1. At its thirty-fifth session, in 1980, the General Assembly unanimously adopted a Declaration whereby it designated the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade and prescribed a programme of action to be followed by Member States during the Decade. The present mid-term review of this Declaration provides an opportunity for assessing the progress or otherwise in its implementation, analysing the underlying reasons for the present state of affairs in the field of disarmament and charting the course of action to be followed in the second half of the Decade.

2. An assessment of the situation cannot but lead to the conclusion that the goals of the Decade are far from being achieved. In the five years since 1980 the world has rather witnessed the most massive arms buildup, both qualitatively and quantitatively. An indication of the quantitative buildup is that whereas the total number of nuclear warheads in 1980 was in excess of 40,000, it is today far in excess of 50,000. Qualitatively, nuclear weapons have today not only become more accurate and faster to deliver but also diversified in types and categories in terms of their destructiveness and lethal nature. The deployment of new weapon systems, particularly in Europe, has further exacerbated the tension between the two super-Powers and their alliances. The disposition of the nuclear forces of the major nuclear Powers today is far more menacing than it was in 1980. Warning times between launch and attack by the intermediate-range nuclear missiles have come down to anything between 1.5 to 5 minutes. The modernization of global nuclear arsenals consisting of the newest and most deadly missiles is under way with a view to their deployment on land and sea as well as on aircraft. As though this was not bad enough for the world, the latest quest for deployment of space-based defence against nuclear weapons will not only trigger a still more pernicious arms race but also render meaningless any hope of making progress in disarmament. The danger of the outbreak of a nuclear war has steadily grown with each addition of new weapon systems. The human race finds itself in unprecedented peril due to the threat posed by the nuclear weapons to its very survival. Latest scientific findings have
shown how the use of even a fraction of the existing nuclear arsenal can bring about a global climatic catastrophe in the form of a nuclear winter which will befall the world, including the attacker nation, regardless of whether or not the attacked nation retaliates.

3. Not only in the nuclear field but also in the field of conventional weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, the major Powers have given impetus to yet another spiral of the buildup of armaments. The latest conventional weaponry in the mid-1980s is many times more destructive than before.

4. On the other hand, the record in regard to the implementation of the goals and the priorities of disarmament, as mentioned in the Declaration, shows no progress at all. The second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament completely failed to accomplish any of the substantive tasks on its agenda. It was really tragic that this special session could not reach agreement on adoption of any measures in response to the deep and widespread concern and anxiety of people all over the world for the prevention of nuclear war.

5. During the 1970s, which was designated the first Disarmament Decade, it was possible to achieve modest progress in arms limitation and disarmament. Moreover, the agreements of the 1970s, albeit limited, contributed to a favourable international climate. The convening of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament represented the culmination of the positive trend of the 1970s. The Final Document of that session symbolized the common will and aspirations of the international community for concrete action towards general and complete disarmament. During the decade of the 1980s, however, developments have taken place which have had the effect of wiping out even the marginal achievements of the 1970s. The allegations and counter-allegations about violations of past agreements by the two major nuclear-weapon Powers have served to place in jeopardy even the existing treaties and agreements in the field of disarmament. Negotiations that were under way at the turn of the decade on crucial issues of disarmament, e.g. a comprehensive test ban, prohibition of anti-satellite weapons etc., were suspended. There has been a complete stagnation in the efforts to resume negotiations on these issues in other forums. Some nuclear-weapon States and their allies have taken positions during the past five years which fall far short of their political commitments as stated in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament. These nuclear-weapon States and their allies have persisted in their refusal to engage in negotiations of any serious disarmament agreements in spite of the repeated recommendations to this effect by the overwhelming majority of the membership of the General Assembly. The Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating body, as a result, has been unable to commence negotiations on the highest priority issues on its agenda, namely, measures for prevention of nuclear war, a treaty on a nuclear-test ban, cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament and for prevention of an arms race in outer space.

6. Nuclear-weapon States and their allies have attached great importance to the bilateral negotiations between the two major nuclear-weapon Powers but these negotiations have been severely limited in scope and have been on-again and off-again during the past five years. The purpose of these negotiations has been
to manage the nuclear world rather than eliminate nuclear weapons or even halt the nuclear-arms race. They have been conducted within the framework of the security doctrines which sanction the use of nuclear weapons and the retention of huge nuclear arsenals for this purpose. They have been used as a convenient device for bringing to a standstill the work of the multilateral disarmament forums, in spite of the statement in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament that the United Nations has a central role and primary responsibility for disarmament. It has not even received so much as a report on these negotiations.

7. A larger and larger share of the limited resources of the world has progressively been wasted on continuation of the arms race. The desirability of reallocation of resources released from disarmament for socio-economic purposes has long been expressed in various United Nations forums. Paragraphs 15 and 16 of the Declaration provided for measures to achieve that objective.

8. Because of this dismal failure of bilateral and multilateral negotiations to yield any positive results, the ground swell of public opinion all over the world against the nuclear-arms race has constituted the only hope for mankind. Peace movements and other forms of spontaneous popular expression have demonstrated an unprecedented unity of purpose and the grave concern of ordinary people from all walks of life and from different societies and cultures to stop the nuclear-arms race and to proceed promptly toward the elimination of nuclear weapons.

9. The World Disarmament Campaign, set into motion by the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, is designed to arouse public awareness of the dangers of the continued arms race by disseminating relevant information, organizing discussions, etc.

10. The main reason behind the present alarming state of the nuclear-arms race lies in the security doctrine of the nuclear-weapon States, that is, nuclear deterrence, which is based on mutual assured destruction. This doctrine has served to perpetuate suspicion and mutual antagonisms between the two major nuclear Powers and their allies. Moreover, this doctrine is not even a doctrine of security but a disguise for continuation of the nuclear-arms race for the maintenance of great-Power hegemony over all nations.

11. Notwithstanding this record of unmitigated failure, the stake of mankind in disarmament is so high that the international community must continue its efforts during the second half of the Decade to achieve concrete results. Priorities for immediate action are laid down in the Declaration itself and, more elaborately, in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament. All nations, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, must endeavour to implement the Declaration. They must take steps in accordance with its paragraphs 11, 12 and 14. The very least which the international community can do in the remaining half of the Second Disarmament Decade is to take concrete action to achieve the following:

   (a) Urgent preventive action must be taken to exclude for ever the use of nuclear weapons and the occurrence of a nuclear war.

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(b) The conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty should be given the highest priority because of its positive impact on the cessation of the nuclear-arms race. No technical reasons now exist to prevent an agreement on a treaty.

(c) Nuclear-weapon States should apply a freeze on nuclear-weapon production and proceed toward deep and substantial reductions in present nuclear arsenals leading to their complete elimination.

(d) There should be no further delay in the commencement of negotiations to conclude agreement or agreements for the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

(e) Ongoing negotiations on a chemical weapons convention should be speeded up so as to conclude an international convention for prohibition of production, stockpiling, transfer or use of chemical weapons.

(f) The massive growth of military expenditure must be arrested forthwith and ways and means should be found through appropriate disarmament agreements so that the resources wasted in the continuing arms race are released and devoted to developmental purposes. Paragraphs 15 and 16 of the Declaration provide measures to be taken to achieve this objective. All States are therefore urged to co-operate and facilitate the convening of the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Disarmament and Development and work for its successful conclusion.

(g) The commencement of bilateral negotiations between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has constituted a welcome development. The two negotiating States should constantly bear in mind that the agenda for and the outcome of their negotiations is a matter of concern for all nations and all people. It is imperative that these negotiations produce concrete and effective agreements to prevent an arms race in outer space and to terminate it on earth. The United Nations must be kept informed of the progress made in these negotiations.

12. In the framework of the foregoing, it is imperative that the Disarmament Commission should recommend to the General Assembly to call upon all States:

(a) To reaffirm their commitment to the objectives of the Decade;

(b) To refrain from doing anything that will jeopardize the attainment of the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament under effective international control;

(c) To take urgent steps to halt the nuclear-arms race as a necessary step towards the efficacy of disarmament negotiations and the improvement of the international climate;

(d) To avert the threat to human existence posed by the nuclear-arms race by undertaking in a legally binding instrument not to use nuclear weapons;

(e) To exert greater efforts, in the implementation of the World Disarmament Campaign, to alert the public opinion to the danger of nuclear war.