Tenth special session
AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE
TENTH SPECIAL SESSION
Agenda item 11

ADOPTION OF A PROGRAMME OF ACTION ON DISARMAMENT

Note verbale dated 19 June 1978 from the Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and has the honour to submit annexed hereto a memorandum entitled "Verification of a comprehensive test ban".

The Permanent Representative requests the Secretary-General kindly to circulate the memorandum as an official document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly under agenda item 11.
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Verification of a comprehensive test ban

1. Norway attaches particular importance to halting the further development and spread of nuclear weapons and has therefore, consistently supported the quest for a complete nuclear test-ban agreement.

2. In connexion with the verification of such a ban, the work undertaken by the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and to Identify Seismic Events, established by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament on 22 July 1976 on Swedish initiative, is of particular importance. Norway has taken an active part in the work of this Ad Hoc Group, set up to consider the possibilities of international co-operative measures for the detection and identification of seismic events, in order to facilitate the verification of a comprehensive test ban. In its final report (CCD/550), the group recommends a network of seismological stations around the world, an international exchange of the recorded events over an international communications network and the processing of the data at international data centres.

3. One of the world's largest seismological observatories, NORSAR, is situated in Norway. The installation, which comprises more than 50 seismometers distributed over the south eastern part of the country, has for more than five years been recording signals from earthquakes and underground nuclear explosions. Research conducted at NORSAR has resulted in improved methods for distinguishing the signals of explosions from those of earthquakes. This work has contributed in making verification of a comprehensive test-ban agreement technically feasible. Norway is in the position to make important contributions to a control system for such a treaty both by making NORSAR data available for a global seismological system, and by scientific evaluation of the recorded data in order to verify that a test-ban treaty is adhered to.

4. The proposed global system comprises special international data centres, where detailed analysis and reporting of recorded events will take place. At the NORSAR data centre, a similar reporting system, although on a smaller scale, has been in effect for the past five years. Because of the experience thus accumulated, NORSAR is well prepared to serve as an international data centre, should this be desirable.

5. According to the proposal of the expert group, the international data centres will not be responsible for the actual identification of seismic events. They will only present the available data in a form suitable for detailed assessment by each Government, or possibly by an international body, if the necessary political agreements are reached. Based on the experience from operating the NORSAR system, Norwegian experts will also be prepared to contribute in the scientific evaluation of the data recorded by the global system.