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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

ITEM 4 OF THE AGENDA OF THE COMMISSION'S CURRENT SESSION

Working paper: Mexico

1. The United Nations General Assembly, in the Final Document of its first special session devoted to disarmament, approved by consensus in 1978, defined a series of objectives, principles, priorities, measures and mechanisms which, taken together, constitute what could be called an excellent philosophy of disarmament.
2. However, even though the Assembly itself emphasized the urgency of putting the provisions of the Final Document into practice and continuing along the path of obligatory and effective international agreements in matters of disarmament, it is an undeniable fact that almost all of those provisions have remained a dead letter up to the present time and that during the five years elapsed since then it has not been possible to conclude a single new treaty or convention on nuclear disarmament.
3. This is why it is necessary to resort to procedures that could make more effective those traditionally used in international negotiations. Perhaps one such procedure which might well be explored carefully in the light of some experiences that have already been fruitful is that of unilateral measures.
4. As will be recalled, the probable immediate precursor of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, signed in 1972, was the unilateral declaration made a short time earlier by the Government of the United States, announcing its intention to destroy all its stocks of such weapons.
5. Another significant example of unilateral measures is the one known as "voluntary suspension of nuclear-weapon tests", which was observed for almost three years, from the autumn of 1958 to the autumn of 1961.
6. For the necessary development of measures of this kind, it would undoubtedly be essential that the States concerned should be fully confident that the measures will not be harmful to their security. However, that does not seem difficult to achieve if there is reciprocal good will. Thus, for example, a State or group of

States could initiate the process by announcing the unilateral adoption of a very modest disarmament measure, declaring in addition that if there was no reciprocity within a reasonable period - say, six months - on the part of the corresponding State or States, they would annul the measure. They would make it known at the same time that if reciprocity was shown, they would be prepared to expand the scope of the measures in question progressively and to a very considerable extent.

7. What has been said here constitutes merely a suggestion of the unsuspected advantages that may be found in this idea if it is properly explored.

8. For that reason, the delegation of Mexico believes it would be highly desirable that the report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session should include, in connection with item 4 of the agenda of the Commission's current session, a paragraph reading as follows:

"The Disarmament Commission recommends to the General Assembly that it should request the Secretary-General to prepare, with the assistance of qualified governmental experts and applying the methods customary in such cases, a report, to be submitted to the Assembly at its thirty-ninth session, on the procedures that seem advisable for stimulating the adoption of unilateral disarmament measures which, without prejudice to the security of States, would come to promote and complement bilateral and multilateral negotiations in this sphere."
