Note verbale dated 25 April 1977 from the Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and with reference to the latter's note OR 421/6(3) dated 28 January 1977, has the honour to submit the following observations and suggestions concerning the question of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament issues in response to resolution 189 B adopted during the thirty-first session.

In accordance with the decision of the Fifth Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries held in Colombo, Indonesia supports the convening of a special session of the General Assembly to consider disarmament issues, as negotiations in the past have not resulted in concrete progress and it has become necessary to exert fresh efforts. In our view, such a session, however, should not duplicate the annual disarmament discussion of the General Assembly and the First Committee and should possess distinct characteristics of its own emanating from its purposes. These are mainly threefold:

First, it would provide a forum which would enable the medium and small powers to play an important role in disarmament efforts and in particular in helping to bridge the gap between the often divergent and frequently irreconcilable positions of the great powers.

Second, in view of the fact that the United Nations bears responsibility under the Charter with regard to the principles governing disarmament, to the achievement of general and complete disarmament, and in fact, with regard to all aspects of disarmament, its role must be enhanced to all aspects of disarmament, its role must be enhanced and more clearly defined. The realization of such a role can be facilitated by the participation of the United Nations in all negotiations held outside the auspices of the Organization and by the establishment of an organic relationship between the United Nations and the CCD with appropriate structural and organizational changes which will strengthen that forum for multilateral disarmament
negotiations. Moreover, the special session can promote the process of disarmament and initiate measures designed to achieve genuine progress as well as improve the disarmament machinery. This will, in general, strengthen the role of the United Nations in disarmament issues.

Third, it would provide an opportunity for world public opinion to become more familiar with the difficulties that have impeded the attainment of substantive progress, the dangers of the arms race as well as the problems and challenges which face the United Nations in its consideration of disarmament issues in order to bring its influence to bear on the strengthening of efforts and adopt measures that are widely acceptable.

In the light of these considerations, the agenda of the special session should reflect the present state of affairs as well as those fundamental issues which are more frequently identified in deliberations on arms control and disarmament, the solutions of which would represent significant progress towards the goal of general and complete disarmament. These would include the entire range of questions concerning nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons, incendiary weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, other types of weapons, reduction of armed forces as well as the establishment of zones of peace and co-operation.

Towards this end, the special session should engage in an authoritative appraisal of the current status of disarmament negotiations in order to adopt a flexible and appropriate approach in determining priorities and in selecting the main issues for consideration. In addition, Indonesia firmly believes that the special session should concentrate its efforts in formulating action-oriented measures relevant to substantive issues.

In order to restore the central role of the United Nations in disarmament issues, the establishment of a machinery to implement the agreed measures of the special session would be of great importance, as Indonesia considers the United Nations to be the principal international forum for a meaningful discussion of disarmament questions.