

1. The Commission noted with grave concern that it was meeting at a critical moment of deterioration in international relations. The crisis in the process of détente has once again posed a serious threat to world peace and stability. The rivalry among great Powers has intensified; the competition for spheres of influence continues for perpetuating and expanding relations of domination and exploitation. The arms race, particularly in its nuclear aspect, has escalated to new levels of irrationality and there has been a resurgence of the cold war. Forces hostile to the emancipation of peoples continue to infringe the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries and the right of peoples under alien and colonial domination of self-determination and independence. There has been increasing recourse to the use, or threat of use, of force, military intervention, occupation and interference, in violation of the United Nations Charter and international law. Thus, focal points of aggression and tension, particularly in the Middle East, southern Africa, South West Asia, South-East Asia, the Caribbean and Central America continue to exist, while new conflicts among States further aggravate the international situation. The Commission considers that the achievement of international security for all peoples and nations could be realized only by efforts aimed at the democratization of international relations. In this connexion, the Commission stressed the need for urgent measures to improve the international political climate, conducive to progress towards the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament. It reiterates the conviction that the easing of international tensions cannot be based on the policy of balance of force, spheres of influence, rivalry between power blocs, military alliances and the accumulation of armaments, particularly nuclear weapons, and the relaxation of tension cannot be fully ensured without the active participation of all countries in vital decisions affecting world peace and security on the basis of equality.

2. The greatest peril facing the world today is the threat of destruction as a result of nuclear war. The actions of the nuclear-weapon States, which are engaged in a new round of the nuclear-arms race, have created a situation in which mankind seems to have been condemned to live in the shadow of nuclear annihilation.
Attempts were being made by some nuclear-weapon States to promote the highly dangerous concept of limited nuclear war and to minimize the distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons. At the same time, the so-called "balance of deterrence" among the great Powers had not prevented their involvement in regional conflicts. The competition in deterrence has not, in any way, afforded a dependable device for averting the impending catastrophe.

Doctrines of nuclear deterrence lie at the root of the continuing escalation of the quantitative and qualitative development of nuclear armaments and lead to greater insecurity and instability in international relations. Moreover, such doctrines, which in the ultimate analysis are predicated upon the willingness to use nuclear weapons, cannot be the basis for preventing the outbreak of a nuclear war, a war which would affect belligerents and non-belligerents alike. The competitive accumulation of nuclear arms by the nuclear-weapons States cannot be condoned on grounds that it is indispensable to their security. The increase in nuclear arsenals, far from contributing to the strengthening of the security of all States, on the contrary, weakens it, and increases the danger of the outbreak of a nuclear war.

3. The Commission is of the conviction that the nuclear-arms race runs counter to efforts to achieve further relaxation of international tensions; that progress in the field of nuclear disarmament would be beneficial to the strengthening of international peace and security and to the improvement of the international climate, which in turn would facilitate further progress; and that all nations, nuclear and non-nuclear alike, have a vital interest in measures of nuclear disarmament, because the existence of nuclear weapons in the arsenals of a handful of Powers directly and fundamentally jeopardizes the security of the whole world. The arms race stems particularly from the persistent recourse to the use of force in order to maintain the status quo in international relations. Renewed and co-ordinated actions are necessary so as to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race with a view eventually to bringing about the complete elimination of nuclear weapons from the arsenals of States. The promotion of nuclear disarmament would be facilitated by the strict adherence by all States to the principles of the United Nations Charter, and in particular by measures that would bring about the relaxation of international tensions and the peaceful settlement of disputes among States.

4. In the task of achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament, all the nuclear-weapon States, in particular those among them which possess the most important nuclear arsenals, bear a special responsibility. That responsibility entails the fulfilment of commitments entered into in international instruments in the field of disarmament, the respect for the security concerns of the non-nuclear nations, the refraining from any action conducive to the intensification of the nuclear arms race and to the increase of international tensions, and above all the duty to take positive and practical steps towards the adoption and implementation of concrete measures of nuclear disarmament.

5. It is obvious that the most effective assurance of security against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is nuclear disarmament and, pending that,
prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. The nuclear-weapon States must refrain from any activity in the nuclear field which would jeopardize the security and well-being of the peoples of non-nuclear-weapon States. The nuclear-weapon States have the obligation to guarantee that the non-nuclear-weapon States will not be threatened or attacked with nuclear weapons. Proposals on that subject had been submitted to the Committee on Disarmament, and there had been no objection in principle in the Committee to an international convention to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

6. The Commission affirmed that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned constituted an important disarmament measure.

The establishment of such zones in different parts of the world should be encouraged with the ultimate objective of achieving a world entirely free of nuclear weapons. In the process of establishing such zones, the characteristics of each region should be taken into account. The States participating in such zones should undertake to comply fully with all the objectives, purposes and principles of the agreements or arrangements establishing the zones, thus ensuring that they are genuinely free from nuclear weapons.

7. Even the limited agreement on strategic arms control between the two most heavily armed nuclear-weapon States remained unratified because of the policy of negotiating from positions of strength. The Commission further deplored the fact that in dramatic contrast to the abject poverty in which two thirds of the world's population lives, the international community, and particularly the nuclear-weapon States and their allies, squandered up to hundreds of billions of dollars annually on expenditure on armaments. The lack of progress in disarmament and the upward spiral in the arms race, particularly in its nuclear aspect, had further aggravated international tensions and impeded the realization of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and the objectives of the First Disarmament Decade. In this connexion, the Commission emphasized the urgent need for the early attainment of the objectives of the Second Disarmament Decade.

8. In the light of its deliberations, the Commission firmly believes that all States and particularly the nuclear-weapon States must continue and intensify the search for a common approach that will lead to progress in the field of disarmament. Bilateral and regional negotiations, especially with regard to specific areas where the concentration of nuclear armaments increases the danger of confrontation, are useful and should be intensified, but multilateral negotiations on questions of vital interest to nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States alike should be initiated without delay.

9. The Commission noted with profound regret that the decisions adopted at the tenth special session of the United Nations General Assembly have not yet been implemented, owing to the lack of political will of some major military Powers. It called upon all States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, urgently to implement these decisions so as to achieve more rapid progress in the field of real and genuine disarmament with particular emphasis on the priorities established by /...
General Assembly resolutions and specially by the Final Document of the tenth special session. The Commission strongly recommends that the Committee on Disarmament devote particular attention to the urgent negotiations of concrete measures aimed at the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and the achievement of nuclear disarmament, of which the conclusion of a ban on nuclear weapons testing will constitute a significant first step.

It particularly emphasized the importance of the forthcoming second special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted to disarmament to be held in 1982, and expressed determination to work towards its success so that a process of genuine disarmament, particularly in the nuclear field, could be initiated.