

**REPORT
OF THE
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE
WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 28 (A/36/28)



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I. INTRODUCTION

1. By its resolution 35/151 of 12 December 1980, the General Assembly, inter alia, requested the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference 1/ to maintain close contact with the representatives of the States possessing nuclear weapons in order to remain currently informed of their attitudes, as well as with all other States, and to consider any possible relevant proposals and observations which might be made to the Committee, especially having in mind paragraph 122 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (resolution S-10/2). The Assembly also requested the Committee to submit a report to the Assembly at its thirty-sixth session.

2. The elected officers of the Ad Hoc Committee were as follows:

Chairman: Mr. Nadarajah Balasubramaniam (Sri Lanka) and his successor,
Mr. Ignatius Benedict Fonseka (Sri Lanka)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Juan José Calle y Calle (Peru)
Mr. Ryszard Frelek (Poland)
Mr. Artémon Simbananiye (Burundi)

Rapporteur: Mr. Fermín Zelada (Spain)

3. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics participated in the work of the Committee by virtue of paragraph 3 of resolution 3183 (XXVIII). Under the same provision, China, France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America maintained contact with the Ad Hoc Committee through its Chairman. The German Democratic Republic and Viet Nam attended meetings of the Committee as observers.

4. The Working Group established in 1974 continued to function. At its 56th meeting, on 6 April 1981, the Ad Hoc Committee decided to add Sri Lanka to the membership of the Working Group. 2/

1/ By its resolution 3183 (XXVIII) of 18 December 1973, the General Assembly decided that the Ad Hoc Committee should consist of the following 40 non-nuclear-weapon Member States appointed by the President of the Assembly after consultation with all regional groups: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Liberia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire and Zambia.

2/ The composition of the Working Group is as follows: Burundi, Egypt, Hungary, India, Iran, Italy, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Spain (Chairman) and Sri Lanka. Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Indonesia, Japan, Mongolia, the Netherlands and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics participated in the Working Group as observers.

II. WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

5. In accordance with its mandate mentioned in paragraph 1 above, the Ad Hoc Committee held two sessions in 1981.
6. During the first session, the Committee held two meetings on 6 and 8 April.
7. During the second session, the Committee held three meetings between 6 and 10 July. At the first meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee was informed that H.E. Mr. N. Balasubramaniam (Sri Lanka) had completed his mission in New York and thus was unable to continue in his function as Chairman. The Committee, therefore, elected by acclamation Mr. I. B. Fonseka (Sri Lanka) as the new Chairman. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the contribution made to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee by Mr. N. Balasubramaniam during his chairmanship of the Committee.
8. During the two sessions, the representatives of the following States members of the Ad Hoc Committee and observers made statements on the subject: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Viet Nam.
9. Members of the Committee were fully aware of the positions previously expressed by the Governments of other States on the convening of a world disarmament conference.
10. The members of the Ad Hoc Committee were also aware of the fact that the idea of convening a world disarmament conference had been recently recalled by the General Assembly. In particular, resolution 35/46, entitled "Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade", recalls, inter alia, that the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament stated: "... at the earliest appropriate time, a world disarmament conference should be convened with universal participation and with adequate preparation". (annex, para. 23 (b)).
11. Some delegations expressed the view that the question of holding a world disarmament conference should find a reflection in the work and decisions of the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, to be held in 1982, and that the United Nations Disarmament Commission might take up this subject in connexion with its recommendations and conclusions to be presented in the Disarmament Commission's report to the special session.
12. The Working Group held three meetings, on 8 and 9 July, under the chairmanship of Mr. F. Zelada (Spain), and elaborated the draft of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee.
13. The Ad Hoc Committee, at its 60th meeting, on 10 July, considered and adopted its report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session.

14. In accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 35/151, the Ad Hoc Committee, through its Chairman, maintained close contact with the representatives of the nuclear-weapon States in order to remain currently informed of their attitudes and obtained the following updated indications of their positions:

China

The position of the Government of the People's Republic of China on the question of the World Disarmament Conference remains unchanged.

France

The French position with regard to the convening of a World Disarmament Conference has not changed since 1980. Having, in the past, adopted an attitude favouring, in principle, the idea of a world disarmament conference which, after a period of adequate preparation, would be attended by, among others, the five nuclear-weapon Powers, France none the less recognizes that the present international situation is not conducive to making real progress in considering such an initiative.

France points out, moreover, that such an initiative should take into account the achievements of the 1978 first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and the conclusions which will emerge from the second special session to be held in 1982.

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

The Soviet Union stands for the convening of the World Disarmament Conference on the presumption that this forum would constitute an important step towards joining in the efforts of States for the purpose of solving the key problem of the present time - the limitation of arms race and disarmament. The idea of holding the World Disarmament Conference has gained wide international support, inter alia, at the United Nations. It is witnessed, in particular, by the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament, by the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade, adopted by consensus, and by a series of other resolutions of the General Assembly, including resolution 35/151 of its thirty-fifth session.

In the opinion of the Soviet Union, the World Disarmament Conference, proceeding on the basis of a detailed study of disarmament questions, could elaborate effective approaches to the question of halting the arms race and the realization of real disarmament. In the opinion of the Soviet Union, the particular importance and usefulness of this forum lies in the fact that the conference would adopt not mere recommendations but specific decisions that the States would undertake to implement.

At present, preparations for the second special session on disarmament are taking place at the United Nations. The Soviet Union believes that this session can and should give a new impetus to negotiations on specific urgent problems of arms race and disarmament. It is also important that it would become a milestone towards the convening of the World Disarmament Conference. In the light of the provision of the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament concerning the convening without delay of a World Disarmament Conference, as well as the provisions of resolution 35/151, adopted by the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session, on the possibility of convening such a conference after the second special session on disarmament, the Soviet Union is of the opinion that during the forthcoming session it would be necessary to take such a decision that would contribute to the practical realization of the above-mentioned recommendations.

The international situation and the state of affairs in regard to the limitation of the arms race urgently demand new, more decisive efforts on the part of the States in their all-out struggle to save mankind from the scourge of war.

Guided by its course of principle towards the strengthening of peace and curbing the arms race, the Soviet Union is ready to facilitate in the most active way the achievement of real disarmament.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The Government of the United Kingdom maintains the view that, in the light of the deterioration in the international situation over the last two years, it is not useful to continue to consider for the time being the idea of a world disarmament conference. Accordingly, the United Kingdom doubts the usefulness of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference continuing to meet and, in any event, does not think it appropriate for the Committee to undertake any substantive work at this stage.

United States of America

The United States continues to believe that it is premature to set a date and begin preparations for the convening of a world disarmament conference. As noted in the views of the United States contained in the 1980 report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference to the General Assembly, the United States believes there is insufficient political agreement on the issues which would presumably be addressed at such a conference. This lack of agreement would probably hinder rather than assist efforts to reach concrete and verifiable arms control measures.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

15. The Ad Hoc Committee reiterated that the idea of a world disarmament conference has received wide support by the membership of the United Nations, however, with varying degrees of emphasis and differences on conditions and certain aspects related to the question of its convening, including aspects related to the deteriorating international situation. It was also evident from the updated indications of positions of the nuclear-weapon States, as reflected in paragraph 14 of this report, some of which confirm certain elements requiring careful consideration by the Ad Hoc Committee, that no consensus with respect to the convening of a world disarmament conference under the present conditions has yet been reached among the nuclear-weapon States whose participation in such a conference has been deemed essential by most States Members of the Organization.

16. Having regard for the important requirements of a world disarmament conference to be convened at the earliest appropriate time, with universal participation and with adequate preparation, the General Assembly may wish to decide that after its second special session devoted to disarmament, a world disarmament conference would take place as soon as the necessary consensus on its convening has been reached.

17. The General Assembly may wish to renew the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee and to request it to continue to maintain close contact with the representatives of the nuclear-weapon States in order to remain currently informed of their attitudes, as well as with all other States, and to consider any relevant comments and observations which might be made to the Committee.

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