Twelfth special session
Item 12 of the provisional agenda*

ENHANCEMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MACHINERY IN THE FIELD
OF DISARMAMENT AND STRENGTHENING OF THE ROLE OF THE UNITED
NATIONS IN THIS FIELD, INCLUDING THE POSSIBLE CONVENING OF
A WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

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* A/S-12/10.
REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

ISRAEL

[Original: English]
[25 March 1982]

1. At the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly, Israel joined the consensus in favour of resolution 36/97 D.

2. In the light of the growing complexity of the issues involved, the need for improvements in the institutional arrangements relating to multilateral disarmament has become self-evident. These issues should therefore be approached from the regional perspective for the reasons expressed, inter alia, in the report of the Secretary-General transmitting the study on all the aspects of regional disarmament (A/35/416, annex).

3. On a practical level, Israel has recently given effective expression to its views by advancing proposals for regional measures based on important principles and guidelines specific to the regional approach to disarmament (letter dated 19 March 1982 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations to the Secretary-General (see A/AC.206/19)). It is imperative that the initiative for regional disarmament and the consultations necessary for reaching this aim originate with the States of the region and that they conduct negotiations with each other. Such a move would by itself constitute a valuable step in the direction of building much-needed confidence among the States of the region.

4. In his letter of 6 April 1979 to the Secretary-General (see A/CN.10/1), the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations proposed the establishment of

"... regional disarmament commissions, composed of all Member States in the region, the task of which would be to review ideas and proposals for intergovernmental regional agreements on arms reduction and control. These commissions should address themselves, inter alia, to finding appropriate solutions to two specific problems related to a "comprehensive programme for disarmament":

"(a) To create by common agreement of all Member States of the region the necessary modalities for the limitation of military budgets in conformity with resolution 33/67;

"(b) To implement within a regional basis the terms of the decisions adopted by the General Assembly during its tenth special session in paragraph 93 of the Final Document with reference to confidence-building measures."

5. Israel reiterates its readiness to negotiate freely and directly with the States of the region the conclusion of institutional arrangements relating to the process of disarmament.

/...
6. As far as the Middle East is concerned, such arrangements would make a serious contribution to the welfare, stability and peace of that region, as well as to international peace and security, by endorsing the principle of direct negotiations and by urging all States to respond to existing constructive initiatives in the field of disarmament.

NETHERLANDS

[Original: English]

[3 May 1982]

1. Since the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the machinery available to the international community for seeking progress in the field of disarmament has expanded remarkably. The First Committee of the General Assembly now deals only with questions of disarmament and related international security questions. The United Nations Disarmament Commission was reestablished as a deliberative forum for all States Members of the United Nations. The Committee on Disarmament at Geneva has been restructured and has intensified its work, e.g., by creating working groups. Mention should also be made of a considerable number of expert studies undertaken at the request of the General Assembly, such as the one on institutional arrangements relating to the process of disarmament (A/36/392). A United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research was established. A United Nations disarmament fellowship programme is operating. More and more United Nations publications on disarmament appear.

2. Despite all these efforts, concrete disarmament measures have not been achieved. In so far as this is due to an unfavourable international climate, those institutional arrangements are not to be blamed as seemingly inadequate. Nevertheless, it is a legitimate question whether they do not emphasize too much discussions of a deliberative character to the detriment of real negotiations, the former leading only to statements and documents of a declaratory nature, the latter having too little opportunity to produce concrete results. It being recognized that the attainment of disarmament measures is, in the last resort, a matter of political will, it can still be argued that more emphasis and more room should be given to the process of negotiations.

3. With this in mind, the Netherlands delegation to the Committee on Disarmament ventured the idea that the Committee - the only available forum for multilateral disarmament negotiations - should be in session all year round. It is somewhat strange indeed that the Committee's negotiating programme is mainly dependent on the timetable for deliberations elsewhere; in the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission, etc. Valuable time could be gained - in fact it would be almost doubled - for doing business in this field. Greater expertise could be built up on specific questions also.

4. Furthermore, it was suggested that the present system - under which each working group of the Committee on Disarmament meets once or twice a week - imposes an artificial schedule on the negotiations. It does not reflect the fact that during various phases of negotiations one subject might become more time-consuming
than another. It seems worthwhile to consider the Committee as a steering committee under which permanent working groups would operate. While there would be no obligation for the full membership of the Committee to participate in each of them, the working groups could be open also to non-members having an interest in the subject matter.

5. This arrangement would also go a long way to solving the membership problem of the Committee on Disarmament. In any event, if enlargement of the Committee would seem unavoidable, any addition should be kept to a minimum so as to safeguard the viability of the Committee as a negotiating body.

6. The concentration of the work of the First Committee of the General Assembly on disarmament and international security items has been in itself a positive development. However, in the view of the Netherlands, it should be a matter of concern that it has also entailed an inflation in resolutions. In 1981, for example, no less than 48 resolutions were adopted under the title of disarmament, involving a total of 623 paragraphs. Unless this tide can be stemmed, resolutions of the General Assembly on disarmament will rapidly lose their meaning. Instead of dealing with a growing number of resolutions, the First Committee could refer certain questions to the Disarmament Commission for preparatory in-depth deliberations.

7. The General Assembly has been increasing the number of requests to the Centre for Disarmament for assistance in a variety of disarmament matters. The added responsibilities of the Centre should be reflected in the organization of the Centre and its place within the Secretariat; in the view of the Netherlands, the transformation of the Centre into a department for disarmament affairs would recognize the importance the General Assembly attaches to its role within the United Nations system.

8. In this context, a more precise definition of the role of the Advisory Board, which clearly is in need of review, is called for. The Netherlands would prefer a much smaller body than the present one, consisting of eminent scholars in the field of disarmament.

9. The establishment of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research has added to the research capabilities of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. In order to further promote this cause, the Institute should become an autonomous United Nations institution. The Institute should mainly be geared to undertaking studies which support the work of the Committee on Disarmament and which are not being undertaken elsewhere (such as specific verification studies).

10. Apart from the safeguards system relating to the peaceful use of nuclear energy of the International Atomic Energy Authority, the United Nations system is conspicuously lacking in capabilities in the field of verification, fact-finding and other implementation arrangements for use under existing and future disarmament agreements. It is clear that conventions like the one prohibiting the development, production stockpiling and use of radiological weapons or a treaty banning nuclear tests would require elaborate mechanisms for their implementation. For these reasons the Netherlands put forward at the first special session the idea of creating an international disarmament organization. In this context, reference
should also be made to the report of the Secretary-General on the implications of establishing an international satellite monitoring agency (A/AC.206/14). The Government of the Netherlands will give its views on these matters in a separate document which will be presented to the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (A/S-12/22, annex).

YUGOSLAVIA

*Original: English*

*28 May 1982*

1. The approach to the question of institutional arrangements relating to the process of disarmament is unavoidably conditioned by the general, very serious situation in the field of disarmament, as well as by the evident ineffectiveness of the operation of the international negotiating mechanism on disarmament. On the other hand, the consideration of this question is conditioned by the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, (resolution S-10/2) paragraph 27 of which explicitly emphasizes the central role and primary responsibility of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, and thus of all of its instruments, including administrative, technical, legal and financial ones. However, this has not been fully realized in practice, for which the primary responsibility falls on the super-Powers. Substantive negotiations on a large number of vital questions have not yet been launched, while the negotiations that have been initiated are proceeding slowly and without concrete results.

2. This unsatisfactory situation calls for energetic action on the part of all States Members of the United Nations in order to ensure, as soon as possible, the central role of the United Nations in the process of disarmament.

3. The Government of Yugoslavia is firmly convinced that a greater efficacy of the international mechanism can be achieved only by strengthening the role of the United Nations, i.e., by expanding its competence in the field of disarmament. In this context, it attaches exceptional importance to the efforts made by the group of experts - in which the Government of Yugoslavia itself was represented - in carrying out a study on institutional arrangements (A/36/392, annex). The study represents a contribution and a solid basis for future efforts aimed at improving the ability of the organs of the United Nations to fulfil all their obligations in the field of disarmament.

4. It is the view of the Government of Yugoslavia that the following aspects of the study should be especially emphasized:

   (a) The increasing need for efficient disarmament measures and for the substantial role of the United Nations to be implemented in order to achieve such measures in turn produces the need for the following question to be clarified: which means and which institutional solutions will meet these requirements most effectively?

   (b) As pointed out in the above-mentioned study, further discussions on the complex issue of institutional arrangements from the point of view of the need for
reforming and re-organizing them so as to create as efficient a system as possible must proceed from the real needs and the existing possibilities.

(c) In any future consideration of the institutional arrangements relating to disarmament, due attention should be paid to a more equitable representation of the non-aligned and developing countries in the bodies and organs of the United Nations in view of their role in the international community and the fact that, objectively, those countries are the ones most seriously threatened by the unabated arms race.

(d) In view of the fact that the Centre for Disarmament constitutes the only specialized, organized and functional body for reviewing the process of disarmament within the United Nations system, attention should be paid in future discussions of the question of institutional arrangements to making the Centre more effective so that it renders technical assistance to certain organs and bodies of the United Nations, the Committee on Disarmament and international conferences devoted to disarmament questions.

(e) In this connexion, the question whether, by improving the internal organization of the Centre, it can function better and play a more independent role in discharging its duties should be examined. Furthermore, the question of a clearer division of functions and the relationship between the Centre and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research falls also within this framework.

(f) The recommendation contained in the study to review in a more comprehensive manner the possibilities and explore the ways and means of investing material resources released through disarmament in development needs, and in particular the development needs of developing countries, deserves special attention.

5. The Government of Yugoslavia expresses its full readiness to participate actively in all the activities related to the promotion of institutional arrangements. It shares the view that the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament represents an opportunity to pay, within the review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, adequate attention to the question raised in the study on institutional arrangements relating to the process of disarmament.