Fifteenth special session
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 3 June 1988, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. AHMAD (Pakistan)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to thank all delegations for the honour they have bestowed on me by entrusting me with the responsibilities of Chairman of the Committee of the Whole.

This Committee is to deal with all the substantive items on the agenda of the special session; thus, what we may accomplish in our work will in very large measure determine the outcome of the session. I am confident that I will be able to count on the goodwill and co-operation of all delegations in making this a successful special session. For my part, I pledge that in directing the work of the Committee I shall spare no effort to contribute to achieving that result.

ELECTION OF THE OFFICERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The CHAIRMAN: In paragraph 39 of its report, the Preparatory Committee for the Third Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament recommended that the Committee of the Whole should have a 20-member bureau consisting of a Chairman, 18 Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. As members will recall, the General Assembly at its opening meeting, on 31 May, endorsed that recommendation. In paragraph 41 of the report, the Preparatory Committee recommended also that the regional groups should consider re-nominating the members of the bureau of the Preparatory Committee to serve in the bureau of the Committee of the Whole.

On the basis of my consultations with the regional groups, I should like to inform the Committee that there is agreement with that recommendation and that therefore the representatives of the following Member States have been
nominated as Vice-Chairmen of the Committee: from Africa: Morocco, Sudan, Togo and Zaire; from Asia: Japan, Mongolia and Sri Lanka; from Eastern Europe: Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia; from Latin America and the Caribbean: Argentina, Bahamas and Uruguay; and from the Group of Western European and other States: Australia, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Norway. Finally, Mr. Pedro Núñez Mosquera of Cuba is the candidate for Rapporteur.

May I take it that the Committee wishes to elect by acclamation those candidates as Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur of the Committee of the Whole?

It was so decided.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK, INCLUDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES

The CHAIRMAN: In the light of consultations I have carried out with the various groups it is my understanding that agreement has emerged on a number of organizational matters, in particular those relating to the establishment of subsidiary bodies, their chairmanship and the allocation of agenda items. I therefore wish to put before the Committee for decision the following organizational arrangement: the establishment of three working groups: Working Group I to deal with agenda item 10 and to be chaired by Ambassador Hepburn of the Bahamas; Working Group II to deal with agenda items 12 and 15 and to be chaired by Ambassador von Stülpmagel of the Federal Republic of Germany; and Working Group III to deal with agenda items 13 and 14 and to be chaired by Ambassador Engo of Cameroon.

It would be understood that arrangements relating to the organization of work of the subsidiary bodies would be left to the discretion of their respective Chairmen and would be taken up at working group level.
(The Chairman)

With respect to agenda item 11, "Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament", the Committee of the Whole would authorize me to request Ambassador Garcia Robles of Mexico, in view of his long experience and close connection with the subject, to conduct consultations, as appropriate, and thereafter report to the Committee of the Whole.

May I take it that the Committee of the Whole endorses the arrangement I have indicated?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: In light of the decision that we have just taken, the Working Groups will be in a position to begin work next Monday, 6 June. Midway in their work - that is, on Monday, 13 June - the Working Groups would present progress reports to the Committee of the Whole. The consultations I have conducted indicate that it seems to be generally agreed that the target date for the completion of the work in the subsidiary bodies should be Friday, 17 June, when the results of their work will be presented to the Committee of the Whole. May I also say that the Chairmen, in presenting the conclusions of the work in their respective Working Groups, would present to the Committee of the Whole agreed conclusions or recommendations that have emerged from their work.

During the last week of the session, which commences on 20 June, substantive work on the elaboration of the final product of the special session would take place within the framework of the Committee of the Whole.

Are there any comments on those proposals?

Mr. ENGO (Cameroon): I should like first to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your well-deserved appointment. You know the respect that we have for you and the number of times we have co-operated together, sharing as we do a common vision of global peace and security. I should also like to seize this opportunity to thank the Committee of the Whole for the confidence it has placed in
my delegation. We will do our very best to enhance the Committee's work through the Working Group that has been set up.

I have asked to speak merely to seek some clarification as to what we are supposed to be doing. It would appear to me that we have in fact been asked to spend 11 days trying to negotiate. That actually involves seven working days. At least, that is the impression we have received. We are to begin our work on 6 June. Many of us are still involved in the general debate in the General Assembly, and, with Heads of State coming, we might be tied up there. Those of us with small delegations cannot do more than try to be in both places at the same time.

If we must report on 13 June, we do not feel that that gives us very much time in which to give a progress report. Would it not be more useful if we did not waste a whole day reporting to the Committee of the Whole, a whole day in which we merely listen to what has been said without anything coming out of it?

Experience in the United Nations Disarmament Commission has been that, given the limited time, that represents a wasted day. We as Chairmen can inform you, Mr. Chairman. We have no doubt that members of the Committee of the Whole will be attending the meetings of Working Groups and participating in their endeavours. Do we really think that, given this very difficult time schedule, it is essential for us to make these two reports, rather than utilizing the time for our work? This is just by way of suggestion.

The CHAIRMAN: I think it would be useful for the Chairmen of Working Groups to present to the Committee of the Whole brief oral reports midway through the two weeks that have been allotted for the substantive work of the Working Groups. I do not foresee the meeting at which we will hear those oral reports being longer than a half hour or 45 minutes or so. I therefore do not think that it will really in any way result in wastage of time.
(The Chairman)

So far as progress is concerned, of course, only such progress as has been made can be reported on. If a certain Working Group — and I hope this is not the case — has not been able to make too much progress during the first week, then the oral report will be to that effect.

I would suggest that we keep to the indicative timetable. As I have said, I do not foresee that involving wastage.

May I take it that the Committee accepts the suggestions I have outlined?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: Concerning the meetings of the subsidiary bodies, I should like to inform the Committee that, given available conference-service facilities, two meetings of subsidiary bodies could be held in the morning and two in the afternoon during the general debate in the Assembly, except on 8 and 9 June, when the Committee of the Whole would also be meeting to hear statements of non-governmental organizations and peace and disarmament research institutes. On those days only one meeting of a subsidiary body could be held in the morning and one in the afternoon. Following the conclusion of the general debate in the Assembly, which is scheduled for the afternoon of 14 June, it would be possible for three Working Groups to meet simultaneously.

With respect to the allocation of time to the subsidiary bodies, it would seem to me that the most appropriate way of dealing with the issue would be for me to discuss it with the Chairmen of the respective Working Groups and with Ambassador Garcia Robles. It is therefore my intention to meet with them, following this meeting of the Committee of the Whole, to consider an appropriate timetable of meetings for next week, with a view to submitting the conclusions reached to the Committee at our next meeting, which will take place on Monday morning. The allocation of time during the following week could be considered at the meeting to be held on Monday, 13 June. At that meeting we shall receive
progress reports and thus appropriate decisions could be taken in the light of the evolution and requirements of our work.

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL REPORTS OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT, THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE AND THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

The CHAIRMAN: Having dealt with the various organizational matters relating to our work, I should now like to call upon the Chairmen of the Conference on Disarmament, the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference and the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean to introduce the reports of those bodies to the special session. The report of the Disarmament Commission will not be available in all languages until Monday, 6 June, and therefore the Chairman of the Commission will introduce the Commission's report at our next meeting.
(The Chairman)

I shall now call upon Ambassador Esztergalyos, the Permanent Representative of Hungary, who will introduce the special report of the Conference on Disarmament on behalf of Ambassador Meiszter, the Conference's current Chairman.

Mr. ESZTERGALYOS (Hungary): Mr. Chairman, first of all may I congratulate you on the occasion of your appointment. My delegation is looking forward to working under your able guidance, and it wishes you every success in your difficult task. You may count on the constructive support of the Hungarian delegation.

I have the honour to introduce on behalf of Ambassador Meiszter, the Chairman of the Conference on Disarmament, the special report of the Conference on Disarmament to the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It has been circulated as document A/S-15/2.

At the same time I should like to convey to you the apologies of Ambassador Meiszter for his being unable to present the special report in person since circumstances prevent him from doing so. I shall now read out the text of Ambassador Meiszter's statement.

"The Conference on Disarmament was requested by the General Assembly of the United Nations in resolution 42/42 L to submit a special report on the status of its negotiations and on its work to the General Assembly at its third special session devoted to disarmament.

"Pursuant to that resolution, the Conference on Disarmament prepared its special report to the General Assembly and adopted it at its 462nd plenary meeting, held on 28 April 1988.

"In connection with the introductory part of the special report, may I recall that starting from 7 February 1984 the designation 'Conference on Disarmament' was assumed in place of the previous designation, 'Committee on Disarmament'. Annual reports for years before and after that date are named accordingly.

"Concerning part II, 'Organization of the work of the Conference', I wish to draw attention to the fact that a new item, 'Prevention of nuclear war including all related matters', has been inscribed on the annual agenda, first in 1983 as a part of agenda item 2, and subsequently as separate agenda item 3.

"The special report pays due attention to the issue 'Participation of States not members of the Conference' as well as to the issue 'Expansion of the membership of the Conference'. The section entitled 'Improved and effective functioning of the Conference' reflects the substantive exchange of views which has brought to the surface constructive and forward-looking ideas and suggestions aimed at improving various aspects of the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament. In this connection I should like to highlight the increasing interest displayed by member and non-member States alike towards the Conference, among other ways by high-level visits and substantive contributions to its work by high-ranking Government officials.

"Part III of the special report covers the substantive work done by the Conference in the period under review on various items inscribed on its agenda. The first three sections of this part of the special report reflect the substantive work done on the priority items of the agenda, such as the nuclear test ban, cessation of the nuclear arms race, nuclear disarmament, and the prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters. Following the consensus reached during the first part of the 1982 session, an ad hoc subsidiary body was set up on the question of the nuclear test ban; it was
functioning from the second part of the 1982 session up to the end of the 1983 session. In spite of the continuous efforts made at the subsequent session of the Conference, however, differences of position prevailing on those items prevented the Conference from setting up the appropriate subsidiary bodies.

"Subsequent sections contain the special reports of the ad hoc committees on chemical weapons, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, radiological weapons and the comprehensive programme of disarmament. Their reports contain an assessment of the work done, the results achieved and the tasks yet to be accomplished, as well as the differences of positions still prevailing on various issues.

"I am confident that the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament will carefully consider the special report and will analyse the achievements and failures in an objective manner. Hopefully it will make use of the practical experience gained in a decade of functioning of the Conference on Disarmament and on that basis will draw the necessary conclusions and establish the appropriate guidelines for its future work.

"I wish to express the appreciation of the Conference to all the representatives who have contributed in good faith to our common goal either by serving as presiding officers or by participating in the substantive work. I should like to convey profound gratitude to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Komatina, and to the Deputy Secretary-General, Ambassador Berasategui, as well as to the entire team of the Secretariat who rendered exceptionally valuable help and services to us."
The CHAIRMAN: I now call on Ambassador Perera of Sri Lanka, who, as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference and of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, will introduce their reports.

Mr. PERERA (Sri Lanka): At the outset let me offer you my sincere congratulations on your election as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. I am confident that with your long experience and diplomatic skills you will be able to guide the deliberations of this Committee to a successful conclusion.

As a member of the South Asia subregion, it is especially gratifying to see you leading us in this important exercise. We offer you our whole-hearted co-operation.

In my capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference, I have the privilege and honour to introduce the report of the Committee, which is contained in document A/S-15/4. The General Assembly, by its resolution 42/41 of 30 November 1987, requested the Committee inter alia to submit a report at its third special session devoted to disarmament. Pursuant to that request, the Ad Hoc Committee held a meeting on 14 January of this year. At that meeting the Committee established an open-ended Working Group which was entrusted with the responsibility of drafting the Committee's report to the third special session devoted to disarmament. The Working Group held two meetings under the able chairmanship of the Committee's Rapporteur, Mr. Viqueira of Spain. The Group presented its report to the Ad Hoc Committee on 27 April 1988, and it was adopted by consensus at its 98th meeting.
A spirit of co-operation and understanding characterized all stages of the deliberations of the Committee and of the Working Group. I take this opportunity to thank Mr. Tomaszewski of Poland, who acted as Chairman during my absence, provided valuable guidance and made an excellent contribution to the work of the Committee. I wish also to place on record the valuable contribution made by Ambassador Nissanka Wijewardane, my predecessor, Mr. Viqueira of Spain, Chairman of the Working Group, Mr. Sohrab Kheradi, Secretary of the Committee, and other members of the Secretariat.

The current report on the work of the Ad Hoc Committee covers the period between 1982 and 1988. The report consists of three sections: the introduction; the section dealing with the work of the Committee during the period 1982 to 1988; and the section dealing with conclusions and recommendations. During the period under consideration, the Chairman continued to be in close contact with the representatives of the nuclear-weapon States as well as all other States, in order to remain informed of the development of their positions on the question of convening a world disarmament conference.

In section III of the current report, dealing with conclusions and recommendations, it may be seen that the Ad Hoc Committee has taken note of the important developments in the field of disarmament, particularly in the bilateral sphere, since the convening in 1982 of the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Further, the Ad Hoc Committee recognizes the continuing validity of the initiative for the convening of a world disarmament conference. However, taking into consideration the divergence of views as to the immediate convening of the world disarmament conference, the Ad Hoc Committee has decided to recommend to the General Assembly at its third special session devoted to disarmament that the work
of the Committee be suspended until such time as the Assembly deems it appropriate to reactivate it.

On behalf of the Ad Hoc Committee, I recommend that the General Assembly consider this report for adoption at its third special session devoted to disarmament.

I wish now to turn to the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean.

The General Assembly, by its resolution 42/43 of 30 November 1987, requested the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean to present a report on its work. In my capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee I have the privilege and honour of introducing that report. The report is contained in document A/S-15/5.

As members may recall, an item entitled "Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace" was included in the agenda of the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly at the request of Sri Lanka, later joined by the United Republic of Tanzania. At that session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 2832 (XXVI) of 16 December 1971, in which it solemnly declared that the Indian Ocean, within limits to be determined, together with the airspace above and the ocean floor subjacent thereto, was designated for all time as a zone of peace. It also called upon the great Powers, in conformity with the Declaration, to enter into consultations with the littoral States of the Indian Ocean with a view to halting the further expansion of their military presence in the Indian Ocean and eliminating from the area all bases, military installations, nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and any manifestation of great-Power rivalry, and called upon the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean, the permanent members of the Security Council and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean to enter into consultations with a view to implementing the Declaration and ensuring that warships and military aircraft would not use the Indian Ocean for
any threat or use of force against any of its littoral or hinterland States; subject to the foregoing and to the norms and principles of international law, the right to free and unimpeded use of the zone by all nations would be unaffected; and arrangements would be made to give effect to any international agreement reached on the question.

By its resolution 2992 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, the General Assembly decided to establish an Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. The Committee started its work with 15 members. Over the years the membership of the Committee has grown, reflecting the increasing international recognition of the importance of the subject. At present the Committee is composed of 49 member States, including all permanent members of the Security Council.

In its report to the General Assembly at its second special session devoted to disarmament, the Committee provided information on its work from 1972 to 1981. The present report covers the work of the Committee from 1982 until the first session in April this year. The report consists of three parts. Part I of the report contains an introduction in which the background information and the mandates given by General Assembly resolutions during the period are described. Part II of the report describes in detail the work accomplished by the Ad Hoc Committee during the period. Part III contains the conclusions of the report and the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations to the General Assembly at its third special session devoted to disarmament.

I need not reiterate here the importance of the Indian Ocean for the political and economic life of mankind as a whole. Members will recall that at its first and second special sessions devoted to disarmament, the General Assembly recognized the importance of the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean with a view to strengthening the security of States within the zone and international peace and
security as a whole. The General Assembly, during the period between 1982 and 1987, repeatedly requested the Ad Hoc Committee to complete its preparatory work to convene the Conference on the Indian Ocean at Colombo as a necessary step in the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

As is evident from the report, members of the Committee are aware of growing international concern about the escalation of the foreign military presence in the area. The Committee is also aware of the strategic importance of the ocean as perceived by the major military Powers. Furthermore, the Committee is deeply concerned about the numerous international conflicts which continue to afflict the Indian Ocean region. The Committee has always believed that this situation in the Indian Ocean adds urgency to the need for early realization of the objectives of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

The Committee has been encouraged by the recent improvements in the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as among the regional States of the Indian Ocean. The Committee welcomes the ratification of the intermediate-range nuclear forces Treaty and the recent summit meetings of the leaders of the two super-Powers.
The Ad Hoc Committee is also encouraged by the solution of the conflicts in Afghanistan and the new developments in the situation in Kampuchea. Those developments will undoubtedly bring about a more positive attitude on the part of Member States towards the convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean, which has been recognized by consensus as a necessary step for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, adopted in 1971.

Progress has been made in the Working Group "to identify, expand and facilitate agreement on substantive issues relating to the establishment of a zone of peace with a view, inter alia, to recommending to the Committee elements that might be taken into consideration during the subsequent preparation of a draft final document of the United Nations Conference on the Indian Ocean." (A/S-15/5, para. 32)

As its recommendation the Ad Hoc Committee urges the General Assembly at its third special session devoted to disarmament to reaffirm its full support for the implementation of the Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. In order to facilitate the intensification of the Ad Hoc Committee's work towards the implementation of its mandate and to enable the completion of its remaining preparatory work for the early convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean at Colombo, as repeatedly called for by the Assembly, in particular in resolution 42/43, the Committee requests the Secretary-General to continue to extend to it all necessary assistance.

I wish to take this opportunity to place on record our appreciation of the valuable contribution made to the work of the Committee by my predecessor, Ambassador Nissanka Wijewardane. I also wish to record our appreciation of the assistance and co-operation rendered to the Committee by its Secretary, Mr. Shunichiro Yoshida, and the secretarial and other staff.
In conclusion, on behalf of the Ad Hoc Committee, I recommend that the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament consider this report for adoption.

The CHAIRMAN: As I noted earlier, there will be a meeting of the Committee of the Whole on Monday morning. At that meeting Ambassador Hepburn, as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, will introduce the Commission's report to the special session. At that meeting I shall also present to the Committee the conclusions reached in my consultations with the Chairmen of the Working Groups concerning the timetable of the meetings of those Groups next week. I expect that the meeting on Monday morning of the Committee of the Whole will be a very short one and that therefore Working Groups will be able to meet immediately thereafter.

The next meeting of the Committee of the Whole will be held on Monday, 6 June, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.