PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE SECOND SPECIAL SESSION OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

Second session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 12 May 1981, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ADENIJI (Nigeria)

CONTENTS

Consideration of views on other relevant questions relating to the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, including the organization of work of the session (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room A-3550, 866 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of the session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

81-55961
The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF VIEWS ON OTHER RELEVANT QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE SECOND SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT, INCLUDING THE ORGANIZATION OF WORK OF THE SESSION (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited comments relating to the date and duration of the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

2. Mr. LIDGARD (Sweden) said that the general opinion which had emerged from consultations he had held with various other delegations was that the special session should be held a little earlier than the date originally suggested by the Chairman. He proposed that the special session should start on Tuesday, 11 May 1982 and continue for four weeks. The possibility of extending the duration of the session should be left open. One problem with those dates was that they coincided with the session of the Disarmament Commission due to be held in May 1982. It might, however, have to be accepted that if the special session was held in May, the regular session of the Disarmament Commission scheduled for that month would not take place. He did, of course, recognize that it was not up to the Preparatory Committee to make decisions regarding the holding of meetings of the Disarmament Commission.

3. Mr. GRINBERG (Bulgaria) said that his delegation had no exact date in mind for the special session. Indeed, it might be easier to make a decision on the matter in October during the next session of the Preparatory Committee. He felt that if the second special session was to be a success, it should last no less than three weeks and no more than four weeks.

4. Mr. OKAWA (Japan) said that four weeks was an appropriate length for the special session but that his Government would prefer it to be held in June. That preference related to the level of representation in the early weeks of the special session. His delegation was willing to communicate the views of other delegations to its Government.

5. Mr. FLOWERREE (United States of America) said that his delegation could support most of the proposals put forward by the representative of Sweden. His Government would probably support the starting date of 11 May 1982 if it was acceptable to other members of the Committee and to the other Governments taking part in the special session. In any case, he felt that the starting date should be no more than one week later than the one proposed by the representative of Sweden and that a duration of four weeks would be acceptable to his Government.

6. Mr. MENZIES (Canada) said that, because of the brevity of the Canadian summer, his delegation would like to see the work of the special session completed before the end of June. That would appear to accord with the views expressed by the representatives of Sweden and the United States of America that the session should begin on 11 or 18 May 1982. He agreed with the logic of the Swedish representative's opinion that if a special session devoted to disarmament was held, the regular session of the Disarmament Commission should not take place.
7. Mr. DIACONU (Romania) said that his delegation had no preconceived ideas concerning the date of the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It would, however, be wrong for the Preparatory Committee to take decisions regarding the United Nations Disarmament Commission. That Commission could well be given a specific mandate by the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session, a mandate which it would have to discharge as a deliberative organ of the United Nations for disarmament and, above all, as a preparatory body for the second special session. His Government's preliminary view on the length of the session was that it should last for four weeks with the possibility of an extension if need be. He stressed that his Government would review its position on the subject in the light of progress made in the preparations by early 1982.

8. Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) said that his delegation considered the Swedish proposal sensible. It did, however, feel that, in the light of the experience of the first special session, a duration of five weeks would be more appropriate. It felt also that time would be used better during the session if that duration was fixed without a possibility of an extension.

9. Mr. ZAKI (Egypt) said that his delegation had a flexible approach toward the starting date of the special session and would consider any time in mid-1982. The Committee should ensure that the duration of the special session was adequate to allow all the items on the agenda to be considered fully.

10. Mr. WAGENMAKERS (Netherlands) said that his delegation had come to the Preparatory Committee with no rigid views on the subject. He approved the Swedish suggestion that the session should begin in the middle of May 1982 and felt that 11 May 1982 would be quite suitable if it fitted in with other meetings on the disarmament calendar. The special session should last about one month.

11. Mr. BLONDELD (Finland) expressed his approval of the Swedish proposal for the starting date of the special session. His delegation was flexible regarding the duration of the session but felt that four weeks seemed most suitable. There should be a strict time-limit on the length of the session and no extension.

12. Mr. MINAJLOVIĆ (Yugoslavia) said that his delegation had an open mind as to the starting date of the special session. He felt it would be inappropriate to discuss the duration without prior discussion of organization of work, which might reveal the need for additional time. He noted that, if there was any need to extend the work of the Preparatory Committee beyond the end of the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the dates already arranged for the work of the Committee on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission would have to be borne in mind.

13. Mr. DE LA GORCE (France) said that his delegation would like to see the special session start in the second half of May, possibly on 18 or 19 May 1982. In planning the special session, it was important to take account of the schedule of meetings on disarmament, including the work of the Committee on Disarmament. He thought that the Committee on Disarmament should complete its work by the end of April 1982 and that one week should be reserved after that for a possible further meeting of the Preparatory Committee.
14. The CHAIRMAN said that any decision on the date and duration of the second special session must be related to further work on disarmament in 1981 and to the work of the Committee on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The Committee could recommend to the General Assembly that the Disarmament Commission should not hold a session in May 1982. That might mean that the Disarmament Commission would meet for a longer period in December 1981. Members might also have to ensure that the General Assembly did not assign additional tasks to the Disarmament Commission which might force it to meet in 1982. First of all, it was important to clarify whether there was a general desire to make such a recommendation.

15. Mr. FONSEKA (Sri Lanka) said that the dates set for the second special session must be acceptable to all States Members of the United Nations, not just to the members of the Preparatory Committee. It should be borne in mind, therefore, that all suggestions made in the Committee were very tentative ones whose purpose was to enable the Secretariat to give an indication of the dates which members would find suitable.

16. Mr. FLOWERRY (United States of America) asked whether the dates which had been suggested were compatible with the calendar of conferences and meetings for 1982.

17. Mr. CSILLAG (Secretary of the Committee), replying to the representative of the United States, said that a period of six weeks from the last week of May 1982 to the first week of July 1982 had been provisionally set aside for the holding of the special session. He was not at the moment able to say whether a starting date of 11 May 1982 or 18 May 1982 could be accommodated in the calendar of conferences for 1982. He would, however, be able to give a clearer answer at the following meeting.

18. The CHAIRMAN said that members of the Committee should take note that all dates mentioned at the meeting were tentative and that a final decision could not be taken until October 1981. The dates that were eventually decided upon would have to take into account the need for other meetings, such as additional sessions of the Preparatory Committee and the need or otherwise for a session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission in May 1982. The earlier an indication was given to the Secretariat, the greater the possibility of accommodating those dates. He suggested that the French proposal to begin the special session around 18 May 1982 was a generally acceptable middle way. Bearing in mind the length of the first special session devoted to disarmament, which had had to be extended, it would be unrealistic to set the duration of the second special session for three or four weeks. It would be better to specify that the second special session should run for not more than five weeks, a formulation which would seem to satisfy the concerns of all members of the Committee.

19. Mr. DIACONU (Romania) said that the decision on whether or not the Disarmament Commission should hold a session in the spring of 1982 could be taken only after the results of its 1981 session were available and after its report had been considered by the First Committee of the General Assembly during its thirty-sixth session.
20. Mr. KABLA (Sierra Leone) drew attention to the fact that the Organization of African Unity (OAU) generally met in the middle of June and, accordingly, he suggested that the second special session should be convened during the first week of May, especially if representation was to be of a high level, so as not to overlap with the OAU meeting.

21. Mr. MARSHALL (United Kingdom) suggested that, subject to advice from the Secretariat, the period from the beginning of May until the end of June should be reserved, on the understanding that not all that time would be needed. His delegation would in fact favour an early convening of the special session.

22. Mr. ERDENEECHUULUN (Mongolia) agreed with the representative of Sweden that four weeks should be sufficient for the special session.

23. Mr. PFEIFFER (Federal Republic of Germany) expressed the opinion that a period of five weeks, starting from 11 or 18 May, should be reserved, although with proper advance preparation four weeks should be sufficient.

24. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Secretariat should be requested tentatively to reserve the period from 18 May to 18 June for the second special session, thus allowing time for the Disarmament Commission to meet and for the session to last five weeks, if necessary.

25. It was so decided.

26. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the level of representation, drew attention to the fact that it had been suggested that the second special session should be represented at the highest political level and also that certain world religious leaders should be invited to attend.

27. After a brief discussion in which Mr. TALIANI (Italy), Mr. AYEWAH (Nigeria) and Mr. FLOWERPOT (United States of America) took part, the CHAIRMAN suggested that the question of inviting world religious leaders should be given more thought, but that such invitations should reflect all the world's religions, and that the recommendation to be made by the Preparatory Committee concerning the level of representation should be expressed in general terms, for example, that the second special session should be attended at the highest political level possible.

28. It was so decided.

29. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the question of participation in the second special session, recalled that it had been decided in connexion with the first special session to invite representatives of non-governmental organizations and peace research institutions. It had also been agreed that the President of the previous General Assembly session should preside over the proceedings, that one Main Committee should hold meetings and that subsidiary bodies could be set up. Accordingly, he suggested that the pattern prescribed for the first special session, as outlined in the report of the Preparatory Committee for that session, should be followed in the case of the second special session.

/...
30. It was so decided.

31. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the mobilization of public opinion in connexion with the special session, suggested that the decision on that question should be postponed until the relevant Secretariat paper had been circulated.

32. It was so decided.

33. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the question of the principal documents that should result from the second special session, noted that the representative of Mexico had suggested the possibility of issuing a final act and that others had suggested a final document or documents concerning the instruments submitted by the Committee on Disarmament. It had also been suggested that the results of the session should take the form of a report.

34. Mr. FLOWERDEE (United States of America) said that, in his delegation's opinion, that question depended on the agenda of the session. If it was decided that a final report should be issued, such a report might take the form of a factual account of what had transpired during the session, including the views expressed in connexion with the implementation of the Final Document of the first special session. The comprehensive programme of disarmament should also be issued, either as a final document or as a section of the final report. Decisions on institutional matters and conventions or agreements commended for signature should be recorded in the report. Accordingly, the full range of possibilities must be examined, but the decision on the nature and outline of the final document should be postponed until agreement had been reached on the agenda.

35. Mr. CRINERFO (Bulgaria) said that his delegation would prefer the results of the second special session to be issued as a single document with as many annexes as necessary, depending on the number of agreements reached or multilateral instruments submitted. That document should be a factual report of what had occurred during the session, should refer to any agreements resulting from the work of the Committee on Disarmament and should contain the comprehensive programme of disarmament. Several documents might be forthcoming from the Committee on Disarmament before the convening of the special session, although his delegation was not very optimistic in that regard. His delegation also favoured the issuing of a single document as a reflection of the commitment to try to solve all problems of substance by consensus. As to the name of such a document, he did not think that it should be called a "final document", because there should not be two documents of the same name which were dissimilar in nature. His delegation would prefer that document to be called a final report because it should be a factual account of the proceedings and should reflect the views expressed on the situation of disarmament and any appeals for action.

36. Mr. DE LA GORCE (France) noted that the question of the list and objectives of the documents resulting from the second special session was closely related to the question of the agenda. The results of the session could probably be grouped together in a single document consisting of several parts; that arrangement would have the advantage of keeping all the relevant conclusions together. Such a document could contain factual information: For example,
an introduction recalling the Final Document of the first special session, a
summary of the general debate on that topic, particularly on the Programme of
Action, an assessment of the state of disarmament, future prospects and, finally,
general policy recommendations, including references to the relationship between
disarmament and international security and between disarmament and development.
The document could also contain the comprehensive programme of disarmament, any
General Assembly recommendations on the specific questions discussed and other
proposals and General Assembly decisions concerning institutional matters. In
his delegation's opinion, a final document organized in that manner would be
appropriate and would reflect the ideas expressed in connexion with the agenda.

37. Mr. OKAWA (Japan) said that it was in fact too early to take a final decision
on the type of document that should result from the session, for example, whether
it should be a record of the proceedings or a type of final act. As he understood
it, the words "final act" generally referred to a document resulting from a
diplomatic conference convened for the purpose of adopting a treaty or treaties.
Such a document recorded the proceedings and was signed by duly authorized
delegates.

38. The CHAIRMAN said that a final act was not necessarily signed by participants.
It was true, however, that the term was most often used in relation to diplomatic
conferences convened to negotiate particular treaty texts. The document envisaged
by the United States representative seemed to have all the attributes of a final
act. At the present stage, it was perhaps best for the Preparatory Committee to
keep the various options open and to go into the question in greater detail when
it had agreed on the agenda and given more thought to the form of the document
to emerge from the second special session.

39. Mr. ISSRAELEVICH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he too felt that,
without agreement on the agenda, it would be difficult to define the nature and
content of the final document or documents. According to United Nations practice,
there was usually a final document at special sessions and treaty review
conferences. The document normally gave a full account of proceedings, as in the
case of the first special session devoted to disarmament. It was hoped that the
second special session would be slightly different from the first, and there was
the possibility that the General Assembly might succeed, at that session, in
taking note of international agreements worked out by the Committee on Disarmament.
Everyone hoped that the Assembly would also adopt at that session the comprehensive
programme of disarmament. The adoption of various other resolutions or
recommendations was also possible. In other words, there would be elements at
the second special session not present at the first session and not normally
present at treaty review conferences when final documents were adopted.

40. On the whole, his delegation sympathized with the views expressed by the
representative of France. It felt, however, that the Committee should give more
thought to the Bulgarian suggestion, which was not incompatible with the French
suggestion. The final document should record matters of a general nature, give
a factual account of proceedings and include, perhaps in an annex or addendum,
legal instruments adopted. The nature of the final document would probably differ
from that of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session.

/...
41. A decision that only instruments adopted at the second special session should be included in its final document might preclude the possibility of work on the text of the final document during the preparations for the second session. If it was decided that the results of the second session should be reflected in a final document containing proposals such as the comprehensive programme of disarmament, such proposals would be worked out within the Committee on Disarmament. In October 1981, the Preparatory Committee could begin work on the general political or factual aspects of the final document, independently of those other proposals.

42. Mr. DE LA GORCE (France) said that the designation of the final document did indeed pose a problem. The term "final act" would be confusing since it usually applied to a treaty instrument such as the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Another term would therefore have to be found.

43. As to his suggestion concerning a single document, such a document would not be drafted in its entirety at the second special session devoted to disarmament. One part might, for instance, be drafted by the Preparatory Committee; another part might include disarmament agreements already concluded or recommendations of the Committee on Disarmament; yet another part might contain the text of the comprehensive programme of disarmament, as negotiated in Geneva and finalized at the second special session. That was primarily a question of form. What was essential was that there should be a single document encompassing all the elements approved at the second special session.

44. The CHAIRMAN said that the Preparatory Committee should give further thought to the question of the designation of the final document and resume the discussion after it had addressed itself to the question of the agenda.

45. Mr. TALIANI (Italy) said that the question of designation was of far less importance than the content of the final document. "Final act" was as good as any other term; some final acts were signed, others were not. What was certain was that the document would not be a replica of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.