Ad Hoc Committee on the World
Disarmament Conference

DRAFT REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON
THE WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

(Submitted by its Working Group)

I. Introduction

1. By resolution 3183 (XXVIII) of 18 December 1973, the General Assembly decided in paragraph 1 to establish an Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference to examine all the views and suggestions expressed by Governments on the convening of a world disarmament conference (WDC) and related problems, including conditions for the realization of such a conference, and to submit, on the basis of consensus, a report to the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session.

2. The General Assembly, in paragraph 2 of the resolution, decided that the Ad Hoc Committee should consist of the following 40 non-nuclear-weapon Member States appointed by the President of the General Assembly after consultation with all regional groups: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Liberia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire and Zambia.

3. The General Assembly, in paragraph 3 of the resolution, invited the States possessing nuclear weapons to co-operate or maintain contact with the Ad Hoc Committee, it being understood that they would enjoy the same rights as the appointed members of the Committee.

4. It further invited all States to communicate as soon as possible to the Secretary-General, for transmission to the Ad Hoc Committee, any views and suggestions they deemed pertinent to submit for the purpose defined in paragraph 1 above. The replies received are contained in document A/AC.167/L.2 and Add.1-6, as well as in two communications contained in documents A/9590 and A/9636.
II. Work of the Committee

5. The Committee held meetings at the United Nations Headquarters between 7-10 May, 24-27 June and 9-13 September 1974. The first session of the Committee was opened by the Secretary-General who made a statement.

6. The Committee elected the following officers:

Chairman: Mr. Fereydoun Hoveyda (Iran)
Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Eugeniusz Kulaga (Poland)
              Mr. Patrice Mikanagu (Burundi)
              Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (Peru)
Rapporteur: Mr. Antonio Elias (Spain)

7. In addition to States appointed to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee as members, France, United Kingdom, USSR, ... participated in the work of the Committee by virtue of paragraph 3 of resolution 3183 (XXVIII). Under the same paragraph, maintained contact with the Ad Hoc Committee through its Chairman.

8. In examining the views of States as requested by General Assembly resolution 3183 (XXVIII), the Committee had before it, on its request, a summary prepared by the Secretariat quoting, under headings proposed by the Bureau and accepted by the Committee, views and suggestions expressed by Governments. The draft of the summary was circulated to all Members of the United Nations for additional comments and suggestions. The Secretary-General sent communications to the Member States, inviting them to present in writing any new suggestions they desired to offer.

9. At its 8th meeting on 26 June 1974, the Committee established an open-ended working group composed of Burundi, Egypt, Hungary, India, Iran, Italy, Mexico, Peru, Poland and Spain with the task to prepare a draft report to be examined by the Committee for submission to the General Assembly. Representatives of the following members of the Ad Hoc Committee participated in the deliberations of the Working Group: Argentina and Yugoslavia. In addition, representatives of Brazil, Czechoslovakia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Romania, Sweden, Turkey and Zambia attended meetings of the Working Group.

10. The Working Group held 37 meetings between 27 June and 6 September 1974 under the chairmanship of the Rapporteur of the Committee.

11. The final version of the "Summary of views and suggestions expressed by Governments on the convening of a world disarmament conference and related problems, including conditions for the realization of such a conference" (A/AC.167/L.4), incorporating the views expressed up to 5 August 1974, was examined by the Working Group and the Committee and found to be an adequate reflection of the positions maintained by Governments. Various delegations expressed their appreciation to the Secretariat for the preparation of such a document.
12. It was decided that the Summary should be annexed to the report of the Committee.

III. Examination of views and suggestions expressed by Governments

13. From the range of views expressed by Governments as summarized by the Secretariat in document A/AC.167/L.4 annexed to this report, the following approaches are discernible:

A large group of States strongly urges that a WDC be convened as soon as possible after due preparation. While stress is laid on the participation of all States on an equal footing, the participation of nuclear-weapon States is, nevertheless, deemed essential.

Other States maintain that active participation of all nuclear-weapon States is a condition sine qua non for the success of the Conference, which would also require thorough preparation. If all nuclear-weapon States take an active interest in the preparation and convening of a WDC, it could produce positive results.

Another group of States is convinced that political conditions for the convening of a WDC, being especially promoted by détente and ever increasing importance of disarmament, have become ripe. The Conference should be convened as soon as possible, with preparatory steps to be taken without delay. All countries of the world should participate in the Conference on an equal footing. The participation of all nuclear-weapon States is of great importance.

*According to another approach a WDC can only be convened if certain prerequisites for the creation of necessary conditions conducive to genuine disarmament are met. The convening of a WDC could only be acceptable if there is a clear obligation on the part of the nuclear-weapon States, (a) not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, particularly against non-nuclear-weapon States and (b) to end all forms of their military presence on the territory of other countries.

According to another line of thinking, a WDC cannot contribute at this time to the achievement of concrete arms control agreements. Such agreements could only be obtained through a step-by-step approach by careful, patient and businesslike negotiations in an atmosphere relatively free of polemics. The General Assembly could note, by consensus, the possible usefulness of a WDC convened at an appropriate time.

Finally, several States agree and support in principle the convening of a WDC; however, they consider of crucial importance the need to eliminate the difficulties with regard to its convening. Therefore, they call upon

* The wording of this paragraph is subject to the result of consultations.
all parties to overcome the difficulties which separate them so that a WDC, so long awaited by the peace-loving peoples, could be realized.

14. The views and suggestions expressed by Governments on the convening of a WDC can be generally summarized as follows:

A WDC could provide a new universal forum to make multilateral disarmament negotiations effective and to give meaning and substance to the Disarmament Decade, and to the efforts to reach general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

A WDC could give new impetus or become a turning point in the disarmament efforts. It could fulfill the need for a universal forum for disarmament discussions; ideas and principles emanating from a WDC could strengthen negotiating bodies in arriving at concrete agreements.

A WDC could approach disarmament within the context of international collective security, global and regional, and in its relations to development.

The universalization of the disarmament talks could spur disarmament negotiations and facilitate the adoption of disarmament measures.

A WDC could ensure the openness of diplomacy, equality of participation and exposure to public accountability that might stimulate effective action.

The premature convening of a WDC or of a preparatory commission would be more likely to produce harmful rhetoric, rather than purposeful, businesslike negotiations which would be needed to produce specific results.

The First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly where all nuclear-weapon States were represented, was performing the task of establishing broad objectives for disarmament negotiations and there was no need for duplication of this activity in another forum.

15. The following views were expressed about the conditions for the realization of a WDC:

A WDC should be adequately prepared.

The participation in a WDC should be universal. All States should be assured of equal participation in the Conference.

The participation of all nuclear-weapon States and major military States in a WDC must be assured; the nuclear-weapon States should display a readiness to go along with the widely held views that disarmament issues should be tackled on an urgent basis and with the participation of all States, big and small.
The developing process of détente in international relations provides one of the basic conditions for the successful convening of a WDC.

A WDC could be successful only in an atmosphere of détente, international co-operation and mutual trust.

A WDC would have to be able to offer real prospects of agreement on significant arms control measures.

All countries should have the right to equal participation in the decisions and control over their implementation.

*The People's Republic of China maintained that: "all nuclear countries, particularly the Soviet Union and the United States, which possess the largest amount of nuclear weapons, must first of all undertake the unequivocal obligations that at no time and in no circumstances will they be the first to use nuclear weapons, and they not only will not use nuclear weapons against each other, but more importantly will not use them against the non-nuclear countries; they must withdraw from abroad all their armed forces, including nuclear missile forces, and dismantle all their military bases, including nuclear bases, on the territories of other countries".

It was indispensable to ensure in advance general support for the convening of a WDC.

16. Suggestions have also been offered by Governments on the main objectives of a World Disarmament Conference which can be generally summarized as follows:

A WDC should have clear objectives, namely, to discuss the total prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

A WDC could help States to determine and agree upon the most urgent aspects of the disarmament problems and to point out practical and mutually acceptable and agreed ways and means of limiting and putting an end to the arms race.

A WDC could evaluate and encourage disarmament efforts, formulating guidelines and priorities with a view to the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control; it could also point out practical and mutually acceptable measures of disarmament.

A WDC, by bringing together all States of the world and specially all the nuclear-weapon States and militarily significant countries, could tackle disarmament globally, and seek ways and means of solving disarmament problems.

* The wording of this paragraph is subject to the result of consultations.
A WDC could review and make recommendations on the political, economic and military aspects of disarmament.

A WDC should give prominent place to the question of the negative economic and social consequences of the arms race for the world community and, in particular, for the developing countries.

A WDC could strengthen the link between disarmament and economic development, suggesting ways and means of channeling the funds saved from measures of disarmament for accelerating economic and social development in general and in the developing countries, in particular.

A WDC could make an assessment of the results achieved in the field of disarmament negotiations, and evaluate the significance and implementation of international agreements concluded so far.

A WDC could draw the attention of the international community to the magnitude and gravity of the arms race and to determine a general line of action to halt and reverse it.

17. Views and suggestions have also been offered by Governments on the preparation, agenda and organizational aspects of a World Disarmament Conference:

(a) Adequate preparation:

The preparation necessary for a World Disarmament Conference could be undertaken in stages, through bilateral and multilateral consultations, by either existing organs dealing with disarmament or eventually by a preparatory body, designated in advance (with timing, size, composition, terms of reference to be determined and agreed upon). The participation of all the nuclear-weapon States and militarily significant Powers in the preparation for a World Disarmament Conference was considered by some Governments as useful, by others as extremely desirable and by still others as indispensable.

(b) Agenda:

The agenda of a World Disarmament Conference should be comprehensive with a view to arriving at agreement on guidelines for general and complete disarmament, under effective international control.

Priority should be given in a World Disarmament Conference agenda to specific measures of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament and the elimination of other weapons of mass destruction.

The agreement on the agenda should be reached in the preparatory stage.
(c) Timing, duration and possible site:

A WDC should be convened at an early date, preferably within the next two years or as soon as possible; it should be convened at an appropriate time; the time should be decided in light of the preparatory work; it could last for 1-3 months or as necessary for the fulfilment of its task; it could be convened in Geneva, New York, Vienna or any other site assuring participation of all States.

(d) The view was also expressed that under present circumstances it is inadvisable to convene, set a date for, or start preparations for a WDC.

18. Views were also expressed on procedural aspects of a World Disarmament Conference (level of representation, character of decisions and ways of their adoption), its follow-up and relationship to the United Nations.

/Closing paragraph(s)/