Preliminary Committee for the Second Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament

Views of Members States on the Agenda and Other Relevant Questions Relating to the Second Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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AUSTRIA

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1. In the view of the Austrian Government the years since 1978 have been marked by the near total failure to transform the universal commitment to the cause of disarmament which formed the basis of the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament into concrete disarmament measures. The second special session on disarmament will therefore provide a timely opportunity to examine the causes for this disappointing record of the disarmament process and for the continuing dangerous and wasteful acceleration of the arms race. The current international situation, characterized by serious violations of the principles of the Charter, will have to be taken fully into account in the course of this examination, as well as the inherent limitations and inadequacies of the present approaches to arms control and disarmament.

2. On the basis of an in-depth analysis of the reasons for the insufficient implementation of the programme of action of the Final Document, the second special session on disarmament should proceed to a constructive dialogue on ways and means to advance the process of disarmament. The inseparable link between disarmament and security and the consequent need for equitable reciprocal and verifiable measures must be borne in mind in this deliberation. Austria believes that substantive progress can only best be achieved if the special session concentrates on concrete, realistically attainable disarmament measures.

3. The halting of the nuclear arms race remains the most urgent objective in the field of disarmament. Renewed bilateral and multilateral efforts need to be undertaken to achieve substantive limitations of nuclear weapons on the strategic, theatre and tactical level. In view of the interruption of the tripartite talks and the inability of the Committee on Disarmament to commence multilateral negotiations, Austria believes that the second special session should direct special efforts to achieving a breakthrough toward an agreement on a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing. High priority should also be accorded to any other measure suitable to strengthening the non-proliferation régime.

4. Austria attributes special importance to the energetic pursuance of the negotiations on the prohibition of the development, reduction, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and their destruction.

5. The second special session should also address the problem of the rapid increase in conventional armaments. As conventional military forces consume the overwhelming part of total military expenditures, this issue is particularly relevant in the context of efforts to reallocate resources to social and economic problems.

6. Austria believes that the current atmosphere of mistrust is one of the greatest obstacles to disarmament. The special session should therefore place particular emphasis on measures to build confidence among States. An improved flow of information and greater openness and transparency in military matters would be
especially valuable in preparing an international climate more conducive to the success of disarmament negotiations.

7. Austria would welcome the adoption of a comprehensive programme of disarmament. As a follow-up document to the Programme of Action of 1978, this programme should provide realistic guidelines for the disarmament process in the years to come. At the same time the special session on disarmament should reaffirm the validity of the Final Document of the first special session, which remains the world community's most fundamental and comprehensive statement on disarmament.

8. Considerable attention will have to be devoted to measures to strengthen the United Nations role in the field of disarmament, to improve the functioning of its deliberative and negotiating bodies and to adjust the institutional arrangements within the Secretariat to the greater demands and challenges of the future. Ways and means must be found to achieve significant results in the Committee on Disarmament. In this context the opportunity granted to non-members to participate in the work of the Committee on Disarmament is considered extremely valuable. Austria shares the opinion that, in the light of the decision of the first special session to review the composition of the Committee on Disarmament, a broadening of this co-operation is most desirable.

9. The agenda of the second special session on disarmament should include the following items:

(a) General debate;

(b) Review of the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the first special session devoted to disarmament;

(c) Implementation of the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade;

(d) Recommendations from, and follow-up to, studies initiated by the first special session on disarmament and subsequent sessions of the General Assembly;

(e) Consideration and adoption of the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament;

(f) Strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament;

(g) Adoption of the principal document(s) of the special session.

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