Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of
the Role of the United Nations
in the Field of Disarmament

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

Report of the Secretary-General

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TABULATION OF REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

I. POSSIBLE NEW APPROACHES FOR ACHIEVING MORE EFFECTIVE PROCEDURES AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT, THEREBY ENABLING THE UNITED NATIONS TO EXERCISE ITS FULL ROLE IN MULTILATERAL DISARMAMENT EFFORTS

1. **(Role of the General Assembly and Improved methods of work of the First Committee)**

   **Australia**

   Australia believes that the First Committee of the General Assembly provides a suitable universal forum for the discussion of broad principles and the establishment of priorities. Australia further believes that many States share its concern at difficulties many delegations have experienced in dealing with the proliferation of agenda items, with their accompanying resolutions, which has marked the Committee's debate in recent years to the detriment of the effectiveness of the Committee's proper function.

   In order to improve the working of this Committee, Australia would suggest that the disarmament debate be divided broadly into separate parts dealing with nuclear arms control and non-nuclear and conventional arms control respectively and that, where practicable, the Committee report separately to the Assembly on these questions. Australia further suggests that once the Assembly has endorsed the broad concept relating to a measure of arms control, it then be referred to an appropriate subsidiary body or, in the case of regional arms control agreements, to the regional organization concerned, for further detailed consideration and negotiation. It is in our view important that debates of the First Committee should not develop into a mere ritual devoid of practical effect.

   **Costa Rica**

   Costa Rica shares the concern already expressed by many other countries with respect to the methods of work of the United Nations organs dealing with disarmament. One of them is the First Committee of the General Assembly. The study of items relating to disarmament in the First Committee can and should be rationalized with a view to making it more specific and effective, without prejudice to a broader examination of the matters under study. As has been justly observed, it is discouraging to note that in spite of the many resolutions adopted on a wide range of subjects, the practical result of these efforts does not seem capable of holding back the growth of armaments, which is intensifying and proliferating, both in conventional and in nuclear weapons. This point should be explored and negotiated in the course of the informal consultations that will be held during the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee.

   (See also section I.3 below.)

   /...
France

(See section I.2 below.)

Ireland

The General Assembly is currently the only forum open to all Member States for the in-depth review and debate of disarmament questions. Because of this it would clearly be inappropriate to restrict the right of any Member State to raise at the General Assembly any disarmament question of concern to it or to advance any proposal which it considers important. None the less it is apparent that the disarmament content of the agenda of the General Assembly and in particular of the First Committee is becoming overloaded and correspondingly unmanageable. This has resulted in a dissipation of energy over a wide and often diffuse range of items at the expense of clarity and progress on the priority issues. Some refinement of the existing procedures of the First Committee is, therefore, called for if the Committee and the General Assembly are to give a lead in identifying the priority goals and in defining the broad principles which should guide progress towards agreement on them.

Working Procedures of First Committee

With the aim of improving the working procedures of the First Committee, Ireland has the following proposals to offer:

(i) The agenda

(a) This should allow for a coherent and structured debate of integrally related items. In the formulation of the agenda, specific categories of issues could be grouped together under a common agenda heading so as to encourage the debate to focus more clearly on their substance and on the interrelationship between them.

(b) Essentially the agenda should allow for a reflective discussion of key issues based on a mutually agreed and carefully balanced allocation of work as between Assembly sessions. For example, by common agreement certain issues could be debated biennially rather than annually as at present. This may, of course, require some modification of the present practice whereby items are automatically inscribed on the agenda through the provisions of the previous session's resolutions and at the least that practice merits review.

(ii) Resolutions

(a) Where practicable, draft resolutions should be submitted well in advance of the commencement of the disarmament debate.

(b) Some attempt should also be made to reduce the number of resolutions tabled annually so that delegations are afforded an opportunity to concentrate their attention on improving the content and form of resolutions.

/...
(c) If a more systematic and reflective approach to the agenda were followed, this would in itself assist in reducing the number of resolutions arising at each session.

(d) Whereas issues which are unrelated in their substance clearly do require separate resolutions, the possibilities could be explored of combining closely-related questions within a single common resolution.

(e) Greater efforts should be made to secure broad agreement on the resolution tabled.

Report of CCD

The report of CCD has in the past provided a useful focal point for the disarmament debate in the First Committee. At the same time, Ireland considers that the present format of the report could be improved so as to provide Member States with a more analytic and detailed statement of the stage reached in the negotiations at Geneva and the issues involved.

In future, the report might not only cover in broad fashion the main issues at each working session of CCD but could also identify the reasons for lack of progress on any given area, the positions taken by the main negotiating States and offer a common assessment of the prospects for concrete agreement on the outstanding issues. This would allow the General Assembly to reach its own independent evaluation of the extent of progress made on the main items under consideration. The aim in general should be a healthy interaction between the work of the General Assembly and that of CCD.

New Zealand

It has become increasingly obvious that if the General Assembly is to make a significant contribution to the cause of disarmament, it is essential that some improvement be made in the procedure by which the Assembly considers disarmament matters. The First Committee is now each year confronted with an agenda of mammoth proportions, with new items added each year to those fruitlessly retained from previous sessions, in most cases without visible signs of progress. Some of the resolutions adopted have done little to promote the cause of disarmament.

It would be desirable, in New Zealand's view, to attempt to limit the number of agenda items to be given full consideration in the First Committee at any one session. One possibility might be to establish a preparatory committee or sub-committee which would meet between the adoption of the agenda for the session by the General Assembly and the commencement of consideration by the First Committee of the disarmament items. The task of this group would be to consolidate the disarmament agenda as far as possible, to recommend a set of priorities and, where appropriate, suggest the deferment of items which have already been fully discussed or on which early progress seems unlikely.

A suggestion made by the Group of Experts on the Structure of the United Nations System may have some relevance to the problem of handling disarmament moves more
effectively. With a view to facilitating agreement on issues on which there is a wide divergence of opinion and interest among Member States, the Group of Experts suggested new consultative procedures, including small negotiating groups working under a full-time chairman for specified periods during which interested parties would seek to reconcile their differences. It is recognized that such a procedure could be used to a limited extent only in the disarmament field, but in certain instances it could enhance the prospects of speedier implementation of resolutions. Whether or not this idea finds acceptance as part of the structural review, there is certainly a need for more systematic consultations among interested delegations concerning the draft resolutions on the principal disarmament items before the formal debate begins. It is a serious defect in present practice that important draft resolutions sometimes do not emerge until the general debate is over.

2. Role of the Disarmament Commission

France

It is apparent that ... the debates on disarmament suffer from certain shortcomings. The representatives of the French Government have been particularly struck by the following facts:

Excessive proliferation of agenda items. Taking into account the fact that the item "General and complete disarmament" itself comprises several different topics, a total of 25 to 30 different questions were submitted to the First Committee for consideration at the most recent session of our organization. The resulting impression was one of divided attention and confusion.

The manifestly differing degree of importance recorded to the items considered, some of them having been inadequately prepared and having been taken up as a mere formality.

Abuse of the consensus procedure, which in some cases serves to mask fundamental differences of opinion.

The establishment of "working groups" or "ad hoc committees" on a haphazard basis according to dissimilar procedures and methods, such groups and committees thus lacking the necessary authority for carrying out their tasks.

The occasional tendency on the part of the Assembly to refer to other bodies the consideration of matters that fall within its own competence. A case in point is the regulation and prohibition of certain types of weapons, a matter which was referred to the Diplomatic Conference on Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts.

These shortcomings, despite all that has just been said, are still minor ones that could easily be remedied by bringing the Disarmament Commission back into operation and setting up within it, on a basis of equitable geographical representation, a specialized committee that would:

/...
Carry out an initial examination of draft resolutions submitted (at the appropriate time) by Member States and report thereon to the Commission. The agenda would thus be cleared of minor points not giving rise to any discussion, and delegations, not all of which include disarmament specialists, would be better informed concerning the particulars of the various problems.

Propose the deletion from the agenda of items which clearly are no longer relevant.

In the same way, the various "ad hoc committees" entrusted with particular problems would be converted into specialized committees of the Disarmament Commission that would be directly answerable to the Commission and would work under its direct supervision.

The French Government does not, however, intend to formalize this suggestion which, it feels, would, in the light of the present structural situation, be met with an insurmountable objection - the existence of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

On the one hand, since CCD does not owe its origin either to the First Committee or to the General Assembly, and since it operates according to procedures other than those which are customary in United Nations bodies, it obviously cannot be asked to perform such tasks.

On the other hand, it does not seem feasible for two specialized permanent bodies each concerned with the consideration of disarmament problems to exist at the same time. A situation of this kind would inevitably involve overlapping and jurisdictional conflict which, aggravated by inevitable differences in approach, would not be likely to contribute to the desired improvement in the functioning of our organization.

Reform, even on a modest scale, along the lines indicated above presupposes that the disarmament negotiating and research body would be directly answerable to the Disarmament Commission, would be linked to it in an organically dependent way and would function according to procedures compatible with those of our organization.

This would necessitate either a radical modification of the structure, procedures and, very likely, the membership of CCD, or its replacement by another body.

Iran

(See section I.3 below.)

New Zealand

For many years the Security Council has not been directly active in promoting disarmament. The New Zealand Government would like to see the Council undertake a review of its Charter responsibilities with a view to a more active role, perhaps to be exercised through a revitalized and reconstituted Disarmament Commission.
3. (The machinery of negotiation
(The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD)

Australia

We believe that no single negotiating body can or should fulfil the objective of arriving at specific disarmament agreements. Indeed it is the view of the Australian Government that the basis for the majority of such agreements can ultimately only be negotiated directly between the States most involved. Australia believes that in certain circumstances CCD in either its present or an expanded form is an appropriate body to assist in the negotiation of specific multilateral agreements provided that in its considerations the views of all interested States are taken into account. In putting this view, Australia recognizes that on occasion other bodies of either a standing or ad hoc nature may be both more appropriate for this task and provide the Assembly with added flexibility in dealing with disarmament negotiations. It is suggested that the present Ad Hoc Committee pay particular attention to the outcome of the present discussions with CCD on the organization and structure of that body.

Australia welcomed the opportunity of participation in an expert study conducted last year under the auspices of CCD and believes this approach could be applied in the future to the study of other arms control measures. Australia also believes that CCD could play a more useful role to Member States generally if its annual report to the General Assembly more clearly indicated the progress made and problems outstanding on individual issues considered during the year.

Costa Rica

It would seem advisable to seek a way of revitalizing procedures in order that the General Assembly, on the one hand, and CCD on the other hand, may be able to deal adequately and effectively with disarmament questions. It is a fact, as has often been said, that the effectiveness of CCD is closely linked to the political will of the military and nuclear super-Powers to conclude agreements and negotiations that will bring decisive results and give rise to genuine changes in the present state of affairs. Recognition must be given to the efforts of CCD and the important role it has played in the preparation of texts for such important agreements as the partial nuclear test-ban treaty, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Convention prohibiting bacteriological (biological) weapons. The negative comments that have been made concerning its performance are largely attributable to the failure of two nuclear Powers, permanent members of the Security Council, to participate in its work; this prevents CCD, a body of relatively small membership in any event, from discussing far-reaching measures that will have decisive effects. It would be important to search, in the appropriate forum, for some formula that will offer a way out of this impasse.

France

The structural problem, as well as the procedural problem, is of primary importance because it largely determines the solution of the substantive problems. There would be little point in attempting to improve the functioning of the United
Nations in the field of disarmament while ignoring this aspect of the matter. Furthermore, the need for an international body concerned with research and negotiation in the field of disarmament is almost universally recognized. What is important is to determine its composition, its procedures and its relationship with our organization in order to provide the conditions necessary to ensure its effectiveness. This is an extremely complex matter. In the opinion of the French Government, an effort must be made to reconcile what are sometimes conflicting demands in order to arrive at a coherent policy; in doing so, the following criteria should be taken into account:

1. A relatively limited number of permanent members in order to ensure an indispensable level of efficiency of operation;

2. A geographically and politically balanced membership;

3. Participation by all the militarily significant Powers, without, however, allowing them a de jure or de facto predominance over the countries that are less well armed;

4. Preservation of the "open" character of the negotiating body. There is, after all, no reason why a State should be deprived of the opportunity to make known its views and suggestions to the disarmament body or even to participate in studies and discussions of particular interest to it;

5. An organically dependent link with the United Nations General Assembly, which bears the ultimate responsibility for disarmament.

CCD does not, in the opinion of the French Government, meet these criteria. To be sure, the Geneva Committee does have a relatively limited membership, and the competence of delegations made up of outstanding specialists in the field of disarmament is undeniably a positive factor.

On the other hand, certain other aspects of its membership and some of the ways in which it functions have given rise to serious reservations on our part. When CCD was established in 1962, the French Government made unmistakably clear what, in its opinion, were the drawbacks of the new machinery thus brought into being. These concerned the tripartite membership of the Committee, namely, one third to consist of socialist States, one third of Western States and one third of non-aligned States. Although the original imbalance was gradually remedied as new members were admitted, the fact remains that the present membership of CCD does not, either geographically or from the point of view of political balance, properly reflect either our organization or the world as it is today.

Furthermore, the circumstances attending the establishment of CCD and the determination of its procedures, which induced France to refrain from taking its place in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, also caused another nuclear Power not to apply for membership in that body. Without the participation of two of the nuclear Powers, a disarmament negotiating body does not meet the conditions indispensable to enable it to do full justice to the role which it should be performing.
Having been set up on the basis of agreements arrived at by Mr. McCloy and Mr. Zorin on 20 September 1961, CCD was required to function under a joint United States-Soviet co-chairmanship. It was under the guiding hand of this co-chairmanship that the items to be included in the agenda were decided upon and that the problem of general and complete disarmament was put aside, while the sectoral and marginal aspects of disarmament were instead given prominence. While not denying the merits of what has been accomplished by CCD, especially in the fields of science and technology, the French Government feels that the practices just referred to are partly to blame for the short-comings now being brought to light.

(See also section 1.2 above.)

Iran

The Iranian Government believes that the Ad Hoc Committee can more usefully study ways and means of employing the machinery available to the United Nations to engage the nuclear-weapon States in serious arms control negotiations designed to reduce the risk of war and to reverse the nuclear arms race, particularly between the two major nuclear Powers. For this purpose the Ad Hoc Committee may study the implication of such proposals as modifications in the procedures and structure of CCD, the revival of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as well as any other relevant proposal which would be conducive to the above objective.

At present CCD is engaged in reviewing its procedures and operational methods. The Government of Iran hopes that such review will yield positive results. It is the opinion of the Iranian Government that if CCD were to rid itself of the burdensome vestige of the institution of the co-chairmanship, it would not be so susceptible to the charges of displaying hegemonic tendencies. By eliminating this device of dubious operational value, a great psychological hurdle will have been lifted, paving the way for larger and more meaningful participation in its work.

Such a measure should not be taken in a precipitate fashion and without careful consideration of its implications and consequences. An appropriate course of action might therefore be the authorization, by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament, of its Chairman or all its officers to undertake consultations with the parties concerned in order to ascertain their views regarding the ways, and means of facilitating their participation.

Furthermore, in recommending any structural modifications the Ad Hoc Committee should also take into account the views of CCD itself on all matters concerning procedural reform.

Ireland

(See section I.1 above.)

New Zealand

While it is imperative that the principal forum for disarmament negotiations

/...
should be one in which all the nuclear Powers will be present with the firm intention of making progress, New Zealand also considers that that forum should be one in which the smaller Powers will also have an effective voice.

In recent years the New Zealand Government has been disappointed by the inability of CCD to play a more positive role owing to its limited mandate and the absence of two nuclear Powers. CCD, which is currently conducting a review of its own procedures, should examine ways and means of inducing all the nuclear Powers to participate in its work. CCD might, in addition, consider opening its meetings to allow interested non-member States to attend as observers. This could be extended, to a limited extent, to giving access to non-governmental organizations, members of the public and the press.

It would also seem desirable to introduce rotation of membership of CCD. An infusion of new members on a regular basis could dispel the current appearance of inertia and result in new initiatives. Such rotation would not exclude re-election.

The annual report of CCD to the General Assembly in its present form does not contribute significantly to the disarmament debate. It would be more useful if it provided an analysis of the Committee's work rather than merely a description of it.

4. **Negotiations at the bilateral and regional levels**

No specific remarks made under this item.

5. **Relationship between the General Assembly and international organizations dealing with disarmament-related questions**

**Australia**

Australia reaffirms the importance it attaches to the role of other specialized bodies such as the International Committee of the Red Cross in humanitarian matters and the International Atomic Energy Agency in questions relating to international nuclear safeguards and the proposed international service for the conduct of peaceful nuclear explosions. Furthermore ... Australia believes that regional bodies can play a greater role in the negotiation of arms control agreements and that the United Nations Organization should facilitate this role wherever possible.

6. **Strengthening the capacity of the United Nations for in-depth studies of relevant disarmament questions**

**France**

(See section II below.)

**Ireland**

Given the highly technical and increasingly specialized nature of negotiations...
on arms control and disarmament and the growing complexity of the issues to be solved, it seems desirable that the First Committee have before it as a matter of practice detailed analytic reports and studies relevant to the main agenda areas. These could in certain cases be prepared by the Secretariat, particularly where they relate to activities conducted within the broad framework of the United Nations. Increasingly, however, in the preparation of research papers the Secretariat should be given the authority to call on the assistance of specialists from the Member States or on the assistance of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations active in the field of arms control and disarmament. Such reports and studies could, moreover, be developed and updated from session to session.

7. World Disarmament Conference

Bulgaria

In the opinion of the Bulgarian Government, the attention and efforts of States ... should not be diverted towards unimportant issues of procedural and organizational nature. The United Nations has at its disposal the necessary means and possibilities in this respect and should make the fullest use of them.

The long experience of the United Nations and the established international institutions in conducting negotiations in the field of disarmament have proved their ability and efficiency. It is well known that it was not the organizational or other causes of such kind which impeded the successful implementation of measures aimed at halting the arms race and at achieving disarmament. The lack of political will and readiness on the part of certain States, putting preconditions and raising artificial obstacles - these are the fundamental impediments that stand in the way of making a real headway in this field.

The World Disarmament Conference, the idea for which has gained wide support among the majority of countries in the world, will help the solution of a number of problems of vital importance for all mankind and will give a new impetus to the work of the Organization as well. That is why, the People's Republic of Bulgaria is firmly in favour of its early convening with the participation of all States.

New Zealand

The New Zealand Government supports the convening of a World Disarmament Conference as soon as there is evidence that the nuclear Powers are ready to participate. Its attitude towards a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is subject to the same consideration.

Senegal

The Republic of Senegal, as an active member of the movement of non-aligned countries, subscribes to the Lima Declaration on disarmament in its entirety, as adopted by the Ministerial Conference of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Lima from 25 to 29 August 1975.

/...
The Declaration states that: ...

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs agree to co-ordinate the action of the non-aligned countries within the framework of the United Nations in order to promote the holding of a world conference on disarmament, with as little delay as possible, with the participation of all States on an equal basis, during which universal disarmament guidelines, in particular with respect to nuclear disarmament, would be approved, together with the utilization of resources thus freed for international economic co-operation.

If it becomes evident that it will not be possible to convene a world disarmament conference, the Foreign Ministers consider that a special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted to disarmament issues should be convened, as proposed in the Declaration of the first summit conference of non-aligned countries.

8. **Special session of the General Assembly on disarmament**

**Senegal**

(See section I.7 above.)
II. WAYS AND MEANS OF IMPROVING EXISTING UNITED NATIONS FACILITIES FOR THE COLLECTION, COMPIlATION AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON DISARMAMENT ISSUES, IN ORDER TO KEEP ALL GOVERNMENTS, AS WELL AS WORLD PUBLIC OPINION, PROPERLY INFORMED ON PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT

Costa Rica

One important aspect, whose value should not be underestimated, relates to the work of the United Nations Secretariat in the dissemination of information on disarmament, making it more accessible and comprehensive in order to reach the general public rather than only sectors or groups of persons whose academic preparation enables them to assimilate the material produced by the Organization.

Logically, if material accessible to the public is to be prepared and distributed, the Secretariat will have to be strengthened to achieve these ends. The Secretariat should also have means of increasing and making more thorough the collection, compilation and dissemination of information on disarmament subjects, in order to supply proper information to Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and world public opinion.

Costa Rica believes that the NGOs interested in the subject can make a very useful contribution. It shares the view of other countries that the lines of co-operation between the United Nations Secretariat and the NGOs should be closer and more systematic. It would be important for the Secretariat to supply the NGOs regularly with material relating to the various aspects of disarmament and for the NGOs, in turn, to distribute such material within their own spheres of action, promoting interest among their members and developing their influence with various levels of the communities in which they are active.

France

The United Nations, even if it is not itself in a position ... to offer solutions to the problem of general disarmament and of nuclear disarmament in particular, can pursue three courses of action in this field:

It can provide information;

It can conduct studies, such as an examination of the necessary preliminaries for general disarmament (e.g., study of control and verification procedures at the international level);

It can provide a stimulus by striving to promote everything which can contribute to the achievement of true disarmament.

Ireland

The United Nations has essentially a twofold informational role on disarmament questions. The first is that of ensuring that the Member States have
access to up-to-date, detailed and specialized information on all aspects of disarmament. In this regard, Ireland has drawn attention to its interest in the regular and systematic preparation of reports and studies helpful to the disarmament debate at the General Assembly. The second and no less important role is that of ensuring that public opinion remains informed of and involved in the international debate on disarmament. Resolution 2825 C (XXX) in particular serves as a useful starting point for the development of the role of the United Nations in this second area.

Clearly, such reports and studies as are placed at the disposal of the Member States could also usefully be made available to the general public. At the same time, in addition to specialized studies and reports, public opinion also requires more general and more basic information on the main issues in disarmament. Such information could be furnished perhaps in periodical form on a regular and low-cost basis and should be given the widest dissemination by the Member States through normal outlets.

In addition to regular publications on disarmament, conferences and seminars could be organized under United Nations auspices on various aspects of the disarmament problem. The existing facilities and resources of specialized United Nations bodies could be utilized for this purpose.

Ireland also looks forward to any concrete proposals which the Secretary-General may wish to make on the strengthening of the informational role of the United Nations in the matter of disarmament.

Jordan

International attention must be focused on the important issue of disarmament, and it is the duty of the United Nations and of all the Member States to inform their public opinion on the Disarmament Decade and its objectives and goals.

New Zealand

New Zealand is concerned that greater emphasis be given to the dissemination of information on disarmament issues in order to keep all Governments, as well as world public opinion, properly informed of progress achieved and problems to be overcome in the disarmament field. The present system whereby reports are prepared on an ad hoc basis only when required by the General Assembly is inadequate. In the first instance, a comprehensive background report clearly outlining the past and present role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament seems essential. New Zealand would, therefore, suggest that the Secretariat might usefully prepare, for release possibly on an annual basis, a publication which provided:

(a) An up-to-date report on the status of disarmament agreements;

(b) An analysis of developments in both multilateral and bilateral forums in each of the main areas of arms control and disarmament activity for the preceding year;

/.../
(c) The reproduction of any relevant documents such as agreements, communiqués, etc.;

(d) A study on some major disarmament theme.

In addition to such reports, there is a need for the United Nations to play a greater role in the field of public information, in order to give a lead to Governments in this essential area. Both the Secretary-General and Member Governments were requested to publicize the Disarmament Decade in resolution 2602 E (XXIV).

Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council present recommendations to the Council and its subsidiary bodies in the economic, social and cultural fields. Similar arrangements could be made to enable non-governmental organizations to offer their views to any United Nations organ considering disarmament. This would provide United Nations organs with new information and ideas from private groups specializing in this field, for example, the International Institute for International Studies and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.
III. WAYS AND MEANS TO ENABLE THE SECRETARIAT TO ASSIST, ON REQUEST, STATES PARTIES TO MULTILATERAL DISARMAMENT AGREEMENTS IN THEIR DUTY TO ENSURE THE EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF SUCH AGREEMENTS, INCLUDING APPROPRIATE PERIODIC REVIEWS

Costa Rica

Costa Rica believes that it would be desirable for the United Nations Secretariat to assist, on request, States parties to multilateral disarmament agreements in the fulfilment of their obligations to ensure the effective functioning of such agreements. In addition, it considers it important for the Secretariat, through the appropriate Division, to issue annual reports on the situation concerning the status of multilateral international disarmament conventions and agreements, in the same way as the Division of Human Rights issues reports on the situation concerning the international covenants on human rights.

Iran

The Ad Hoc Committee should also study ways and means of enhancing the effectiveness and the role of the Disarmament Division of the United Nations Secretariat in all its aspects and make concrete recommendations to this effect.

Ireland

The United Nations Secretariat, within the limits of its resources, has already made a useful contribution to international efforts in the area of arms control and disarmament. That role, moreover, will inevitably be augmented as wider and new responsibilities devolve to the United Nations on disarmament questions. Indeed, in the short term, if a qualitative improvement can be agreed in the present informational activities of the United Nations, this will in itself involve a strengthened and more active role for the Secretariat. In addition as a means of developing the central role of the United Nations in the process of disarmament, the Secretary-General could undertake depository functions in respect of international agreements on arms control and disarmament, and increasingly a supervisory function in regard to their implementation.

Ireland would also favour the appointment at an early date of a senior official to serve as special co-ordinator of United Nations activities in the field of disarmament. The creation of such a post would strengthen the overall involvement of the United Nations in disarmament questions and enable the Secretariat to respond adequately to the challenge of the new responsibilities assigned to them.

(See also section 1.6 above.)

New Zealand

New Zealand considers that the United Nations Secretariat could play a useful role in:
(a) Providing advice on the legislative history of particular agreements and assistance in the interpretation of the formal provisions;

(b) Acting as the depository body for disarmament agreements;

(c) Encouraging the ratification of disarmament agreements and, where appropriate, co-ordinating decisions to ratify;

(d) Providing monitoring and verification services.

The extent to which the Secretariat can assist in these ways will, of course, be governed by the terms of individual treaties. New Zealand takes the view, however, that in drawing up arms control and disarmament agreements, Governments should make full provision for taking advantage of the services that the United Nations is able to provide.

New Zealand is not convinced that the discharge of the functions outlined above would necessarily require any radical strengthening of the Disarmament Division. New Zealand would, however, recommend that the Secretary-General be asked to keep the question of staffing under review.

United Republic of Cameroon

Nuclear energy should be used solely for peaceful purposes. To that end, a control commission should have permanent units stationed in all countries and should be permitted to conduct inspections everywhere, without any restrictions.

Lastly, there is one problem which some States deliberately ignore, namely, the problem of arms dealers who are prepared to sell weapons to anyone who wants them, apparently without the prior consent of their Governments. This practice should be banned, and, in order to ensure that it ceases, customs inspections should be carried out by State agencies, assisted by members of the United Nations control commission who should not be nationals of the countries in which they are discharging their duties.