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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION  
Agenda item 7

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

#### Findings, recommendations and proposals

#### Paper of the Chairman of Working Group II

In reviewing how the effectiveness of the United Nations role in disarmament might be strengthened, the following were agreed:

#### I. STRENGTHENING OF THE COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT OF THE MEMBER STATES TO THE PROCESS OF DISARMAMENT IN CONFORMITY WITH THE FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE TENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT OF THE TWELFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. The Disarmament Commission recommends that all States Members of the United Nations should reaffirm their full commitment to the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and their obligation strictly to observe its principles as well as other relevant and generally accepted principles of international law relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.
2. It recognizes that the Charter envisages that multilateral agreement on measures of disarmament shall have an important role in the maintenance of international peace and security.
3. The Commission stresses the special importance of the principles of refraining 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; non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States; the inviolability of international frontiers; and the peaceful settlement of disputes, having regard to the inherent right of States to individual and collective self-defence in accordance with the Charter.

4. The Commission recognizes that all the peoples of the world have a vital interest in the success of disarmament negotiations. Consequently, it reaffirms that all States have the right and the duty to be concerned with and to contribute to efforts in the field of disarmament, in conformity with the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly and the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly. All States have the right to participate on an equal footing in multilateral disarmament negotiations that have a bearing on their national security.

5. The UNDC recognizes that most of the goals set in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly have not so far been achieved. Consequently, the Commission, after stressing the need for political will on all sides, and in particular among the nuclear-weapon Powers and other militarily significant States that have been recognized in the Final Document as bearing the primary responsibility for halting and reversing the arms race and moving towards disarmament, recommends that all States should reaffirm their commitment to the Final Document, including the Declaration and Programme of Action contained therein.

6. While disarmament is the responsibility of all States, the Commission reaffirms that the nuclear-weapon States have the primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament and, together with other militarily significant States, for halting and reversing the arms race in all its aspects. It is therefore crucial to secure their active participation in concrete efforts towards that end, including in particular the following:

(a) Nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of the human race and civilization. Nuclear disarmament therefore remains a matter of the highest priority for multilateral disarmament efforts. In this connection, the Commission, recalling the recommendations and decisions contained in the Final Document, recommends that all States, particularly nuclear-weapon States and especially those among them that possess the most important nuclear arsenals, should urgently engage in negotiations to fulfil the priority tasks set forth in its Programme of Action. They should hasten the early attainment of agreements for the purpose of halting and reversing the nuclear arms race and preventing the further proliferation of such weapons with a view to the achievement at the earliest possible time of the ultimate and complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

(b) Having regard to the vital and growing importance of efforts to prevent the expansion of the arms race into areas hitherto free from it, the Commission recommends that Member States should ensure that activities in outer space shall be carried out for peaceful purposes.

(c) The Commission considers that effective measures are necessary to prevent the development, testing, production, stockpiling or use of other weapons of mass destruction. In this context, it recommends that an agreement on the total elimination of all chemical weapons should be concluded as a matter of high priority.

(d) The Commission recommends that more attention should be paid to the dangers posed by the growing development, production, transfer and accumulation of conventional weapons. Consequently, it recommends that, together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, negotiations should be carried out, especially among States possessing the largest military arsenals, on the balanced reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments, based on the principle of undiminished security of the parties with a view to enhancing stability at a lower military level, taking into account the inherent need of all States to protect their security as well as the need of peoples under colonial or racist domination to realize their self-determination and independence.

(e) The Commission considers that verification is an essential and integral element of the disarmament process. In the context of international disarmament negotiations, it recommends that adequate measures of verification acceptable to all States concerned should be examined and elaborated.

## II. STRENGTHENING OF THE CENTRAL ROLE AND PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT

7. The Disarmament Commission reaffirms that the United Nations, a forum where all nations have the opportunity to contribute to the process of disarmament deliberations and negotiations, has, in accordance with its Charter, a central role and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament.

8. The Commission recommends the reaffirmation of the central role and primary responsibilities of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. States Members of the United Nations should therefore undertake to facilitate the effective exercise of the jurisdiction of the Organization in this field. To this end, Member States should undertake further to use fully the existing institutional arrangements as well as other appropriate arrangements as may be agreed upon by all Member States concerned.

9. The Commission recommends that the United Nations should encourage and facilitate all disarmament efforts - unilateral, bilateral, regional and multilateral - and be kept duly informed, through the General Assembly or any other appropriate United Nations channel reaching all Members of the Organization, of developments in disarmament efforts outside its aegis without prejudice to the progress of negotiations. The Commission stresses that the need for the United Nations to be kept informed of such outside efforts is more so when the subject-matter of the negotiations concerns the wider interests of other countries and the international community as a whole.

10. The Commission recognizes that while the effectiveness of the United Nations in the field of disarmament depends, above all, on the readiness of Member States to recommit and rededicate themselves to the fulfilment of their obligations under the Charter and to the implementation of the measures recommended in the Final Document, a significant role can also be played by the effective functioning of an appropriate international machinery designed to deal with the problems of disarmament in its various aspects. To that end, the Commission recommends that Member States should undertake continually to improve such machinery, as appropriate, with a view to enhancing its effective functioning.

III. STRENGTHENING OF THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE  
FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY; CO-OPERATION AND  
CONFIDENCE AMONG STATES

11. The Disarmament Commission reaffirms that the maintenance of international peace and security is one of the main purposes of the United Nations. It considers that the strengthening of international peace and security can be obtained through the increased effectiveness of the Organization and that, in turn, the effectiveness of the Organization depends first and foremost upon the readiness of Member States to fulfil their obligations under the Charter. Consequently, the Commission recommends that Member States should co-operate and seek common solutions for the maintenance of international peace and security within the framework of the collective security system provided under the Charter.

12. The Commission recommends that the permanent members of the Security Council, having regard to their special status and responsibilities under the Charter, should undertake as a matter of extreme urgency to ensure the effectiveness of the central role of the Council with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security, including disarmament.

13. The Commission affirms that disarmament is an essential factor for lasting peace and security. It also recognizes that improvement in the international security situation would facilitate sustained progress in the field of disarmament. Consequently, the Commission considers that disarmament should be pursued within the overall context of the search for the prevention of war, in particular nuclear war, and the establishment of an effective system of collective security for the maintenance of international peace and security.

14. The Commission affirms that progress in disarmament would be difficult if there is continued recourse to force or the threat of force in the settlement of disputes among States and if there is no reliable machinery to guarantee the security of all States. It emphasizes that the ineffective functioning of the system of collective security set up by the Charter has led States, especially small, non-aligned developing countries, to seek to develop their own independent military capability, with adverse consequences for their economic development. The Commission therefore recommends that States Members of the United Nations should urgently examine and adopt practical and realistic measures and mechanisms for collective security within the United Nations.

15. The Commission stresses that security, especially in the nuclear age, should be seen as an extremely complex objective and should therefore be viewed in its widest context as a universal and indivisible phenomenon comprising a variety of socio-economic, political and military elements. Progress on arms limitation and disarmament should therefore be accompanied by a sustained process of co-operation among States in a variety of areas, including economic, social, scientific and cultural affairs. It would be conducive to confidence-building and thus promote co-operation among States.

16. While confidence-building must neither be a substitute nor a pre-condition for disarmament measures nor divert attention from them, the Commission considers that

commitment to pursue appropriate confidence-building measures in a specific context, including strict compliance with agreements already entered into, could foster the process of disarmament and security.

IV. STRENGTHENING OF THE DELIBERATIVE AND NEGOTIATING FUNCTIONS OF THE RELEVANT MULTILATERAL ORGANS, AS WELL AS THE FUNCTIONS OF OTHER ORGANS, ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE TENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT OF THE TWELFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AS WELL AS SUBSEQUENT RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

17. The Disarmament Commission reaffirms that in order for the United Nations to discharge effectively its central role and primary responsibility in the field of disarmament, the necessary political will of States, as well as the effective functioning of the international machinery set up to deal with the problems of disarmament in its various aspects, must be demonstrated.

18. The Commission reiterates the importance and necessity for Member States to fulfil their obligations under the Charter and to implement the recommendations and decisions of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly. Equally, it considers that while the existing multilateral machinery for the consideration of disarmament questions is sufficient to allow the United Nations to discharge the responsibility entrusted to it in the field of disarmament, there is room for improvement in that machinery to ensure that it functions effectively and yields practical results. The Commission therefore recommends that the following practical measures should be implemented without delay:

1. General Assembly and its organs

19. Special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament should be held when in the opinion of the States Members of the United Nations as a whole there is a clearly defined need for such sessions.

20. The General Assembly's substantive consideration of disarmament issues should continue to be undertaken by the First Committee.

21. Rationalization and streamlining of the work of the First Committee with a view to enhancing its effectiveness should be undertaken through: (a) increased clustering of items on its agenda; (b) the staggering of perennial items on the agenda of the First Committee over two or more years; (c) the organization of the Committee's work in such a way as to allow more time for informal consultations; (d) endeavouring to merge draft resolutions on the same subject or under the same agenda item in order to focus more clearly on the central issues involved; and (e) efforts by Member States to focus their statements during the general debate on a limited number of topics, without restricting the right of representatives to speak on any other subject of concern to them.

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22. The General Assembly should adjourn the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference and the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean until the climate for substantive progress in the work of those organs has improved. In this connection, the respective chairmen should keep the General Assembly informed of relevant developments and indicate when in the opinion of the members of the organs concerned the resumption of meetings would be useful.

## 2. Security Council

23. The role of the Security Council in the promotion of disarmament should be strengthened. To this end, the General Assembly should invite the Security Council urgently to explore possibilities for initiating discussions under its auspices on the maintenance of international peace and security in the nuclear age, including in particular the prevention of nuclear war and other measures for nuclear disarmament, and to report thereon to the Assembly during the first half of 1987.

## 3. Other organs and activities

### (a) World Disarmament Campaign

24. The role of the World Disarmament Campaign in the dissemination of information on all aspects of disarmament in an objective, balanced and practical manner in all regions of the world should be strengthened, bearing in mind the voluntary nature of funding for the Campaign. The Secretary-General, in the implementation of the Campaign, should take the necessary administrative measures, including greater use of existing institutional arrangements, notably the Department of Public Information, in order to eliminate waste and duplication in United Nations information activities.

### (b) Advisory Board of the Secretary-General on Disarmament Studies

25. Upon the expiration of the present term of office of its membership, the Advisory Board of the Secretary-General on Disarmament Studies should be restructured, limiting its membership to 15 for a five-year rotational term, and its role strengthened with the additional function to consider and recommend guidelines as well as the framework for carrying out proposed studies.

### (c) United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

26. Bearing in mind the Statute of the Institute and its close working relationship with the United Nations Secretariat and the General Assembly and taking into account also the need to lower costs and to eliminate duplication in respect of disarmament research and studies within the United Nations, the General Assembly should consider entrusting to the Institute all requests for studies approved by the Assembly. This should include those to be carried out with the assistance of groups of governmental experts.

4. Specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency

27. Member States of the United Nations should be kept duly informed, through the General Assembly or other appropriate channels reaching all Member States, of disarmament activities carried out by the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

5. Conference on Disarmament

28. The General Assembly should invite the Conference on Disarmament to consider the following measures as a contribution to the strengthening of the negotiating functions of multilateral organs and the enhancement of the central role and primary responsibility of the United Nations in the field of disarmament:

(a) Membership of the Conference on Disarmament should be placed on a four-year rotational basis, taking into account equitable geographical representation and bearing in mind the right of all States to participate in disarmament negotiations as well as the primary responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States for nuclear disarmament and the collaboration of these States with other militarily significant States with a view to halting and reversing the arms race in all its aspects;

(b) The rules of procedure for the Conference on Disarmament should be revised to waive the rule of consensus on procedural or organizational matters, including the adoption of the agenda, proposals for the establishment of subsidiary organs of the Conference and requests by non-members to participate in the work of the Conference;

(c) In order to enhance the central role and primary responsibility of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and to strengthen the relationship between the Conference on Disarmament and the General Assembly, the Secretary-General should appoint the Under-Secretary-General of the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat to serve concurrently as the Secretary-General's Personal Representative to the Conference on Disarmament.

6. Review conferences and other multilateral bodies

29. The General Assembly should recommend to the States parties concerned that unless specific review periods are indicated in relevant disarmament agreements, review conferences ought not to be held except where, in the opinion of the majority of States parties, there is a clearly defined need for them.

V. ROLE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

30. The role of the Secretary-General, as envisaged under the Charter, in the maintenance of international peace and security should be strengthened. In the field of disarmament, (a) the General Assembly and the Security Council should, in

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appropriate cases, request the Secretary-General to undertake investigations of allegations of treaty violations in the field of disarmament or other related developments that may threaten international peace and security; (b) the Secretary-General should, in consultation with the States concerned, explore possibilities for controlling, limiting, reducing or eliminating armaments in specific areas of conflict; (c) the Secretary-General should report annually to the Assembly on the world-wide process of disarmament, including negotiations held within and outside the framework of the United Nations at different levels - bilateral, regional and multilateral - without prejudice to the progress of the negotiations. To this end, the Assembly should call upon Member States involved to co-operate with the Secretary-General.

#### VI. DEPARTMENT FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS; CO-ORDINATION

31. The role of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in the overall co-ordination of and support for the political efforts of States in the multilateral disarmament deliberating and negotiating machinery should be strengthened. To this end, the Secretary-General should undertake to streamline and rationalize the activities of the Department to enhance further its effectiveness and efficiency in the execution of the tasks entrusted to the Secretariat by the General Assembly in the field of disarmament.

#### VII. ASSISTANCE TO STATES AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

32. The United Nations should provide assistance to regional organizations that 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.

33. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly should carry out periodic reviews of the functions of the various organs of the Assembly in the field of disarmament with a view to assessing the validity of their continued existence.

34. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly should carry out periodic reviews of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament in order constantly to monitor and evaluate relevant developments in this field with a view to ensuring the effective discharge of the central role and primary responsibility of the United Nations in disarmament.

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