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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND
DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH
SPECIAL SESSION

Programme of research and studies on disarmament

Report of the Secretary-General

1. At its thirty-third session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 33/71 K of 14 December 1978, entitled "Programme of research and studies on disarmament". In paragraph 1 of that resolution, the Secretary-General was requested to report to the Assembly at its thirty-fourth session on possible ways of establishing, operating and financing an international institute for disarmament research, under the auspices of the United Nations. In paragraph 2 of the resolution, the Secretary-General was further requested to seek in this regard, inter alia, the advice of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies, established in implementation of paragraph 124 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (resolution S-10/2), in view of the competence to be assigned to that body in respect of a programme of studies on disarmament.

2. Accordingly, at its two sessions in 1979, the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies 1/ discussed this matter. The Board first had a thorough exchange of views on the general aspects of the establishment and operation of an international institute for disarmament research and on various requirements which such an institute would have to meet. In its current discussions the Board considered a specific proposal that an international institute for disarmament research should be set up within the framework of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), to take the form of a new section of UNITAR, with its own scientific council, located at UNITAR's premises in Geneva and funded from a special item in the UNITAR budget. Mindful of its limited mandate to advise on the modalities of the establishment, operation and financing of an international

1/ For the composition of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies, see the annex to document A/34/588.

institute for disarmament research, the Board concentrated in its discussions on the purposes which such an institute could and should meet and the way in which it could be accommodated within the framework of UNITAR.

3. The General Assembly may wish to note that several alternative proposals were also made in the discussion, including the possibility of establishing a pilot project, for a limited time to be specified, to verify the effectiveness of an international institute on disarmament research so as to permit a decision on its feasibility and usefulness. It was further stated that the United Nations Centre for Disarmament was the logical body to undertake the research envisaged in the Assembly's resolution.

4. A view was also expressed, however, that the most urgent task of the moment in the field of disarmament was the adoption of practical measures to halt and reverse the arms race. In that connexion an expansion of activities in the area of disarmament research, and the establishment of an institute such as the one under discussion, would be an unnecessary diversion of effort and resources from that goal. From this perspective, the recommendation regarding the establishment of an institute on disarmament research could not be supported.

5. In conclusion, the Board agreed to recommend an interim arrangement, for the period until the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, under which the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research would be established within the framework of UNITAR. This arrangement would be subject to review by the General Assembly at its second special session, at which time the Assembly would be in a position, in the light of experience gained in the operation of the Institute, either to confirm its continuation, in a form to be decided, or to adopt a different arrangement.

6. The Board agreed that the Institute should have a simple, pragmatic mandate to carry out research for the purposes of assisting in ongoing negotiations in the area of disarmament and arms limitation, stimulating initiatives for new negotiations and providing a general insight into the problems involved. It should work on the basis of the provisions of the Final Document of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (Assembly resolution S-10/2). The Institute should be able to function with a high degree of scientific independence and autonomy but it would have to be so established and operated as to ensure in its output a balance of political views. Towards that end, the recruitment of staff and the choice of the researchers to be associated with its work should be based on the principles contained in Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations. In its work, the Institute should be closely linked with other disarmament activities in the framework of the United Nations, and avoidance of duplication with, in particular, those of the United Nations Centre for Disarmament should be ensured.

7. With regard to the establishment, operation and financing of the Institute, the Advisory Board made the following specific recommendations:

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(a) When dealing with administrative and management questions in regard to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, including the appointment of its Director, the Board of Trustees of UNITAR should include, in addition to its regular members, the Chairman of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies, the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, the Chairman of the Committee on Disarmament and the Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Centre for Disarmament;

(b) The Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies should function as the Institute's Advisory Council on Disarmament Research and, as such, should include the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, the Chairman of the Committee on Disarmament and the Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Centre for Disarmament. The Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies would discharge this function in conjunction with its regular sessions;

(c) The tasks of the Advisory Council on Disarmament Research should include the following:

- (i) Nomination of the Director of the Institute;
- (ii) Establishing the policy to be followed by the Institute on the basis of the provisions of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly;
- (iii) Laying down the general programme for the Institute's work for a specified time ahead and defining appropriate areas of research;
- (iv) Supervising the work of the Institute through its Director;

(d) The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research should have as its task the implementation of the general programme of work laid down by the Advisory Council on Disarmament Research, in the light of the policy set by the Council. To implement that programme the Institute should carry out such studies as it can undertake itself and should arrange for studies to be carried out by other research institutes. In its initial stage the Institute should be of modest size. To this end it should, inter alia, establish a roster of experts who can be called upon to carry out specific items of research, and engage a small core of researchers to ensure adequate continuity;

(e) The costs of the operation of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research should constitute a special item in UNITAR's budget and should be met as provided for in article VIII of the Statute of UNITAR.

8. The Board agreed that it would be necessary to ensure a strong and effective link between the work of the Institute and that of the United Nations Centre for Disarmament. It noted that the Centre would be linked to the Institute, inter alia, through the fact that the Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Centre for Disarmament, would be serving on the Board of Trustees of UNITAR when that body deals with questions regarding the Institute and would be a member of the Advisory Council on Disarmament Research. Further, the Centre provides the secretariat for the Advisory Board and would act in the same capacity when the Board functions as the Advisory Council.

9. In bringing to the attention of the General Assembly the recommendations of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies on possible ways of establishing, operating and financing an international institute for disarmament research, the Secretary-General wishes to point out that the implementation of those recommendations would involve a number of steps of an organizational, financial and administrative nature. These steps would have to be considered in consultation, inter alia, with UNITAR. Should the General Assembly wish to give effect to the recommendations set out above, the Secretary-General proposes to report to it at its thirty-fifth session on the steps taken to that end.
