Letter dated 27 April 1977 from the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the reply of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Romania to letter No. OR 421/6(3) from the Secretary-General of the United Nations concerning the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

I should be grateful if you would arrange for this reply to be circulated as an official document under item 51 of the preliminary list of questions to be included in the provisional agenda of the thirty-second session of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Ion DATCU
Ambassador
Reply from the Government of the Socialist Republic of Romania to letter No. OR 421/5(3) from the Secretary-General of the United Nations concerning the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament

For the first time in the history of the United Nations, Member States have decided to consider the question of disarmament at a special session, which is destined to be a milestone in efforts to end the arms race and to embark resolutely on disarmament.

Since it is aware of the lofty responsibilities of the United Nations with regard to disarmament, Romania attaches great importance to the holding in 1978 of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and it also favours the convening of a World Conference designed to halt the arms race and, above all, the nuclear arms race.

In the opinion of the Romanian Government, this special session should adopt measures which will enable the United Nations to play a more active role in military disengagement and disarmament, as an integral part of the process of the establishment of a new international economic and political order guaranteeing the free and independent development of all States, without any external interference, and broad and unimpeded co-operation among all nations. The importance of the special session of the General Assembly is also due to the fact that the United Nations is still far from having accomplished the mission entrusted to it in the sphere of disarmament.

The disarmament negotiations have gradually been removed from the authority of the United Nations, and those negotiations which have continued in one form or another to be guided by the United Nations have in fact been deprived of any real content. Although more than three decades have elapsed since its establishment, the United Nations still cannot exercise direct competence in the negotiations concerning military disengagement and disarmament. The problems of disarmament, and particularly of nuclear disarmament, have not yet resulted in the adoption by Governments of resolute and decisive measures which would be really likely to lead to the reduction and elimination of armaments and to secure mankind from another war. Although the international treaties and conventions so far concluded have made a certain contribution to the creation of an atmosphere of better understanding, they have proved unable to halt the arms race or to guarantee the implementation of effective disarmament measures and have not affected the bases of armaments, particularly nuclear armaments.

The stalemate in the disarmament negotiations has permitted the expansion of the arms race and the development, diversification and accumulation of nuclear and conventional arsenals with a huge destructive force. The arms race is spiralling to dizzy heights, particularly in Europe, where more than anywhere else in the world there is an unprecedented concentration of armed forces and modern weapons, including nuclear weapons.
The disquieting picture presented by armaments and disarmament at the present stage shows that the strategy, approaches, rules and procedures used to tackle these problems have not proved to be the most suitable and effective and, despite the efforts made, have not produced the results demanded by the peoples.

In convening the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the United Nations is in fact acknowledging that the time has come to take forceful action in order to guarantee equal and real security for all, by the adoption of efficient measures of general and complete disarmament, primarily nuclear disarmament, under strict and effective international control.

In a desire to join other Governments in contributing to the attainment of general disarmament, and primarily nuclear disarmament, the Romanian Government submitted at the thirtieth session of the United Nations General Assembly a document entitled "The position of Romania on the problems of disarmament, and particularly nuclear disarmament, and the establishment of lasting world peace". That document set out a broad programme of immediate and long-term measures which, in the opinion of Romania, represent real steps towards disarmament and proposed the convening of a special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament problems.

In the opinion of the Romanian Government, the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, to be held in May/June 1978, will be an independent forum with the power to adopt decisions of crucial importance to world peace and security. For this purpose, the task of the special session should be to discuss and adopt suitable principles, decisions and measures to usher in a new era of negotiations, the era of actual and real disarmament. The General Assembly is in a position to perform this task, because all States Members of the United Nations are represented there and because it has rules of procedure which are both democratic and flexible and able to reconcile the interests of all.

The Preparatory Committee will play an important role in ensuring the complete success of the special session. To this end, the work of the Preparatory Committee must be conducted in such a manner as to guarantee broad participation, on an equal footing, of all States in all forms of activity and throughout the negotiations and to avoid the practice of closed blocs and groupings.

In the opinion of the Romanian Government, the Preparatory Committee should be responsible for drafting the following basic documents:

1. The agenda, which should be clear, precise and strictly to the point, in order to highlight the danger of the arms race and the specific shortcomings of the negotiations so far conducted on the subject of disarmament and to establish the measures to be taken in the future. In our view, the special session should deal with problems such as: the situation which has arisen with regard to nuclear and conventional weapons, the stage reached and the results achieved in the disarmament negotiations; the measures which should be taken by the United Nations in order to break the deadlock in disarmament negotiations and to achieve workable agreements leading to general and complete disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, détente, co-operation, peace and security; the role of the United Nations in disarmament.
2. The declaration to be adopted at the special session should cover the principles of disarmament negotiations, the aims and priorities of those negotiations, and the tactics and strategy to be followed in all disarmament talks.

3. The programme of action, spread over a period of time, embodying specific measures which should be taken in the area of nuclear and conventional disarmament in order to strengthen confidence and co-operation among States.

4. The negotiating machinery should provide for the establishment of viable structures, invested with full authority, which would both be flexible and would follow democratic rules and methods of work. These structures should give all interested States an opportunity to participate in disarmament negotiations on an equal footing.

In expressing these general views, the Romanian Government is determined to contribute to the best of its power to the preparation and smooth conduct of the special session of the United Nations General Assembly, so that this session may be a milestone in efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament, and primarily nuclear disarmament.