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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Report of the Secretary-General

1. By its resolution 31/90 of 14 December 1976 on the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to implement as soon as possible the measures recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament falling within his area of responsibilities, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its thirty-second session. The measures recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee, contained in its report, 1/ were endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 31/90.

2. The measures recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee falling, at least in part, within the Secretary-General's area of responsibilities are the following:

- (a) Role of the United Nations in providing assistance on request in multilateral and regional disarmament negotiations;
- (b) Improvement of existing United Nations facilities for the collection, compilation and dissemination of information on disarmament issues, in order to keep all Governments, as well as world public opinion, properly informed on progress achieved in the field of disarmament;
- (c) Assistance by the Secretariat, on request, to States parties to multilateral disarmament agreements in their duty to ensure the effective functioning of such agreements, including appropriate reviews;
- (d) Strengthening of the resources of the Secretariat.

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1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 36 (A/31/36).

3. With regard to paragraph 2 (a) above, the Ad Hoc Committee recommended that:

"States participating in multilateral and regional disarmament negotiations give serious consideration to the possibility of requesting conference servicing and other technical assistance from the United Nations."

In this connexion, the Secretary-General wishes to report that, in the course of 1977, full Secretariat services continued to be provided to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. In addition, at the request of interested delegations, the Secretariat provided conference services for informal consultations among interested Governments, pursuant to resolution 22 (IV) adopted on 9 June 1977 by the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts at its fourth session (A/32/144, sect. VII, p. 43).

4. Concerning paragraph 2 (b) above, the Ad Hoc Committee recommended that:

"(a) The United Nations publish annually, before the regular session of the General Assembly in all working languages of the Assembly, a United Nations Disarmament Yearbook."

"(b) The Secretary-General report to the General Assembly on the publication of the Yearbook and, on the basis of that report, the United Nations consider publishing a disarmament periodical in all working languages of the General Assembly. The periodical would present in highly readable form current facts and developments in the field of disarmament, such as summaries of new proposals and of important relevant statements and communiqués. It would also contain, inter alia, summaries of in-depth studies undertaken by the United Nations or the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. It should further provide annotated bibliographies and brief summaries of important books and articles on disarmament questions and related matters."

With regard to point (a) above, the Secretary-General wishes to report that the first volume of The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook, 2/ prepared by the United Nations Centre for Disarmament, Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, was issued on 5 October 1977, covers the calendar year 1976 and gives an account of developments in the field of disarmament, within and outside the United Nations, during that period. In connexion with point (b) above, the Secretary-General considers that since, as reported above, the publication of The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook has been effectively initiated and its continuous publication on a yearly basis is assured, the General Assembly may now wish to take up the question of the publication of a disarmament periodical.

5. Under paragraph 2 (c) above, the Ad Hoc Committee recommended that:

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2/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.77.IX.2.

"(a) States participating in multilateral disarmament negotiations consider the possibilities of entrusting appropriate functions to the United Nations, its specialized agencies or the IAEA with respect to the implementation of multilateral disarmament agreements. The capacity of these organizations to assist States, on request, to meet their obligations arising out of agreements concluded in such negotiations should be commensurate with the tasks which might be entrusted to them;

"(b) As a general rule, such States may request the Secretary-General to assume the depositary role for multilateral disarmament conventions and treaties;

"(c) States participating in multilateral and regional negotiations of disarmament agreements give serious consideration to the inclusion of a Review Conference provision. In making the necessary preparations for Review Conferences, the States parties should consider requesting the United Nations to provide facilities, conference services and other assistance in connexion with such conferences. The United Nations should have the capacity necessary to meet such requests."

The Secretary-General wishes to report the following:

(a) In the course of 1977, no requests were addressed to the United Nations under point (a) of the present paragraph;

(b) Concerning point (b), the Secretary-General assumed the depositary function for the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques when the Convention was opened for signature and ratification on 18 May 1977;

(c) Concerning point (c), the United Nations provided, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 3484 E (XXX), assistance and services for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof, held in the Palais des Nations at Geneva from 20 June to 1 July 1977, as well as for its Preparatory Committee.

6. Under paragraph 2 (d) above, the Ad Hoc Committee recommended that:

"(a) The Disarmament Affairs Division be transformed into a United Nations Centre for Disarmament within the framework of the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs;

"(b) The Centre be headed by an official with the rank of Assistant Secretary-General;

"(c) The Centre be staffed accordingly."

The Secretary-General wishes to report that the recommendation has been fully implemented. He wishes also to report that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 31/90, the recruitment of the staff of the Centre for Disarmament has been carried out on a wide geographical basis.