Fifteenth special session
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF THE
FIFTEENTH SPECIAL SESSION
Agenda item 10

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

Report of Working Group I

1. At its 1st meeting, on 3 June 1988, the Committee of the Whole decided to
establish Working Group I to deal with agenda item 10 entitled:

"Assessment of the implementation of the decisions and recommendations adopted
by the General Assembly at its tenth and twelfth special sessions:

"(a) Report of the Conference on Disarmament;

"(b) Report of the Disarmament Commission;

"(c) Resolutions of the General Assembly in the field of arms limitation and
disarmament;

"(d) Status of negotiations on arms limitation and disarmament in bilateral
and various multilateral forums".

2. At the same meeting, Mr. Davidson L. Hepburn (Bahamas) was appointed Chairman
of the Working Group.


4. In addition to the documents submitted to the General Assembly and to the
Committee of the Whole relevant to agenda item 10, the Working Group had before it
the following documents:

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(a) Working paper regarding agenda item 10: Elements for consideration by Working Group I (A/S-15/AC.1/WG.I/1);

(b) Working paper regarding agenda item 10, submitted by Canada (A/S-15/AC.1/WG.I/2);

(c) Working paper regarding agenda item 10, submitted by India (A/S-15/AC.1/WG.I/3);

(d) Working paper regarding agenda item 10, submitted by Bulgaria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (A/S-15/AC.1/WG.I/4);

(e) Working paper regarding agenda item 10, submitted by the Federal Republic of Germany, on behalf of the Twelve member States of the European Community (A/S-15/AC.1/WG.I/5);

(f) Conference room paper of Working Group I: Programme of work (A/S-15/AC.1/WG.I/CRP.1);

(g) Conference room paper of Working Group I: A compilation of proposals submitted by delegations (A/S-15/AC.1/WG.I/CRP.2 and Add.1);


5. At its 1st meeting, on 6 June, the Working Group adopted its programme of work, as contained in document A/S-15/AC.1/WG.I/CRP.1. It also decided that section I of the annex to the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Third Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament 1/ could serve as a basis for the work of the Working Group.

6. In accordance with its programme of work, the Working Group devoted four meetings to the general exchange of views on agenda item 10. A large number of delegations participated in that exchange of views. Subsequently, on the basis of views expressed, the Chairman of the Working Group prepared a set of elements on agenda item 10 (A/S-15/AC.1/WG.I/1), which was adopted as an additional basis for the deliberations in the Working Group.

7. As a result of the exchange of views, a number of proposals were put forward by delegations. In order to facilitate the work of the Working Group, the Chairman prepared an informal working paper, which served as another basis for further consideration of the subject, taking into account the various views expressed and concrete proposals submitted.

8. In the course of consideration of the informal working paper presented by the Chairman, a number of amendments were proposed by delegations with a view to reaching a consensus text. However, the Working Group was unable to consider all of the amendments submitted.
9. Despite strenuous efforts made by delegations, the Working Group could not reach a consensus on the Chairman's paper. At its 13th meeting, on 17 June, the Working Group agreed to annex the Chairman's informal paper to its report, which is herewith forwarded to the Committee of the Whole.

Notes

ANNEX

Assessment of the implementation of the decisions and recommendations adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth and twelfth special sessions

Chairman's working paper

Introduction

1. In assessing and reviewing the state of affairs in the field of arms limitation and disarmament negotiations for the past decade, the States Members of the United Nations acknowledge the historic significance of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (resolution S-10/2 of 30 June 1978), the first special session devoted to disarmament. They reaffirm the validity of the basic concepts and ideals as well as the principles and priorities set forth in the Final Document with a view to achieving general and complete disarmament under effective international control. However, they note that at the twelfth special session of the General Assembly it was not possible to make concrete recommendations for the implementation of decisions of the Assembly at its tenth special session. Furthermore, they reaffirm that the United Nations has a central role and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament. It is generally felt that while disarmament is the responsibility of all States, the nuclear-weapon States have the primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament and, together with other militarily significant States, for halting and reversing the arms race. In this connection, Member States express their concern that during the past decade, though some progress was made in the field of bilateral disarmament negotiations, no significant achievement has been made in the multilateral disarmament forums, particularly in the Conference on Disarmament.

2. For the past decade, the arms race in all its aspects has continued unabated. It has been estimated that global military expenditures have reached one trillion United States dollars per year. During that period, a new trend has emerged in the arms race that is characterized by its extension to new fields and the shifting to qualitative improvement of weapon systems, particularly between the two major Powers. As a result, the world economic situation has not been improved proportionally and the gap between the rich and the poor countries has widened even further. Although solutions in certain areas have been improved, regional conflicts persist. In some cases, there have been reports of the use of chemical weapons. Moreover, the danger that war, including nuclear war, still exists poses a grave threat to world peace and security. Because people throughout the world have made strenuous efforts to oppose war and to maintain world peace, the international climate has been improved, thus enabling the international situation to move in a direction favourable to peace.

Prevention of nuclear war

3. In view of the fact that nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of civilization, it is encouraging to note the declaration made
by the leaders of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought". a/ In this connection, Member States welcome the establishment and activation of the new communication links between the Nuclear Risk Reduction Centres in Moscow and Washington, D.C., which would serve, inter alia, as practical steps for confidence-building measures intended to reduce the risk that nuclear war might be initiated by miscalculation, accident or misunderstanding. Member States further recall pledges made by China and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, another important step towards the prevention of nuclear war.

4. Member States note with disappointment that although the question of prevention of nuclear war has been considered in the multilateral disarmament forums, particularly in the General Assembly and the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament, no substantive progress has been made on the formulation of concrete measures regarding this subject.

Nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament

5. During the past decade, the nuclear arms race between the two major Powers has been continuing, particularly in the aspect of qualitative improvement and development of nuclear-weapon systems. In the implementation of provisions of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session, the question of cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament has been considered in the multilateral disarmament forums, but no substantive progress has been made on this issue.

Bilateral measures on nuclear disarmament

6. Member States welcome the conclusion 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). They consider the Treaty, which, for the first time, will eliminate an entire class of United States and Soviet nuclear arms and which sets new standards for arms limitation and disarmament, particularly in the area of on-site verification provisions and asymmetrical reductions, as of historic importance. They also note the progress made on the negotiation of a treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms, which will reduce the strategic arms of the two sides by 50 per cent.

Nuclear-test ban

7. The conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty by all States would make a significant contribution to the goal of ending the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and the development of new types of such weapons, as well as towards preventing their proliferation. It is encouraging to note that in addition to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water b/ (1963), all nuclear-weapon States have now pledged not to conduct nuclear testing in the atmosphere. The agreement signed between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on a joint verification
experiment regarding nuclear testing is a positive development in this regard. As part of the stage-by-stage negotiations on nuclear testing, the results of this experiment together with ongoing negotiations on protocols for the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear Weapon Tests (threshold test-ban Treaty) of 1974 and the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes, of 1976, would make it possible to agree to effective verification measures permitting the ratification of these two agreements. The two nations have reaffirmed their commitment to proceed thereafter to negotiating further intermediate limitations on nuclear testing leading to the ultimate objective of the complete cessation of nuclear testing as part of an effective disarmament process, which process would, inter alia, pursue, as a first priority, the goal of the reduction and ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

8. Member States note with satisfaction that under the Conference on Disarmament, the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operation Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events conducted a successful data exchange experiment in 1984 and is planning a new experiment, involving the exchange of large amounts of so-called Level II (full waveform) data and using a modern seismic system, as part of the efforts for concluding a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. However, in substance the Conference on Disarmament failed to begin its negotiation of such a treaty, as reflected in its reports.

Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons

9. The States Parties of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons c/ note with satisfaction the successful conclusion of the Third Review Conference of the Treaty with the adoption of a Final Declaration d/ by consensus. They commend the safeguard measures undertaken on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons by the International Atomic Energy Agency for the past decade, which has continued to provide an essential service in ensuring the effective implementation of the non-proliferation Treaty. However, vertical and geographic proliferation of nuclear weapons, through the build-up of nuclear arsenals and the deployment of nuclear weapons outside the territory of the nuclear-weapon States and on the seas, remain unchecked.

Security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States

10. During the past decade, there has been a general desire to conclude effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In this respect, Member States acknowledge the unilateral declarations made by all nuclear-weapon States. However, despite the fact that this subject has been included in the agenda of certain multilateral disarmament forums, in particular the Conference on Disarmament, it is disappointing to note that no substantive progress has been made towards the search for a common formula which could be included in an international instrument of a legally binding character, though there was no objection, in principle, to the idea of an international convention.
11. There is a broad recognition by the international community that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned constitutes an important step towards the goal of general and complete disarmament. It would also promote the objectives of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament. In this connection, Member States acknowledge the valuable contribution of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco) e/ to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America. They also welcome the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific by the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga). Member States further note that proposals for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia have been considered in various multilateral disarmament forums during the past decade. They also note with encouragement that other proposals have been put forward to establish such zones in the region of South-East Asia, the Korean peninsula, Central Europe, Northern Europe and the Balkans.

Chemical weapons

12. Bearing in mind that it is the general wish of the international community to conclude a total ban on chemical weapons, Member States appreciate the substantive progress made in the Conference on Disarmament on the negotiations of a multilateral convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction. Pending the conclusion of such a convention, they reaffirm the importance of the strict observance by all States of the principles and objectives of the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. f/ They solemnly condemn the continuing use of chemical weapons in various regional conflicts, as reflected in the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council. In this regard, they affirm their support for international investigation of suspected violations of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, as conducted by the Secretary-General. Member States also express concern about the possible proliferation of chemical weapons and they note that proposals for the establishment of chemical-weapon-free zones in certain areas have been put forward.

Biological weapons

13. Member States commend the successful conclusion of the Second Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction with the adoption of a Final Declaration g/ by consensus. They also note with satisfaction that an ad hoc meeting of scientific and technical experts from States parties to the Convention was held with the adoption by consensus of the modalities for the exchange of information and data agreed to in the Final Declaration, thus enabling States parties to follow a standardized procedure, which would contribute to the improvement of confidence-building among countries.
Radiological weapons

14. Member States regret that for the past decade efforts in the Conference on Disarmament to conclude a convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of radiological weapons, including the prohibition of attack against nuclear facilities, has not yet been successful. Moreover, the question of dumping nuclear wastes and other industrial wastes with radioactive materials in the territory of other States has also given grounds for growing concern.

Prevention of an arms race in outer space

15. Member States acknowledge the overwhelming support of the concept that outer space is the common heritage of mankind and should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes in an equitable manner for the benefit and in the interest of all countries regardless of their level of economic or scientific development and that it should be open to all States. In view of the recent developments in this field, they express serious concern about the possibility of the extension of an arms race into outer space, particularly the concept of new weapon systems in outer space. They reaffirm the need for all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to adhere to the existing restrictions and limitations contained in the relevant international legal instruments on space weapons, including the 1972 Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems h/ (ABM Treaty), and to conclude additional agreement or agreements in order to prevent the extension of the arms race into this field. Member States regretfully note that despite the efforts made in the Conference on Disarmament, negotiation on this urgent subject has not yet commenced, as called for in the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons

16. Member States acknowledge the importance of effective measures to be taken to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons based on new scientific principles and achievements as well as efforts to prohibit such weapon systems. They note that this subject has been continuously included in the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament for consideration, but no progress has been achieved.

Conventional weapons in all aspects

17. Member States acknowledge the growing recognition of the importance of addressing issues related to conventional arms limitation and disarmament as well as the need to achieve significant reductions in conventional armaments and armed forces in various parts of the world as an important component of the process leading to general and complete disarmament. In this regard, they commend unilateral measures undertaken by China, a permanent member of the Security Council, to reduce substantially its armed forces by one million. Bearing in mind the close relationship between nuclear and conventional weapons, Member States reaffirm the principle that together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, negotiations should be carried out on the reduction of armed forces and
conventional armaments in a mutually balanced and verifiable manner. They also underline that particular attention should be given to regions where concentrations have attained the most dangerous levels, such as in Europe. They also note the progress made in Vienna on the mutual and balanced force reduction (MBFR) negotiations.

18. Member States consider the Document of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence-and Security-building Measures and Disarmament in Europe as a new step of great political importance, which, inter alia, provides for mandatory on-site inspection of certain military exercises, can significantly increase openness on military matters and mutual confidence.

19. Member States also recognize that conventional disarmament measures must duly take into account the characteristics of each region and the need of States to protect their sovereignty, territorial integrity and national security, as well as the right of peoples to self-determination and independence.

20. Member States acknowledge the complex issues of the international transfer of conventional weapons, bearing in mind the principle of undiminished security of all the parties concerned, with a view to promoting or enhancing stability at a lower military level. They are also alarmed at the growing illicit arms trade.

21. Member States recognize that there is growing concern by the international community of the increasing sophistication of conventional weapons and the alarming spread of highly sophisticated and destructive weapons, which give a new and dangerous signal to the continuing arms race all over the world. They also recognize that the regional approach to the issue of conventional arms limitation and disarmament could be most practical for achieving progress in this field and would facilitate global negotiations on the issue.

22. Member States commend the Study on Conventional Disarmament j/, which gives a comprehensive examination of the subject. They note with disappointment that the deliberations in the Disarmament Commission on the issue has made only nominal progress, with a view to making concrete recommendations regarding all aspects of conventional disarmament.

23. Member States note with satisfaction the successful conclusion of the United Nations Conference on Prohibitions or Restrictions of Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects with a convention j/ containing agreements on certain specific conventional weapons, and has laid groundwork for further progress in this field.

Naval armaments and disarmament

24. Member States acknowledge the growing awareness of the dangers posed by large naval forces and the naval arms race, as part of the general arms race and in its own right, in the context of the military blocs and the countries possessing the largest naval fleets. They also note the increasing concern of the nuclear dimension in this area, including the geographical proliferation of nuclear weapons, a threat posed to the maintenance of international peace and security in general and to the countries of those regions in particular.

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25. Member States note with satisfaction the progress made in the Disarmament Commission on its deliberations on the subject of naval armaments and disarmament, particularly the questions regarding the maintenance of the freedom of navigation and the naval confidence-building measures, which would promote security at sea.

Verification and compliance

26. Member States recognize that in the context of pursuing general and complete disarmament under effective international control, verification is a matter of critical importance in the negotiations and implementation of arms limitation and disarmament and that a disarmament agreement should provide for necessary and effective measures of verification. They welcome the successful conclusion of the deliberations in the Disarmament Commission on verification in all its aspects with the adoption by consensus of a set of 16 principles of verification, which codify international acceptance of the essential role of verification in the arms limitation and disarmament process. They also note that the Disarmament Commission elaborated on the provisions and techniques of verification as well as the role of the United Nations in the field of verification. For the past decade, there has been a growing awareness for linking ways and means of verification to specific disarmament agreements and to their being acceptable to all the parties involved. To this extent, Member States emphasize that the United Nations could play a central role in the implementation of verification on arms limitation and disarmament agreements.

Confidence-building measures

27. There has been growing international recognition of the importance of confidence-building measures and the step-by-step approach to arms limitation and disarmament. In this regard, Member States recognize the contribution made by the agreement reached at the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-building Measures and Disarmament in Europe to the subject and consider that such a process should, as appropriate, be extended to other regions. They also welcome the successful conclusion of deliberations on the question in the Disarmament Commission with the adoption of a set of guidelines for confidence-building measures, which could be applied and formulated on a voluntary basis by the countries concerned through consultations and in accordance with the specific circumstances in and practical needs of different regions of the world. Such a set of guidelines has laid groundwork for further progress in the field.

Reduction of military budgets

28. Member States are alarmed by the fact that today global military expenditures are soaring with a significant portion of the expenditures devoted to military research and development. Member States note with satisfaction the substantive progress made in the Disarmament Commission on the elaboration of a set of principles which should govern further actions of States in the field of freezing and reduction of military budgets, which has been agreed upon except the one paragraph left outstanding, as reflected in the report of the Disarmament Commission.
29. Member States commend the study carried out by the United Nations in 1980 entitled Reduction of Military Budgets: International reporting of military expenditures, particularly the standard instrument for international reporting of such expenditures, which could serve as an important method to facilitate the process of negotiations on the reduction of military budgets. In this connection, they consider it appropriate that all States could make use of such a standardized reporting instrument on military budgets in order to obtain an objective assessment of military capabilities and promote confidence-building among countries.

Disarmament and development

30. There is a general recognition that disarmament and development are interrelated and that they are two pillars on which enduring international peace and security can be built. It is felt that progress in disarmament could release the needed resources for the benefit of development of all States. Member States consider that the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development 1/ should be recognized as a significant event. The participating States recognized, inter alia, that, while disarmament and development are distinct processes, each should be pursued vigorously, regardless of the pace of progress in the other. They also consider that disarmament and development have a close and multidimensional relationship, which is in part derived from the fact that the continuing global arms race and development compete for the same finite resources. They further note that in the relationship between disarmament and development, security plays a crucial role and that progress in any of the three areas could have a positive effect on the others.

Zones of peace

31. Member States generally recognize that the establishment of zones of peace in various regions of the world under appropriate conditions can contribute to strengthening the security of States within such zones and to international peace and security as a whole. In this regard, they welcome proposals for the establishment of zones of peace in the Indian Ocean, South-East Asia and a zone of peace and co-operation in the South Atlantic. They further note that the proposal of convening an international conference on the Indian Ocean as a step towards the establishment of a zone of peace has been considered in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean for the past decade, and regret that to date no consensus could be reached on such a proposal.

Multilateral disarmament forums

32. Member States recall that for the past decade the General Assembly and its First Committee have played a significant role in their deliberative functions and have served as a parliamentary forum for general exchange of views on a broad range of disarmament and related international security issues.

33. Member States recognize that as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly for in-depth deliberations on specific priority disarmament issues, the Disarmament Commission has demonstrated its importance as the unique multilateral deliberative body, in whose work all States Members of the United Nations participate. They
note that the Commission has considered intensively a great number of the most important issues in the field of disarmament. The Disarmament Commission, during the past decade, has reached agreement on recommendations on the elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament, the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade (Assembly resolution 35/46 of 3 December 1980, annex), guidelines for the study on conventional disarmament, verification in all its aspects, guidelines for confidence-building measures, as well as on the majority of a set of principles concerning the reduction of military budgets. They also note that for many years progress in the Commission's deliberations on questions related to nuclear weapons and South Africa's nuclear capability has been nominal.

34. Member States reaffirm the important role of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament. However, they note with disappointment that, for the past decade, the Conference has not been able to conclude any substantive disarmament items included in its agenda, particularly questions relating to nuclear weapons and outer space, although considerable progress has been achieved in connection with the negotiation of a draft convention on chemical weapons.

World Disarmament Campaign

35. Member States note with satisfaction that in implementing the decisions of the twelfth special session of the General Assembly, the second special session devoted to disarmament, the World Disarmament Campaign has played a useful role in publicizing, explaining and promoting public understanding and support for the goal of the United Nations in the field of arms limitation and disarmament. The observance of the Disarmament Week and the establishment of regional disarmament centres in Lomé, Lima and Kathmandu are also conducive to this end.

Conclusion

36. During the recent years, significant progress has been recorded in the field of arms limitation and disarmament. This may be attributed in part to the favourable climate developed within the international community. For example, the direct threat of a war, including a nuclear war, involving the major Powers has gradually decreased and the world situation has acquired greater stability and predictability. Existing international agreements have continued to be implemented or observed and measures for strengthening those agreements have been adopted. Despite this encouraging trend, however, many of the hopes for disarmament remain unfulfilled. Nevertheless, as reflected in the recent developments, it appears that Member States are sincerely demonstrating their political will and determination to minimize global tension, regional conflicts and the accumulation of armaments in order to reduce the threat of war, either nuclear or conventional war. The progress achieved thus far, while not total, can serve as a firm foundation for charting a sound and realistic future course of arms limitation and disarmament efforts on the part of the international community.

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Notes

a/ A/40/1070, annex.


c/ Resolution 2373 (XXII), annex.


g/ BWC/CONF.II/13/II, part II.


i/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IX.1.


l/ For the report of the Conference, see United Nations publication, Sales No. E.87.IX.8.