Twelfth special session
Agenda: item 12

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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DENMARK

1. Denmark expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General and the experts who assisted him for the efficient manner in which the report was prepared. As a demonstration of her interest in the subject and of her constructive attitude, it wishes to refer to the participation of three Member States of the Ten in the group of experts and to the detailed views which others submitted in written form.

2. Considering the central role and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament vested in the United Nations and in view of the fact that disarmament and arms control constitute an important and difficult field of international concertation, Denmark believes that provision should be made for the adequacy of the machinery available to the international community.

3. At the same time, it must be recognized that progress towards real measures of arms control and disarmament is more often determined by substance of the matter under negotiation and the quality of the international climate than by the institutional framework. The primary objective of institutional arrangements should be to enable the United Nations to carry out its role in enhancing international peace and security by furthering the progress of the disarmament negotiations.

4. For these reasons, Denmark will give appropriate attention to the institutional evaluation process which is due to take place at the second special session on disarmament.

5. As far as the existing machinery is concerned, Denmark notes that this has expanded remarkably since the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament:

(a) The First Committee of the Assembly now deals only with questions of disarmament and related international security questions;

(b) The United Nations Disarmament Commission was established as a deliberative forum of all Member States of the United Nations;

(c) The new structure of the Committee on Disarmament assures a more democratic approach to this problem. Any proposition for a new increase of membership should take into account the necessity to preserve the efficiency of this single multilateral negotiating forum.

/...
6. The possibilities of lengthening of the session as well as providing for more frequent sessions of the various working groups could be examined.

7. A considerable number of expert studies have been undertaken on the request of the General Assembly. A United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research was established. A United Nations disarmament fellowship programme is running. More and more United Nations publications on disarmament appear.

8. Denmark recalls that the General Assembly, through its First Committee, remains an important forum in the field of disarmament. In general, it considers that the reorganization of the work of the Committee has been beneficial. However, in the view of Denmark, it should be a matter of concern that it has also entailed an inflation in resolutions.

9. Member States might consider reaching an informal understanding to limit the draft resolutions output of the First Committee, thus concentrating the delegations' attention on the most relevant and urgent matters.

10. It might also be desirable to consider a better division of labour between the First Committee and the United Nations Disarmament Commission. In this context, the latter could be called upon to assume specific tasks which at present are not dealt with in depth by the former. With regard to the principle of consensus basis on which the United Nations Disarmament Commission has operated, Denmark takes the view that it should be maintained.

11. As a result of the first special session on disarmament, in 1978, the functions of the Centre for Disarmament have been expended. Denmark recognizes that the Centre has played hitherto a considerable role and that its staff has performed various services to the benefit of other disarmament bodies within the United Nations system. Denmark expresses the view that, in order to improve the effectiveness of efforts made in the disarmament sphere, the co-ordinating role of the Centre for Disarmament vis-à-vis the other bodies performing disarmament related activities need to be strengthened. In particular, the advice of the Centre should be obtained before any of the specialized agencies become involved in the discussion of substantive disarmament issues.

12. In this connexion, Denmark supports the recommendation of the group of experts that Member States should be kept informed of the progress made in the matter of co-ordination as well as of the difficulties encountered.

13. Denmark notes that there was no agreement among the experts on whether it is necessary at present to enlarge the Centre to meet new responsibilities or to turn into a separate department of the United Nations.

14. Considering the new and heavier responsibilities the Centre will have to assume in the future, its status within the Secretariat should be re-examined after careful consideration of all implications, in particular in the financial field. The possibility of upgrading the Centre to a department headed by an under-secretary-general who would be reporting directly to the Secretary-General might be considered.
15. Denmark supports the view expressed in the report of the Group of Experts (A/36/392) that when substantial progress has been made in the current negotiations it would be appropriate to consider institutional arrangements for the implementation and verification of disarmament agreements.

16. Denmark welcomes the establishment of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) which represents a significant additional strengthening of the research capabilities of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Denmark is confident that the second special session on disarmament will take a decision concerning a permanent status of UNIDIR, which would allow a better co-ordination of its work with the activities of the Secretariat which might be asked to prepare factual background papers while UNIDIR might be given responsibility for policy studies. The new status should also guarantee a scientific independence.

16. In this context a more precise definition of the role of the advisory board which clearly is in need of review is called for. Furthermore the board should be encouraged to develop a role in the co-ordination of studies. Also a small board might be more effective.

17. It could, moreover, be envisaged that the advisory board would serve as a consultative body of UNIDIR.

FRANCE

[Original: French]
[9 June 1982]

1. France wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General and the experts who assisted him for the care with which the report was prepared.

2. As evidenced by its participation in the work of the Group and the detailed views which it and its European partners set forth, France attaches great importance to the problems dealt with in the study.

3. Indeed those problems have a direct bearing on the ability of the United Nations to undertake the "central role and primary responsibility" it has in the sphere of disarmament.

4. International co-operation in the field of disarmament and arms control is as difficult as it is necessary. France therefore considers it necessary that every effort be made to ensure the adequacy of the machinery available to the international community for that purpose. In taking this view, it fully recognizes that the substantive issues under negotiation and the international climate are as decisive, if not more so, than the institutional framework in which the negotiations are conducted.
5. From this point of view, the main objective in improving the institutional arrangements within the United Nations should be to enable the Organization to meet its responsibilities for the strengthening of international peace and security, including by fostering progress in disarmament negotiations.

6. For all these reasons, France considers that it is entirely appropriate that the second special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament should carry out a thorough review of institutional arrangements.

7. Like its partners of the European Community, France notes that, since the first special session, substantial improvements have been made in the existing machinery:

(a) The First Committee of the General Assembly now deals only with questions of disarmament and related issues of international security;

(b) The reactivated Disarmament Commission is now a deliberative body in which all Member States are represented;

(c) The changes made in the structure of the Committee on Disarmament — especially the abolition of the joint chairmanship — have helped to ensure a more democratic approach.

8. In accordance with the recommendation set out in the 1978 Final Document, the current session of the General Assembly is to carry out a review of the composition of the Committee on Disarmament. An increase in the number of its members should be compatible with the requirements entailed by its role as the main forum for multilateral negotiation.

9. Consideration might also be given to increasing the length of the Committee's sessions and those of the various working groups:

(a) At the request of the General Assembly, numerous studies have been made, with the assistance of experts;

(b) The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research was set up in Geneva;

(c) A Programme of fellowships on disarmament was established;

(d) The United Nations has begin to issue a greater number of publications on disarmament issues.

10. France, like its European partners, wishes to stress that the First Committee of the General Assembly continues to be an important forum for disarmament issues. It considers that, on the whole, the organization of the Committee's work is satisfactory.
11. It hopes, however, that the interest of a growing number of States in disarmament matters and the expanding scope of the issues dealt with by the First Committee will not increase its workload and thereby adversely affect its effectiveness.

12. It might also be desirable to define more clearly the specific role to be played by the Disarmament Commission in thoroughly considering disarmament questions, having regard, in particular, to the studies commissioned by the General Assembly.

13. France considers that the principle of consensus on the basis of which the Disarmament Commission has operated should be maintained.

14. One of the results of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament was the expansion of the functions of the Centre for Disarmament. Those functions relate, in particular, to the assistance which the staff of the Centre can provide to other forums within the United Nations system which deal with disarmament issues.

15. In that connexion, France considers that co-ordination should be substantially improved with respect to the activities of other institutions which, in any way, have a bearing on disarmament. It believes that the Centre for Disarmament should be recognized as the means of ensuring such co-ordination and provided with appropriate resources for carrying out that task.

16. It is desirable, in particular, that the Centre be consulted by specialized agencies before they deal with disarmament-related issues.

17. France therefore supports the recommendation of the Group of Experts to the effect that Member States should be kept informed not only of progress relating to interagency co-ordination on disarmament but also of the difficulties encountered.

18. France notes that the report of the Group of Experts provides an accurate and objective account of the various viewpoints that exist with regard to the future development of the Centre's structure, whether by increasing the resources at its disposal and/or transforming it into a new specialized division within the Secretariat.

19. However, in the light of the new and more demanding responsibilities which the Centre will no doubt be called upon to assume in the future, its status within the Secretariat should be reviewed in the light of all potential implications, especially financial.

20. France not only believes that consideration should be given to the upgrading of the Centre but it also favours an arrangement under which the Centre would be headed by an Under-Secretary-General reporting directly to the Secretary-General.
21. In addition, France sees a need for the General Assembly at its special session to pursue consideration of the various proposals for expanding the role of the United Nations in the international verification of disarmament agreements. Such proposals may, in fact, justify the introduction of certain institutional changes to enable the United Nations to provide all the assistance which States deem necessary.

22. States should be assisted by the Organization, where necessary, in obtaining access to appropriate technology for the verification of agreements, whether, for example, by seismic detection, remote sensing of the earth by satellite or specific procedures for monitoring the use and prohibiting the production or stockpiling of certain types of weapons, such as chemical weapons.

23. France, like its European partners, welcomes the establishment of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. The Institute represents a major step forward in enhancing the capacity of the United Nations for research in the field of disarmament.

24. Bearing in mind that the second special session devoted to disarmament is expected to decide on the permanent status of the Institute, France favours an arrangement under which it would, inter alia:

(a) Produce factual papers on substantive issues in co-operation with the United Nations Secretariat;

(b) Have responsibility for both policy studies and research on specific topics.

The new status should also guarantee the Institute's scientific independence.

25. In that connexion and having regard to the need to review the terms of reference of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies, France is of the view that the Advisory Board could, with a smaller membership, serve as the Institute's scientific board and guarantee the independence of its work.

GERMANY, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF

[Original: English]
[9 June 1982]

1. The Federal Republic of Germany expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General and the experts who assisted him for the efficient manner in which the report was prepared. As a demonstration of its interest in the subject and of its constructive attitude, the Federal Republic of Germany wishes to refer to the participation of three Member States of the European Community in the Group of Experts and to the detailed views which others submitted.
2. Considering the central role and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament vested in the organization of the United Nations and in view of the fact that disarmament and arms control constitute an important and difficult field of international concertation, the Federal Republic of Germany believes that provisions should be made for the adequacy of the machinery available to the international community. At the same time, it must be recognized that progress towards real measures of arms control and disarmament is more often determined by substance of the matter under negotiation and the quality of the international climate than by the institutional framework. The primary objective of institutional arrangements should be to enable the United Nations to carry out its role in enhancing international peace and security by furthering the progress of the disarmament negotiations.

3. For these reasons, the Federal Republic of Germany will give appropriate attention to the institutional evaluation progress which is due to take place at the second special session on disarmament.

4. As far as the existing machinery is concerned, the Federal Republic of Germany notes that this has expanded remarkably since the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament:

(a) The First Committee of the Assembly now deals only with questions of disarmament and related international security questions.

(b) The United Nations Disarmament Commission was established as a deliberative forum of all Member States of the United Nations.

(c) The new structure of the Committee on Disarmament assures a more democratic approach to this problem. Any proposal for a new increase of membership should take into account the necessity to preserve the efficiency of this single multilateral negotiating forum. The possibilities of a lengthening of the session as well as providing for more frequent sessions of the various working groups could be examined.

(d) A considerable number of expert studies have been undertaken on the request of the General Assembly. A United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research was established. A United Nations disarmament fellowship programme is running. More and more United Nations publications on disarmament appear.

5. The Federal Republic of Germany recalls that the General Assembly remains an important forum in the field of disarmament through its First Committee. In general, it considers that the reorganization of the work of the Committee has been beneficial.

6. The Federal Republic of Germany fears, however, that the growing interest and more active involvement of a larger number of States in disarmament affairs, as well as the increasing number of problems under consideration, could lead to an increased workload which could hamper the effectiveness of the work of this body. Member States might consider reaching an informal understanding to limit the output in draft resolutions of the First Committee, thus concentrating the delegations' attention on the most relevant and urgent matters.
7. It might also be desirable to consider a better division of labour between the First Committee and the United Nations Disarmament Commission. In this context, the latter could be called upon to assume tasks which at present are not dealt with in depth by the former. With regard to the principle of consensus basis on which the Commission has operated, the Federal Republic of Germany takes the view that it should be maintained.

8. As a result of the first special session in 1978, the functions of the Centre for Disarmament have been expanded. The Federal Republic of Germany recognizes that the Centre has hitherto played a considerable role and that its staff has performed various services to the benefit of other disarmament bodies within the United Nations system. The Federal Republic of Germany expresses the view that in order to improve the effectiveness of efforts made in the disarmament sphere the co-ordinating role of the Centre for Disarmament vis-à-vis the other bodies performing disarmament-related activities needs to be strengthened. In particular, the advice of the Centre should be obtained before any of the specialized agencies become involved in the discussion of substantive disarmament issues.

9. In this connexion, the Federal Republic of Germany supports the recommendation of the group of experts that Member States should be kept informed of the progress made in the matter of co-ordination as well as of the difficulties encountered.

10. The Federal Republic of Germany notes that there was no agreement among the experts on whether it is necessary at present to enlarge the Centre to meet new responsibilities or to turn it into a separate department of the United Nations.

11. Considering the new and heavier responsibilities the Centre will have to assume in the future, its status within the Secretariat should be re-examined after careful consideration of all implications, in particular in the financial field. The possibility of upgrading the Centre to a department headed by an under-secretary-general who would be reporting directly to the Secretary-General might be considered.

12. The Federal Republic of Germany supports the view expressed in the report that when substantial progress has been made in the current negotiations it would be appropriate to consider institutional arrangements for the implementation and verification of disarmament agreements.

13. The Federal Republic of Germany welcomes the establishment of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) which represents a significant additional strengthening of the research capabilities of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. The Federal Republic of Germany is confident that the second special session on disarmament will take a decision concerning a permanent status of UNIDIR, which would allow a better co-ordination of its work with the activities of the Secretariat which might be asked to prepare factual background papers while UNIDIR might be given responsibility for policy studies. The new status should also guarantee a scientific independence.
14. In this context a more precise definition of the role of the Advisory Board which clearly is in need of review is called for. Furthermore the Board should be encouraged to develop a role in the co-ordination of studies. Also a smaller Board might be more effective.

15. It could moreover be envisaged that the Advisory Board would serve as a consultative body of UNIDIR.