Note verbale dated 13 January 1978 from the Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Representative of the Republic of Senegal to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, with reference to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 31/189 B, in which the Assembly invited Member States to communicate to the Secretary-General their views on the agenda and all other relevant questions relating to the special session devoted to disarmament, has the honour to transmit to him the views of the Government of Senegal on that question.
VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SENEegal ON THE SPECIAL SESSION OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

The Government of Senegal has for many years, whenever the opportunity
presented itself, consistently expressed its concern and anxiety about the growing
peril to mankind posed by the frenzied arms race, the enormous waste of
non-renewable resources which it entails, and above all the growing insecurity
which it creates and maintains.

Today, the arms race, which primarily takes the form of the expansion of
nuclear arsenals, has augmented to a hitherto unprecedented degree the risk of the
accidental self-destruction of mankind as a result of a defect in the weapon
systems, an accident or a simple mistake.

Furthermore, it diverts vast resources to activities aimed at destruction and
extermination. Compared with the $300 billion spent annually for military purposes
throughout the world, the sum of about $15 billion devoted, grudgingly to
development assistance seems very paltry. The means of destruction are becoming
increasingly sophisticated, while the living conditions of two thirds of mankind
continue to deteriorate.

However, the most serious feature of the arms race is the fact that it is
inadequate to its purpose. Instead of ensuring the security of those who
participate in it, it increases their insecurity. It is progressively undermining
the concept of mutual dissuasion on which the nuclear peace of recent years is
based, as a result of the efforts to achieve military superiority.

The arms-control measures adopted in recent years constitute an admission of
failure which shows that extreme armaments policies can provide only temporary
security. Moreover, they help to conceal the need for genuine disarmament, which
involves reducing and destroying weapons and not simply freezing or limiting their
number. Such policies thus prolong the impasse in the current disarmament
negotiations by preventing the very time-worn conception which equates security
with weapons from being replaced by a conception better adapted to the nuclear age,
which would associate security with co-operation and dialogue.

The time has therefore come to ponder the question of disarmament and to
revise the traditional conceptions which seem to stem from the reflexes of another
era rather than from a sound analysis of the contemporary situation. In this
connexion, it is necessary to study the causes of the arms race, stressing its close
links with the policies of hegemony and spheres of influence, the existence of an
unjust international economic order, the lack of collective security, the
non-existence of effective machinery for settling disputes between States and the
violation of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and
intervention in their internal affairs. The Government of Senegal believes that
disarmament should be regarded as a coherent set of gradual and complementary
measures under international control, whose ultimate objective would be the
establishment of a new international order based on co-operation, equality of
States, economic and social justice and the peaceful settlement of disputes between
States.
In view of the negligible progress made since 1945, the special session of the General Assembly should give a new impetus to the disarmament negotiations by defining the principles and machinery which would permit the conclusion of specific disarmament agreements. The Government of Senegal believes that this is the ultimate goal of the special session, which could be attained by achieving the following objectives:

1. Evaluation of the current situation as regards disarmament, and definition of the causes of the current impasse and of the limitations and weaknesses of existing approaches to disarmament.

2. Reaffirmation of the responsibility of the United Nations in this sphere and of the need for it to participate in all efforts relating to disarmament.

3. Creation in participating States of the political will that could give fresh momentum to the disarmament negotiations.

4. Awakening of public interest and moulding of public opinion by provision of complete and detailed information on the question.

5. Formulation and adoption of disarmament guidelines and objectives. In this connexion, it is important that the links between disarmament, international security, economic development and machinery for the settlement of disputes should be emphasized.

6. Formulation and adoption of a programme of action on the basis of which negotiations would be carried out in a balanced and integrated manner with a view to achieving general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

It is at this level that the immediate impact of possible future disarmament negotiations or conferences should be evaluated. It would be unrealistic to assume that the stockpiles of weapons held by the main Powers could be destroyed in a short space of time.

In our opinion, what could be envisaged in the short term is practical action following three basic courses:

- Gradual and progressive reduction in the number of nuclear weapons;
- Measures to prevent any increase in their degree of sophistication;
- Energetic measures to halt transfers of weapons which threaten the stability of each region.

The eventual agreement in which the three foregoing points would be embodied should be based on parity of arms levels achieved by means of over-all ceilings for each Power.
On the other hand, the agreement should not create an imbalance in favour of one Power, which would jeopardize the general equilibrium of the world as a whole.

Thus the mutual, balanced and progressive reduction in the number of weapons would be viewed as the means of achieving collective security and not as the means of obtaining a unilateral military advantage.

However, the Government of Senegal believes that as regards the first two courses, priority should be given to measures prohibiting the development or manufacture of new weapon systems over measures aimed at the gradual reduction or limitation of stockpiles of weapons, because for the big Powers reducing the quantity of existing weapons has always meant destroying stockpiles of obsolete weapons in order to produce more highly-developed weapons.

Moreover, the concept of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has enabled those Powers to monopolize the possession of such weapons, whose development remains prohibited to other States.

We therefore believe that emphasis should be placed first on the most important aspect of disarmament, namely non-armament, and subsequently on the progressive reduction and complete elimination of existing weapons, for there will be no genuine disarmament so long as the big Powers are in a position to produce new weapons.

Lastly, it is essential that the special session reach a universal consensus involving all the nuclear Powers, including the People's Republic of China and France, which at present are not participating in the principal disarmament negotiations.

The current forums for disarmament negotiations, whether multilateral (United Nations, Conference of Non-Aligned Countries, CCD, ICRC), regional (talks on the mutual reduction of forces and weapons and related measures in central Europe), or bilateral (SALT), are either unsuited to promoting real disarmament or independent of the United Nations, i.e. they are under no control and do not have the clearly affirmed objective of general and complete disarmament.

Measures designed to increase their effectiveness are needed in order to enable these bodies to promote the conclusion of disarmament agreements taking into account the nature, scope and specificity of the problems posed by the arms race.

The work of these bodies should be supervised and co-ordinated by the United Nations, which will define the general political approach to disarmament.

The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament should be restructured so as to include all the nuclear Powers and should have a number of sub-committees in which negotiations would be held on specific agreements relating to different aspects of disarmament.