Outline of a draft final document of the special session
of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament

Mexico: Working paper

Introductory note

The main purpose of this working paper is to facilitate the practical
implementation of the recommendation formulated by the Preparatory Committee in
paragraph 33 of the report which it submitted to the General Assembly at its
thirty-second session. It will be recalled that, in that paragraph, the Committee,
after having noted that there had been a trend in favour of the adoption of one
final document at the special session, stated that consensus had been reached, in
principle, regarding the contents of the final document, namely, that it should be
divided into four sections: an Introduction, a Declaration on Disarmament, a
Programme of Action, and a final section devoted to what was called in the report
"Machinery for Disarmament Negotiations".

The foregoing conclusion of the Preparatory Committee appears appropriate from
every point of view. The concentration in four sections of a single final document
of all the conclusions and decisions of the special session will make it easier to
organize and co-ordinate future work on disarmament and avoid the risk of dispersion
which is so apparent in the case of the many resolutions on the subject which the
General Assembly has adopted year after year, and will provide world public opinion
with convincing proof that a new approach has been adopted which there is reason to
hope will yield more fruitful results.

It should also be borne in mind that the Committee at its fourth session, at
which it will have to prepare all - or at least almost all - the substantive drafts
which it will have to transmit to the General Assembly for its special session, will
have only a little over four weeks of work. Thus, it would appear highly advisable
that from the outset the Committee should have the clearest possible idea of what
should be the structure, the framework, of the final document referred to in
paragraph 33 of its aforementioned report (A/32/41) so that it will faithfully
reflect the view set forth in that paragraph.

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The achievement of rapid agreement on the matter would appear to be relatively easy, compared with the considerable difficulties which will certainly have to be overcome in attempting to reconcile the various views on the questions of substance which will be dealt with, in particular, in the last three sections of the final document. Perhaps for that very reason it would be all the more appropriate to begin by obtaining a consensus concerning the distribution to be given to the many proposals, of which some have already been submitted and the number will undoubtedly increase daily, within each of the four sections of the final document. It would appear all the more appropriate when one considers that several of the working papers submitted to the Committee suffer to a greater or lesser degree from a lack of clarity in that respect.

Since all the instruments adopted by the General Assembly are always adopted by means of a resolution, this working paper begins with a draft which could serve as a basis for the resolution to which the final document will be annexed. It has been considered preferable to keep this resolution very short in order to avoid any unnecessary redundancy since all the ideas, principles, purposes and rules which are relevant must be included in the final document, which should be a complete and self-sufficient instrument.

All the texts included in the working paper for possible use in the drafting of the four sections of the final document correspond to the schematic character of the draft, the very limited and precise objective of which has been explained above. Suffice it to add that it has been deemed appropriate to begin the drafts of the sections intended for the Declaration and the Programme of Action with a paragraph which should help to evaluate the significance and the scope of the instrument concerned.

The substantive material included in the working paper for the Introduction is limited to four paragraphs, which it is suggested could be the first paragraphs of the section. They emphasize concepts the importance of which is obvious and about which there appears to be unanimity: the dangers involved in the arms race for international peace and security and the incompatibility of the arms race with the new international economic order. Following those paragraphs, various others would undoubtedly have to be added since in the working papers already before the Committee and in those which may be submitted at its fourth session a wealth of material will be found.

The purpose of the final paragraph - which is marked with an X since there is no way of knowing what number it will be once the additional paragraphs have been incorporated - is to define the relationship between the Introduction and the other three sections, a relationship which is one of cause - the deplorable and alarming situation created by the arms race - and effect: the various decisions which it is hoped the Assembly will adopt at its special session to try to remedy the situation.
The Declaration on Disarmament, apart from the opening paragraph - whose purpose, as has already been mentioned, is similar to that of the paragraph with which the Programme of Action also opens - consists simply, by way of example, of the first two principles in the working paper submitted to the Preparatory Committee by the delegation of Mexico in May 1977 (A/AC.187/56), to which no objection seems likely to be raised. Certainly, from among the wealth of documentation already available to the Committee - suffice it to recall, for example, that the Mexican working paper mentioned above included 25 principles and norms - it will be possible to find sufficient material for the formulation of all principles and purposes that it may be deemed necessary to embody in the Declaration.

It will, we believe, be obvious to anyone with some experience of disarmament negotiations that, in the five months which remain before not only the opening but the closure of the special session, it would be Utopian to think of completing the formulation of a comprehensive programme of disarmament that would obtain general approval. It is for that reason that we have put forward the idea of making provision, in the Plan of Action included in the working paper, for a Three-Year Disarmament Plan as a purely transitional measure. Such a plan - as was stated as long ago as 1 September 1977, when the representative of Mexico in the Preparatory Committee explained this point at the 16th meeting of the Committee - would not try to present a more or less exhaustive catalogue of disarmament measures that would be fated, as has happened so often in the past, to remain a scrap of paper. It would include only a selection of such measures, chosen from among the most urgent and meaningful ones, which it is thought may realistically and objectively be considered capable of being transformed into reality during the three-year period from June 1978 to May 1981. In this sense, therefore, the draft Programme of Action is not too ambitious. At the same time, however, in order to stress the transitional nature of this procedure and the fact that it in no way means the abandonment of the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, the draft provides for another procedure which appears best suited for ensuring that, within a period of roughly 2 1/2 years, it will be possible to draft a comprehensive, thoroughly negotiated programme, the implementation of which should lead to the attainment of that goal. The Three-Year Plan also includes provisions that will enable the General Assembly to keep the manner in which the Plan is being implemented under periodic review and to consider and adopt, at a second special session devoted to disarmament that would be held in May-June - or perhaps in May-July 1981 - the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament which will have been drafted.

With regard to the final section of the working paper, concerning what the Preparatory Committee has been calling "Machinery for Disarmament Negotiations" and what here is given the title of "Guidelines for Disarmament Negotiations", it is suggested that, to begin with, the provisions contained in the three paragraphs should, as in the case of the outline of a Declaration on Disarmament, be taken as simply examples of some measures which, for various reasons, seem to merit priority action. To such measures, of course, will have to be added all others that may be deemed desirable, perhaps concluding with the one which in this paper is given the letter X - the establishment in Geneva of permanent missions to CCD
of all States members of the Conference - and the implementation of which would 
enormously increase the effectiveness and pace of disarmament negotiations.

The delegation of Mexico feels sure that this working paper, despite - or 
perhaps precisely because of - its modest aims, can have a very constructive 
effect in helping to ensure that the work of the Preparatory Committee takes, from 
an early stage of this fourth session, a direction that is in keeping with the 
conclusion expressed by the Committee itself in paragraph 33 of its first report 
to the General Assembly. It is in this belief that the delegation has the honour 
to submit to the Committee, for its consideration, the outline of a draft final 
document reproduced below.

OUTLINE OF A DRAFT FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE SPECIAL SESSION OF 
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

The General Assembly,

Convinced that it is imperative to put an end to the arms race, both because 
it entails a threat to the very survival of mankind and because it is incompatible 
with the new international economic order,

Having resolved to lay the foundations of a new international disarmament 
strategy which, through co-ordinated and persevering efforts within the framework 
of the United Nations, can culminate in general and complete disarmament under 
effective international control,

Adopts the following

Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly 
devoted to disarmament

I

Introduction

1. Never since the period of prehistory has mankind faced a threat of 
anihilation as real as that posed by the arms race. For years the nuclear 
 arsenals of a few States which possess those terrible instruments of mass 
destruction have been sufficient to wipe out, not once but many times over, every 
vestige of life in the world and to make the earth itself uninhabitable.

2. The increase in weapons, especially nuclear ones, far from helping to 
strengthen international security, weakens and decreases it. The enormous 
quantities of weapons which have been stockpiled and the constant process of 
qualitative and technological refinement to which unbridled competition is 
subjecting them pose incalculable threats to peace.

3. Military expenditures are reaching ever higher levels which until 
recently would have seemed inconceivable. The magnitude of the waste represented
by the hundreds of billions of dollars spent annually on the manufacture or
improvement of weapons is in sombre and dramatic contrast to the want and poverty
in which two thirds of the world's population live.

4. This gigantic squandering of financial resources is even more serious
in that it diverts to military activities enormous material and, in particular,
technical and human resources which are essential for development. Thus, the
economic and social consequences of the arms race are so detrimental that their
continuation is obviously incompatible with the consolidation of the new
international economic order, which should be based on co-operation, justice and
equity.

X. The alarming situation whose principal aspects have been described above
makes it imperative to take without delay the necessary steps to ensure that
disarmament is recognized in practice, and not only in theory, for what it really
is: the most important and urgent question confronting the international
community today. The General Assembly has accordingly resolved solemnly to
proclaim, in this final document of its first special session devoted to
disarmament, the following three instruments: a Declaration on Disarmament, a
Programme of Action, and Guidelines for Disarmament Negotiations.

II

Declaration on Disarmament

In order both to formulate and to apply a programme of action which will
provide for and co-ordinate the adoption of genuine disarmament measures aimed at
achieving general and complete disarmament under effective international control
and to define the basic rules which should serve to make disarmament negotiations
more effective, it is imperative to have a clear idea of the fundamental
principles and purposes meriting general acceptance in this connexion. The
systematic compilation of those principles and purposes is the subject of this
Declaration on Disarmament, through which it is reaffirmed or established that:

1. All the peoples of the world have a vital interest in the success of
disarmament negotiations.

2. General and complete disarmament under effective international control
should be the final objective of mankind.

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III

Programme of Action

This Programme of Action has a twofold purpose. First of all, it enumerates a series of specific disarmament measures which have been selected because there is a consensus on the need and advisability of making every possible effort to implement them within a period of not more than three years, it being felt that, realistically and objectively, there is a reasonable likelihood that such efforts will succeed. Secondly, the Programme of Action seeks to establish suitable procedures for monitoring compliance with the commitment thus made and for conducting serious negotiations on the preparation of a comprehensive programme of disarmament. In the light of the foregoing, the States participating in the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament undertake to do everything in their power, in good faith, to ensure the implementation, during the period from June 1978 to May 1981, of the measures set forth in the following Three-year Disarmament Plan:

X. The agendas for the thirty-third, thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth regular sessions of the General Assembly should include an item permitting the Assembly to review the manner in which the Three-year Disarmament Plan is being carried out and to make any appropriate recommendations resulting from that review.

XX. The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, as soon as it has undergone the reforms envisaged in the Guidelines comprising section IV of this Final Document, will undertake the preparation of a comprehensive programme of disarmament encompassing all measures thought to be advisable in order to ensure that the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control becomes a reality in a world in which international peace and security prevail and in which the new international economic order is strengthened and consolidated. The comprehensive programme should contain appropriate procedures for facilitating the co-ordination of all disarmament negotiations, regardless of where and in what form they are conducted, and for ensuring that the General Assembly is kept fully informed of the progress of the negotiations so that it can properly perform its functions, including an appraisal of the situation when appropriate and, in particular, a continuing review of the implementation of the programme. The said programme should be completed by 1 March 1981 at the latest and should immediately thereupon be submitted, as a draft, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations so that he may transmit it to Member States and to the General Assembly at the latter's second special session devoted to disarmament.

XXX. A second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament will open at the end of May 1981, its main objective being to consider and adopt the comprehensive programme of disarmament prepared in accordance with the provisions of the preceding paragraph.
IV

Guidelines for Disarmament Negotiations

1. The experience gained since the establishment of the United Nations shows that, for maximum effectiveness, two kinds of bodies are required for disarmament negotiations - deliberative and negotiating. The largest possible number of States should be represented on the former, whereas the latter, for the sake of convenience, should have a relatively small membership.

2. Where the deliberative function is concerned, it is undeniable that the General Assembly, at its regular sessions, cannot deal adequately with the numerous disarmament items which are always included in its agenda. Accordingly, until such time as a consensus is reached on convening and institutionalizing a world disarmament conference - which could play the same role in its own sphere as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development plays with regard to economic and social matters - it seems desirable to hold regular special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

3. With regard to the negotiating body which functions within the framework of the United Nations, namely, the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, it is obvious that it too has not in a position to fulfill the extremely important task required of it in its own field of competence. Among the reforms necessary to increase its effectiveness, priority ought to be given to the following: the co-chairmanship system should be replaced by a chairmanship to be held on a monthly rotating basis by non-nuclear-weapon States represented in CCD, thereby helping to make it easier for China and France to participate in its work; a standing subcommittee of the whole should be established; and appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that, without prejudice to its limited membership, CCD can receive such co-operation as all States, or at least all Members of the United Nations, may wish to extend to it.

X. States members of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament which have not yet established in Geneva adequately staffed permanent delegations to the Committee should endeavour to do so as soon as possible.