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EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

Working paper submitted by the Chairman

Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 49/75 I, adopted without a vote, decided, in principle, to convene the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. There is general support for convening this special session. The Disarmament Commission decided to include in the agenda of its 1996 substantive session an item entitled "Exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament". It is generally accepted that the consideration of this item by the Commission should not substitute for the work of the Preparatory Committee, which will be held at a later date. There is wide agreement that the exact date for the convening of the fourth special session should be decided by the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. As the importance of holding a new special session devoted to disarmament is widely recognized, thorough and adequate preparation is viewed as a significant condition for its successful conclusion. In that connection, the procedures set for and followed by the first special session devoted to disarmament and subsequent special sessions shall be followed for the fourth special session.

Objectives

2. Since the first special session devoted to disarmament, the world has gone through dramatic changes, and the events that have occurred in the field of disarmament and international security are unprecedented. In the aftermath of



the end of the cold war era, and on the eve of the twenty-first century, the convening of the fourth special session will provide the international community with a unique opportunity to assess the past in order to prepare better for the future. For an agreed, positive and forward-looking disarmament programme to be adopted, there is a need to draw lessons from past endeavours and preserve and build upon the positive achievements of the first special session devoted to disarmament; there will also be a need to take stock of some fundamental changes, and identify new problems and ways and means to solve them, with a view to arriving at a mutually agreed programme of action for the future. For such an exercise to be comprehensive, all issues pertaining to disarmament and international security, including the disarmament machinery, will have to be addressed.

3. During the discussion in Working Group II, some delegations put forward specific proposals in regard to substantive issues for consideration by the Preparatory Committee for the fourth special session. These proposals are contained in working papers submitted to the Working Group.
