COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF THE
FIFTEENTH SPECIAL SESSION
Working Group III
Agenda item 13

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

Working paper submitted by New Zealand

REPORT OF CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

1. The Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament
negotiating forum of the international community. It is composed of 40 Member
States of the United Nations and it presents a report on its work each year to the
General Assembly. The report is conveyed to the First Committee. At present very
little time is devoted to considering the report. Yet the Conference is
negotiating on behalf of the entire international community: when a multilateral
agreement is concluded the practice has been for it to be conveyed formally to the
United Nations for its consideration, and thereafter to be opened for signature by
all Member States.

2. It is suggested that the disarmament machinery of the international community
would be strengthened if the work of the Conference, including the progress in the
multilateral negotiations of the preceding year, were open to a more effective
review process by the United Nations. The Conference's annual report should be the
subject of a separate debate by the United Nations. This might be done by either
one of the two deliberative bodies, the Disarmament Commission or the General
Assembly. There are some arguments in favour of the Commission assuming the
responsibility, but practical considerations of precedent and timing suggest that
the General Assembly should continue to carry the responsibility.

3. In order to allow it to meet that responsibility, however, new arrangements
might be made. The First Committee should have a separate agenda item for the
Conferences report, and it might devote some time to a debate on the report. It
might thereafter make recommendations to the Conference on its work in the following
year. Although the Conference is not an integral part of the United Nations, it negotiates on behalf of the international community and it avails itself of the United Nations financial support and other facilities. It is therefore justified for the Assembly to make recommendations to the Conference for its consideration, as it has done at the previous two special sessions.

Proposal:

It is proposed that the First Committee of the General Assembly receive the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament for consideration under a separate agenda item, "Progress in Negotiations of the Conference on Disarmament", and devote several working days to a debate on the report; and that it thereafter make recommendations to the Conference for its work in the following year.