PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

Note verbale dated 10 May 1977 from the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

1. The Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and with reference to his circular note No. OR.421/6(3) of 28 January 1977, regarding the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to be held in New York in May/June 1978, has the honour to communicate the following views of the Government of India in response to operative paragraph 3 of resolution 31/189 B, adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 1976.

2. The initiative for convening a special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament was taken by the first Summit Conference of Non-aligned Countries held in Belgrade from 1 to 6 September 1961, which adopted the following declaration on the subject:

"The participants in the Conference recommend that the General Assembly of the United Nations should, at its forthcoming session, adopt a decision on the convening either of a special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted to discussion of disarmament or on the convening of a world disarmament conference under the auspices of the United Nations with a view to setting in motion the process of general disarmament."

3. The Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-aligned Countries held at Lima from 25 to 30 August 1975 made the following declaration regarding their joint policy on this subject:

"The Ministers for Foreign Affairs agree to co-ordinate the action of the Non-aligned countries within the framework of the United Nations in order to promote the holding of a World Conference on Disarmament, with as little delay as possible, with the participation of all States on an equal basis and during which universal disarmament guidelines, in particular with respect to nuclear disarmament, would be approved together with the utilization of resources thus freed for international economic co-operation."
"If it becomes evident that it will not be possible to convene a world disarmament conference, the Foreign Ministers consider that a special session of the General Assembly should be convened as proposed in the Declaration of the First Summit Conference of Non-aligned Countries."

4. The Fifth Summit Conference of Non-aligned Countries, held at Colombo from 16 to 19 August 1976, reiterated the call for a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and made the following specific suggestions in this regard in its declaration and resolution on disarmament:

"The Conference reiterated the urgent need to adopt effective measures leading to the convening of a World Disarmament Conference."

"The Conference also recommended, in the meantime, that members of the non-aligned movement request the holding of a special session of the General Assembly as early as possible and not later than 1978. The agenda of the special session should include:

a. a review of the problem of disarmament;

b. the promotion and elaboration of a programme of priorities and recommendations in the field of disarmament; and

c. the question of convening a World Disarmament Conference."

5. The Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Co-ordinating Bureau of Non-aligned Countries held in New Delhi from 7 to 11 April 1977, issued the following communique regarding the agenda and other related matters pertaining to the holding of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament:

"The Bureau expressed the hope that the special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament scheduled to be held in May-June 1978, at the initiative of the Non-Aligned States, would enable a comprehensive review of the problem of disarmament and result in effective measures aimed in particular at halting the nuclear arms race and promoting nuclear disarmament in the first place and the process of general disarmament. In pursuance of the decisions adopted and the priorities established at the Colombo Conference, the Bureau recommends that the special session of the General Assembly should inter alia consider the adoption of a declaration of principles and a programme of concrete measures on disarmament as well as review the role of the United Nations in disarmament in terms of the United Nations Charter and the question of convening a world disarmament conference. The Bureau further considers that non-aligned countries including those who are members of the Preparatory Committee should act together in achieving the above-mentioned goals."

6. The Government of India are of the firm view that matters pertaining to the agenda and all other relevant questions concerning the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament should be considered by the Preparatory Committee in the light of the declarations issued by the non-aligned countries.
7. The Government of India are convinced that the work of the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament should be based on the following main considerations, which have been repeatedly put forward by India along with several other States and which have also been accepted by the international community, in regard to the fundamental approach to be adopted towards the question of disarmament.

8. One of the most important questions facing mankind in this nuclear age is that of disarmament. The goal of all efforts in the disarmament field should be the achievement of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. Any partial or collateral measures, which might be adopted, should be conceived of and implemented within the framework of this ultimate goal. The highest priority in the field of disarmament should be accorded to the elimination of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

9. All States have a vital interest in disarmament. Hence, deliberative forums are essential, where all States can express their views on disarmament. However, actual negotiations on specific measures of disarmament can be better conducted in small negotiating bodies. Measures of disarmament can be classified into three broad categories, namely, preventive or "non-armament" measures, arms limitation measures, and actual disarmament measures. Special efforts should be made to negotiate measures of actual disarmament, particularly in regard to nuclear weapons and all the other weapons of mass destruction. A substantial portion of the funds released by disarmament should be devoted to the economic and social development of developing countries.