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# The Disarmament Bulletin

A review of national and international disarmament and arms control activities

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## UN Convenes Third Special Session on Disarmament



Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations presenting petition in support of UNSSOD III. UN Photo 171795/Saw Lwin

The Third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament (UNSSOD III) was held May 31-June 25, 1988 in New York. After four weeks of deliberations, the participating states were unable to reach agreement on a concluding document. Why was this so? Should the four-week conference be considered a failure? An attempt to answer these questions and a brief analysis of the Special Session are included in the following report.

### Preparations

The Canadian Government engaged in extensive preparations for UNSSOD III. Following the disappointing failure of the UNSSOD III Preparatory Committee to reach agreement on a document on which the Special Session could build, Canada made *démarches* in some 45

countries in all regions urging governments to make special efforts to bring the Special Session to a successful conclusion. In particular, Canada stressed the importance of developing a co-operative approach, maintaining flexibility, seeking common ground and avoiding polarization.

The Government also convened a meeting of the 50-member Consultative Group on Disarmament and Arms Control in Ottawa last April on the subject. The group put forward a broad range of policy recommendations, many of which had already been or were subsequently adopted as part of the Government's position for UNSSOD III. (See the Spring 1988 edition of *The Disarmament Bulletin* for more details concerning UNSSOD III preparations.)