



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/37/550
26 October 1982

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-seventh session
Agenda item 55 (c)

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT: INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS
RELATING TO THE PROCESS OF DISARMAMENT

Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies

Note by the Secretary-General

1. During its present session the General Assembly may wish to review the functions of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies. The Secretary-General sets out below some considerations with regard to the Advisory Board which may assist the Assembly in its deliberations.
2. In paragraph 124 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (resolution S-10/2 of 30 June 1978), the Assembly requested the Secretary-General "to set up an advisory board of eminent persons, selected on the basis of their personal expertise and taking into account the principle of equitable geographical representation, to advise him on various aspects of studies to be made under the auspices of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and arms limitation, including a programme of such studies". The Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies was accordingly established in the autumn of 1978. It functioned until the autumn of 1981. During these three years it met seven times. A summary of its principal activities is included in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session (A/36/654).
3. The Board has not met since the autumn of 1981. The terms of appointment of its members expired at the end of that year, the members having been initially appointed by the Secretary-General for the period ending with his own term of office. During the preparations for the twelfth special session of the General Assembly, it had been expected that, under agenda item 12 entitled "Enhancement of the effectiveness of machinery in the field of disarmament and strengthening of the role of the United Nations in this field, including the possible convening of a world disarmament conference", the General Assembly would, inter alia, deal with

the institutional arrangements relating to the process of disarmament, including the future mandate of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies. However, this aspect of the agenda was not discussed by the Assembly at its twelfth special session. Pending the decision that the Assembly was expected to take in this respect, the Secretary-General had not deemed it appropriate to make any new appointment to the Advisory Board and, therefore, the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies continues to exist in principle but has no members at present.

4. The question of the future mandate of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies was among the subjects discussed by a group of qualified governmental experts who made a study of the institutional arrangements relating to the process of disarmament (A/36/392, annex, paras. 61-63), as well as by the Advisory Board itself (A/36/654). The Advisory Board, in discussing its possible future mandate, reached a general agreement that the wording of paragraph 124 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session "... left sufficient flexibility to cover additional activities" (besides those directly related to disarmament studies) (A/36/654, para. 14). Further, specific proposals for possible future activities of the Advisory Board were made at the twelfth special session, in particular in a letter dated 24 June 1982 from the Permanent Representative of Norway, contained in document A/S-12/AC.1/32, annex, part C, and in a note verbale dated 28 June 1982 from the Permanent Mission of Turkey contained in document A/S-12/AC.1/54, annex, part B.

5. The work done by the Advisory Board in the past has been reflected in the first place in the reports which the Secretary-General has each year, beginning with the thirty-third regular session of the General Assembly, submitted to the Assembly, pursuant to paragraph 98 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session, which states as follows:

"98. At its thirty-third and subsequent sessions the General Assembly should determine the specific guidelines for carrying out studies, taking into account the proposals already submitted including those made by individual countries at the special session, as well as other proposals which can be introduced later in this field. In doing so, the Assembly would take into consideration a report on these matters prepared by the Secretary-General."

In each of these reports due account was taken of the recommendations of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies both with regard to a programme of such studies and to proposals for individual studies.

6. It will also be recalled that the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies, upon a request by the General Assembly, rendered advice on possible ways of establishing, operating and financing an international institute for disarmament research, under the auspices of the United Nations (resolution 33/71 K of 14 December 1978; see also A/34/589). The proposals made in this regard by the Advisory Board were endorsed by the General Assembly and, accordingly, the international institute for disarmament research was set up within the framework of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), as an interim arrangement until the period of the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, at which time it would be reviewed. In line with the

proposals of the Advisory Board, the Institute was given its own Advisory Council, which was so composed as to permit an adequate representation of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies, taking into account its specific responsibilities. The Chairman of the Advisory Board served ex officio as Chairman of the Advisory Council (see A/35/574).

7. Further, the General Assembly may wish to recall that at its thirty-third session it adopted resolution 33/71 N, entitled "New philosophy on disarmament" in which it, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General, with the assistance of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies, to study ways and means whereby the objectives in paragraph 1 of that resolution could be accomplished. A report on this matter was submitted to the Assembly at its thirty-fourth session (A/34/590).
8. Lastly, with specific reference to possible future tasks of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies, reference is made to the World Disarmament Campaign, which was launched by the General Assembly at the opening meeting of the twelfth special session. Paragraph 20 of the agreed text on the World Disarmament Campaign, annexed to the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session, states as follows:

"20. The Secretary-General is further requested to submit at each subsequent regular session of the General Assembly for its review, a report on the implementation of the World Disarmament Campaign during the preceding year, and to convey to the Assembly the relevant views of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies, taking into account the tasks the Assembly may further entrust to it." (A/S-12/32, annex V)
9. The various suggestions that have been made for possible future activities of the Advisory Board, as referred to in paragraph 4 above, may be summarized as follows:
 - (a) To advise the Secretary-General on various aspects of studies and research in the area of arms limitation and disarmament carried out under the auspices of the United Nations or institutions within the United Nations system, in particular on the integration of a programme of such studies with a comprehensive programme of disarmament, once this has been established;
 - (b) To serve as the Advisory Council of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research depending on any arrangements that may be adopted with regard to that Institute;
 - (c) To advise the Secretary-General on the implementation of the World Disarmament Campaign, in accordance with the relevant decision taken by the General Assembly at its second special session on disarmament (A/S-12/32, annex V, para. 20);
 - (d) At the specific invitation of the Secretary-General, to provide him with advice on other matters within the area of disarmament and arms limitation.
10. The composition of the Advisory Board would depend on the tasks assigned to it and should take due account of the needs for practical effectiveness and financial restraint.