Letter dated 9 June 1977 from the Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee

I have the honour to submit attached for circulation as a document of the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, i.e. a working paper containing some views on the content of the declaration on disarmament to be elaborated by the Preparatory Committee for submission to the special session.

(Signed) Radha Krishna RAMPHUL
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Annex

Working paper containing elements to be included in the declaration on disarmament submitted by the Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations on 9 June 1977

The framework

1. During the three decades that have elapsed since the Second World War, vast transformations have taken place in the world and this development is continuing. The process of decolonization is nearly completed and has transformed the geopolitical map of the world. All States, regardless of their size and their economic and military potential, are increasingly active in the discussion and solution of major issues.

2. While fully recognizing the important role and responsibilities of great Powers with respect to peace and security, the small and medium-sized States, the developing countries and the non-aligned States, are all parties which must be involved in this time and age when the process of scientific and technological advance and democratization is producing a new form of world society. The world is in the search for a more and just acceptable world order. The positive results of this search are, however, constantly threatened by the continuing arms race. In an international environment dominated by the arms race, military and strategic considerations stand to shape the over-all relations between States affecting also all other relations and transactions. Only if we make a major progress in the field of disarmament will it be possible to create a system of world order based on collective responsibility and a climate of international confidence.

3. The vast arsenals already accumulated and the ongoing race to produce new arms make the peace and security of our world less stable. Stocks of nuclear weapons in the possession of the nuclear Powers have already for many years been sufficient to destroy the world many times over. Still the number of nuclear warheads have increased fivefold in the last eight years. In addition, these weapons are constantly being diversified and their performance characteristics improved. Already today we observe the development by the major Powers of new generations and types of nuclear weapons that are smaller in power but more accurate in finding their intended target. These can lead to a gradual erosion of the dividing line between the use of nuclear and conventional weapons. The danger over the spread of nuclear weapons increases with every year as the art of nuclear technology becomes more widely known. The so-called conventional weapons are becoming increasingly sophisticated and deadly. There is the real possibility of development of new, even more dangerous weapons of mass destruction which would pose additional innumerable hazards to all mankind.

4. There is an evident need to end the present trend of massive diversion to military ends of financial resources, manpower, raw materials, technical skills and development capability. There is today a greater awareness that the whole world is facing a series of urgent and important problems which will require the mobilization of all energies and resources for their solution. Chief among these questions is the problem of development and the associated task of establishing a

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new international economic order. There are consequently large claims on
investment, research and other resources in direct competition with military
demands. The arms race with its economic costs and social and political effects
constitutes the single most massive obstacle to effective progress. Effective
disarmament is needed to release resources for the peaceful development of all,
and especially of the developing countries. Disarmament must be a vital part of
our attempts to restructure the world order politically, economically and socially.
The need is today greater than ever.

5. Relieving the cold war atmosphere has had an important effect in relaxing the
international climate, thereby diminishing the risk of an over-all nuclear war.
But détente has not extended to all areas of the world and it has not yet been able
to lead to a real break-through in the process of disarmament.

6. The disarmament efforts, since the Second World War, have produced some very
modest results in the nature of arms limitation, rather than disarmament. The
thrust has been on regulating competition in armaments proscribing certain
developments deemed to be particularly destabilizing, costly or otherwise
unacceptable rather than an attempt to substantially reduce important weapons
systems. In the context of a rapidly innovating arms race such an approach is
bound to fail. Technological innovations tend to outstrip the pace of
negotiations. The momentum of the arms race makes it circumvent the too weak
barriers that have been built to stop it. Partial and collateral measures can
play a role in the cessation reversal of the arms race only if they are conceived
as part of a broader programme aimed at substantial disarmament in areas of
weaponry of central military significance ultimately leading to general and
complete disarmament and particularly nuclear disarmament under effective
international control.

7. Disarmament should be approached in a comprehensive manner, efforts should
aim at real disarmament. Work should be resumed on the elaboration of a treaty on
general and complete disarmament.

Principles for disarmament negotiations

8. The goal of negotiations is to achieve agreement on a programme which will
ensure:

(a) That disarmament is general and complete and war is no longer an
instrument for settling international problems;

(b) That such disarmament is accompanied by the establishment of reliable
procedures for the peaceful settlement of disputes and effective arrangements for
the maintenance of peace in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the
United Nations.

9. The highest priority should be given to disarmament matters dealing with
nuclear weapons.
10. All States should have the opportunity to express their views on the substance and basic principles of such a programme and on its scope, practical ways and means of implementing it and other aspects of the programme; they should participate actively in terms of full equality in all phases of negotiations on the drafting of the programme so that it may embody the will of all peoples and give expression to their fundamental interests.

11. The participation of all nuclear-weapon States and of all other major military powers in the efforts to contain the nuclear arms race and to reduce and eliminate all armaments is indispensable for a full measure of success in the disarmament efforts.

12. Disarmament being a matter of great concern to all States and to all peoples, there is a pressing need for all Governments and peoples to be informed about and understand the prevailing situation in the field of the arms race and disarmament and that the United Nations has a central role in this connexion in keeping with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. The problems of disarmament and particularly nuclear disarmament should not be a secret held by certain categories of persons, politicians and soldiers; they directly affect the security and the very lives of peoples and the peoples should know what action to take in this direction in order to be able to have their say and defend their vital interests. That is why public opinion and peoples of all countries must be fully informed and periodic reports must be issued on the current status of armaments and its consequences and on the steps to be taken to stop the arms race.

13. The United Nations which bears responsibility for disarmament under the Charter should be kept informed of all unilateral, bilateral or multilateral efforts thereon.

14. No disarmament or disarmament-related measure should adversely affect the scientific, technological or economic future of nations. All nations have full rights of access to all achievements of science and technology without any restrictions whatsoever.

Principles for the disarmament process

15. International agreement in the field of disarmament concluded so far should become universal and all parties should fulfil all the obligations arising from these treaties.

16. The programme for general and complete disarmament shall ensure that States will have at their disposal only such non-nuclear armaments, forces, facilities and establishments as are agreed to be necessary to maintain internal order and protect the personal security of citizens; and that States shall support and provide agreed manpower for a United Nations peace force.

17. To this end, the programme for general and complete disarmament shall contain the necessary provisions, with respect to the military establishment of every nation for:

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(a) The disbanding of armed forces, the dismantling of military establishments, including bases, the cessation of the production of armaments as well as their liquidation or conversion to peaceful uses;

(b) The elimination of all stockpiles of nuclear, chemical, bacteriological and other weapons of mass destruction, and the cessation of the production of such weapons;

(c) The elimination of all means of delivery of weapons of mass destruction;

(d) The abolition of organizations and institutions designed to organize the military effort of States, the cessation of military training, and the closing of all military training institutions;

(e) The discontinuance of military expenditures.

18. The disarmament programme should be implemented in an agreed sequence, by stages, until it is completed, with each measure and stage carried out within specified time-limits. Transition to a subsequent stage in the process of disarmament should take place upon a review of the implementation of measures included in the preceding stage and upon a decision that all such measures have been implemented and verified and that any additional verification arrangements required for measures in the next stage are, when appropriate, ready to operate.

19. All measures of general and complete disarmament should be balanced so that at no stage of the implementation of the treaty could any State or group of States gain military advantage and that security is ensured equally for all.

20. All disarmament measures should be implemented from beginning to end under such strict and effective international control as would provide firm assurance that all parties are honouring their obligations. During and after the implementation of general and complete disarmament, the most thorough control should be exercised, the nature and extent of such control depending on the requirements for verification of the disarmament measures being carried out in each stage. To implement control over and inspection of disarmament, an international disarmament organization including all parties to the agreement should be created within the framework of the United Nations. This international disarmament organization and its inspectors should be assured unrestricted access without veto to all places, as necessary for the purpose of effective verification.

21. Progress in disarmament should be accompanied by measures to strengthen institutions for maintaining peace and the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means. During and after the implementation of the programme of general and complete disarmament, there should be taken, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter, the necessary measures to maintain international peace and security, including the obligation of States to place at the disposal of the United Nations agreed manpower necessary for an international peace force to be equipped with agreed types of armaments. Arrangements for the use of this force should ensure that the United Nations can effectively deter or suppress any threat or use of arms in violation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations.
22. States participating in the negotiations should seek to achieve and implement the widest possible agreement at the earliest possible date. Efforts should continue without interruption until agreement upon the total programme has been achieved, and efforts to ensure early agreement on and implementation of measures of disarmament should be undertaken without prejudicing progress on an agreement on the total programme and in such a way that these measures would facilitate and form part of that programme.

Other elements

23. The General Assembly should consider annually the progress made in the implementation of the comprehensive programme. Every three years, the General Assembly should review the comprehensive programme and revise it as warranted. This will entail an evaluation of the over-all situation in the field of disarmament and a comparison between the development in regard to armaments and disarmament. The Disarmament Commission might be reactivated and entrusted with part of this task.

24. The practice of requesting the Secretary-General to prepare, with the assistance of expert consultants, authoritative studies on concrete questions relating to the arms race and disarmament should be continued.

25. The advisability of carrying out studies by qualified groups of experts on specific problems of disarmament, which warrant it, should be carefully explored in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

26. There should be more conferences and scientific exchanges among scientists and experts from various countries on the problem of the arms race and disarmament.

27. Universities and academic institutes should be encouraged to establish continuing courses and seminars to study problems of the arms race, military expenditures and disarmament.

28. The increased exchanges and publications of relevant information and data should lead to greater openness, to the establishment of greater confidence among States and increased knowledge and interest in these matters among the public.

29. The feasibility of convening, in due time and after appropriate preparatory work, a world disarmament conference of all States should be thoroughly studied.