Twelfth special session
AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE TWELFTH
SPECIAL SESSION
Agenda item 11

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION OF THE 1980s AS THE SECOND
DISARMAMENT DECADE AS WELL AS CONSIDERATION OF INITIATIVES
AND PROPOSALS OF MEMBER STATES

Note verbale dated 24 June 1982 from the Permanent Mission of
France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

The Permanent Mission of France presents its compliments to the United Nations
Secretariat and has the honour to request it to have the attached proposal
concerning the establishment of a "Universal Conscience Council" within the
framework of the World Disarmament Campaign circulated as a document of the twelfth
special session of the General Assembly under agenda item 11.
ANNEX

UNIVERSAL CONSCIENCE COUNCIL

1. Within the framework of the World Disarmament Campaign and taking into account any provisions that may be adopted concerning the organization of the latter, it would be desirable to envisage the convening of a committee of eminent persons on the initiative of the Secretary-General.

2. Public opinion is becoming aware of the necessity and possibility of breaking out of the circle of false fatalities: the fatality of crisis for the rich, the fatality of poverty for the poor, the fatality of war for all.

3. It is important to encourage this intellectual movement, to keep it informed and to guide it along an effective course. Disarmament should not evoke emotional reactions alone. It is salutary to emerge from apathy, but it is not salutary to exchange apathy for Utopian dreams. Disarmament is desired by the heart but must be achieved by the use of reason.

4. Since people are now aware of the new dimensions and increasing complexity of the problems involving the security of nations and public opinion is demanding more information about what is at stake in the negotiations that are currently under way or envisaged for the future, it would be desirable to establish a body that would respond to that need, which could be called the "Universal Conscience Council".

5. This Council would consist of eminent persons representing the main categories of the spiritual life of mankind, and science, culture, art and philosophy; for example, Nobel Prize winners, former Heads of State or Government who are unanimously respected and no longer involved in national political activities and eminent persons representing the principal religious faiths and lay philosophies of a humanist and social nature.

6. It would consist of permanent members, appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and temporary members chosen by the permanent members.

7. The Council's role would be to provide general information on the various aspects of the problems relating to disarmament and arms control, international security and the link between disarmament and development.

8. The Council could consider proposals submitted to it by the General Assembly and, at the latter's request, express its views thereon.