Tenth special session
Item 9 of the provisional agenda*


Letter dated 23 May 1978 from the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a message from His Excellency Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council and the Council of Ministers of Socialist Ethiopia, on the occasion of the convocation of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

I would like to request that Your Excellency kindly have the above-mentioned message circulated as a document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly under item 9 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Mohamed Hamid IBRAHIM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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* A/S-10/10.

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ANNEX

Message from the Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council and the Council of Ministers of Socialist Ethiopia to the Secretary-General on the occasion of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament

On behalf of the people and the Provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia and in my own name, I wish to extend sincere best wishes for the success of the United Nations special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

A major problem of our times, and one which affects the peace and security of all States, is undoubtedly the question of disarmament. The advent of the nuclear age and the subsequent stockpiling of increasingly sophisticated and deadly weapons is today imperilling humanity and the entire human civilization with nuclear annihilation.

The convening of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament therefore offers a unique opportunity to explore new approaches and guidelines towards more meaningful disarmament negotiations. Given the present dangerous period that we live in, to respond merely in platitudes, however noble they may be, can only make future attempts to achieve general and complete disarmament more elusive. The nations of the world, therefore, must not allow this golden opportunity to slip by.

Ethiopia believes that this special session of the General Assembly should endeavour to make an objective assessment of the prevailing situation and determine why nations are reluctant to admit that each individual nation's security would be more positively ensured within a system of world security rather than the arms race. The session should also attempt to identify and analyse the root causes of the arms race with a view to the early reduction and eventual removal of arms as the most effective and viable strategy for genuine disarmament.

Mankind yearns for the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Since this is the minimum necessary first step in any disarmament process, acceptance and implementation of practical measures in this respect would provide further impetus towards other disarmament negotiations. As if the stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction already accumulated are not an ominous threat to world peace, attempts to introduce a new generation of weapons of ghastly potentialities is not only callous but would also further stimulate the arms race. This should prompt us to seek urgently effective disarmament measures.

An equally fundamental requirement in any disarmament process is the question of coping with problems of human and social inequities. While the majority of the world's population live in a state of abject poverty, we should not delude
ourselves into believing that disarmament alone can bring about peace and security. Coupled with disarmament, a commitment should be made towards genuine efforts to divert the resources released as a result of disarmament measures to improve the quality of life of the world's neediest peoples. Ethiopia, being irrevocably committed to the earliest achievement of social justice at the national level, can but lend its strongest support to similar world-wide objectives.

Ethiopia is also convinced that mankind yearns for a world secure in peace and social justice, a world free from the threat or use of force and any kind of interference in the internal affairs of each nation - in short, a world based on the noble objectives of the Charter of the United Nations. It is in this spirit that I reiterate our best wishes for this special session of the General Assembly as it grapples with one of the most agonizing problems that mankind has ever faced.

(Signed) Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu HAILE MARIAM Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council and the Council of Ministers of Socialist Ethiopia