Communication dated 18 May 1977 from the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations and Chairman of the Co-ordinating Bureau of Non-Aligned Countries addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries, I have the honour to transmit herewith a working paper entitled "Some preliminary ideas concerning preparations for the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament".

I would request you kindly to have the document published and circulated as a working paper of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament.
SOME PRELIMINARY IDEAS CONCERNING PREPARATIONS FOR
THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED
TO DISARMAMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

1. The Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, at the Fifth
Summit Conference in Colombo (16-19 August 1976) decided, inter alia, to call on
the United Nations to convene a special session of the General Assembly devoted to
disarmament. Accordingly, at the initiative of non-aligned countries, the General
Assembly adopted resolution 31/189 B dated 21 December 1976 calling for a special
session of the General Assembly for this purpose in May/June 1978.

2. The vitally important question of disarmament has been one of the central
concerns of the non-aligned countries. At their First Summit held in Belgrade in
1961, they expressed the conviction that disarmament was an imperative need and
a most urgent task of mankind and recommended, inter alia, convening a special
session of the United Nations General Assembly to set in motion the process of
general disarmament. The non-aligned countries have continued to make a notable
contribution to the endeavours aimed at orienting disarmament negotiations towards
solutions that would make it possible to achieve decisive progress toward genuine
disarmament.

3. Since disarmament negotiations within the framework, or under the auspices of
the United Nations, as well as the regional and bilateral negotiations have not
produced the expected results in most cases, it is necessary to exert fresh efforts
to overcome this situation. The contradiction between the urgent necessity to
curb the arms race and the stand-still in disarmament efforts is becoming
increasingly intolerable. Expenditure, particularly on the development of new
and more sophisticated weapon systems is spiralling. The continuation of the arms
race poses a direct threat to international peace and security and slackens
economic and social development. Disarmament has thus become one of the most
urgent international problems, requiring the greatest attention.

4. Therefore, the special session of the General Assembly dealing with
disarmament will, in all probability, be the largest and most representative
gathering ever convened to consider this question. The participation of all States
in the disarmament discussions is generally seen as a necessary precondition for
achieving progress on a global basis towards halting and eliminating the arms
race and thus contributing to the establishment of a more just and equitable world
order. There is, therefore, every reason to exert the greatest possible effort
toward making the special session a genuine success and a landmark on the right
path towards general and complete disarmament. It is universally recognized that
disarmament is an extremely complex question. The hazards and perils of the arms
race to the maintenance of international peace and security and the development
and survival of mankind necessitate a serious effort to half and eventually
eliminate this race.
5. The special session should reaffirm our commitment to general and complete disarmament, and to this effect, adopt a declaration of principles, a comprehensive programme of action and improve the disarmament machinery in order to reassert the responsibility of the United Nations and its central role in the field of disarmament.

6. In this endeavour, the aim of the non-aligned countries is to help bring about the relaxation of tension, to strengthen international peace and security and to encourage a substantial reduction in national expenditures for military purposes, so that resources could be reallocated for international development.

7. At the outset, the special session should undertake an authoritative appraisal of the current situation regarding disarmament problems, the causes which have led to stagnation and inadequate results of disarmament negotiations held so far, and the consequences and dangers that the arms race poses to peace and security and to development in the world. The special session of the General Assembly should also contribute towards strengthening the role of the United Nations and its overall involvement in the field of disarmament and disarmament negotiations. In this respect, it should promote and elaborate a programme of priorities and measures whose gradual but consistent implementation would effectively bring about substantive changes in this field and ensure the beginning of the process of disarmament - particularly nuclear disarmament leading to general and complete disarmament, under effective international control.

8. Taking into consideration the importance of the special session as a significant event in the history of the United Nations, the non-aligned countries should continue to be in the forefront of this action. The special session must be very carefully and adequately planned so as to ensure that it is representative and effective, and that at the same time, the equality of States in the decision-making process is guaranteed. The intention of the non-aligned countries is to seek collaboration with all countries and endeavour to elaborate a joint policy and agree on a common approach in regard to fundamentals. The success and relevance of the special session is closely linked with the active participation of all Member States in its work at as high a level as possible. This conclusion is based on the fact that the halting of the arms race, its elimination as a threat to international peace and security and the release, for peaceful economic development, of the resources it consumes, is of cardinal interest to the international community.

II. DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

9. An assessment of disarmament efforts in the past three decades indicates that, despite some measures in the field of arms limitation, no real progress has been made on the crucial question of disarmament, and in particular concerning the nuclear arms race. It is therefore of paramount importance for the special session to adopt a declaration embodying a set of up-to-date principles as well as to work out a programme of priorities and measures dealing with all aspects of disarmament negotiations.
10. Such a document, however, should be drafted in general terms, so that the widest political support for its implementation may be secured. With this objective in mind, it seems essential not to lose sight of the political realities of our time which are of great significance in the field of disarmament. This prerequisite is of singular importance when dealing with questions affecting the national security and territorial integrity of Member States. None the less, it should not be construed in such a way as to curtail the endeavours of the non-aligned and other developing countries, particularly their rights to share, on an equal basis, in the access to modern nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

11. The non-aligned countries have constantly considered that:

- Universal peace and security can be assured by general and complete disarmament (GCD), in particular nuclear disarmament, under effective international control, and that measures to that end should include the complete cessation of all nuclear weapon tests pending the conclusion of a test ban treaty, the elimination of arsenals of all nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction, and an unequivocal renunciation of the use, or threat of use, of such weapons.

- The creation of zones of peace and, where appropriate, the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones should be supported.

- Regional considerations in a nuclear-weapon-free zone may require that formal procedures and arrangements should be flexible and that there should be alternative ways and methods to suit the particular character of each zone. The nuclear-weapon States should undertake to respect nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace and co-operation.

- The arms race is inconsistent with efforts aimed at achieving the new international economic order in view of the urgent need to divert the resources utilized for the acceleration of the arms race towards socio-economic development, particularly of the developing countries.

- Armaments are used in certain areas of the world to suppress the right to self-determination, freedom and independence of peoples under colonial, imperialist or any other form of alien domination, as well as their right to struggle to that end.

- A programme of agreed measures is an essential prerequisite for the opening of a process of genuine disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament, and accomplishment of general and complete disarmament, under effective international control.

- Immediate prohibition of the production and stockpiling of all weapons of mass destruction, as well as the production and stockpiling of new weapons of mass destruction is an essential first step in halting the arms race.

- The dissolution of military blocs, great Power alliances and pacts arising therefrom, the dismantling of foreign military bases and withdrawal of military forces from foreign territories would contribute to this end.
- The cessation of all forms of foreign interference in the internal affairs of States.

12. The declaration should include new principles for disarmament negotiations, taking as a basis the principles already agreed upon, as well as the obligations undertaken by States in all international instruments related to disarmament and United Nations resolutions on the subject as well as any new ideas stemming from the debates during the special session.

13. The following principles, which though of a general nature, could provide a broad framework for the declaration of principles:

- Disarmament is an integral part of a new international order founded on national independence and international co-operation based on sovereign equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, mutual trust and justice, and renunciation of the policies of spheres of influence and domination.

- Highest priority should be given to measures of disarmament of nuclear, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction.

- The United Nations, which has specific responsibility for disarmament under the Charter, should participate in all efforts thereon.

- While disarmament is the responsibility of all States, full participation of all nuclear-weapon States in negotiations on nuclear disarmament should be secured.

- Neither the existing nuclear arsenals nor the addition of new and more sophisticated weapons of mass destruction ensure or strengthen national security.

- Given adequate safeguards, access to technology for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should not be subjected to discriminatory restrictions, whether between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States or among non-nuclear-weapon States themselves.

- The need to intensify disarmament efforts and accelerate the pace of all disarmament negotiations thus contributing towards the relaxation of tension and the advancement of peaceful relations among all States.

- Negotiations on partial measures of disarmament should not preclude nor postpone negotiations on a treaty on general and complete disarmament.

- The principle of balanced disarmament should be kept in mind. It concerns both a numerical decrease of men in arms and types of arms to pre-fixed levels, as well as packages of disarmament measures by which an over-all balance is achieved which is judged by all parties to be satisfactory in the light of their own security. Particular efforts will have to be undertaken by military significant States in order to reduce the gap that exists between them and other countries.
- The ultimate elimination of conventional armaments can be achieved only within the framework of general and complete disarmament.

- Verification methods form an indispensable part of disarmament measures. A combination of several methods should be employed, mutually reinforcing one another in order to achieve the necessary assurances that a certain disarmament measure is being observed by all parties to such agreements.

- A substantial portion of the savings derived from measures in the field of disarmament should be devoted to promoting economic and social development, particularly in the developing countries.

- Public opinion should be given adequate information about armament and disarmament, so that it may bring its influence to bear on the strengthening of efforts.
III. PROGRAMME OF ACTION

14. Although the General Assembly has adopted general and complete disarmament under effective international control as a goal, disarmament negotiations are still conducted on a very narrow basis on selective issues of interest only to a very few countries. To overcome such a situation, a need for a programme of action on disarmament is widely felt.

15. The special session should agree on a programme of action on disarmament aimed at achieving tangible progress in order that the goal of general and complete disarmament, under effective international control, becomes a reality.

16. This programme of action would not constitute solutions or formal agreements to be adopted in the special session, but would provide for, on the basis of the activities of the United Nations, WDC, CCD and regional and bilateral negotiations, for gradual solution of individual questions within a reasonable time frame.

Elements of the programme

17. All efforts and negotiations should be geared in a balanced and integrated way and lead to general and complete disarmament under effective international control. The order of priorities in disarmament negotiations should be as follows:

1. Nuclear weapons
2. Chemical and biological weapons
3. Incendiary weapons
4. Other weapons of mass destruction
5. Other types of weapons
6. Reduction of armed forces.

18. The following measures should be urgently implemented in order to achieve prompt cessation of the arms race:

- Cessation of all nuclear-weapons tests
- Cessation of research and development of new types of nuclear weapons and weapon systems
- Cessation of production of fissionable material for military purposes
- Freeze on the deployment of all types of nuclear weapons
- Respect for the status of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace
- The prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical and biological weapons
- Prohibition of the use of incendiary weapons

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- Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of non-nuclear weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons

- Prohibition of the creation of new foreign military bases and the stationing of troops and military equipment in foreign territories.

19. The following measures should also be implemented as concrete steps within the programme of action for disarmament:

- Gradual reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons

- Destruction of chemical and biological weapons

- Elimination of incendiary weapons

- Elimination of all types of non-nuclear weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons

- Complete withdrawal of foreign troops and military bases

- Gradual reduction of other types of weapons and armed forces

- Gradual reduction of armed forces.

20. Besides the measures concerned with cessation of the arms race and disarmament, the possibility of adopting other collateral measures, particularly those concerned with the strengthening of international peace and security and the relaxation of tensions should be considered. It is a recognized fact that there is a close interrelationship between disarmament, international peace and security and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

21. In this context, the following measures should be considered:

- The renunciation or prohibition of the use, or the threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States

- The non-use of force, or threat of use of force in any of its manifestations

- The general prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons

- Convening of regional conferences at the initiative of the States of the region for reduction of armaments and armed forces

- The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace

- The reduction of military expenditures.

22. During the period of the negotiations on disarmament measures, there should be parallel negotiations in the appropriate fora for the establishment and
development of United Nations peace-keeping machinery and procedures in order to increase and ensure the maintenance of international peace and security.

23. The General Assembly should consider annually the progress made in the implementation of the programme of action. This will entail an evaluation of the over-all situation in the field of disarmament. A special periodical review by the United Nations General Assembly or a WDC will allow an assessment and appraisal of the strategy for disarmament and revise it as warranted.

IV. MACHINERY FOR DISARMAMENT

24. In addition to the well-known causes which have led to the current stagnation in the field of disarmament, the inadequacy of the existing disarmament machinery should be underlined. Therefore, the special session should make every effort to ensure the full implementation of the programme of action through the strengthening of the central role of the United Nations in the disarmament process.

25. While the principal political decision-making organ of the United Nations should continue to be the General Assembly, with one of its main committees entrusted solely to deal with disarmament questions, the necessity remains for an efficient multilateral body to negotiate specific disarmament measures.

26. Since its establishment in 1961, the body that is now known as the CCD has accumulated considerable experience but has not produced commensurate results. This may partly be due to the fact that its endeavours have been mainly devoted to partial or collateral aspects of the problem, resulting merely in arms control or arms limitations agreements. Therefore, the time seems ripe for the special session to devote attention to improving the structure and working methods of the CCD.

27. It would be of primary importance to revise the membership of the CCD and to ensure de jure full member status to all nuclear-weapon States in it. Also, in order to enable their actual participation in its work, it would be necessary to introduce, without delay, certain changes in the CCD's organization and procedures, and particularly the present system of co-chairmanship.

28. Furthermore, to enhance the ultimate responsibility that the United Nations General Assembly bears for disarmament, an organic link with the CCD should be established.

29. The special session may consider the future role of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

30. The role of the United Nations Centre for Disarmament may be considered in the light of the future activities of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

31. The special session should also consider the question of convening of a WDC.

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V. AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

32. Agenda:

(a) Review and appraisal of the present international situation in the light of the stagnation in the field of disarmament, the continuing arms race and close interrelationship between disarmament, international peace and security and economic development

(b) Adoption of a Declaration of Principles on Disarmament

(c) Adoption of a Programme of Action on Disarmament

(d) Review of the role of the United Nations in disarmament, of disarmament mechanisms, including the question of convening a World Disarmament Conference

33. Level of representation: The non-aligned countries consider that the special session should be held at as high a political level as possible.

34. Organization of the work: It may be necessary to convene one or more committees, to meet simultaneously with the plenary of the special session.

New York, 31 March 1977