Fifteenth special session  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF THE  
FIFTEENTH SPECIAL SESSION  
Agenda item 12

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 DUTY 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

Working paper submitted by Australia, Canada and New Zealand

Advancement of women in the disarmament process

1. The participation of women in the activities of the United Nations, including in the Professional category of the Secretariat, has been a matter of concern to Member States for many years. Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations stipulates as the "paramount consideration" in the employment of staff the "highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity". Due regard is also to be paid to the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible. No discrimination is made in the employment provisions of the Charter between men and women. Article 1, paragraph 3, of the Charter, however, identifies as one of the purposes of the United Nations the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

2. The objective of increasing the participation of women in the process of peace and disarmament has been affirmed by Member States a number of times in recent years. The 1982 Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Co-operation stated as follows (resolution 37/83, annex, part I, article 5):
Special national and international measures are necessary to increase the level of women's participation in the sphere of international relations so that women can contribute, on an equal basis with men, to national and international efforts to secure world peace ... 

The 1985 Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women state, \textit{inter alia}: 

Universal and durable peace cannot be attained without the full and equal participation of women in international relations, particularly in decision-making concerning peace ... 1/

3. Member States of the United Nations are themselves devoting efforts to advancing the participation of women in their national societies. There is thus a correlation in the efforts of the national and international communities in moving towards the above objective.

4. The Department for Disarmament Affairs has done well in moving toward this objective. It currently has 10 out of 31 Professional positions filled by women. The Department has earned a sound reputation for the high professional quality of its work. A greater proportion of women are employed in the central services work of the Department. It is clear that the contribution of women to the cause of promoting international peace and disarmament through the Department's activities is already considerable. This third special session devoted to disarmament should commend the Department for its achievements in the disarmament process and in advancing the participation of women in United Nations activities.

5. One of the major components of the United Nations activities in disarmament is the World Disarmament Campaign. While the Campaign is working well towards accomplishing its objectives, there is scope for intensified effort to increase the participation of women in its activities.

6. The special session provides a useful opportunity to give further impetus to the objective of advancing the participation of women in the process of peace and disarmament. Consistent with the judgements and objectives of the 1982 Declaration and the 1985 Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, it is proposed that the General Assembly call for the following:

(a) Department for Disarmament Affairs

While noting with satisfaction the positive trends in the Department with respect to the employment of women at the Professional level, to encourage the Secretary-General to intensify efforts to employ appropriately qualified women, including at senior Professional levels, in accordance with measures being undertaken to promote the advancement of women within the Secretariat;

(b) World Disarmament Campaign

(i) To invite the Secretary-General, in organizing the programmes of the World Disarmament Campaign, to place increased emphasis on the participation of women in meetings, speaking engagements and expert panels;
(ii) To ensure the inclusion of women members when focusing on the five major
constituencies on which the campaign is currently targeted
(non-governmental organizations, electoral representatives, the media,
educational communities and research institutes), including in the
preparation of material;

(c) Other agencies

To encourage other agencies such as the Centre for Social Development and
Humanitarian Affairs (Branch for the Advancement of Women), the United Nations
University and the University of Peace to undertake activities that will
further involve women in education for peace and disarmament.

Notes

1/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of
the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi,
15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. III,