COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF THE  
FIFTEENTH SPECIAL SESSION  
Working Group III  
Agenda items 13 and 14

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

Proposals submitted by Nigeria

There is general agreement that disarmament machinery created by SSOD I has not justified expectations. Nigeria takes the view that the main problem lies not with the structure of the machinery but with the fact that some Member States have not shown sufficient commitment to make use of the multilateral process. If there has been a decline in commitment to multilateralism generally, the field of disarmament has been a particular victim, related as it is to a most sensitive area of State policy. Yet multilateral machinery for negotiations was erected principally to underline the central role and primary responsibility of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament.

A starting point in the consideration of this issue should be to admit that some of the militarily significant States have not shown any commitment to the development of the central role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. This should not be seen as an attempt at polemics but a keen desire to be honest with ourselves, which is the only sure basis for improving the situation.

Therefore, SSOD III should provide the impulse for further ideas on how to enable the United Nations to discharge its role effectively. It should emphasize again the need for the United Nations to be kept fully informed by disarmament negotiators at the bilateral, regional or multilateral level.
Similarly in order to underscore the complementarity of bilateral and multilateral negotiations, the Conference on Disarmament should be kept informed of bilateral or other negotiations on items that feature on the Conference's agenda. In this connection, negotiations on nuclear weapons are vital. Since they are now taking place at the bilateral level, the USA and USSR should demonstrate greater openness with the CD.

Organs for deliberations and negotiations

Coming to the various organs themselves, I believe that the procedural improvements that have been made in the workings of the organs for disarmament deliberations and negotiations in the years since SSOD I have helped. The First Committee's ability to cope with its agenda fully and with greater care will be further enhanced if that Committee were to be allowed to start its work earlier than hitherto, i.e. without having to wait till the end of the General Debate, so as to allow more time for consultations on draft resolutions.

The Department for Disarmament Affairs

Among the tools available to the Secretary-General the Department for Disarmament Affairs is of course central. The Department's responsibilities far outweigh its size. It has been one of the more cost-effective departments and should therefore be enabled to maintain its efficiency. Disarmament is of universal interest and this should be reflected with greater transparency in the structure of the Department notwithstanding its small size. No region should feel itself at a disadvantage at the decision-making level.

The Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies has played a useful role, in its dual capacity as Secretary-General's Advisory Board and the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR. However, the Secretary-General and the United Nations will derive greater benefit from the experience and expertise of the members of the Board if greater flexibility is permitted in the use which the Secretary-General makes of the Board. SSOD III should recommend that the Board should henceforth be renamed the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters. Such a change will take account of present realities as well as future possibilities.

UNIDIR has shown that a small institute can make very useful contributions if properly guided by its Board and if competently led by its Chief Executive. SSOD III can contribute to the greater effectiveness of the Institute by inviting more Member States to contribute towards its upkeep.

United Nations and verification

Paragraph 31 of the Final Document of SSOD I states:

"... Agreements should provide for the participation of parties directly or through the United Nations system in the verification process."

The Final Communiqué of the Special Ministerial Meeting devoted to disarmament of the Co-ordinating Bureau of NAM held two weeks ago in Havana states in paragraphs 26 and 27:

/...
"The Ministers emphasized that the United Nations should play a central role in the implementation of verification agreements".

"The Ministers endorsed the principle of a multilateral verification system within the United Nations as an integral part of a strengthened multilateral framework required to ensure peace and security during the process of disarmament and eventually for sustaining a nuclear weapon free world".

In his contribution to the General Debate on 7 June, the Nigerian Minister of External Affairs underlined the importance of verification in disarmament agreements. However, he expressed the view that verification cannot replace the will of States to reach agreements, nor to fulfil, in good faith, their undertakings in such agreements.

It is self-evident that the weight of monitoring the compliance with the terms of any disarmament agreement will rest primarily with the parties. However, even in bilateral disarmament agreements that touch on nuclear weapons, the universal fear engendered by the existence and possible use of this category of weapons makes it essential for insisting on a role for a multilateral verification mechanism under the United Nations. Provision for verification by challenge which features in the INF Treaty is likely to recur in many subsequent agreements. This is an appropriate area for the United Nations to play a role. Obviously, resort to challenge will not be made lightly by either party to the agreement. However, if it does arise, a third party inspector drawn from the United Nations mechanism will be reassuring. This does not demand, particularly at this initial stage of nuclear disarmament, an expensive apparatus in the United Nations. But it does require a recognition by both super-Powers that the United Nations embodies international interests in nuclear disarmament.

Nigeria supports a study on United Nations and verification system. We believe, however, that in view of the urgency of the subject it should not be delayed till the next biennium of the United Nations budget. Rather, the Secretary-General should be authorized to invite a special voluntary contribution for the study. It should be noted that Sweden showed an example of commitment when it funded the study on the relationship between disarmament and development following SSOD I. Member States, particularly the militarily significant, should be willing to provide the financial resources for such a study.

**Item 14**

The Third SSOD should recognize the success so far achieved by the World Disarmament Campaign and call upon the international community (States, organizations both governmental and non-governmental) to support and sustain it.

**United Nations Fellowship Programme on Disarmament**

The United Nations Fellowship Programme on Disarmament established by SSOD I has proved to be more useful than could have been envisaged when it was proposed in 1978. At that time it was believed that it would interest only the developing countries that lacked trained manpower for disarmament negotiations. As it has
turned out, the 191 fellows trained to date from 93 countries include some from several developed countries. The average yearly application for the 20/25 places available is over 75. The logic of this would have been to seek an expansion. However, the current financial crisis facing the United Nations makes my delegation hesitate.

Nigeria expressed its concern at the cut-down of the number of Fellows from 25 approved by SSOD II to 20, while the duration was reduced to three and a half months from five months, when the United Nations budget crisis reach a peak two years ago. SSOD III should require the Secretary-General to restore the number of Fellows and the duration of the Programme to keep with the decision of SSOD II and always to keep it at that level unless the General Assembly so decides.