DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

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

Letter dated 24 April 1985 from the Permanent Representative of
the Republic of Cameroon to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government and in accordance with your letter
relating to resolution 39/151 G adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 1984
and entitled "Review of the role of the United Nations in the field of
disarmament", I have the honour to transmit herewith a document entitled "Review of
the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament" prepared by the
Government of the Republic of Cameroon.

I will appreciate it if this document can be circulated as an official

For the Ambassador,

(Signed) Nkwelle EKANAY
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT

INTRODUCTION

1. As the international community prepares to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, which was specially conceived from the outset with the principal aim of maintaining international peace and security in order to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", it is particularly useful to review the Organization's role in the field of disarmament with a view to increasingly enhancing its effectiveness. The absence of significant progress in this field has been the decisive factor in the Organization's failure, over its 40 years of existence, to perform its primary responsibility effectively. In fact, no issue has exposed to public question the credibility, indeed the very raison d'être, of this world organization so much as the all-out arms race, in particular the nuclear-arms race, and the increasingly frequent use of force or the threat of force in the settlement of disputes among States. In these circumstances, the quest for peace and security is not only an essential concern of the day but also assumes an extremely urgent and universal dimension, all the more so since we now live in the nuclear age.

2. The world is still grappling today with two basic concerns: security and socio-economic development. Whether they are viewed as the causes or the consequences of the dangerous conflicts and tensions which seem to characterize contemporary international relations, it is these two concerns which create the most significant obstacles to any national, regional or world effort to establish a stable international order. Whatever the reasons, the all-out arms race, particularly in this nuclear age, poses a threat not only to the international security essential for building a world of peace, justice and human dignity but, still more so, to the very survival of the human race.

3. Never in our lifetime has there been a truth as obvious but also as alarming as the recognition that the nuclear-weapon States have more than sufficient power not only to destroy each other but also, in the process to take the whole of mankind with them. All the many implications of the development and stockpiling of nuclear weapons have been eloquently described on numerous earlier occasions. It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that while the nuclear-weapon States, in particular the two super-Powers, are responsible for manufacturing these instruments of death and potential disaster, they cannot continue to bear sole responsibility for determining the fate of the whole of mankind. Since all countries and all peoples live under the permanent threat of such weapons, it is only right that the entire international community should be deeply concerned at this threat and should show a profound interest in preventing a nuclear war and bringing about nuclear disarmament.

4. Unfortunately, for some time now a sort of "closed club" has existed in the field of disarmament, consisting of a handful of countries which engage in esoteric discussions of this vital and universal problem. This situation has created an environment in which most countries, even though they are directly concerned, have
been reduced to frustration. The process of democratization and broader participation which began not long ago in this field should therefore be actively encouraged. Any genuine progress in this connection requires the co-operation and participation of all interested parties in order to ensure security for all and no longer just for some at the expense of others. The United Nations, which is open to the universal participation of all States, would appear to be the most appropriate forum, for such a process, offering as it does a framework for discussion, negotiation and appropriate collective action in reviewing the question of the arms race, in particular the nuclear-arms race.

5. When this Organization was founded, it was the aspiration of all peoples that it would transcend short-term interests and provide a new world order based on collective security and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Forty years later, the system of collective security provided for in the Charter of the United Nations is still inoperative. As a result, during this period Member States have tended to opt instead for unilateral security measures, either through domestic military means or through participation in military alliances or other defence arrangements among States. This has only served to intensify the arms race, at the same time as the rivalry between military alliances and indeed the United Nations inability to settle disputes peacefully among its Members peacefully has increased.

6. Cameroon's interest in the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament is motivated above all by its commitment to an international system which is capable of keeping the peace in an increasingly interdependent world exposed to the permanent threat of nuclear war. Like many other States, with which it faces common challenges, Cameroon believes that a world forum is indispensable for harmonizing the views of nations around common goals and helping to put into effect the collective wishes of the international community. In particular, the potential and possibilities for collective United Nations action in the area of security, socio-economic development and many other spheres offer small developing countries grounds for hope and positive alternatives in the quest for peace and justice.

7. Our country's attachment to the ideals, purposes and principles of the United Nations can be attributed, inter alia, to the special historical ties which bind us to the Organization. As a former trust territory, Cameroon and its people have always taken considerable interest in the United Nations and have always trusted in the ideals and original goals of this Organization which, moreover, gave a practical illustration of those ideals and goals in the role it played in Cameroon's accession to independence. Cameroon is deeply concerned therefore at the impotence, and indeed a certain increasing tendency towards marginalization, currently experienced by the Organization. Moreover, as a country of the African region which is currently engulfed in an acute socio-economic crisis, we are naturally concerned at the growing problems of insecurity and instability engendered by this state of affairs. Such a situation diverts to defence the already severely limited resources which the countries of the region need for vital economic development projects. The growing militarization of the concept of security, the ensuing violation of the rules of international law and the frequent use of violence in the settlement of disputes pose a real threat, particularly to small, non-aligned and militarily weak countries.
8. It is in this context of widespread concern for the maintenance of international peace and security that Cameroon is submitting, in response to General Assembly resolution 39/151 G of 17 December 1984, the following analysis and recommendations aimed at strengthening the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

9. It is clear that States bear primary responsibility for the arms race. In this regard, no progress can be made towards disarmament as long as States fail to show the necessary political will and to adjust their policies and actions accordingly. Within the multilateral context of the United Nations, any such progress will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to achieve unless, inter alia:

- Proper attention is paid to all countries' natural right to security;
- The right of all countries to participate in disarmament negotiations, which concern them all, is respected;
- Due account is taken of the specific circumstances existing in different parts of the world;
- Attempts to create the impression among public opinion that some States or groups of States favour disarmament while others promote the arms race are forestalled; and
- Organizational and procedural reforms are undertaken to emphasize the need for practical negotiations and to encourage a flexible approach to current disarmament talks.

10. The Government of Cameroon believes that United Nations efforts in this field could be more productive if they first of all took sufficient account of contemporary world realities and concentrated more on those initiatives and proposals which offered the greatest chances of agreement among States. Such an approach would help to create a climate of confidence and would enhance the credibility and effectiveness of the United Nations. On the other hand, to make proposals or to assign to the Organization a role which is known a priori to have no chance of winning general approval not only erodes the Organization's credibility but also, and above all, tends to encourage endless debate, creating an atmosphere which is hardly conducive to constructive dialogue and co-operation.

11. In addition to pragmatism and realism, United Nations efforts in the field of disarmament should show a greater sense of priorities. The agenda of the current multilateral negotiations is far too broad and complex. The Organization's chances of success would be greatly enhanced if it were to adopt a case-by-case approach and concentrate on a number of priority issues instead of dispersing its limited resources and its influence in a tentacular approach aimed at considering every issue at once. Of course, Cameroon supports the right of any country to propose items for the agenda of the various United Nations disarmament organs, but it also believes that appropriate arrangements could and should be made by those organs to ensure that the items proposed are in effect included in the agenda and, better still, given all the attention and detailed consideration they deserve.
12. In the light of the order of priorities established in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and in view of the universality of the nuclear threat which hangs over the whole of mankind, Cameroon firmly supports the position of the International Community that the prevention of nuclear war and the promotion of nuclear disarmament remain the highest priority. The global and deadly nature of the nuclear threat makes it abundantly clear not only that this issue is of world concern but also that it requires urgent consideration in order that a climate of confidence might be restored in international relations. In this connection, it is becoming extremely necessary to find credible machinery to enable the United Nations to play an effective role in nuclear disarmament talks, taking into account the fact that the nuclear-weapon States, in particular the two super-Powers, bear primary responsibility in this field.

13. We also believe that the overall question of international security must be considered in its broadest context, including its non-nuclear aspects. Over the past 40 years, the world, in particular the developing countries, has experienced untold destruction as a result of conflicts using conventional weapons. Whether triggered by border or territorial disputes, foreign occupation or intervention, or denial of the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination, these conflicts, although localized, have none the less gradually become among the most disturbing, not only because they have resulted in all kinds of death and destruction but also and above all because they have brought us closer and closer to a nuclear confrontation.

14. As we emphasized earlier, if States, in particular small non-aligned and developing countries, have tended to develop their own independent military power, this has been due largely to the inability of the system of collective security set up by the United Nations Charter to prevent, frustrate or punish aggression. Because the Security Council has often failed to respond to requests for assistance addressed to it by weak countries which have been the victims of aggression, other countries have quite justifiably seen fit to divert to military and security needs the few scant resources which they desperately need for economic development.

15. From the internal socio-economic crisis which increases military spending, particularly in the developing countries, to the suspicion and acute tensions among States which result from increasing militarization and the arms race, we see a climate of generalized insecurity which in turn encourages military spending. This creates a vicious circle to which most of our countries are unfortunately forced to accommodate themselves. It is precisely this unstable situation which fosters the arms race at the expense of development and increases the risk that local conflicts will be transformed into broader conflagrations, thereby threatening international peace and security and even the very survival of mankind in this nuclear age. Cameroon believes therefore that, in addition to efforts to prevent a nuclear war and bring about nuclear disarmament, the United Nations must at the same time devote special attention to preventive diplomacy and to an operational system of collective security which would be likely to win the trust of States.

16. As we see it, the key problem is to find ways and means by which States can safeguard their security without resorting to the arms race which, in the final
analysis, leads instead to generalized insecurity, even for the most heavily armed States. There is thus a very close link between disarmament and international security. There is an urgent need therefore for the United Nations to make practical and realistic efforts to find mechanisms of collective security. These two parallel approaches, like the questions of disarmament and security are themselves closely linked and any progress in one of them could have beneficial consequences for the other. Conversely, any setback in one could have a negative impact on the other, and vice versa. In establishing a realistic order of priorities between these two closely interrelated objectives, it is extremely important that the United Nations primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, as defined in the Charter, should be able to focus all the necessary attention. In the final analysis, any positive step in this field will have to be based on the fundamental truth that, without security, it would be illusory to expect any progress whatsoever in the field of disarmament and development. Conversely, any progress in disarmament and development is likely to create conditions conducive to enhanced security.

17. Security would therefore seem to be an extremely complex objective consisting, at one and the same time, of a variety of socio-economic, political and military elements. Traditionally, however, it has generally been perceived only in military terms. This narrow approach to security problems tends to encourage concepts such as deterrence which immediately bring us back to an all-out arms race, on the pretext of the illusory quest for an increased security which ultimately leads to the outbreak of war. The destabilizing effect of the search for security through militarization can be observed in several ongoing conflicts and in the relations between the two super-Powers. In this latter case, such militarization has brought the world to the brink of the nuclear holocaust which threatens it today. Truly, the time has come to actively seek security in its broadest context, which must of necessity include non-military measures. This new, integrated approach is likely to provide a more lasting and viable alternative for safeguarding security. It is also likely to facilitate disarmament by encouraging a procedure of constantly promoting peace through peaceful interaction and co-operation among States.

THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT

18. Cameroon strongly supports the position currently expressed by the international community, in particular in the Final Document of the 1978 special session on disarmament, that the United Nations should play a central role and have primary responsibility in the field of disarmament. Our country also believes that the time has come to give this concept of a "central role" real content if it is not to remain an empty notion, the verbal reaffirmation of which by itself can only contribute to eroding further the credibility of the United Nations in public opinion.

19. Demonstrating its deep concern about the general problem of international peace and security, the Organization has been constantly active in the field of disarmament since its earliest days. Every year its General Assembly constitutes a universal forum in which Member States can exchange views and consider specific initiatives on various aspects of disarmament and related questions. It has
adopted as many as 640 resolutions on the subject, including a record number of 63 resolutions during its thirty-ninth session in 1984 alone.

20. As a result of all the decisions taken by the General Assembly at its regular sessions and at its special sessions in 1978 and 1982, and after a first evaluation of the role of the Organization in the field of disarmament in 1976, the current situation in terms of programmes and activities is as follows:

- The First Committee meets for two months during the annual sessions of the General Assembly to consider disarmament and security questions;

- When the Assembly is not in session, the Disarmament Commission meets for one month each year to study various questions and recommendations relating to disarmament;

- The Conference on Disarmament is composed of 40 countries and at present constitutes the only multilateral negotiating body on disarmament; it meets virtually throughout the year at Geneva;

- The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research was established for the purpose of conducting research and studies on disarmament and security questions;

- The Secretariat, with the assistance of governmental and other experts, has begun a series of studies on the question of disarmament;

- The Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies was set up to advise the Secretary-General on various aspects of disarmament studies to be undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations;

- The World Disarmament Campaign was launched to inform and educate and to generate public understanding and support for the objectives of the United Nations in the field of arms limitation and disarmament;

- Other United Nations information activities in the field of disarmament have been strengthened through the publication of The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook and a periodical;

- New subsidiary organs of the General Assembly - to date the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference - have been set up to deal with certain specific questions relating to disarmament;

- Finally, the role of the Secretariat has been enhanced and strengthened, in particular by the establishment of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, headed by an Under-Secretary-General answerable to the Secretary-General.

21. All these activities and programmes are sufficient evidence of the active commitment of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. However, the
question remains why so many activities have given rise only to such meagre concrete results. It is also essential to ask what should be done to improve this situation, however little. In fact, if any lesson can be drawn from the regrettable impasse at which efforts in the United Nations to promote disarmament have arrived, it is undoubtedly that at the current time nothing can replace, or even merely equal, concrete, substantive results in the field of disarmament, be they reforms in the institutions, structures and procedures, which are admittedly of value, the very large number of studies already made or being undertaken or the many meetings of the various existing bodies. Cameroon considers that the present structure and resources of the Organization are sufficient to allow it to play a more effective role in the field of disarmament, at least for the time being. It should be emphasized that, in addition to political will, a great sense of realism is necessary on the part both of the Secretariat and of Member States in order to achieve any progress in this field. From that particular standpoint, resolutions, programmes and activities which have no chance of being implemented by the international community should be reconsidered.

22. Since disarmament is above all a highly political question, emphasis should be placed on those activities which support or facilitate the political action of States in this field. In the opinion of Cameroon, the Secretariat could play an extremely useful role in this regard.

23. In document A/36/392, entitled "Study of the institutional arrangements relating to the process of disarmament", prepared by the Secretary-General with the assistance of a group of qualified governmental experts and submitted to the General Assembly in response to its resolution 34/87 E of 11 December 1979, the role of the Secretariat in the field of disarmament was defined in paragraph 9 as follows:

"The role of the Secretariat of the United Nations with respect to disarmament matters derives from the general functions of the Secretary-General as defined in the Charter and developed over the years. The present organizational and institutional arrangements of Secretariat management of disarmament affairs have evolved over a period of more than three decades, as a result of decisions by the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies."

24. In the opinion of the Cameroonian Government, the Secretariat has, generally speaking, so far undertaken the tasks conferred on it in the field of disarmament in a fairly effective manner. In view of our suggestions for a more pragmatic and realistic approach on the part of Member States in this field, it seems to us to be necessary to rationalize certain activities and structures of the Secretariat with a view to enhancing their effectiveness. The current situation appears to be somewhat bureaucratic and also tends to encourage duplication and waste. Overloading the Secretariat with unessential tasks and programmes has, in fact, sometimes been a convenient pretext for Member States to defer decisions on negotiations concerning substantive political measures.
25. The functions of the Secretariat in the field of disarmament should generally be linked to, or co-ordinated with, its activities relating to international peace and security, since the objective of disarmament is to contribute to the maintenance and strengthening of world peace and security. To this end, the Secretary-General might consider the possibility of establishing within the Secretariat a co-ordinating committee on security questions, composed of the heads of the various administrative units concerned. This committee, as its name indicates, would have a co-ordinating function and would also advise the Secretary-General on various aspects of the role and activities of the Secretariat relating to relevant political questions in the field of security and disarmament, taking into account, inter alia, the close link between the arms race and lack of security on the one hand and between disarmament and security on the other. The ultimate and primary objective would thus be to make the Secretariat an effective, impartial body, which would enjoy the heightened confidence of Member States.

Activities and programmes

26. Through the various mechanisms which exist within the United Nations, a vast programme of activities has been undertaken to support the efforts of the international community in the field of disarmament.

27. Thus, in the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989, currently being implemented, and the programme budget for the biennium 1984-1985, many programmes and subprogrammes are devoted to the question of disarmament. Studies, seminars and substantive support for negotiations are essential elements of these programmes. A few remarks are in order in this regard.

28. Firstly, these programmes seem to be concentrated in the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. This Department, whose primary function should be overall co-ordination of and active support for the deliberative and negotiating bodies, is thus overburdened by the tasks of disseminating information and undertaking studies, tasks that could be entrusted to the Department of Public Information and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

29. In addition, the study programmes should be revised and reoriented towards arrival at practical conclusions likely to lead to substantive, action-oriented proposals. In that way, they could be expeditiously considered by the various deliberative and negotiating bodies and serve as a basis for useful recommendations.

30. Lastly, it should be emphasized that the majority of the activities and programmes currently being implemented are at the headquarters level, which leaves the regional mechanisms for the maintenance of peace and for disarmament with no real possibility of contributing to their implementation or of benefiting from the assistance of the central organs of the United Nations. Such a situation needs to be corrected. In addition certain United Nations activities and programmes in the field of disarmament deserve special attention. Among them, we would single out the following:
(a) **Studies and research**

31. Cameroon is concerned about the nature and the expansion of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament studies and research. While such studies can sometimes help negotiations by casting light on the numerous complex and technical problems inherent in this field, it must, however, be pointed out that the most essential factor in these negotiations remains the "political will" of States and not a lack of technical knowledge. We therefore think that studies should not be an end in themselves but should rather be undertaken in the context of specific substantive negotiations. We continue to support the observation accepted by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament (A/31/36) and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 31/90 of 14 December 1976 that studies should be carried out punctually. We are concerned that the institutionalization of studies within the United Nations Secretariat on a permanent basis has been achieved at a high and constantly increasing cost in spite of the Organization's ever more limited budget, especially as the majority of these studies have not achieved their primary objective of contributing substantially to the negotiation and conclusion of disarmament agreements. We consider that the way in which these studies and research are currently being carried out in the United Nations is generally uneconomic and necessarily leads to waste and duplication.

32. Cameroon supports the recommendations of the group of governmental experts which assisted the Secretary-General in the preparation of the document on the institutional arrangements relating to the process of disarmament (A/36/392), in particular those requiring that account be taken of the following criteria and guidelines, which Cameroon feels should be taken together when considering any proposal relating to a request for disarmament studies:

- The extent to which the proposed study is likely to promote the conclusion of disarmament agreements;
- The opinion of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies;
- Existing studies in the field;
- The contribution that the various competent bodies and institutes of the United Nations system could make;
- The estimated cost of the proposed study.

33. Cameroon also notes with interest that, in paragraph 65 of the above-mentioned document, it is suggested that the Institute for Disarmament Research might be a more effective and less expensive instrument for conducting such studies.

34. In addition, we think that the consideration of any proposal for studies should take account of the expertise that is increasingly available in States as a result of training and advanced study made possible by the implementation of the United Nations programme of fellowships on disarmament. Logically, the need for studies should diminish as Member States acquire the necessary expertise to participate fully in disarmament deliberations and negotiations.
(b) The gathering, compilation and dissemination of information on the arms race and disarmament

35. Our country attaches great importance to the increasing awareness and understanding of world public opinion regarding the dangers of the arms race and the beneficial effects of disarmament and congratulates the United Nations Secretariat on its activities in this field. With regard to the dissemination of information to the general public, we continue to think that a realistic approach should be adopted that takes account of the particular conditions existing in specific regions of the world. For example, greater use could be made of information leaflets, radio programmes and other related United Nations activities using local languages. As far as information for Governments is concerned, we think:

(i) That the United Nations Disarmament Yearbook for the year that has just elapsed should be distributed to Member States well before the First Committee begins its deliberations at each session of the General Assembly.

(ii) That the quarterly Disarmament might be published twice a year, in January and September and concentrate on providing factual information regarding pertinent news items and official reports and also substantive articles on disarmament, instead of reproducing, as at present, the well-known views and comments of individual authors.

(c) World Disarmament Campaign

36. In the general context of United Nations information activities regarding disarmament, Cameroon attaches particular importance to the decision taken by the General Assembly at its special session in 1982 to inform, to educate and to generate public understanding and support for the objectives of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. An effective campaign to that end would help revive the political will of Governments in favour of disarmament.

37. We therefore support the request of the General Assembly that that Campaign should be universal and conducted in an objective and practical manner in every region of the world. Bearing that in mind and taking into account, in particular, resolution 39/63 J of 12 December 1984 calling for the establishment of regional mechanisms for the implementation of the Campaign on the basis of existing resources and of voluntary contributions, Cameroon considers that it would be realistic and appropriate to entrust the implementation of the Campaign's programmes to the Department of Public Information of the United Nations, which has more than 60 information centres throughout the world. Such an arrangement would avoid waste and duplication within the Secretariat and would leave more time for the Department for Disarmament Affairs to fulfil its principal political functions.

(d) Training

38. Cameroon considers that the current United Nations programme of fellowships for disarmament is functioning satisfactorily. It would perhaps be advisable,
during the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, to envisage a new overall consideration of the training activities in this field. This programme has been functioning adequately since 1979, in accordance with the basic mandate outlined in paragraph 108 of the Final Document of the 1978 special session - namely, to promote the necessary expertise in disarmament in more Member States, particularly in the developing countries - and it now appears that the needs and requirements of the programme are evolving as annual training activities are successfully completed.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

39. Cameroon wishes first of all to reaffirm that the United Nations has a central role and primary responsibility in the field of disarmament; moreover, that role should be an effective one. Secondly, Cameroon considers that disarmament, which is a decisive factor for the lasting peace and security of States, should be pursued within the general context of the search for the peaceful settlement of disputes and the establishment of a system of collective security for the maintenance of international peace and security. In our opinion, it is illusory to hope for progress in disarmament if there is continued recourse to force in settlements between States or when there is no reliable international machinery to guarantee the security of all States.

40. It is in view of these considerations as a whole that our country puts forward the following recommendations, which it regards as a realistic step towards the search for more comprehensive measures for peace and security. In making these proposals, our country is well aware that the effectiveness of the role of the United Nations depends ultimately on the political will and the commitment of States. In this respect, it should be emphasized that relations of positive co-operation and other measures capable of building confidence among States can effectively and to a considerable extent facilitate the achievement and constant development of political will.

B. Recommendations

1. Machinery

(a) First Committee of the General Assembly

41. The agenda of the First Committee should be revised to permit biennial consideration of some of its traditional items.

42. When the General Assembly is in session, more time should be devoted to informal consultations and to the consideration of proposals and draft resolutions in the First Committee.

43. Efforts should be made to combine draft resolutions relating to the same subject and appearing under the same agenda item.

/...
(b) Disarmament Commission

44. The General Assembly should, during its third special session devoted to disarmament, consider the possibility of dissolving the present Disarmament Commission, particularly since its proceedings tend simply to duplicate those of the First Committee of the General Assembly.

(c) Conference on Disarmament

45. Membership of the Conference on Disarmament should be placed on a four-year rotational basis, bearing in mind the right of all States to participate in negotiations on disarmament, as well as the primary responsibility of the nuclear States regarding nuclear disarmament and the collaboration of those States with other military Powers with a view to ending the arms race.

46. In the Conference on Disarmament, the rule of consensus should not be applied to procedural or organizational matters, including proposals to establish subsidiary organs of the Conference and requests for participation in its work by non-members.

47. In order to enable him to carry out his responsibilities fully, the Secretary-General of the Conference should not - as is presently the case - also act as Personal Representative of the Secretary-General. The Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs could perform this latter role in the Conference.

48. Appropriate attention should be given to the excessive length of the sessions of the Conference on Disarmament, particularly in view of the lack of progress typical of its proceedings. To that end, sessions might be shortened or meetings cancelled whenever it becomes apparent that there is no prospect at a given time for constructive negotiations.

(d) Security Council

49. Extensive use should be made of the machinery of the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, in respect of all the complex questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, including disarmament. In view of the threat of a nuclear holocaust, the Security Council, as the only international forum where efforts are being made for the global security of humanity, should be encouraged to play a leading role in this field, as follows:

(1) Within the framework of the Council, the nuclear States, which are coincidentally the five permanent members, should meet at a conference of nuclear States and report regularly to the Council as a whole, through it to the General Assembly, and, subsequently, to the Conference on Disarmament, on the crucial question of preventing nuclear war and other measures for nuclear disarmament and security, with a view to holding negotiations which could lead to the conclusion of relevant agreements;
(ii) A new subsidiary organ of the Council should be established or an existing organ should be used, inter alia, to elaborate practical measures and modalities with a view to establishing an effective system of collective security and a programme of non-military security measures including such elements as confidence-building among States, the non-use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes, disarmament and development. This organ should report to the plenary session of the Council, which would, in turn, report to the General Assembly.

(e) **Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies**

50. This body advises the Secretary-General on various aspects of disarmament studies carried out under the auspices of the United Nations and on the conduct of the World Disarmament Campaign; it also functions as the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. Cameroon proposes that, when the present term of office of its members expires, this body should be replaced by an advisory committee on disarmament questions whose purpose would be to consider various matters relating to the role and activities of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and to advise the General Assembly on this subject, while at the same time functioning as the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR. This new committee would be made up of 18 Member States elected by the General Assembly on the basis of equitable geographical representation and a five-year system of rotation. The committee would report annually, or as frequently as required, to the General Assembly.

(f) **United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)**

51. Taking into account the Statute of the Institute and its close working relationship with the United Nations Secretariat and the General Assembly and also bearing in mind the need to eliminate duplication in respect of disarmament research and studies within the United Nations, the General Assembly should consider entrusting to UNIDIR all requests for studies approved by the Assembly, including those to be carried out with the assistance of groups of governmental experts and others.

2. **Programme management**

52. Cameroon attaches very great importance to rationalization, decentralization, priority-setting, co-ordination and the monitoring of performance in the overall management of various United Nations programmes related to disarmament. We therefore suggest that an in-depth evaluation of programme management be carried out as soon as possible.

3. **Role of the Secretary-General**

53. The role of the Secretary-General in crisis-prevention diplomacy should be generally enhanced by strengthening the capacity of his office to identify potential disputes among States and to prevent such disputes from degenerating into
relatively limited and localized conflicts or turning into broader conflagrations which consequently present a danger to international peace and security.

54. Whenever the United Nations is engaged in preventive diplomacy or peacekeeping operations during a specific crisis, the Secretary-General, with the concurrence of the States concerned, should, where appropriate, explore together with those States the possibilities of controlling, limiting or reducing armaments in the areas of conflict.

4. **Assistance to States and regional organizations**

55. The United Nations should provide assistance to regional organizations which request such aid with a view to resolving conflicts and monitoring or administering the limitation and regulation of armaments and disarmament agreements on a unilateral, bilateral, subregional or regional basis.