Note Verbale dated 26 April 1977 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations ... has the honour to refer to the Note OR 421/6(3) of 28 January 1977, by which the Secretary-General, in accordance with the operative paragraph 3 of resolution 31/189 B, invited Member States to communicate to him their views on the agenda and all other relevant questions relating to the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

In reply to this note, I have been instructed by the Finnish Government to communicate the following views and suggestions to the Secretary-General.

1. The Finnish Government welcomes the resolution by the thirty-first session of the General Assembly to convene a special session devoted to disarmament to be held in New York in May-June 1978.

2. Progress in the limitation of the arms race and in disarmament has been slow although the continued growth of armaments in virtually all sectors of arms technology has rendered the urgency of arms limitation and disarmament increasingly obvious. The measures so far adopted in arms limitation are encouraging as such. Nevertheless, reliance on military means as a way to seek security has not decreased; on the contrary, its pace is, to some extent, even accelerating.

3. While marked progress has been achieved in the reduction of tensions in international relations and in developing peaceful patterns of co-operation, endeavours towards disarmament are proceeding excruciatingly slowly. Clearly, there is an interdependence between détente on one hand and the reduction of armaments and disarmament on the other. It is becoming ever more pronounced that the continuance of the arms race is contrary to the fundamental security interests of nations.
4. The use of the material and intellectual resources of the world for military ends is totally in conflict with the aspirations to resolve the problem of under-development and other world-wide economic problems. Therefore, the reduction of armaments should be scrutinized in the light of the repercussions that it may have on the intensification of all social and economic development efforts.

5. For these reasons, the nations of the world are facing new challenges. In the view of the Finnish Government, it is natural and desirable that the United Nations, keeping general and complete disarmament as the ultimate aim, will meet these challenges. Progress in disarmament requires purposeful, consistent and continuous efforts.

6. In view of these basic observations the Government of Finland considers that the task of the special session is

   - to make a comprehensive survey of current disarmament issues,
   - to outline the principles for action that the new challenges and circumstances call for,
   - to adopt guidelines of action for reaching tangible results in disarmament negotiations.

7. In this context it is to be noted that the General Assembly has for more than six years strived to pave the way for convening of a world disarmament conference. The Finnish Government has given its backing to convening such a conference and supported efforts to this effect. In the view of the Finnish Government the special session devoted to disarmament could contribute to the attainment of this goal.

8. In the opinion of the Finnish Government, the special session should, while adopting a comprehensive approach, give priority to the most pressing disarmament issues. Thus, the special session should discuss, in particular, the serious and urgent problems posed by nuclear weapons, including the cessation of nuclear weapon tests, the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, etc.

9. In order to be able to give an impetus to negotiations aiming at curbing the arms race the special session should consider the limitation and elimination of other mass destruction weapons, including chemical weapons, the development of new weapons of mass destruction, etc.

10. Furthermore, the session should pay attention to all opportunities and avenues for stimulating disarmament measures, including the reduction of military budgets, the control of conventional armaments and the limitation of trade in conventional arms as well as the strengthening of the role of the United Nations system in disarmament.

11. Several crucial arms control and disarmament questions are presently subject to an intensive process of negotiations. The Finnish Government wants to emphasize...
that if progress in these negotiations could be achieved before the special session, the possibilities of a successful outcome of the session would be greatly enhanced.

12. In addition to the above observations on the outline and main tasks of the special session, the Finnish Government wishes to present the following views on procedural and other more specific questions.

13. As to the level of participation of Member States in the special session, the Finnish Government considers that this level should adequately reflect the significance of the session, which should therefore be held at a high level such as that of Foreign Ministers. Considering the aims of the special session and the need for the support of an enlightened public opinion for their attainment, due attention should also be paid to the vital role held by non-governmental organizations.

14. Although the procedural arrangements of the special session are largely dependent on the agenda to be adopted for the session, the establishment of committees for discussing the major groups of issues will probably be needed to facilitate a flexible and efficient functioning of the session.

15. As has been the case at previous special sessions, the special session on disarmament would probably wish to adopt a number of final documents incorporating the results of the session. In the view of the Finnish Government, these final documents should contain, on one hand, a politically authoritative declaration on the goals of disarmament and, on the other hand, practical guidelines setting out the tasks of disarmament negotiations for the coming years.

16. A successful session requires careful preparations. The Finnish Government considers it important that the various expectations and views about the session will adequately manifest themselves at the preparatory stage. Thus, it is essential that the preparations of the session will be based on a broad participation. The Finnish Government, although not a member of the Preparatory Committee, reiterates its readiness to make its contribution to these preparations in all their forms.

17. In the light of the above comments on the purpose and aims of the special session, the Finnish Government holds it important that the documents and recommendations to emerge from the special session will be based on the widest possible support and be adopted preferably by consensus. In the view of the Finnish Government this is an essential prerequisite for their effectiveness.