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

Working paper submitted by India

1. A decade has passed since the First Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament was held in 1978. It originated in the shared awareness of the people that general and complete disarmament is of utmost importance and that peace, security and economic and social development are indivisible. In recognition of the universal obligations and responsibilities, the Final Document of the SSOD-I laid the foundations of an international disarmament strategy. The Final Document also provided a Programme of Action and elaborated on the international disarmament machinery to lead to the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

2. During the decade, India has made increasing efforts in various disarmament fora to move towards the commonly agreed objectives, keeping in view the priorities established in the Final Document. While some progress has been registered, the threat to the survival of mankind posed by the existence of the nuclear weapons still persists, exacerbated by the unabated arms race.

3. As such we cannot but reaffirm the continued validity of the Final Document and renew our efforts towards the implementation of its Programme of Action.

4. Our present task is not merely to catalogue the developments of the past decade, but to assess them against the goals we set ourselves. This does not imply apportioning blame but recognition of the multidimensional and collective nature of security. An objective analysis will assist the task of the other working groups in developing steps for the future as also the organizational requirements for their implementation.
5. An assessment in the complex field of disarmament will rely on both quantitative and qualitative criteria. At a quantitative level, it is a fact that global military spending grew at a faster rate during the eighties than during the second half of the seventies. Today, it accounts for 6 per cent of the world GDP as against 5.5 per cent at the time of SSOD-I. In absolute terms, global military expenditure is estimated to be approaching $1 trillion per year. Another quantitative criteria of the continuing arms race is the growth of military R and D. It is estimated that global military R and D expenditure represents approximately one quarter of world's R and D expenditure. During recent years, as weapons have become more sophisticated, the rate of increase in spending on military R and D has also grown. Once again, in absolute terms, expenditure on military R and D is estimated to be in excess of $80 billion. In 1978, as today, nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority issue on the multilateral disarmament agenda. Despite all efforts, the nuclear warheads during this decade has increased from approximately 35,000 to more than 55,000. The order of magnitude of nuclear-weapons testing has not changed except during the period of the unilateral moratorium by one of the leading nuclear-weapon States. In 1978, the number of nuclear tests carried out was 56; in 1982 the figure was 55 and during 1987, it is estimated that 45 nuclear tests were conducted.

6. It is increasingly evident, that an assessment on the basis of quantitative criteria cannot be described as positive. There have however been certain positive developments whose impact has been perceptible. Though limited in number, these have taken place during the last few years. It is to be hoped that the momentum generated will be given a decisive impulse enabling us to turn the blind corner from the theology of nuclear deterrence into a new way of thinking about collective security.

7. The INF agreement is an encouraging development but its quantitative impact is limited for it covers only a tiny fraction of the awesome armouries of the United States and USSR. To nurture the change that the INF agreement symbolizes, we must seek assurance that this constitutes the first step of a time bound process of nuclear disarmament, which will not be restricted to the United States and USSR but will be multilateralized.

8. The successful conclusion of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development with the adoption by consensus among participating States, of a Final Document is a positive sign. What is now called for is the resources to begin implementation of the Action Programme.

9. It is universally accepted that the single most effective measure to check the nuclear-arms race would be to end all nuclear-weapon tests. The United States and the USSR after a number of years have started negotiations on gradually establishing lower limits on nuclear tests. This however is not enough for any agreement that leaves room for continued testing would not be acceptable. What is needed pending multilateral negotiation of a long overdue comprehensive nuclear-weapon-test-ban treaty is a suspension of all nuclear testing, by all States.

10. Recognizing that the most effective guarantee against nuclear war is nuclear disarmament, the Final Document urged that pending its achievement, an agreement to
prohibit the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons needs to be negotiated. Despite the inscription of this item on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating body where all five nuclear-weapon States, it has not been possible to commence negotiations to universalize the partial undertakings of the nuclear-weapon States into a legally binding treaty.

11. In 1987, the Treaty of Rarotonga established a nuclear-free-zone in the South Pacific area on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region, in keeping with the principles of the Final Document. All nuclear-weapon States should provide the necessary undertakings in the relevant protocols to respect the status of the zone, in keeping with the wishes of the States parties, to enable it to constitute an effective disarmament measure.

12. It is universally accepted that outerspace, as the common heritage of mankind should be used only for peaceful purposes, for the benefit of mankind. To translate this understanding into a commitment, the Conference on Disarmament needs to strengthen the existing legal régime and negotiate suitable agreement or agreements aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space. The moratorium observed by the two leading space Powers on ASAT weapons needs to be translated into multilateral negotiations for an ASAT ban.

13. On certain collateral measures, there have been positive developments. These relate to the work done in the UNDC on Confidence-Building Measures, Reduction of Military Budgets and Verification. The positive impact of these developments can only be seen in their accelerating the progress on concrete disarmament negotiations.

14. These do not provide the main thrust to the multilateral disarmament efforts. A truly multilateral disarmament agenda must be based on the criteria of relevance to the world community and cannot be guided on considerations of realism or pragmatism only. On this basis, the priorities adopted in 1978 still retain their validity.

15. An objective assessment will not only assist the task of this working group but also help in deliberations of the other working groups.

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