Programme of action

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

Working paper: Australia, Austria, Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden and Venezuela

In its resolution 32/78 of 12 December 1977 the General Assembly declared that the conclusion of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests and its opening for signature would be the best possible augury for the success of the special session. The General Assembly urged the three nuclear-weapon States which had begun negotiations to expedite these negotiations with a view to bringing them to a positive conclusion as soon as possible and to use their best endeavours to transmit the results for full consideration by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) by the beginning of its spring session. The Assembly further requested the CCD to take up the agreed text resulting from these negotiations with the utmost urgency, with a view to the submission of a draft treaty to the special session.

The General Assembly has therefore accorded the highest priority to the conclusion of a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTB), a measure for which it has been calling with increasing urgency for a number of years, by the time of the special session. Reflected in resolution 32/78, which received the overwhelming support of the General Assembly, including the three negotiating nuclear-weapon States, is the deep conviction that the conclusion of a CTB would be a major step towards controlling the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons and that the opening of a treaty for signature at the special session would generate maximum pressure for its early ratification. There is a clear expectation that negotiations will continue at a heightened pace with a view to the submission by the CCD of a draft treaty to the Assembly at its special session. This unmistakable expectation expressed by the General Assembly is not sufficiently taken care of in all the formulations of the programme of action submitted to the Preparatory Committee to date.
In the light of this expectation, the Preparatory Committee should not imply, in submitting a draft programme of action to the special session, that mere agreement on the text of a CTB treaty is one of the objectives to be attained within the time-frame of the programme. Rather it should state as its objective the ratification of a treaty by the maximum number of States and its entry into force at the earliest possible date.

The following formulation for inclusion in the programme of action is therefore suggested for consideration by the Preparatory Committee:

"Ensuring the broadest possible application of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty through its early signature and ratification by as many States as possible."