

## Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

At its sixth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 502 (VI) of 11 January 1952 by which it established, under the authority of the Security Council, a Disarmament Commission and directed it to prepare proposals to be embodied in a draft treaty (or treaties) for the regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of all armed forces and armaments, for the elimination of all major weapons adaptable to mass destruction, and for effective international control of nuclear energy to ensure the prohibition of nuclear weapons and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes only. At the 1954 session of the Disarmament Commission, India submitted a letter to the Commission on the topic of suspension of experimental explosions of nuclear weapons which requested that the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission (established by General Assembly resolution 715 (VIII) of 28 November 1953) consider a “standstill agreement” to suspend experimental explosions (DC/44 and Corr.1). At the ninth session of the General Assembly, India submitted, as revised, a draft resolution to this effect to the First Committee (A/C.1/L.100/Rev.1).

At the same session, following the recommendation of its First Committee (A/2729), and having considered the report of the Disarmament Commission (DC/53 and DC/55), the General Assembly adopted resolution 808B (IX) of 4 November 1954 by which it accordingly referred the Indian proposal to the Disarmament Commission for appropriate consideration. At the tenth session of the General Assembly, following the recommendation of its First Committee (A/3090), the Assembly adopted resolution 914 (X) of 16 December 1955 by which it suggested inter alia that the Sub-Committee take account of India’s proposal regarding the suspension of experimental explosions of nuclear weapons.

At the 1957 session of the Disarmament Commission, the Soviet Union submitted a proposal to the Sub-Committee which recommended that the discontinuance of nuclear tests should be considered independently of any other disarmament measures (DC/SC.1/49). At the same session, the Soviet Union submitted another proposal which recommended an immediate cessation of all nuclear weapons tests for a period of two or three years and proposed the establishment of an international monitoring body for that purpose (DC/SC.1/60). By letter to the Secretary-General dated 20 September 1957, the Soviet Union accordingly requested that the item entitled “Discontinuance under international control of atomic and hydrogen weapons” be placed on the agenda of the twelfth session of the General Assembly (A/3674 and Rev.1).

At the twelfth session of the General Assembly, following the recommendation of its First Committee (A/3729), the Assembly adopted resolution 1148 (XII) of 14 November 1957 by which it urged that the States concerned, and particularly those which were members of the Sub-Committee, give priority to reaching a disarmament agreement which would inter alia provide for the immediate suspension of testing of nuclear weapons with prompt installation of effective international control. By the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Disarmament Commission to invite its Sub-Committee to establish a group of technical experts to study inspection systems for disarmament measures on which the Committee may reach agreement.

In 1958, by an exchange of letters between the Soviet Union and the United States, a Conference of Experts to Study the Possibility of Detecting Violations of Possible Agreement on the Suspension of Nuclear Tests was convened in Geneva from 1 July to 21 August of the same year to study the feasibility of detecting violations of a possible agreement on the suspension of nuclear tests (A/3897 and Corr.1). Following

a positive conclusion of the expert conference, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States subsequently agreed to commence negotiations at Geneva on 31 October 1958 to achieve an agreement on a nuclear test discontinuance treaty under effective international control.

At the thirteenth session of the General Assembly, following the recommendation of its First Committee (A/3974), the Assembly adopted resolution 1252B (XIII) of 4 November 1958 by which, having welcomed the report of the conference of experts and the decision of States to meet in a conference at Geneva concerning the question of nuclear weapons tests, it requested the parties concerned to report to the General Assembly the agreement that may be the result of their negotiations.

In 1962, an Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee (established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1722 (XVI) of 20 December 1961) was convened in Geneva, and the Committee decided that the question of a treaty on the suspension of nuclear tests, which previously had been considered by the Conference on Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapon Tests, should hereinafter be discussed in a Sub-Committee on a Treaty for the Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapon Tests established for this purpose and composed of the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States (see Report of the Committee, A/5200). At the seventeenth session of the General Assembly, following the recommendation of its First Committee (A/5303), the Assembly adopted resolution 1767 (XVII) of 21 November 1962 by which, taking note of the reports of the Committee, it requested the Committee to report periodically to the General Assembly on its work.

From 12 February to 1 September 1963, the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee resumed its discussions on the question of a comprehensive nuclear weapon test ban treaty. As a result of these discussions, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States signed the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water (see Report of the Committee, A/5408). At the eighteenth session of the General Assembly, following the recommendation of its First Committee (A/5771/Add.1), the Assembly adopted resolution 1910 (XVIII) of 27 November 1963 by which, noting with approval the entry into force of the Partial Test Ban Treaty, it requested the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee to continue with a sense of urgency its negotiations with the aim of achieving agreement on the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons. From 1964 to 1979, the Committee accordingly continued its consideration of the matter under the auspices of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament without, however, achieving general agreement on the text of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (see Reports of the Committee, A/5731; A/5986; A/6390; A/6951; A/7189; A/7741; A/8059; A/8457; A/8818; A/9141; A/9627; A/10027; A/31/27; A/32/27; A/33/27; A/34/27).

At the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, following the recommendation of its First Committee (A/35/688), the Assembly adopted resolution 35/145A of 12 December 1980 under an item of its agenda entitled “Cessation of all test explosions of nuclear weapons” by which, reaffirming its conviction that a treaty to achieve the prohibition of all nuclear test explosions was a matter of the highest priority, it urged all States members of the Committee on Disarmament to support the creation of the Committee, at its 1981 session, of an Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear-Test Ban which should begin the multilateral negotiation of a treaty for the prohibition of all nuclear weapon tests.

At the 1981 session of the Committee on Disarmament, States were unable to reach agreement on the establishment of an Ad Hoc Working Group. At the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly, following the recommendation of its First Committee (A/36/744), the Assembly accordingly adopted resolutions 36/84 and 36/85

of 9 December 1981 by which it urged that the Ad Hoc Working Group be established at the 1982 session of the Committee on Disarmament in order that the Committee may transmit the multilaterally negotiated text of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty to the General Assembly at its second special session devoted to disarmament to be held from 7 June to 9 July 1982.

At its 1982 session, the Committee on Disarmament established the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear-Test Ban to facilitate the multilateral negotiation process and requested it to start with discussing and defining issues relating to verification and compliance for a future draft treaty on a comprehensive prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. However, no general agreement was reached on the text of a draft treaty on the matter in time for the twelfth special session of the General Assembly (see Report of the Committee, A/37/27). At the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly, following the recommendation of its First Committee (A/37/654), the Assembly adopted resolutions 37/72 and 37/73 of 9 December 1982 by which, deplored that neither the Committee on Disarmament nor the General Assembly at its twelfth special session was able to elaborate a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, it again urged all States members of the Committee to assign to the Ad Hoc Working Group a mandate which should provide for the multilateral negotiation of a treaty on the matter.

At the 1983 session of the Committee on Disarmament, the Ad Hoc Working Group met to continue its consideration of a future comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and also discussed a possible revision of the mandate of the Working Group. However, no agreement was reached as to whether a new mandate would result in a more expeditious negotiating process of the treaty (see Report of the Committee, A/38/27). At the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, following the recommendation of its First Committee (A/38/622), the Assembly adopted resolutions 38/62, 38/63 and 38/72 of 15 December 1983. By these resolutions, the General Assembly deplored again that the Committee (henceforth designated as the Conference on Disarmament) had been unable to initiate multilateral negotiations and noted that the Conference had already received a number of proposals on the matter, including a complete draft for the eventual text of the treaty as a whole. By the same resolutions, noting further that the Committee on Disarmament had agreed that the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group may be revised as decided by the Committee, the General Assembly requested the Conference on Disarmament to resume its negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test ban, taking into account all existing drafts and proposals and future initiatives, and for that purpose to take up the question of a revised negotiating mandate for the Ad Hoc Working Group. At its 1984 to 1992 sessions, negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty continued under the auspices of the Disarmament Conference, albeit without reaching agreement on a new mandate for the Ad Hoc Working Group (see Reports of the Conference, A/39/27; A/40/27; A/41/27; A/42/27; A/43/27; A/44/27; A/45/27; A/46/27; A/47/27).

At its 1993 session, the Conference on Disarmament established the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban with a mandate to negotiate a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and requested its Chairman to conduct intersessional consultations on a new negotiating mandate (see Report of the Conference, A/48/27). At the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, following the recommendation of its First Committee (A/48/671), the Assembly adopted resolution 48/70 of 16 December 1993 by which, welcoming the decision taken by the Conference to mandate the Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate a comprehensive test-ban treaty and calling on participants in the Conference to approach the intersessional consultations in a constructive manner, it urged the Conference, at its 1994 session, to re-establish, with an appropriate negotiating mandate, the Ad Hoc Committee.

At its 1994 session, the Conference on Disarmament re-established the Ad Hoc Committee, setting up two working groups, on verification and institutional issues

agreement on a rolling text which covered all aspects of a future treaty. The Ad Hoc Committee accordingly recommended to the Conference on Disarmament that the rolling text be used as a basis for further discussion and the Conference adopted this proposal (see Report of the Conference, A/49/27). At the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, following the recommendation of its First Committee (A/49/694), the Assembly adopted resolution 49/70 of 15 December 1994 by which, welcoming the preparation of a rolling text in the Ad Hoc Committee, it called upon the Conference to advance work on the basis of the rolling text during the intersessional period and, at its 1995 session, to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee with a view to proceeding to a new phase of the negotiation process.

At its 1995 session, the Conference on Disarmament re-established the Ad Hoc Committee. As a result of its discussions, the Ad Hoc Committee introduced a revised version of the rolling text which was approved by the Conference (see Report of the Conference, A/50/27). At the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, following the recommendation of its First Committee (A/50/585 and Corr.1), the Assembly adopted resolution 50/65 of 12 December 1995 by which, welcoming the further elaboration of the rolling text in the Ad Hoc Committee, it called upon the Conference to advance work on the basis of the revised rolling text during the intersessional period and, at its 1996 session, to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee with a view to proceeding to a final phase of the negotiation process.

At its 1996 session, the Conference on Disarmament again re-established the Ad Hoc Committee which continued the negotiation process on the basis of the revised rolling text. On 28 March 1996, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee submitted a working paper entitled "Outline of a draft comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty", and later proposed, as revised, a complete draft text of the treaty to the Ad Hoc Committee (see Report of the Conference, A/51/27). On 22 August 1996, although the draft treaty was not transmitted by the Ad Hoc Committee to the Conference on Disarmament, it was nonetheless submitted to the Conference by Belgium (CD/1427). On the same day, Australia requested by letter to the President of the General Assembly (A/50/1024) that the Assembly resume consideration of the question of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/65, and for this purpose, submitted a letter to the Secretary-General attaching a document entitled "Draft comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty" which was based on the Belgian proposal (A/50/1027).

At the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, following a debate in the plenary (A/50/PV.123-125) and the introduction of a joint draft resolution sponsored by 128 Member States entitled "comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty" (A/50/L.78), the Assembly adopted resolution 50/245 of 10 September 1996 by a vote of 158 to 3, with 5 abstentions. By this resolution, the General Assembly accordingly adopted the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and called upon all States to become parties to the treaty. It was opened for signature at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 24 September 1996 and it will remain open for signature until its entry into force, in accordance with article XI.