DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

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

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INTRODUCTION

1. On 17 December 1984, the General Assembly adopted resolution 39/151 G, the operative paragraphs of which, inter alia, read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. Invites all States to communicate to the Secretary-General, not later than 15 April 1985, their views and suggestions on ways and means by which the United Nations can more effectively exercise its central role and primary responsibility in the field of disarmament;

"2. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit those views and suggestions to the Disarmament Commission before the convening of its substantive session in 1985;

"3. Requests the Disarmament Commission, at its substantive session in 1985, to carry out as a matter of priority a comprehensive review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, taking into account, inter alia, the views and suggestions of Member States on this subject;

"4. Requests further the Disarmament Commission to submit its report on the subject, including findings, recommendations and proposals, as appropriate, to the General Assembly at its fortieth session;"

2. Pursuant to paragraphs 1 to 4 above, the Secretary-General submits herewith eight replies received to date from Member States.

REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

[Original: Spanish]

[11 February 1985]

ARGENTINA

The resolution puts forward objectives shared by the Argentine Republic, there can be no doubt that United Nations participation in the disarmament process is indispensable and must be constantly promoted and enhanced.

However, in the light of the experience of recent years, the United Nations cannot be held responsible for the deadlock prevailing in the disarmament field. It is difficult to imagine what more the Organization could have done in this area. Its ability to act is no substitute for the political will which the Powers playing the main role in disarmament have failed to evince. It is doubtful that there is a need, as maintained in the penultimate preambular paragraph of
resolution 39/151 G, for the United Nations to "play a more active role in the field of disarmament", because that implies that not enough has been done.

This viewpoint was expressed by the Argentine delegation in its explanation of vote when resolution 39/151 G was adopted by the First Committee. It also pointed out that it was unlikely that the Disarmament Commission would, in view of its crowded agenda, have enough time to carry out a comprehensive review of the question. The third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament would, in the opinion of the Argentine Government, offer a more favourable opportunity for discussion of the role of the United Nations in the disarmament field.

The Argentine Republic is in any case fully prepared to join, in any appropriate forum, in studying the best way to enable the United Nations to discharge its primary responsibility in this sphere.

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

[Original: English]

[16 April 1985]

1. The German Democratic Republic advocates a more active role of the United Nations in efforts designed to maintain peace and strengthen international security, to check the arms race and bring about disarmament. Together with the other Warsaw Treaty member States the German Democratic Republic once again emphasized this view with all vigour at the Berlin session of the Foreign Ministers' Committee of the Warsaw Treaty held in December last. Holding such position, the German Democratic Republic knows itself to be in line with the Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament which stresses that the United Nations, in accordance with its Charter, has a central role and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament.

In order for the United Nations to live up to its role and responsibility in the sphere of disarmament, the German Democratic Republic considers it necessary that all Member States act in a manner conducive to the objectives and principles contained in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament, and the relevant Programme of Action.

The German Democratic Republic has always geared its relevant efforts in the United Nations to ensuring that issues of arms limitation and disarmament be given priority in the Organization's deliberations. Valuable initiatives for the same purpose have also been taken by other countries. Owing to the efforts of all these countries, it was possible for the United Nations General Assembly to adopt also at its thirty-ninth session a great number of significant resolutions which focus on central issues of the struggle for the prevention of a nuclear war and for disarmament.
Topical importance is attached to resolution 39/59 on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The German Democratic Republic regards the adoption of this resolution by an overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations as a convincing vote against a militarization of outer space and for its uses exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Urgent practical measures for the prevention of a nuclear catastrophe and the cessation of the nuclear-arms race are called for in the resolutions adopted on the non-first-use of nuclear weapons and the non-use of such weapons, on a freeze of nuclear arsenals, a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, as well as on nuclear disarmament.

2. In the United Nations, there is an abundance of ideas and recommendations concerning measures designed to prevent nuclear war and bring about disarmament. Urgently required, however, are practical steps towards their realization. If it was not possible to make progress along these lines particularly over the past years, this failure can be put down mainly to the following facts:

First, leading circles of the United States of America continue with their arms-building programmes and the deployment of new nuclear weapons; moreover they have shown no readiness whatsoever to abandon dangerous military concepts as, e.g., the doctrine of the first use of nuclear weapons. The implementation of space-weapons programmes would inevitably lead to an uncontrollable arms race in all spheres, render impossible a limitation, leave alone a reduction, of strategic offensive weapons, and drastically increase the danger of nuclear war. The United States, either alone or together with its closest allies, refused to support the above-mentioned resolutions of the thirty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Second, it was primarily these countries which prevented basic United Nations decisions on disarmament from being translated into practice. They are against the establishment of negotiating committees of the Conference on Disarmament concerning a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, nuclear disarmament, measures to prevent nuclear war and an arms race in outer space. They have also put obstacles in the path of a swift preparation and holding of a conference on the transformation of the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace.

If the role of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament is to be enhanced, the said States are urgently required to co-operate in the realization of the far-reaching United Nations General Assembly decisions on arms limitation and disarmament and, in particular, to participate constructively in relevant multilateral negotiations held in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament and other forums, with a view to achieving concrete results as soon as possible. Thus, they would live up to the obligations they assumed when adopting the Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

3. The German Democratic Republic believes that the role and responsibility of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament should be enhanced not primarily by making organizational, structural or technical changes. The existing mechanisms,
in the main, meet the requirements for practical activities of the United Nations to promote arms limitation and disarmament. Rather it is necessary to make effective use of deliberative bodies such as the United Nations General Assembly, the First Committee, the United Nations Disarmament Commission as well as of ad hoc committees such as the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean or on the World Disarmament Conference in order to facilitate the adoption of disarmament measures. What is also required is in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament to start multilateral negotiations on the key issues on its agenda.

4. Success in United Nations disarmament activities and in multilateral negotiations could well contribute to making progress in the Soviet-American negotiations on nuclear and space weapons which started in Geneva on 12 March; and progress in those negotiations, in turn, would help improve the conditions for enhancing the role of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament. Particular significance is attached to the fact that the two sides in their Joint Statement stated that the subject of their negotiations should be a complex of questions concerning space and nuclear arms - both strategic and intermediate range - with all these questions considered in their interrelationship with the objective of working out effective agreement aimed at preventing an arms race in space and terminating it on earth, at limiting and reducing nuclear arms and strengthening strategic stability. Now it will be important to have this arrangement upheld in every respect.

5. The German Democratic Republic strongly believes that it is the obligation of all peoples and Governments to commemorate the forthcoming fortieth anniversary of the victory over fascism by stepping up their efforts in the name of preserving and strengthening world peace.

It will multiply its efforts aimed at rendering peace more secure, thus carrying on the spirit of the anti-Hitler coalition, and will join in a world-wide coalition of common sense and realism with all those acting to prevent a nuclear catastrophe. The struggle against war must be waged before weapons speak and missiles climb into the sky. The United Nations Organization, which this year will also celebrate the fortieth anniversary of its establishment, must contribute its share towards this end, and it can well do so.

HUNGARY

[Original: English]

[24 April 1985]

The United Nations Organization was established 40 years ago for the still valid purpose, as enshrined in its Charter, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and "to maintain international peace and security". In full conformity with the spirit of the Charter, the Government of the Hungarian People's Republic shares the conviction that, in the longer term, the genuine and lasting peace of mankind can only be guaranteed by general and complete disarmament under effective international control.
During the 40 years of its existence the United Nations General Assembly has adopted a number of resolutions embodying initiatives with regard to both comprehensive and specific issues, for the avoidance of nuclear war, the gravest threat to mankind, and for the halting of the arms race. These resolutions, expressing as they do the will and support of the majority of States, have made an effective contribution to the fulfilment by the world Organization of its historical mission to bring about an appropriate international atmosphere indispensable for removing the danger of world war and creating lasting peace and security.

Acting in this spirit, as it has done in the past, the Government of the Hungarian People's Republic wishes to do its utmost to promote lasting peace, disarmament and constructive co-operation among States as well as to strengthen the role of the United Nations, an international Organization of paramount importance which was founded in furtherance of these goals.

The first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament was an event of outstanding significance in the struggle of peoples for disarmament. Created under the auspices of the United Nations, that world forum offered the first opportunity for the peace-loving countries of the globe and for representatives of public opinion increasingly concerned at the arms race to discuss related matters at a time when the pressing problems of military détente and disarmament came into the focus of world attention.

In the view of the Government of the Hungarian People's Republic, the Final Document adopted by the said special session has formulated with an enduring validity the goals, principles and priorities for disarmament negotiations, the detailed Programme of Action and the international disarmament machinery. Adoption of the Final Document by consensus has well proved that, given the political will of the participating States, multilateral forums are capable of making comprehensive analyses even of the most intricate issues of disarmament and of elaborating valuable proposals.

Though the Programme of Action included in the Final Document is yet to be implemented - a state of affairs for which responsibility lies clearly with the extremist circles of imperialism, which by starting a new phase of the arms race and extending it to new areas and by exerting efforts to upset the strategic parity decisive to world peace have brought about an unprecedentedly tense international situation fraught as never before with the danger of the outbreak of a nuclear holocaust - it can be stated that the tasks and priorities as defined in the Programme of Action are unexampled and provide orientation to this very day.

The Government of the Hungarian People's Republic is firmly convinced that the United Nations, in accordance with its Charter, has a central role and primary responsibility in the field of disarmament and the strengthening of that role may well advance the cause of world peace, facilitate more efficient efforts to curb the arms race and promote better understanding between the countries and groups of countries concerned. An Organization which has a uniquely broad participation of States and a forum which has accumulated highly valuable experience over the past 40 years, the United Nations and its organs concerned with disarmament are apt to
continue providing appropriate frameworks for promoting efforts to solve problems of peace, security and disarmament as issues of the greatest importance to the future of mankind, with allowance for the viewpoints of all interested parties, without force and by way of negotiations, as well as to create a calm international atmosphere indispensable for progress in the process of disarmament.

IRAQ

[Original: Arabic]

[2 April 1985]

1. Because of the operational methods governing the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament, all of whose decisions are taken on the basis of the consensus rule, Iraq was not permitted to make a statement at the 1984 session of the Conference on Disarmament held in Geneva, on the question of the use of radiological weapons, since it is not a member, as a result of the denial by the Iranian régime of Iraq's application. Despite the agreement of all members to Iraq's request to speak on a vital question of radiological warfare connected with the bombing of Iraq's nuclear reactor, in which Iran was neither directly nor indirectly involved, it, nevertheless, abused the rules of procedure of the Conference and denied Iraq its right.

2. The cessation of co-operation in nuclear fields with the racist and expansionist régime, which might assist it in acquiring a nuclear capability.


4. Membership in military alliances or blocs established in the context of big-Power rivalry.

5. Non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and respect for the right of States to individual or collective self-defence in conformity with the United Nations Charter.

6. Refraining from exerting pressure on States or from the threat or use of force.

7. The adoption of effective measures to implement Security Council and other United Nations resolutions relating to the settlement of armed conflicts between Member States.

LESOTHO

[Original: English]

[15 March 1985]

The Lesotho Government is of the view that the United Nations must continue in its efforts at persuading nuclear States in particular to reduce their arsenals and put more emphasis on economic development.
TOGO

[Original: French]

[15 April 1985]

Since the accession to power of His Excellency General Gnassingbé Eyadema, President-Founder of the Togolese People's Rally, President of the Togolese Republic, it has become common knowledge that devotion to international peace and security constitutes the foundation of the foreign policy of the Togolese Republic.

This policy is in line with the objectives of the United Nations and the Togolese Government wholeheartedly supports all relevant General Assembly resolutions, in particular those relating to disarmament. It was for that reason that it co-sponsored resolution 39/151 G entitled "Review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament", adopted by consensus by the General Assembly on 17 December 1984.

In co-sponsoring that resolution, the Togolese Government wished to help, on the one hand, to demonstrate the importance of the role currently played by the Organization in the field of disarmament and, on the other hand, to encourage suggestions and proposals with a view to enabling the Organization to exercise that role more effectively.

I. IMPORTANCE OF THE CURRENT ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The importance of the role of the United Nations no longer needs to be demonstrated. That role stems from the Charter of the Organization, which stipulates in particular that one of the purposes of the United Nations is "to maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace".

Among such measures, those related to disarmament occupy a prominent place.

Since then, the United Nations General Assembly has continued to adopt many resolutions concerning both arms limitation and disarmament in all its forms and has established structures designed to help achieve the objectives set by the Charter.

The year 1978 marked a great turning-point in the evolution of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. In that year, the United Nations General Assembly held its first special session devoted primarily to disarmament questions.

The special session adopted a Declaration and a Programme of Action which permitted the establishment of appropriate machinery for the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Within that framework the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat was structured to co-ordinate all Secretariat activities in the field of disarmament. The efforts of that Department to meet the expectations of the international community should
be commended. There is no need to recall the many activities of the Department, which range from in-depth studies to the simple provision of information, and include training and so on.

It should be noted, however, that the hopes raised by that first special session were not fulfilled to the expected extent, and hence it was necessary to hold a second special session on disarmament in 1982. That second session, inter alia, solemnly reaffirmed the determination of the States Members of the United Nations to work for general and complete disarmament and the strengthening of international peace and security. In addition, it launched the World Disarmament Campaign and emphasized the need to strengthen fellowship programmes.

The World Disarmament Campaign is aimed in particular at achieving the objectives of the Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament with respect to information, education and the strengthening of understanding between peoples, with the participation of States, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.

Within the framework of that Campaign, the Togolese Government organized from 6 to 9 August 1984 at Lomé a National Seminar on Peace and Disarmament, with the co-operation of the United Nations. The Togolese Government would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations once again for the assistance that he was good enough to give it with a view to ensuring the success of the Seminar.

The Togolese Government believes, however, that within the framework of the World Disarmament Campaign, action by the Secretary-General should go beyond occasional national or regional seminars and should rather form part of a sustained course of action supported by the appropriate machinery and aimed at achieving the objectives of the Campaign.

II. SUGGESTIONS FOR ENHANCING THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The comments of the Togolese Government bear essentially on the implementation of the World Disarmament Campaign approved by the General Assembly in 1982 at its second special session devoted to disarmament and are based on the finding that the current approach could fail to achieve the objectives of the Campaign.

In the view of the Togolese Government, the Campaign, to be truly effective, should be pursued actively and visibly everywhere and, in particular, it should be sustained. In that connection, it is important that arrangements should be made at the regional level for the development of a continuing and energetic programme of informational and, in particular, educational activities for the benefit of the populations of the different regions. This is especially true in the case of the developing countries where information, research, education and training programmes on arms limitation are in the main inadequate and need to be better developed and encouraged. The development and encouragement of these programmes in such countries are vital for the implementation of the principle of universality implicit in the World Disarmament Campaign.

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Moreover, programmes of activities should be implemented in such a way as to ensure maximum efficiency at minimum cost.

In general, it would be more effective and more economical to implement the Campaign programme through regional bureaus to be established for that purpose, acting in close co-operation with the Secretariat Headquarters, which would issue guidelines for the co-ordination of the various activities on a world-wide scale.

Such an approach would make economies possible by, for example, reducing the number of staff members who would be required to travel throughout the entire world in connection with the organization and stimulation of the various activities needed to ensure the world-wide scope of the Campaign.

In this same spirit the Togolese Government believes that consideration should be given to the possibility of transferring to the Department of Public Information (DPI) the information programme of the World Campaign; this is now a responsibility of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and there is therefore some overlap which increases the cost of the operation while reducing its efficiency.

It would be desirable to entrust all information activities to DPI and to strengthen the political role of the Department for Disarmament Affairs which would prepare the basic documents and information to be disseminated by DPI. Close collaboration between the two departments would therefore be essential.

The establishment of regional bureaus would provide the appropriate supporting mechanism for achieving the goals of the World Disarmament Campaign, in particular, that of informing, educating and stimulating the public at large in their understanding and support for the goals of the United Nations on the issue of arms limitation in all regions of the world.

In that spirit the National Seminar on Peace and Disarmament held in Togo adopted the Lomé Peace Message, which recommended the establishment of a regional disarmament centre at Lomé. In the same spirit, the United Nations General Assembly, on the proposal of the Togolese Government, adopted on 12 December 1984 resolution 39/63 J regarding the establishment of "regional and institutional arrangements for the implementation of the World Disarmament Campaign".

In conclusion, while the efforts of the Secretariat on the issue of disarmament merit praise, they will not succeed in achieving the goals of the World Campaign unless they can be pursued within a framework which would include the establishment of regional disarmament centres. For its part, the Togolese Government is ready to host the Regional Bureau for Africa and is prepared to offer the buildings needed for that purpose. The commitment of Togo to this initiative also stems from the fact that such a regional institution could facilitate and promote the development of programmes of peace and co-operation among the African States; such programmes would contribute to the achievement of such noble international goals as the peaceful settlement of disputes, arms limitation and disarmament and, above all, the maintenance of international peace and security.
This African regional bureau could also be used as an important tool for co-operation and as a local point of United Nations support for the Organization of African Unity, its member States and the African public as a whole, as it would contribute to the development of an international consensus for peace and security.

The Togolese Government attaches importance to the periodic review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, perhaps at three-year intervals, with a view to evaluating the actions and achievements of the Organization on this important question.

UGANDA

[Original: English]

[27 February 1985]

1. The primary purpose of the United Nations Charter is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. It is, therefore, incumbent on all members of the Organization to reaffirm their full commitment to the fundamental objectives of the Charter and to scrupulously observe its principles and the generally accepted principles of international law relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.

2. Member States must refrain from the threat or use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or against peoples under colonial or foreign domination seeking to exercise their right to self-determination and to achieve independence. They must not intervene or interfere in the internal affairs of other States or violate international frontiers. The path towards peaceful settlement of disputes must always be preferred to the use of force.

3. The increasing danger posed by the incessant arms race, particularly nuclear armaments, is a matter of great concern to the entire international community. Therefore, as paragraph 28 of the Final Document of SSOD I spells out, all the peoples of the world have a vital interest in the success of disarmament negotiations. This interest can best and effectively be realized collectively through the United Nations, which must play a central role in disarmament negotiations.

While recognizing the special responsibilities of the nuclear Powers in this sphere, we believe that our collective endeavours through the United Nations must not be minimized or even downplayed.

4. At its first special session devoted to disarmament in 1978, the General Assembly, recognizing the central role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, established a machinery for it. The First Committee was entrusted to deal only with questions of disarmament and related international security issues. A Disarmament Commission and the Committee on Disarmament (now Conference on Disarmament) were set up as deliberative and negotiating organs respectively. The /...
Commission was to ensure that "in so far as possible decisions on substantive issues be adopted by consensus", while the Conference on Disarmament "will conduct its work by consensus". It has become obvious that since 1978 the "consensus" formula has been terribly abused in both organs by some member States. In our view, therefore, this rule must be reappraised.

The Commission on Disarmament, as a deliberative organ, need not reach its decisions by consensus. In any case, "consensus" should not be construed to mean unanimity. The Chairman of the Commission should be allowed to interpret and sum up consensus to mean the majority opinions expressed by members present and participating at any particular meeting. Where interpretation of the Chairman is challenged, such a question should be put to the vote which should be decided upon by a simple majority.

Similarly, the consensus formula in the Conference on Disarmament should be applicable only in so far as substantive issues are concerned. All procedural matters, including the setting up of working groups, should be decided on by simple majority votes. This will dispense with the now prevalent situation where the Conference's time is endlessly consumed in the settlement of procedural rather than substantive negotiations. Obstruction cannot and should not be a substitute for constructive and effective leadership.

5. We recognize the complexity of the disarmament process. But we do not share the view that disarmament negotiations, as undertaken in the Conference on Disarmament, should be the monopoly of a chosen few as it appears to be the case at present. A way must therefore be found where a third of the membership should resign, say every 10 years on a rotational basis, to be replaced by new members with exception of the permanent members of the Security Council. This would afford an opportunity for other members of the Organization to acquire the in-depth dynamics of the disarmament process and to involve and educate the entire international community in peace negotiations, at least in the long run.

6. Critical examination should be directed at the Disarmament Commission which to us appears to be a replica of the First Committee of the General Assembly. On the other hand, the way it has performed since its rejuvenation in 1978 has conferred on it the image of the Conference on Disarmament. We wonder whether it is useful to retain it since it appears its functions could well be performed by the First Committee.

7. Another disturbing feature in the disarmament process is the continuing proliferation of resolutions in the First Committee. If the swelling number of resolutions in the First Committee and the General Assembly can be regarded as a yardstick for success in disarmament negotiations, then the United Nations must condemn itself. On the other hand, if this is a practical reflection of the tarnished prevailing international atmosphere, much remains to be done. Flexibility rather than rigidity must characterize disarmament negotiations. Political will and the spirit of give and take should be the bedrock of such negotiations. In this connection, we believe that the Non-Aligned Movement can play a very positive role both in the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament. The Movement can narrow the gap between the two main power blocs of
East and West. The initiatives of the Movement should therefore serve as rallying points around which all extreme positions should coalesce and find accommodation. In this way, the number of resolutions originating from the East and West, resolutions which are more often than not contradictory, may be reduced if not eliminated altogether.

8. If the United Nations is to play a central role in the sphere of disarmament and to discharge its functions effectively, it is simply inadequate for it to be informed regularly on the status of bilateral or multilateral negotiations between some member States, particularly by the nuclear Powers.

In our view, the United Nations, through a representative of its Secretary-General, must be afforded the opportunity to actively participate in such negotiations. The nuclear Powers, particularly the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America, should be persuaded to accede to this genuine request of the international community.

9. The Disarmament Campaign is an extremely important programme. It preaches the virtues of peace and the dangers of war. The programme must find grass-roots level globally amongst all the peoples of the world. The United Nations must therefore use more effectively its agencies in this respect. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization should collaborate actively with national institutions to integrate disarmament programmes in educational curricula. The Department for Disarmament Affairs should take deliberate steps to encourage national institutions of higher learning to establish international security and disarmament programmes within the relevant faculties in those institutions. The Department should also assist libraries in such institutions to compile reading materials related to disarmament and peace. Through such institutions and the involvement of non-governmental organizations, especially in developing countries, it would be more effective to promote the ideas of the Disarmament Campaign by promoting and holding national and regional seminars on a regular basis.

10. The materials published by the Department for Disarmament Affairs aimed at promoting the ideals of peace are quite commendable. What we are not sure of is the readership of these materials, especially in developing countries. Ways must be found to distribute such materials so that they receive the maximum circulation to institutions, governmental and non-governmental agencies and to the rest of the public. No doubt, United Nations information centres might be already playing a very active role in this sphere. But it must be borne in mind that these centres do not exist in every capital city. In this connection, the Department for Disarmament Affairs may consider liaising with Resident Representatives of the United Nations Development Programme to see what roles they could play in the Disarmament Campaign.
1. The primary function of the Organization of the United Nations, which emerged from the formidable ruins brought by the Second World War, is to maintain international peace and security. At the present day, as declared in the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security (resolution 2734 (XXV)), "there is a close connexion between the strengthening of international security, disarmament and economic development of countries". The first special session devoted to disarmament, in 1978, considered disarmament "an imperative and most urgent task facing the international community" (Final Document of the special session, para. 17) and "the United Nations, in accordance with the Charter, has a central role and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament" (ibid., para. 114).

2. For the past 40 years, curbing the arms race and disarmament has always secured increased attention at the United Nations. At this forum, the socialist and non-aligned countries have put forth numerous effective and practical peace initiatives and disarmament proposals. The increasingly close and fruitful co-operation between the socialist and non-aligned countries has enabled the United Nations to adopt a number of resolutions not only revealing the dangers inherent in the arms race but also recommending ways and means to eliminate those dangers. Many important multilateral disarmament agreements originated from the United Nations. The United Nations also provides a suitable forum for States to express their positions on the crucial issues in the field of international peace, security and disarmament. The achievements obtained so far at the United Nations have played a considerable part in encouraging the struggle of peace forces the world over.

3. But the past 40 years have also witnessed a continued arms race in both intensity and scope and the danger of the arms race extending into outer space is looming large. Mankind is still confronted with a threat of self-extinction in consequence of the massive accumulation of unprecedented destructive weapons, first of all nuclear weapons. Peoples' legitimate desire for peace, détente and disarmament, which can be found in the resolutions adopted overwhelmingly at the United Nations, are unfortunately far from reality. It is a small group of countries that should be held responsible for this situation. The countries from that small group ignore the will of all peoples and decisions of the United Nations, even those decisions they themselves had participated in.

4. To fully realize the possibilities and ways of enhancing the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, we hold that, first of all, the relation between the struggle at and outside the United Nations should be put into proper perspective. The United Nations emerged as a result of the struggle of the democratic and peace forces. The evolution of the United Nations since the end of the Second World War up till now is organically linked with the struggle launched by the peoples for national independence, international peace and security and

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disarmament outside the United Nations. The struggle waged outside the United Nations has brought about changes favourable to the cause of the peace-loving and progress-loving forces, thereby creating essential conditions for them to gain success at the United Nations.

5. The goals and priorities of the disarmament process were defined and reaffirmed in many documents of the United Nations. Viet Nam holds that the United Nations should continue to concentrate its efforts on achieving those goals and priorities and promptly come to grips with any new dangerous development of the arms race. The efforts by the United Nations in this field should result in effective and concrete measures and commitments.

6. Viet Nam is also of the view that the United Nations should play a more active part in promoting more effective and fuller co-operation among all peace-loving forces, the participation in good faith by all States, especially the nuclear-weapon States, in the disarmament process and the respect and implementation of the existing disarmament agreements.

7. With regard to machinery for disarmament, the wish to give a more authoritative voice on disarmament to the General Assembly is legitimate. At present, the United Nations has a rather appropriately constructed machinery for disarmament, with negotiating and deliberative bodies and also bodies established on an ad hoc basis. The existing machinery should be more effectively utilized. But Viet Nam shares the view of many other countries that progress in the field of disarmament, with whatever machinery it is conducted, depends primarily on the policies of the States involved.

8. Viet Nam pledges itself to full co-operation with all other peace-and-progress loving forces in the struggle for international peace, security and disarmament, both at and outside the United Nations.