PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIA 1986-1987

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Programme budget implications of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/40/L.69

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

Addendum

Observations of the Committee on Conferences submitted in accordance with paragraph 6 of resolution 35/10 A

1. In accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 35/10 A of 3 November 1980, by which the Assembly decided that all proposals affecting the schedule of conferences and meetings made at sessions of the General Assembly should be reviewed by the Committee on Conferences when administrative implications were being considered under the requirements of rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, the Committee on Conferences met to review the implications of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/40/L.69, which was adopted without a vote by the First Committee at its 39th meeting, on 15 November 1985. A statement of the programme budget implications of the draft resolution was before that Committee in document A/C.1/40/L.75.

2. Pursuant to rule 36 of the provisional rules of procedure (see A/40/51, annex) recommended for adoption by the Conference under the terms of operative paragraph 3 of draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/40/L.69, verbatim records would be provided for the plenary meetings of the Conference. It was noted in the statement of programme budget implications before the First Committee that in the light of guideline 1 in the annex to resolution 36/117 D of 10 December 1981 on control and limitation of documentation for special conferences, and paragraph 6 and the annex to resolution 37/14 C of 16 November 1982 on meeting records, the provision of verbatim records to the Conference would require the explicit approval of the General Assembly in a pertinent resolution or decision. The related conference-
servicing cost for the provision of verbatim records for 30 meetings in the six official languages would amount to $694,000 (see A/C.5/40/52, annex II, for breakdown).

3. In a Secretariat paper before the Committee on Conferences, it was further pointed out that rule 72.1 of the draft standard rules of procedure for United Nations conferences now before the General Assembly states that "No conference shall have verbatim records". The draft standard rules for the most part follow the rules of procedure of numerous United Nations conferences convened during the past decade, whose procedures were based on those of the General Assembly and to some extent on those of the Economic and Social Council, and have to a considerable extent become standardized (see A/40/611, para. 6). In effect, therefore, the draft rules reflect established practice.

4. In a Secretariat statement to the Committee concerning the Assembly's provisions governing the provision of meeting records to conferences and some technical aspects thereof, it was recalled that by paragraph 8 of its resolution 37/14 C, the Assembly had confirmed that no special conference was to have summary records. The Secretariat also explained that verbatim reporting capacity existed only at Headquarters. If it were decided to provide the Conference with verbatim records, it would not be possible to provide staff not New York without replacement because the permanent staff of the Verbatim Reporting Section was sufficient only to ensure the provision of verbatim records to the Security Council, and the staff must remain at Headquarters at all times in order to do so. It would therefore be necessary to recruit an entire six-language team of verbatim reporters and revisers on a temporary-assistance basis, and to send them to Paris, along with staff from the cassette-recording operation, and the word-processing, reproduction and distribution staff necessary for the provision of verbatim records.

5. Some delegations questioned the need for providing verbatim records to the International Conference, especially in view of the General Assembly resolutions and guidelines on the control and limitation of documentation. Others, however, took the view that the importance of the International Conference merited the provision of verbatim records.

6. Responding to delegations' comments, the Secretariat stated that the resolutions of the General Assembly pertaining to the provision of meeting records to conferences had been brought to the attention of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference at the time when the draft rules of procedure were being debated. The Preparatory Committee had taken the view that verbatim records were necessary because of the high political level of the participants in the International Conference.

7. In response to further questions, the Secretariat added that it would be feasible considerably to reduce the actual cost of providing verbatim records to the Conference if those records were produced at Headquarters from cassette tapes by the permanent staff members of the Verbatim Reporting Section. That would mean that the records would not be completed until some weeks after the close of the Conference. It was further stated that this delay need not adversely affect the smooth running of the International Conference.
8. The Committee on Conferences wishes to draw to the attention of the General Assembly the fact that under the terms of existing guidelines approved by the Assembly, conferences are not entitled to receive verbatim records. Furthermore, established United Nations practice as reflected in rule 72.1 of the draft standard rules of procedure now before the General Assembly explicitly states that "No conference shall have verbatim records". The Committee wishes to discourage the granting of exceptions to the guidelines governing the provision of written meeting records to conferences. However, should the General Assembly explicitly decide to approve the provision of verbatim records for this Conference, the Committee recommends that those records be produced at United Nations Headquarters.