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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF THE  
FIFTEENTH SPECIAL SESSION  
Working Group III  
Agenda item 14

UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE  
FIELD OF DISARMAMENT, INCLUDING MEASURES TO MOBILIZE WORLD  
PUBLIC OPINION IN FAVOUR OF DISARMAMENT

Working paper submitted by Canada

ORIENTATION PROGRAMME FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

In his address to the General Assembly on May 31, 1988 the UN Secretary-General called for more effective ways to reach the international public in order to encourage the public's participation in the arms control and disarmament process. Consistent with this view, Canada's intervention of June 7 to Working Group III of the Special Session on Disarmament proposed that the Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA) develop and operate orientation programmes for representatives of non-governmental organizations. The following is an elaboration of this proposal.

There appears to be a widespread feeling that there is a need for greater public education in, and recognition of, the processes which contribute to the effective functioning of the United Nations, and of the importance of strengthening international NGO collaboration through the UN system. Such an understanding of the UN and its disarmament efforts should be complemented with an introduction to disarmament fora and mechanisms outside the UN system, such as Mutual Balanced Force Reduction Negotiations, Conventional Stability talks, the Conference on Disarmament and USA-USSR bilateral negotiations. Regional approaches to disarmament and other major issues such as verification would also form part of the programme. Also covered should be other subjects such as types of weapons including nuclear, conventional and chemical. In this way, NGO representatives will be familiarized with the full spectrum of disarmament mechanisms in the international community.