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Tenth special session  
AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE TENTH  
SPECIAL SESSION  
Agenda item 11

Note verbale dated 5 June 1978 from the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to  
the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

The Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the United Nations and has the honour to request the circulation of the attached note, entitled "Proposal by Nigeria for a programme of United Nations fellowships on disarmament", as a document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly under agenda item 11.

ANNEX

Proposal by Nigeria for a programme of United Nations  
fellowships on disarmament

1. Disarmament is of vital interest to all States. It has a direct bearing on their national peace and security as well as on their development. In consideration of this, all States do have the right to participate on an equal footing in the consideration of ways and means of achieving effective disarmament measures which will contribute to the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament. The most appropriate forum for such equal participation is the United Nations which, in keeping with its Charter, should have the primary role and responsibility in the sphere of disarmament. It is imperative, therefore, that the role of the United Nations should be made very effective, so that it will be in a position to give the necessary direction in disarmament issues.

2. There is consensus that an organ of the General Assembly should be the focal point for deliberation on disarmament and that all Members of the United Nations should be represented in such a deliberative organ. Nigeria believes that it is not just enough for the organ to be representative of the whole membership; it is also necessary that all Members play an active role, in keeping with the great importance of the subject.

3. Experience has shown that, in the past, not all Member States have been able to participate equally effectively in the consideration of the items on disarmament during the annual sessions of the General Assembly and that participation by representatives of the developing countries, in particular, has not been as wide as it should have been. Similarly, replies to questionnaires sent to Member States by the Secretary-General in compliance with General Assembly resolutions on disarmament issues were often very few, particularly from the developing countries. The reason can be found mainly in the lack of expertise in disarmament matters in many foreign offices, particularly in the developing countries.

4. At its special session, the General Assembly should therefore seek to widen expertise in disarmament matters among delegations of Member States. It should include in the programme of action a plan designed to give in-depth knowledge on disarmament issues to public officials in countries, mostly developing countries, which are short of such expertise.

5. Under the new programme for promoting expertise in the field of disarmament, the General Assembly at its special session will set up a system of fellowships to be funded from the Organization's regular budget. Annually, up to 20 participants, selected from among those nominated by their Governments, largely from developing countries, will undertake, at United Nations Headquarters in New York, an in-depth course of lectures and seminars on issues relating to disarmament, including the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as well as on-the-job observation of the Security Council, the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations, and any other relevant organs. The participants will conclude the course with a short period with the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, provided it is engaged in the real negotiation of specific measures.

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6. The United Nations Centre for Disarmament will be charged with organizing such a programme, drawing on expertise from the United Nations system, from Member States and from relevant research institutes. The duration of the course will be no more than six months.

7. It is pertinent to recall that, as far back as 1955, the General Assembly had launched a programme to promote expertise in Member States in the field of human rights. That programme, established by General Assembly resolution 926 (X) adopted on 14 December 1955, has proved to be beneficial both to Member States and to the United Nations. Nigeria believes that a similar programme designed for the field of disarmament will prove even more beneficial.

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