

Annex II

Advancing the disarmament agenda: a new approach

I. The urgency of reform

1. At the 2005 World Summit, Heads of State and Government underscored a difficult and challenging moment for disarmament and non-proliferation and the need for more decisive international efforts in those fields. The absence of meaningful outcomes in certain areas (for example, the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament on its priorities, the need for new impetus for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and the outcome of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects) underscores the need for determined leadership at the highest level to revitalize the disarmament agenda.

2. This deeply alarming situation makes clear the need to revitalize the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda through a more focused effort. I believe in the need for a greater role and personal involvement of the Secretary-General in this regard.

3. Therefore, I strongly believe that a new emphasis needs to be imparted on the essential functions of the existing Department for Disarmament Affairs through a combination of high-level commitment and appropriate institutional support. This must ensure that the United Nations has a strengthened institutional foundation and management mechanism to succeed in its central role and primary responsibility in supporting Member States in their disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

4. I have thus concluded that what is needed is an Office headed by a High Representative, so as to maximize the flexibility, agility and proximity to the Secretary-General required to facilitate ongoing and new disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. It would also allow for more systematic interaction between the Secretary-General and the High Representative.

II. Proposed role and responsibilities of the Office for Disarmament Affairs

5. For the reasons articulated above, a managerial reorganization of the Department for Disarmament Affairs will be effected so that the new Office, with a direct line to me, will ensure effective interaction with my office and relevant United Nations departments. The new Office will be in place to respond effectively to the priorities of Member States in the disarmament and non-proliferation area and will ensure effective interaction with the General Assembly, the Security Council and other legislative bodies.

6. The establishment of the Office takes fully into account current trends and developments, as well as Member States' expressed interest in finding ways to address new challenges in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. Its

mandate will continue to derive from the priorities established in relevant General Assembly resolutions and decisions in the field of disarmament, including the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, adopted by consensus at the first special session devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2). The Office's programme will also be guided by the United Nations Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and will take into account other relevant United Nations resolutions.

7. In this connection, it is recalled that the fifth preambular paragraph of General Assembly resolution 61/60 indicated that the convening of a fourth special session of the Assembly devoted to disarmament "would offer an opportunity to review, from a perspective more in tune with the current international situation, the most critical aspects of the process of disarmament and to mobilize the international community and public opinion in favour of the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and of the control and reduction of conventional weapons". In the seventh preambular paragraph of the resolution, Member States reiterated their "conviction that a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament can set the future course of action in the fields of disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and related international security matters".

8. The Office will retain the current five branches of the Department for Disarmament Affairs (see appendix I) and functions and will continue to implement existing mandates. It will continue to provide substantive and organizational support for the norm-setting in the area of disarmament through the work of the General Assembly and its First Committee, the Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament and other bodies. The Director-General of the United Nations Office in Geneva will continue to act as the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Conference, reporting directly to the Secretary-General on matters pertaining to the Conference.

9. Under a High Representative, the work would be re-energized for simultaneous action on both disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects. The two objectives are inextricably linked, and neither can advance without the other. The Office will continue its work in support of universal adherence to international disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements and their full and effective implementation.

10. Weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, continue to be of primary concern to the Organization. The Office will continue to assist Member States in promoting, strengthening and consolidating multilaterally negotiated principles and norms in all areas of disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects in order to help maintain international peace and security and to contribute to global efforts against terrorism. It will also support efforts aimed at further advancement in nuclear disarmament, which will contribute to consolidating the international regime for nuclear non-proliferation and thereby ensuring international peace and security.

11. Conventional weapons, especially small arms and light weapons and landmines, continue to receive increased attention from the international community in view of the havoc that these weapons are inflicting on peoples' daily lives, particularly in conflict-ridden regions. The Office will continue to support efforts for the further implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the United

Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as Member States' efforts to establish common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. It will promote transparency, based on the principle of undiminished security for all, and confidence-building measures in the field of disarmament. Through its regional centres for peace and disarmament, the Office will assist Member States in promoting regional approaches to disarmament, non-proliferation in all its aspects and regional and international peace and security.

12. The Office will continue to contribute to efforts to enhance disarmament expertise in Member States, particularly in developing countries. New emphasis will be put on tailored dialogue, cooperation and assistance to Member States in order to help States build capacity to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as to tackle the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

13. The Office will also carry out such emerging mandates as Member States may entrust to the Organization. Any programmatic adjustments would result only from the successful conclusion of negotiations in the appropriate multilateral forums.

III. Functions and responsibilities of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

14. The functions of the High Representative will be focused on four core areas:

(a) Policy development and coordination functions in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects in support of the Secretary-General;

(b) Advocacy of disarmament and non-proliferation issues with Member States and civil society;

(c) Promotion and support of multilateral efforts on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons;

(d) Promotion and support of disarmament efforts in the field of conventional disarmament, especially with regard to major weapons systems, small arms and light weapons and landmines.

15. A High Representative will be able to operate with more flexibility and have more systematic interaction with Member States. He or she will have more flexibility in establishing cooperation and conducting dialogue with Governments and other interested actors. He or she would also act as a facilitator in finding solutions to issues of concern.

16. As a diplomat and manager, the High Representative will actively seek to engage the international community, bringing together key actors within and outside the United Nations to promote more concerted and effective responses to the challenges in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects.

17. Proximity to the Secretary-General will allow for a strengthened advocacy role in mobilizing political will to overcome the stalemate in disarmament and non-proliferation. The High Representative will also act as a catalyst with civil society organizations, which play a vital role in building and activating public opinion for disarmament and non-proliferation. He or she will undertake appropriate advocacy

work/initiatives in partnership with the relevant parts of the United Nations as well as with civil society, the media, academia and foundations.

18. At the same time, the High Representative will encourage and facilitate the development of networking and foster international cooperation to support efforts on all arms control, disarmament, non-proliferation and related security matters.

19. The High Representative will also actively encourage and support Member States in their efforts to improve the United Nations disarmament machinery and to make it more responsive to the needs of the Member States.

20. The High Representative will report directly to the Secretary-General and will:

(a) Be responsible for all the activities of the Office as well as its administration;

(b) Provide the Secretary-General with advice and support on all arms control, disarmament and related security matters and, in that respect, represents the Secretary-General, as required;

(c) Undertake appropriate advocacy work to advance the disarmament agenda, in partnership with the relevant parts of the United Nations as well as with civil society, the media, academia and foundations;

(d) Provide authoritative analysis and assessment of developments in the field of disarmament and international security for policy guidance and decision-making purposes;

(e) Represent the Office in the meetings of the Senior Management Group, senior advisers' meetings, the Executive Committee on Peace and Security and the Policy Committee;

(f) Act as the focal point between the Secretariat and Member States for information on all arms control, disarmament and related security matters;

(g) Act as a focal point between the Secretariat and global and regional intergovernmental organizations on all arms control, disarmament, non-proliferation and related security matters.

IV. Administrative and financial matters

21. The proposal will be implemented within existing resources. The allocation of responsibilities will be as currently contained in the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 in order to allow the Office for Disarmament Affairs to fulfil its responsibilities with respect to the mandates entrusted to it by the General Assembly and to preserve the Office's ability to undertake the necessary activities in that regard. The reorganization into the new Office will not affect its objectives for the next biennium, as approved in the strategic framework for the period 2008-2009 (see A/61/6 (prog. 3) and resolution 61/235).

V. Conclusion

22. The proposal I have set out above may appear, at first glance, to weaken the way in which the Secretariat is structured and organized to support disarmament and

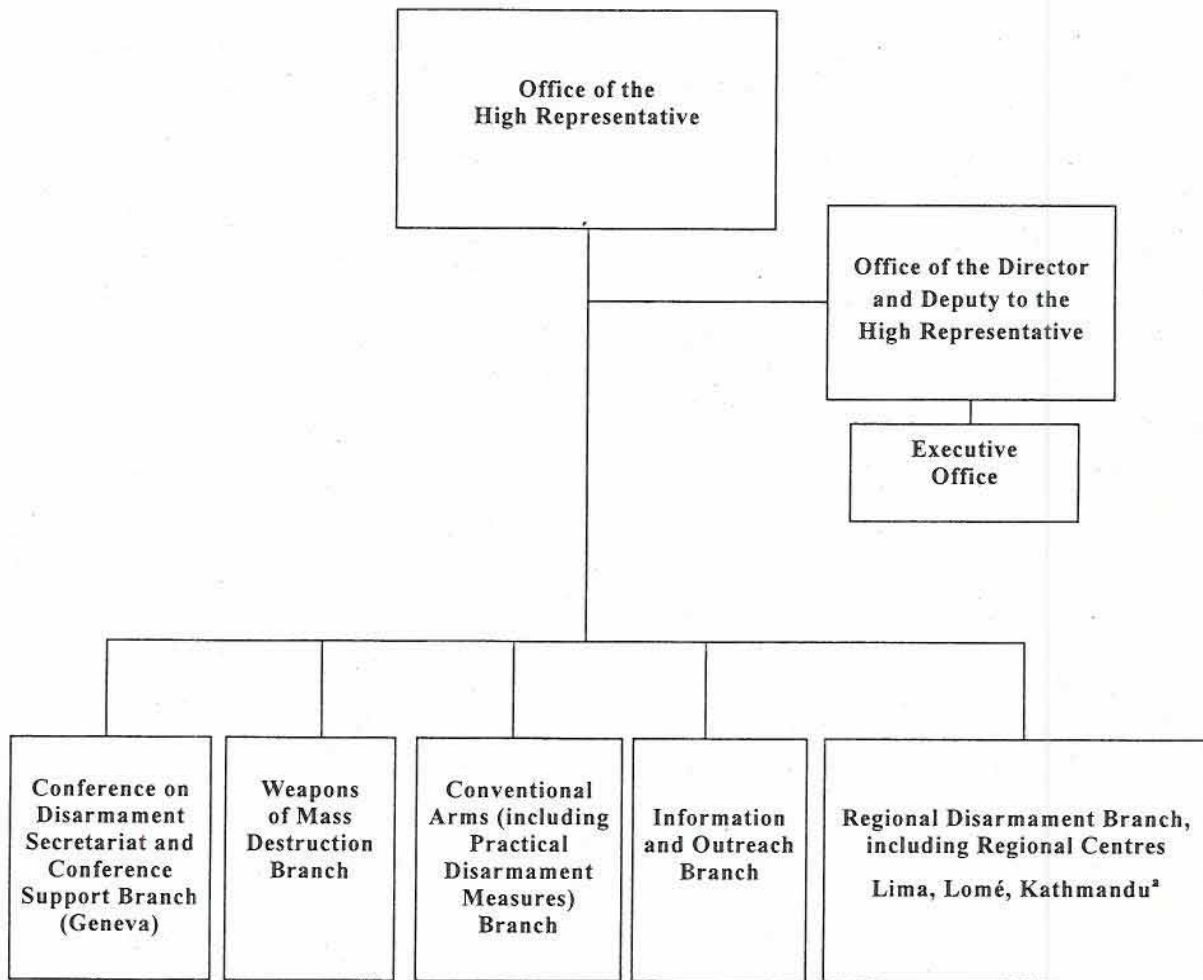
non-proliferation efforts. I believe, however, that the new approach will lead to greater visibility of disarmament and non-proliferation issues and that the new Office will have a stronger impact in support of Member States' efforts to address the threats and challenges that are before the international community.

23. I also believe that the elements set out above help to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs as well as the expectations of how he or she will play a leadership role in providing the policy direction and guidance needed to ensure the implementation of General Assembly resolutions in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

24. I am mindful of my responsibility to contribute to our collective effort in this important area. The full implementation of this proposal, in my view, would strengthen existing synergies across the field of peace and security and, at the same time, would help to build more functional and effective cooperation with Member States, as well as with global and regional intergovernmental organizations. I intend to undertake a thorough review of the implementation of mandates under this reorganization proposal and report on the outcome at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

Appendix I

Office for Disarmament Affairs: organizational structure for the biennium 2008-2009



^a Operating from New York.