Tenth special session
AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE TENTH
SPECIAL SESSION
Agenda items 9, 10, 11 and 12

REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE PRESENT INTERNATIONAL SITUATION IN THE
LIGHT OF THE PRESSING NEED TO ACHIEVE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN THE
FIELD OF DISARMAMENT, THE CONTINUATION OF THE ARMS RACE AND THE
CLOSE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISARMAMENT, INTERNATIONAL PEACE
AND SECURITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ADOPTION OF A DECLARATION ON DISARMAMENT

ADOPTION OF A PROGRAMME OF ACTION ON DISARMAMENT

REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN DISARMAMENT AND OF
THE INTERNATIONAL MACHINERY FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON DISARMAMENT,
INCLUDING IN PARTICULAR THE QUESTION OF CONVENING A WORLD
DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

Note verbale dated 8 June 1978 from the Permanent Representative
of Sri Lanka to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

The Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations presents his
compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to
refer to his letter dated 2 June 1978 (A/S-10/AC.1/9) and to transmit herewith a
working paper entitled "World Disarmament Authority".

The Permanent Representative would be grateful if the working paper were to be
circulated as a document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly under
agenda items 9, 10, 11 and 12.
ANNEX

Working paper submitted by Sri Lanka on the establishment of a World Disarmament Authority

1. The deliberations of the Preparatory Committee, the working papers placed before it and the views expressed in the course of the general debate at the tenth special session of the General Assembly have reiterated and emphasized a single theme: the primary role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. The very holding of this special session devoted to disarmament is itself a reassertion of this role. While this primary role of the United Nations has not been denied, it is also evident that within the existing system there are certain lacunae and an absence of co-ordination which needs to be rectified.

2. The present proposal by Sri Lanka for the establishment of a World Disarmament Authority to function as a permanent institution of the United Nations system derives from Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations to give tangible form to its first purpose: to maintain international peace and security, to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace and, in the context of the present proposal, to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations for the achievement of these common goals.

3. The establishment of a World Disarmament Authority should in no way detract from or diminish the functions and powers of any existing organ or machinery within the United Nations system. The establishment of such an Authority comes within the ambit of the functions and powers of the General Assembly and the Security Council, both of which are also empowered under the Charter to establish such organs as they deem necessary for the performance of their functions.

4. The need for the establishment of such an organ in one form or another has been advocated by other delegations which have addressed the current special session. Some have described it as an international disarmament organization. The functions envisaged for it have been set out in varying degrees. The present proposal by Sri Lanka takes into account other proposals made in the past and more recently during the preparatory meetings and this special session and seeks to give these more specific form while welcoming any modification deemed necessary to make the proposal realistic and feasible. It is also projected in the context of general and complete disarmament, the universally accepted goal.

5. The World Disarmament Authority could be given the broadest possible mandate. Among its first tasks would be the collection and collation of existing information relating to armaments, their production, distribution, transfers and application. The study could include the question of military budgets and their bearing on disarmament and related subjects. It is recognized that the nucleus for this already exists in the Centre for Disarmament which could strengthen or supplement the work of the Authority. The Secretary-General of the United Nations has suggested an advisory board to develop a comprehensive approach to international
study in the field of arms control and disarmament. It is also recognized that parallel work is being undertaken by national research and scientific organizations which could make significant contributions to the work of the Authority. It is nevertheless urged that this Authority assume that role as an organ of the United Nations. Several delegations have stressed the urgency and need for this task of study and research in the field of disarmament in the course of the current debate.

6. The other major role which the World Disarmament Authority could be entrusted with is the implementation and monitoring of existing disarmament measures as well as those to be negotiated in the future. Implementation under effective international control and verification is an indispensable corollary of disarmament, which in turn ensures compliance and promotes the confidence so essential for disarmament. Control and verification of disarmament measures which caused major political controversies at an earlier time are now less controversial because of scientific advances. During the present special session, States having these facilities have offered the use of these monitoring facilities through regional organizations or the United Nations. There have been proposals for the creation of a satellite monitoring agency. In this context a role could be assigned to the Authority envisaged in this proposal. If such a role for the Authority were to be accepted in principle, the modalities could be devised depending on the particular disarmament agreement and the objectives envisaged in it.

7. With its knowledge and experience in the field of implementation and monitoring, the World Disarmament Authority could make a significant contribution towards the development of realistic proposals and programmes for disarmament. In doing so it would in no way encroach on the work and responsibilities of existing organizations engaged in this work. Nor would it seek to substitute institutions or organizations which the General Assembly at this special session may initiate with a view to making more universal the responsibility for disarmament. In developing such proposals and programmes the role of the Authority would be to collaborate with and co-ordinate the work of existing bodies. The Authority could also provide many countries - and these constitute the great majority of the Members of the United Nations - with that specialized knowledge on technical aspects of disarmament now available almost exclusively to the great Powers. That knowledge would enable them to translate their deep concern about disarmament into effective action to advance the cause of disarmament.

8. While these could be the immediately feasible tasks to be undertaken by the World Disarmament Authority, Sri Lanka believes that the Authority's role should be projected in the future context of general and complete disarmament. The Authority could at that time be entrusted with the responsibility for controlling and regulating the production and distribution of armaments and determining the purposes for which such armaments are required and giving effect to decisions of the Security Council and other organs of the United Nations. Here again, it would not seek to infringe on responsibilities assigned by the Charter to the Security Council. If this is accepted in principle, the World Disarmament Authority may be a means of making more effective the relevant Articles of the Charter.
9. The proposed Authority should not be considered in any way as an instrument for curtailing or limiting the legitimate right of self-defence of any Member State. Nor should it be considered a device for restricting the access to arms indispensable for the liberation of territories under colonial rule, or illegally occupied by an aggressor. On the contrary, the Authority, under the direction of the Security Council, could be the instrument for enforcing a decision of the Council and evicting the aggressor.

10. Sri Lanka submits this proposal for a World Disarmament Authority having the functions elaborated in this paper for the consideration of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.