Fifteenth special session
Agenda items 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15

REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE PRESENT INTERNATIONAL SITUATION, ESPECIALLY IN THE LIGHT OF THE VITAL OBJECTIVE OF TERMINATING THE ARMS RACE AND THE PRESSING NEED TO ACHIEVE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT

ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH AND TWELFTH SPECIAL SESSIONS

CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMME OF DISARMAMENT

ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS, INCLUDING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ASPECTS, RELEVANT TO THE DISARMAMENT PROCESS, WITH A VIEW TO THE ELABORATION OF APPROPRIATE CONCRETE AND PRACTICAL MEASURES AND, IF NECESSARY, ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES, TAKING DUE INTO ACCOUNT THE PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED IN THE FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE TENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT


UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT, INCLUDING MEASURES TO MOBILIZE WORLD PUBLIC OPINION IN FAVOUR OF DISARMAMENT

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT, IN THE LIGHT OF THE ACTION PROGRAMME ADOPTED AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
Letter dated 31 May 1988 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the African Group for the month of May 1988, I have the honour to request you to circulate as an official document of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, under items 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16, the attached document reflecting the views of African Member States on issues to be discussed (see annex).

(Signed) Hassan ADAM
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Sudan
Chairman of the African Group for the month of May
ANNEX

Document reflecting the views of African Member States on issues to be discussed at the fifteenth special session of the General Assembly, the third special session devoted to disarmament

Introduction

1. The maintenance of international peace and security is a central objective of the contemporary international community. More than at any other period in history, it has become imperative for States to undertake effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of all threats and conditions that are provocative of breaches to international peace. The preservation of mankind from a nuclear holocaust, the easing of tensions in the world; the removal of regional conflicts; the correction of the flagrant imbalance between the ever increasing volume of expenditure on armaments and the expanding scope of unsatisfied economic needs, these are critical areas that must be addressed in the priority and pressing task of attaining global peace and security.

2. The African States, therefore, commend the decision of the General Assembly of the United Nations to convene the fifteenth special session, the third special session devoted to disarmament, from 31 May to 25 June 1988. That resolution underlines the concern and urgency that the international community attaches to disarmament measures, as well as a determination to examine the vital question of the survival of mankind at the highest political level, especially given the current favourable political climate. It constitutes an affirmation of the vital role assigned to the United Nations in the disarmament process.

3. The African States reaffirm their faith in the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. They firmly support the Charter provisions regarding the central role and primary responsibility of the United Nations in promoting arms limitation and disarmament. They stress their conviction that the United Nations, by virtue of its norms and universal composition, continues to provide the most appropriate forum for the co-ordination and harmonization of the endeavours of the international community in pursuit of arms limitation and disarmament, as well as of international peace and security.

4. The African States remain confident that the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament would give rise to concrete and positive results, and consequently will participate constructively in the important deliberations. The following observations and recommendations are submitted in the hope that they would form a good basis not only for the deliberations at the special session but also for elaborating its final document.

5. The fifteenth special session is part of a process initiated by the General Assembly as early as the inception of the Organization and marked an historic milestone in 1978: the convening of the tenth special session adopted without a vote a Final Document which embodied a declaration, formulated a programme of action and established an international disarmament mechanism. The twelfth special session reaffirmed the continued validity of that document.

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6. The third special session offers the unique opportunity to reactivate a multilateral approach to disarmament. It should facilitate an agreement on the ways and means of implementing a programme of action embodied in the final document and of attaining its objectives. It must be emphasized indeed that if little progress was made in the implementation of that programme it was because of the lack of political will on the part of Member States rather than any shortcomings in the document itself.

7. The reassessment of the multilateral disarmament process should be one of the priorities of the session. To review comprehensively the present situation, it would be most appropriate to make the Final Document adopted in 1978 the basis for a continuing dialogue. The identification of positive developments as well as negative factors will be a first step. It must be accompanied by an examination of new elements introduced by revolutionary discoveries and developments in technological and scientific research. Discoveries made in the process of research for peaceful purposes are known to have been channelled to meet military objectives.

8. The consideration of the substantive changes that have occurred since 1978 or other present-day factors should, however, not lead to a revised or updated version of the Final Document of 1978. Similarly, the international community is already endowed with the programme of action adopted without a vote at the first special session devoted to disarmament. Hence, the third special session should, as a matter of priority, concentrate on the formulation of recommendations and concrete measures to accelerate the implementation of the programme.

Overall review

9. The work of the third special session should be pursued by all effective constructive means that would affect bilateral, regional and multilateral arms limitation and disarmament measures. These efforts should be complementary. The agreement between the two super-Powers to eliminate their intermediate- and shorter-range missiles, the Concluding Document of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence and Security-building Measures in Europe, the Rarotonga Treaty on the Establishment of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the South Pacific, the Contadora and Esquipulas Agreements related to the Central American States, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Lomé Declaration and Programme of Action on Security, Disarmament and Development, as well as the successful conclusion of the United Nations International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, are all efforts in enhancing mutual confidence as well as promoting prospects for peace and co-operation among States - measures required urgently towards arms limitation and disarmament process.

10. The African States, conscious that nuclear war would have devastating consequences for all mankind, and guided by the objective to reduce the outbreak of any war, consider that arms limitation and disarmament on the one hand, and security and development on the other, are among the most urgent issues facing the international community. The desired objective and the collective endeavours should be the patient and concrete constructive workable framework for enduring peace and for stable conditions of peace, stability and development. Security is essential within and between Member States and for their development. Without security, disarmament and development
would be difficult to achieve, as Member States would conceivably continue to pursue military means in order to assure their security, thus diverting vital resources away from development needs. Consequently, security, disarmament and development are mutually reinforcing. In view of this interrelationship, the ultimate goal should be to enhance security at the lowest level of armaments. Thus, any viable or realistic strategy for arms limitation and disarmament must take place within the overall context of the search for international peace and security. As clearly provided for under its Charter, the maintenance of international peace and security is the principal obligation of the United Nations. Ultimately, it believes that security is a military and non-military problem requiring a universal dialogue and the political will of Member States. The collective security system for the maintenance of international peace and security is paramount towards disarmament and development and should enhance peace and prosperity in view of their interrelationship.

11. The non-military approach to security is critical to strengthening peaceful interaction and co-operation within and among States, thus contributing to the removal of the need for diversion of resources from development to military use. The quest for security through armaments has diverted particular attention from the essential priorities that are non-military factors in the desire for equity and peace, in finding appropriate ways and means of improving human well-being. Such an approach to security has indeed revealed its true limitations. There is a need for policies and programmes that should re-examine the obstacles to human resource development and seek to balance the economic view of development with more focused concern for the promotion of education, health, employment and shelter, which are the necessary foundations of non-military security. In this connection, positive social and humanitarian conditions, in particular, the assurance of fundamental rights and freedoms, must constitute elements of non-military security and development at the national as well as the international levels. The dramatic nature of the economic crisis, the stark social and political consequences of the debt burden, the unfavourable terms of trade and protectionism, and poverty are consequently the most serious threats to the security of States today, particularly in the developing countries, impairing their progressive development. Peace, security and development are a valued component of stability and progress in an increasingly interdependent world.

12. The constant security threat to Africa by external forces is both unique and pathetic, through military, political and economic interference in the internal affairs of African States. The continued illegal occupation of Namibia and the perpetuation of racial oppression by the racist apartheid régime of South Africa with its offensive policy of defence destabilization characteristics towards the front-line States, is in contradiction to the intent and purpose of the United Nations Charter and the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, the first special session devoted to disarmament. The Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa, adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at Cairo in 1964, constitute a firm commitment to preventing the introduction of nuclear weapons in Africa. The acquisition of nuclear-weapon capability by the racist apartheid régime of South Africa further undermines the objectives of this Declaration and the non-proliferation Treaty, frustrating the efforts of African States towards security, peace, disarmament and development.
13. In recognizing the goals set in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly and the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session, the fifteenth special session offers a unique opportunity to reactivate and strengthen the multilateral disarmament process. The primary objective, therefore, should not be a revision of the Final Document, but finding ways and means for a consensus agreement of overcoming the obstacles in implementing the decisions, recommendations and Programme of Action embodied in the Final Document. The African States express their deep concern with the Programme of Action of the Final Document which remains unfulfilled. The impasse in the negotiations on nuclear, conventional and chemical weapons, a comprehensive test-ban treaty, and other weapons of mass destruction have not yielded any concrete results in spite of the commitments and obligations undertaken by Member States at the tenth special session. The nuclear-weapon States, together with other militarily significant States, have the primary responsibility for halting and reversing the arms race towards arms limitation and disarmament, the desired objectives at various negotiation forums, in particular, at the Conference on Disarmament.

14. A comprehensive test-ban treaty would be one of the most effective measures in the disarmament process, fulfilling the treaty obligations under the non-proliferation Treaty. It would further provide the best opportunity to demonstrate the linkage between "horizontal" and "vertical" proliferation issues — that is, to demonstrate how progress in curbing nuclear proliferation can have a salutary effect on halting the development and refinement of nuclear weapons that would effectively reduce the "quantitative" and "qualitative" arms race. Its major advantage lies in the discouragement of newcomers to the nuclear club and to contain the so-called threshold States — rendering unreliable the nuclear arsenals in the stockpiles of nuclear-weapon States. In addition, it is the only means that would give assurance to the non-nuclear-weapon States, and for the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate their genuine desire to fulfil their assumed treaty obligations under the non-proliferation Treaty.

15. Through the World Disarmament Campaign a well-informed public opinion constitutes a vital element in the disarmament process. Non-governmental organizations must be permitted to continue to play a genuine role in promoting multilateralism. The African States remain committed to an effective world disarmament campaign and other United Nations initiatives aimed at sensitizing world public opinion in favour of general and complete disarmament. The African States recognize the importance of regional approaches to disarmament, and in this connection, consider it vital for the establishment of the United Nations regional centres for peace, security, disarmament and development.

Conclusion and recommendation

16. In view of the foregoing, the African Member States reaffirm their strong conviction of the central role and primary responsibility of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Member States of the United Nations therefore should undertake to facilitate the effective exercise of the jurisdiction of the Organization in this field, and to implement concrete guidelines and measures to strengthen its institutional role and capacity, bearing in mind that the Charter envisages that multilateral agreements on measures of disarmament shall have an important role in the maintenance of international peace and security.
17. The African States are convinced that the third special session will provide a
unique opportunity further to strengthen the multilateral disarmament process. In
this connection, they propose the following:

The session should:

(a) Reaffirm the validity of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session
of the General Assembly and the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session
of the General Assembly. It should therefore focus on concrete guidelines and
measures to facilitate the implementation of the decisions and recommendations and
Programme of Action of the Final Document;

(b) Undertake an analysis of the non-military threats to security and their
impact on peace and development of States, particularly of the developing countries;

(c) Reaffirm the inherent relationship between disarmament and development
and strengthen the role of the United Nations in implementing the Action Programme
adopted by the International Conference;

(d) Reaffirm the central role and primary responsibility of the United
Nations in the field of disarmament. Member States should therefore undertake to
facilitate the effective exercise of the jurisdiction of the Organization in this
field. In this regard, they should take decisions on the various proposals aimed
at rationalizing the work of the United Nations bodies entrusted with disarmament
matters;

(e) Condemn the racist régime of South Africa for its acquisition of
nuclear-weapon capability and call for the cessation of all forms of collaboration
with the racist régime. In this connection, the special session should recommend
to the Security Council to prevail on South Africa to comply with all resolutions
and decisions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, particularly
those concerning acceptance of an international binding nuclear non-proliferation
commitment, and the placement of all its nuclear installations under International
Atomic Energy Agency safeguards;

(f) Welcome the signing of the Treaty between the United States of America
and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their
Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) and encourage the
super-Powers to consolidate and build upon this positive development in the
disarmament process;

(g) Adopt guidelines for appropriate types of confidence-building measures
and for the implementation of such measures on a global or regional level;

(h) Identify concrete and effective guidelines for verification to facilitate
implementation of disarmament agreements;

(i) Endeavour as a matter of urgency to adopt a comprehensive programme of
disarmament, in accordance with the commitment undertaken at the tenth special
session;
(j) Encourage Member States to commit themselves to accelerating and concluding negotiations on conventional arms limitation and reduction, and the prevention of trade on such arms;

(k) Give due attention to the role of the World Disarmament Campaign and other United Nations initiatives in sensitizing world public opinion. The session should identify ways and means of intensifying the campaign and other related programmes through the regional centres for peace, security and development;

(l) Conscious of the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as a single multilateral negotiating body, the General Assembly should:

(i) Recommend a review of its procedures and organization with the objectives of improving the effective functioning in a contemporary world which is imperative;

(ii) Recommend that the Conference continue its work in this field, as well as on the question of expanding its membership, treating these with urgency demanded by the changing times of concrete decisions and recommendations;

(iii) Recommend that the Conference consider changes in its rules of procedure to enable a more effective participation by observer States in its work.

18. Member States should identify and consolidate the positive results so far achieved, in particular the progress made or being made by the two super-Powers. What is required are the assurances of measures and guidelines towards arms limitation and disarmament, demonstrating the goal set by the international community of ensuring international peace and security, through the harmonization and co-ordination of the views of Member States in exercising moderation and restraint during the deliberations and negotiations at the third special session devoted to disarmament.

19. In this connection, the African Member States reaffirm that security, disarmament and development, relaxation of tensions among Member States, respect for the right of self-determination and independence, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and the strengthening of international peace and security are closely related to each other. Progress in any of these fields would have a beneficial impact on all of them; in turn, failure in one field would have a negative effect on the others.