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CONSIDERATION OF THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE
FIELD OF DISARMAMENT AND OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
DISARMAMENT MACHINERY

Working paper submitted by Canada

1. Experience suggests that participants to the debate on disarmament machinery fall roughly into two distinct "camps". One holds that the present organizational arrangements are sufficient and that only the exercise of political will is needed to make progress. A second approach suggests that, while there is some merit in the first position, prospects for meaningful progress would be enhanced if procedures were updated and streamlined so that the existing institutions could operate more effectively.

2. A section entitled, "Machinery" was included in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (resolution S-10/2). It recognized, in paragraph 113, that

"In addition to the need to exercise political will, the international machinery should be utilized more effectively and also improved to enable implementation of the Programme of Action and help the United Nations to fulfil its role in the field of disarmament."

3. The subject of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament - including the matter of disarmament machinery - was raised in the General Assembly. In resolution 39/151 G of 17 December 1984, the Assembly requested the United Nations Disarmament Commission, at its substantive session in 1985,

"to carry out as a matter of priority a comprehensive review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, taking into account, inter alia, the views and suggestions of Member States on the subject."