

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

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-NINTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 28 (A/39/28)



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New York, 1984

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. By its resolution 38/186 of 20 December 1983, the General Assembly, inter alia, requested the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference 1/ to continue 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 relevant comments 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-ninth session.

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

Chairman: Mr. S. W. Arthur de Silva (Sri Lanka) and his successor,  
Mr. Nissanka Wijewardane (Sri Lanka)

Vice-Chairmen:\* Mr. Ryszard Krystosik (Poland)

Rapporteur: Mr. Arturo Laclaustra (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 1974 continued to function. 2/

## 11. WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

5. In accordance with its mandate mentioned in paragraph 1 above, the Ad Hoc Committee held two sessions in 1984.
6. During the first session, the Ad Hoc Committee held four meetings from 2 to 5 April. At the first meeting of the session (74th meeting), the Committee was informed that Mr. Ignatius Benedict Fonseka (Sri Lanka) had completed his mission in New York and thus was unable to continue in his function as Chairman of the Committee. The Committee, therefore, elected by acclamation Mr. S. W. Arthur de Silva (Sri Lanka) as the new Chairman. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the contribution made to its work by Mr. Ignatius Benedict Fonseka. Two posts of Vice-Chairmen remained vacant, pending further consultations.
7. During the second session, the Ad Hoc Committee held four meetings between 2 and 6 July. At the first meeting of the session (78th meeting), the Committee, by acclamation, elected Mr. Nissanka Wijewardane as the new Chairman of the Committee, following his appointment as the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the United Nations. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the contribution made to its work by Mr. S. W. Arthur de Silva. Two posts of Vice-Chairmen remained vacant, pending further consultations.
8. During the two sessions, the Chairman and the representatives of the following States members of the Ad Hoc Committee and observers made statements: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics also made statements.
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 Working Group held three meetings between 3 and 5 July, under the chairmanship of Mr. A. Laclaustra (Spain), and elaborated the draft of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee.
11. The Ad Hoc Committee, at its 81st meeting on 6 July, considered and adopted its report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session.
12. In accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 38/186, the Ad Hoc Committee, through its Chairman, maintained close contact with the representatives of the States possessing nuclear weapons in order to remain currently informed of their attitudes and obtained the following updated indications of their positions:

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\* See paras. 6 and 7.

## China

China has always stood for the convening of an international conference to discuss disarmament. As early as 1963, China proposed to hold a world summit conference to discuss the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. The two super-Powers that possess the largest arsenals of both nuclear and conventional weapons are now stepping up their arms race, posing a grave threat to world peace and security. It is therefore a matter of utmost urgency to urge them by various means to reduce their armaments. If the majority of the Member States are in favour of a world conference to discuss how the two super-Powers should take the lead in drastically cutting their armaments, China will be ready to support the idea.

## France

The French position has not changed since last year with regard to the conditions that must be met before a world disarmament conference can be convened. France notes that, under present circumstances, there is no consensus on such a proposal.

Such being the case, France would have no objection if the Ad Hoc Committee considered the possibility of spacing out its meetings to take account of this persistent impasse.

## Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

The Soviet Union reaffirms its position of principle regarding the convening of a world disarmament conference.

The dangerous trend in the world situation is a cause of legitimate anxiety and concern among peoples. The quickening tempo of the arms race and the real danger that it may spread to new spheres and become uncontrollable are sharply increasing the risk of an outbreak of war and, above all, of a nuclear catastrophe.

Attempts to halt the arms race, to direct it into a descending spiral and to save mankind from the threat of war should now be the focal point of the efforts of all States, regardless of their social, political and military status. The convening of a world disarmament conference would be an important step aimed at uniting efforts towards this goal.

In the opinion of the Soviet Union, a world disarmament conference could, by a comprehensive discussion of disarmament questions, devise effective approaches to the task of containing the arms race and achieving practical disarmament. An important distinguishing feature of the conference would be that its results would be not simply recommendations but specific practical decisions, which States would undertake to implement.

It is widely known that the idea of holding a world disarmament conference has received wide international support, including support in the United Nations. The attempts by certain nuclear-weapon States to justify their unconstructive position on this question by references to the "unfavourable international situation" are unjustified. It is precisely when the international situation is critical, and when the world is being pushed

ever faster towards the nuclear abyss, that urgent practical measures are required to reverse the dangerous process of the arms buildup before it is too late. A world disarmament conference would create good prospects for this.

The Soviet Union is convinced that the adoption of a decision on specific measures to prepare for a world disarmament conference, including a decision on its timing, would be welcomed by the entire world community as evidence of the determination of Member States to devote special attention to the study and solution of disarmament questions, which are of vitally important significance for all mankind.

In accordance with its policy of principle, aimed at strengthening peace and curbing the arms race, the Soviet Union is prepared to contribute most actively to the adoption of such a decision.

#### United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The Government of the United Kingdom believes that, in view of the present international climate, no useful purpose would be served by preparing for the holding of a world disarmament conference. The United Kingdom therefore continues to doubt the usefulness of further meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee and, in any event, is of the view that it would be inappropriate for the Committee to undertake any substantive work at this stage.

#### United States of America

The United States believes that a propitious international environment is indispensable for a successful world disarmament conference. An unsuccessful or inconclusive conference would serve no useful purpose and could prove unhelpful by creating impediments to future efforts towards concrete and verifiable arms control and disarmament measures. As noted in the views of the United States contained in the 1983 report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference to the General Assembly, the United States believes that, at this time, insufficient political agreement exists on the disarmament issues central to such a conference and it is therefore premature to contemplate the convening of a world disarmament conference. In view of this situation, the United States is persuaded that serious consideration should be given to whether or not future meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee are warranted.

### III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

13. 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 on and differences concerning conditions and certain aspects related to the question of the convening of such a conference, 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 12 of the present 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.

14. 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 should take up the question at its thirty-ninth regular session for further consideration, bearing in mind the relevant provisions of resolution 36/91, adopted by consensus, in particular paragraph 1 of that resolution, and resolution 38/186, also adopted by consensus.

15. 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.

#### Notes

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 States Members of the United Nations 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 (Islamic Republic of), 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 (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Spain (Chairman) and Sri Lanka. The German Democratic Republic, the Netherlands, Tunisia and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics participated in the Working Group as observers.

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