Note verbale dated 11 May 1977 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

The Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 31/189 B, has the honour to transmit the views of the Government of Brazil concerning the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.
Views of the Brazilian Government concerning the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament

Brazil considers that disarmament is one of the main tasks of our times, and that previous international efforts, judging by the meagre results attained, have not been commensurate with the needs of the international community. The first of these needs is the very survival of mankind. In the light of this need, all the others fall into their proper perspective, such as the establishment of true conditions for peace and international security that would benefit all peoples, without exception, and provide the tranquillity they must have in order to guarantee them the benefits of economic and technological progress.

2. In this context the States that are in conditions of greater potential to influence, either positively or negatively, the accomplishment of these objectives, have a correlated special responsibility to facilitate agreements, in progressive stages, between all States, leading towards disarmament and an international order that will be more stable, more peaceful and more equitable.

3. The appraisal of multilateral efforts in the field of disarmament reveals the scarcity of the results obtained so far, results limited to a partial and sectoral containment of the accelerated growth in armaments.

4. Brazil supported the convening of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and co-sponsored resolution 31/189 B. The special session will be an opportunity to promote the opening up of new avenues for negotiation, leading towards general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

5. The Brazilian Government has never spared any effort to facilitate and promote the process of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, in the General Assembly and in the CCD, as well as in other fora. The present situation of the arms race requires the international community to redouble its efforts to correct the extremely critical conditions that now prevail because of the recurrent frustration of multilateral efforts in the field of disarmament.

6. In fact, the arms race is constantly going on, both in nuclear and in conventional weapons. Strategic arms continue to be perfected. The introduction of new generations of miniaturized tactical nuclear weapons seems to be accompanied by a more relaxed and more tolerant attitude towards their possible use than that of strategic arms. In the field of conventional weapons, particularly cruel and inhumane arms continue to be developed, some of them apparently designed specifically for use against civilian populations. In this sense, every effort must be made to prevent the best part of advanced technological capacity being oriented towards the creation of new destructive devices to the detriment of channelling resources to the promotion of development and higher living standards.
7. It therefore seems clear to Brazil that future negotiating efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament should be given maximum priority by the international community. In this context, the question of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is an important, but not an isolated element, in the general framework of disarmament problems. Brazil is, in fact, opposed to all forms of proliferation of nuclear weapons, and is ready to participate in international efforts to reduce and eventually eliminate these weapons, as well as to prevent their vertical and horizontal proliferation.

8. Brazil believes that certain fundamental principles and guidelines should necessarily be observed in the process leading towards new negotiations for disarmament. They are essentially the following:

(1) Negotiating efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament should be given maximum priority by the international community. Since the primordial responsibility for the development, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons is that of the nuclear weapon Powers, it is their constituent obligation to facilitate the achievement of adequate solutions for the problems of disarmament. The absence of positive steps on the part of these Powers will render inviable any significant progress in multilateral negotiations on disarmament.

(2) Disarmament measures should be correlated with the preservation and strengthening of international security in order to avoid the creation of military imbalances or similar situations which might, during the negotiation process, jeopardize international peace.

(3) The principle that responsibilities and obligations should be balanced must prevail in the field of disarmament; furthermore, obligations should not be discriminatory in nature.

(4) New international confidence-building measures or measures of non-armsament should be accompanied by truly significant steps in the field of real disarmament.

(5) The verification system should be an integral element of agreements on disarmament and should be implemented by the adoption of adequate methods, both on the national and on the international level.

(6) All States, including those possessing nuclear weapons, should participate on an equal footing in international negotiations on disarmament.

(7) International efforts on chemical weapons should proceed at an accelerated pace (completing the cycle initiated with the Convention on Bacteriological (Biological) Weapons), along with efforts to deal with weapons of mass destruction and arms that cause unnecessary suffering and those that are particularly inhumane.

(8) All countries must have free access to peaceful technologies both in the nuclear and other fields, given standardized non-discriminatory and universal safeguards. As an element to foster confidence among States in the
field of international co-operation, the system of safeguards should be applied
equally to all States and should be extended, whenever necessary, to cover new
advances in technological research and development. None of these measures,
however, should permit unwarranted interference in the sovereignty of States,
nor threaten scientific, technological or economic development for essentially
peaceful purposes.

(9) Firm commitments should be made to apply significant portions of the
savings derived from disarmament measures to the promotion of economic development
in less developed areas. These commitments will facilitate the establishment of
a new international economic order.

(10) The security of the non-nuclear weapon States should rest on concrete
commitments on the part of the nuclear weapon States, such as the following:

- Commitment to respect demilitarized zones and zones of peace established
  by agreements concluded among States of a region in the exercise of their
  independence and sovereignty;

- Positive guarantees on the part of nuclear weapon States not to use or
  threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States belonging to
demilitarized zones;

- An agreed programme of measures for general and complete disarmament,
elaborated on non-discriminatory bases, and with special regard to the interests
of developing countries.

9. The special session, in the view of the Brazilian Government, should devote
a significant part of its work to the adoption of a political declaration,
reflecting, inter alia, the principles and guidelines mentioned above, indispensable
for the projected multilateral negotiations to have the necessary objectivity in
examining disarmament problems.

10. The Brazilian Government also believes that the special session should
elaborate a programme of action based on adequate criteria, a programme that will
take as its fundamental objective general and complete disarmament under effective
international control. The programme of action could, from the outset, provide
a general orientation that would give renewed impetus for negotiations in the
appropriate fora.

11. In terms of priorities, the Brazilian Government believes as stated that
measures on nuclear disarmament are the most urgent. Of special importance is the
need for an effort to negotiate a comprehensive nuclear weapons test ban parallel
to the adoption of measures for the destruction of the stockpiles of such weapons,
for ending the process of research and development of new types of nuclear weapons
and for freezing the production of fissile material for military purposes.

12. Secondary priority could then be given to the following measures:

(a) Prohibition of the development and production of chemical weapons,
parallel to the destruction of existing stockpiles;
(b) Prohibition of the development and production of new weapons of mass destruction and weapons that cause unnecessary suffering, and the destruction of the stockpiles of such weapons;

(c) Gradual and proportional reduction of stockpiles of conventional weapons, as long as major Powers recognize their own supremacy in this field, and, consequently, their primordial responsibility for any effort to be made in this direction.

13. The adoption of these measures should contribute, on the other hand, to the strengthening of international peace and security and to the establishment of a new international economic order. In this context, the special session of the General Assembly should also consider the adoption of measures for the security of non-nuclear-weapon States, and the application in less developed areas of savings generated by the process of disarmament.

14. Finally, the Government of Brazil believes that the United Nations, according to the Charter, has a preponderant role in negotiations. In order to be viable, efforts to strengthen the role of the Organization in this field should take into account the fact that the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, organically linked to the General Assembly, remains the principal body for negotiations on disarmament. The work of the CCD should, however, obey the priorities decided upon by the special session. Eventual measures for the procedural reform of that body should be basically geared to the objectives recommended by the General Assembly.

15. With regard to the specific role of the United Nations Secretariat, it would be important to make full use of its administrative organs in order to satisfactorily fulfill the actual needs emanating from the special session. An excessive proliferation of bodies and bureaucratic structures within the Secretariat, with the resulting dispersion of efforts and of human and financial resources, would, however, be undesirable.