Fifteenth special session
Agenda items 9, 13 and 14

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

CONSIDERATION OF THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE
FIELD OF DISARMAMENT AND OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
DISARMAMENT MACHINERY

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

Letter dated 14 June 1988 from the Permanent Representative
of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

Attached please find the position of the Twelve Member States of the European
Community on items 13 and 14 of the agenda of the third special session of the
General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

On behalf of the Twelve Member States of the European Community, I kindly ask
you to have circulated this paper as an official document of the fifteenth special
session under agenda items 9, 13 and 14.

(Signed) Alexander COUNT YORK
ANNEX

Position of the Twelve Member States of the European Community

1. United Nations role in disarmament

The United Nations has a central role in the sphere of disarmament pursuant to the purposes and principles enshrined in its Charter. The United Nations should reflect the desire of the international community to pursue gradually the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, and should encourage and facilitate efforts to that end, taking into consideration the major contribution the United Nations has already made and is making to the cause of disarmament. In this context the role and responsibility of the United Nations in this field should be reinforced. The contribution of the United Nations to the disarmament process would be greatly enhanced if full respect for the principles of its Charter was ensured.

2. Review of the machinery

Serious efforts should be continued with the aim of improving the work of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and organizing it more effectively in order to enable the Organization to cope with the increasing complexities in the disarmament process and in the international situation, bearing in mind endeavours of the Secretary-General to improve the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations.

3. The Secretary-General

The role and function of the Secretary-General in encouraging progress in the field of disarmament are fully appreciated.

4. Department for Disarmament Affairs

The Department for Disarmament Affairs has an important role in facilitating the work of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. It has a primary co-ordinating function in helping the Secretary-General in implementing in the field of disarmament his efforts for rationalization, avoidance of duplication and most effective use of resources. Consideration should be given to ensure that the staff assigned to the department must be appropriate to the tasks assigned and the work carried out.

5. Special sessions on disarmament

Special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament are exceptional events and should be convened when it is agreed that they can play an
important role with a view to strengthening international co-operation on issues related to disarmament. Special sessions should provide the opportunity for consideration of the existing situation, and facilitate further progress in disarmament in its various aspects.

6. General Assembly and First Committee

The General Assembly as a forum in which all States participate should remain the main deliberative organ of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. The General Assembly's substantive consideration of disarmament items should continue to be undertaken by the First Committee, as set forth in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, the first special session devoted to disarmament. The First Committee should make every effort to facilitate the implementation of disarmament measures. Related international security questions should continue to be dealt with by the First Committee with the aim of contributing to the full implementation of the Charter in this field.

However, there is a need to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities of the First Committee so that it may optimally fulfil its functions and generate new ideas, approaches and initiatives, thus helping the international community to achieve progress in the field of disarmament. The full implementation of resolution 42/42 N is a matter of priority. The rationalization of the work of the First Committee would be an important step in this direction. In addition further measures need to be taken to reduce the number of resolutions, avoid contradictory and duplicative resolutions, expand the area of consensus and rationalize the agenda in line with suggestions made on the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations.

7. United Nations Disarmament Commission

The United Nations Disarmament Commission is an important deliberative body. It should concentrate on a limited number of complex problems and on making specific recommendations on important disarmament questions. The agenda of the Commission should not be too long. Attempts should be made to complete consideration as soon as possible, since there must be sufficient scope for discussion of new subjects, should this become necessary.

8. Conference on Disarmament

The unique character and importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the single world-wide multilateral negotiating body must be underlined. In this regard the formal and informal discussions of the Conference on Disarmament on questions related to its improved and effective functioning are welcomed.
9. Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies

The Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies has, besides serving as the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, an important role to play in co-ordinating studies so as to avoid overlapping between studies carried out by experts appointed by the Secretary-General and those studies which are of a more academic nature. This role as well as the function of the Advisory Board of considering and recommending guidelines for disarmament studies should be strengthened. Member States are invited to present their proposals for disarmament studies or research to the Secretary-General preferably by 1 September annually to give the Advisory Board the opportunity to make recommendations. Other questions concerning the future role of the Advisory Board could also be addressed.

10. United Nations studies

United Nations disarmament studies can play a useful role as a means of facilitating the discussion and consideration of issues in the disarmament field. Such studies should be related clearly to specific practical objectives and be subject to proper consultation. The mandate for studies should be as precise as possible and take into account practical constraints. Although consensus among the experts taking part in a study should be the aim, there may be occasions when it is preferable for differing views to receive equal weight and attention.

11. United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

The resources of UNIDIR in undertaking independent research on disarmament and related problems, particularly international security issues, should be used wherever appropriate. Bearing in mind the statute of UNIDIR, the attempts to reach a co-ordinated approach to making the most effective use of the facilities and resources available to the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and to UNIDIR should be intensified so that the Institute's work and studies carried out by experts appointed by the Secretary-General would complement and not duplicate each other.

The work of UNIDIR should be in accordance with its autonomous status. Studies carried out by UNIDIR should be research oriented and live up to academic standards. The studies should focus on current and concrete questions. They should not merely reproduce official positions.

12. World Disarmament Campaign

The World Disarmament Campaign has a useful role to play as a means of facilitating the widest possible dissemination, within available resources, of balanced, factual and objective information on questions of disarmament. Its contribution to this goal can be enhanced by the organization of regional conferences and seminars, smaller high-level meetings, as well as the support of the regional centres in Lomé, Lima and Kathmandu.
13. **Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean**

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean should give consideration to organizing its work in a way which takes current realities into account. Its deliberations would be greatly facilitated if appropriate conditions for the full implementation of the declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace were established in the area.

14. **Review conferences**

Review conferences of existing arms control and disarmament agreements have an important contribution to make towards maintaining compliance with established treaties, and for examining relevant technical developments. Review conferences are therefore necessary, at appropriate intervals, which are in some cases indicated in the instrument concerned.