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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE REVIEW OF
THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT

WORKING PAPER

Submitted by the delegation of Sweden

1. Below, suggestions are made with regard to recommendations which the Ad Hoc Committee may wish to adopt as conclusions of its review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

2. It is proposed that the Rapporteur on the basis of the results of the second session of the Committee, be entrusted with the task of formulating the draft final report of the Committee for consideration by the Committee at its third session.

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

A. Improved methods of work of the First Committee of the General Assembly in disarmament matters

3. The Ad Hoc Committee underlines that delegations are free to address themselves in the First Committee of the General Assembly to any arms control and disarmament issue on its agenda. At the same time, the Ad Hoc Committee recommends the following guidelines in order to make the work of the First Committee more constructive and efficient.

(a) At the beginning of the First Committee's consideration of disarmament items, the Chairman, after consultations with members of the Committee, should propose for the approval of the Committee a precise programme of work setting out, inter alia, a specified duration for general debate and schedule for consideration of draft resolutions presented under each agenda item. To the extent possible, this schedule should provide for the grouping together of matters that are closely related.

(b) The Committee should explore fully the possibilities of concentrating its attention on certain issues during each session.

(c) Delegations should make all efforts to arrange for informal circulation of draft resolutions by the time the Committee starts its work during each session of the General Assembly. This could also help to promote the amalgamation, whenever possible, of draft resolutions with similar aims and content.

(d) When action on a particular item does not appear necessary the Committee could consider deferring action to a subsequent session of the General Assembly.

(e) The possibility of taking decisions instead of adopting formal resolutions should be kept in mind, inter alia, with a view to presenting to the General Assembly a limited number of draft resolutions.

(f) In the course of each session the Chairman of the Committee should make proposals for further measures to increase the efficiency and simplify the proceedings of the Committee.

B. The relationship between the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies in the field of disarmament

4. The Ad Hoc Committee recommends that:

Before the annual report of the IAEA is dealt with by the General Assembly in Plenary, it should be made available to the First Committee. Sections of the report concerning the activities of the Agency that are of particular relevance to the prevention of a further proliferation of nuclear weapons and related matters should, in the course of the First Committee's disarmament debate, be drawn to the attention of the Committee in connexion with the relevant items on its agenda.

C. Role of the United Nations Disarmament Commission

5. The Ad Hoc Committee recommends that:

The General Assembly should at an appropriate time consider the future role of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

D. Role of the United Nations in providing assistance on request in multilateral and regional disarmament negotiations

6. The Ad Hoc Committee recommends that:

States participating in multilateral and regional disarmament negotiations give serious consideration to the possibility of requesting conference servicing and other technical assistance from the United Nations.

E. The relationship between the General Assembly and the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD)

7. The Ad Hoc Committee recommends that:

(a) The CCD report, being an indispensable document of the General Assembly, should as a rule be available to delegations in New York not later than 15 September each year. The report should reproduce any decisions and conclusions reached and present in summary form the main substance of the discussions in the CCD, with a view to increasing its usefulness to delegations.

(b) All official CCD documents should be made available to all Members of the United Nations through their delegations in New York on a regular and continuing basis.

(c) The General Assembly, in entrusting tasks to the conference of the Committee on Disarmament, should take into account the existing workload of the Committee as well as the progress achieved on the issues before it.

F. Studies

8. The Ad Hoc Committee recommends that:

(a) The General Assembly consider making increased use of in-depth studies of disarmament and related matters on an ad hoc basis conducted by the Secretary-General with the assistance of qualified governmental experts and with assistance, whenever appropriate, from other sources.

(b) The capacity of the United Nations Secretariat should be such as to ensure that it can effectively carry out the responsibilities given to it in connexion with such studies.

II. Ways and means of improving existing United Nations facilities for 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

9. The Ad Hoc Committee recommends that:

(a) The United Nations publish annually before the regular session of the General Assembly in all the official languages of the Organization a United Nations Disarmament Yearbook. This publication should contain a descriptive review of the main developments and ongoing negotiations in the field of disarmament, including a summary of the General Assembly resolutions adopted and of the proposals made in this connexion. It should further contain inter alia:

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- texts of new treaties and agreements in the field of disarmament as well as drafts of such texts submitted to the United Nations or the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD);
- a report on the status of the existing disarmament agreements;
- decisions and conclusions on these matters reached by, inter alia, the CCD, the IAEA and possible Review Conferences;
- factual information, as communicated by Governments or appearing in their official publications, on military expenditures, armed forces and armaments, military production, arms trade and foreign aid in the military field.

(b) The United Nations publish approximately three times a year a disarmament periodical of the United Nations in all the official languages of the Organization. The publication would present in highly readable form current facts and developments in the field of disarmament, such as summaries of new proposals and of important relevant statements and communiqués. It would also contain, inter alia, summaries of in-depth studies undertaken by the United Nations or the CCD. It should further provide for bibliographies in the field of disarmament and related matters.

(c) To the extent that these tasks are entrusted to the United Nations with regard to the compilation and dissemination of information on disarmament for the benefit of Member States and public opinion, appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that the United Nations Disarmament Affairs Division can effectively carry out these responsibilities.

(d) The United Nations Secretariat, through the appropriate channels, continue to disseminate to the general public information on disarmament questions and related matters including information contained in the periodical and the Yearbook.

III. Ways and means to enable the United Nations Secretariat to assist, on request, States parties to multilateral disarmament agreements in their duty to ensure the effective functioning of such agreements, including appropriate reviews

10. The Ad Hoc Committee recommends that:

(a) States participating in multilateral disarmament negotiations fully explore the possibilities of entrusting appropriate functions to the United Nations, its specialized agencies or the IAEA with respect to the implementation of multilateral disarmament agreements. The capacity of these organizations to assist States, on request, to meet their obligations arising out of agreements concluded in such negotiations should be commensurate with the tasks which might be entrusted to them.

(b) As a rule such States request the Secretary-General to assume the depositary role for multilateral disarmament conventions and treaties.

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(c) States participating in multilateral and regional disarmament negotiations should give serious consideration to the provision of Review Conferences. In making the necessary preparations for Review Conferences the States parties should consider requesting the United Nations to provide facilities, conference services and other assistance in connexion with such conferences. The United Nations should have the capacity necessary to meet such requests.

IV. Strengthening of the resources of the United Nations Secretariat

11. In view of the important new tasks to be entrusted to the United Nations in the field of disarmament comprising functions of committee and conference services, studies on disarmament matters, compilation and dissemination of information, and the follow-up of disarmament resolutions and agreements, the Ad Hoc Committee recommends that:

(a) The Disarmament Affairs Division be transformed into a United Nations Centre for Disarmament (UNCD) within the framework of the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs.

(b) The Centre be headed by an official with the rank of Assistant Secretary-General.

(c) The Centre to be staffed accordingly.

