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

Third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 6 October 1981, at 11.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. VENKATESWARAN (India)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.50 a.m.

PREPARATION OF A DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE SECOND SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT (A/AC.206/13; A/AC.206/CRP.6)

1. The CHAIRMAN reminded members that there had been an extensive exchange of views at the previous session. He asked for specific proposals for items to be placed on the provisional agenda for the second special session of the General Assembly. The Committee would then be able to see more clearly the common ground and to make progress in its work.

2. Mr. AYEHU (Nigeria) said that working paper A/AC.206/CRP.6, which the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee had submitted in May 1981, represented a synthesis of various elements of a possible agenda for the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, based on the oral or written contributions of delegations. However, the representative of Mexico had proposed, in document A/AC.206/13, an alternative approach which had considerable merit and which sought to concentrate the efforts of the 1982 special session on the adoption of the comprehensive programme of disarmament which was one of the instruments currently under discussion in the Committee on Disarmament. Proposals had also been made by the group of socialist countries and the group of Western countries. It seemed possible, therefore, for the preparation of an agenda for the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to be completed at the current session.

3. Delegations should endeavour to narrow the differences between their approaches on three basic issues, namely, whether to annotate the item "general debate", whether new initiatives should form a separate item and what the order of priority of the various agenda items should be. A decision would also have to be taken on the title of the document that would be adopted at the end of the special session. In his delegation's view, the item "general debate" should be annotated so as to put the debate in perspective and thus enable delegations to address themselves positively to the specific and highly complex problems posed by the arms race.

4. The second special session provided an opportunity to reassess the disarmament postures of member States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States and the militarily significant States, to take urgent measures to arrest the deterioration in the international climate and to examine the status of implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by consensus during the first special session on disarmament. The agenda should be as simple as possible and should cover the issues of immediate concern to the international community, such as the nuclear arms race, the relationship between disarmament and development, and the links between disarmament and international security.

5. Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) said that the members of the Committee had had sufficient time to study the two working papers under consideration. He drew particular attention to the introductory note submitted by his country, in which
it was stated that, with the wide-ranging subject of disarmament, it was necessary to seek a concentration of effort with a view to maximum co-ordination. At the first special session, only three basic items had been dealt with: the drafting of a declaration, the establishment of a programme of action, and arrangements for negotiating machinery. Those issues had all been dealt with in the Final Document and could thus be reduced to a single item. In view of the success of the first session and the interest aroused by the Final Document, it seemed desirable that the agenda for the second special session should contain a single basic item: "consideration and adoption of the comprehensive programme of disarmament".

6. However, the preparation of a comprehensive programme of disarmament, in accordance with paragraph 109 of the Final Document, would in effect raise all the questions mentioned in it and many others as well. In particular, as would be seen from the draft document submitted to the Committee on Disarmament at the end of its session by the Group of 21, which contained paragraphs dealing with the studies on the links between disarmament and development, on institutional arrangements for disarmament and on the World Disarmament Campaign, the fact that those studies did not appear as a separate item on the agenda did not mean that they would not be considered at the special session. On the contrary, they would be reviewed in the best possible way, in the context of the relevant provisions of the comprehensive programme.

7. In any event, the comprehensive programme of disarmament could not be discussed without tackling such issues as the strengthening of the role of the Organization in the field of disarmament, which would mean considering the operation of the deliberative organs, how to increase the effectiveness of the Committee on Disarmament, and institutional arrangements.

8. The launching of the World Disarmament Campaign should be made a separate item in order to give the event the importance it merited and to facilitate the convening of a pledging conference.

9. Mr. ISRAELIYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Soviet delegation would do everything in its power to ensure that the decisions taken at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament would help to give effect to the peace initiatives of the Soviet Union and to the constructive proposals made by other countries. The General Assembly had before it two Soviet proposals which bore witness to that determination. One of them (A/36/241) was a draft declaration on the theme that States and statesmen that resorted first to the use of nuclear weapons would be committing the gravest crime against humanity; and the other (A/36/192) concerned the conclusion of a treaty on the prohibition of the stationing of weapons of any kind in outer space.

10. The General Assembly could not achieve the noble aims it had set itself unless the work of the special session was devoted to a thorough study of issues concerning arms limitation and disarmament. The Preparatory Committee must establish conditions conducive to a constructive climate. To that end, the agenda
should be short and should concentrate on specific issues. It should be so
drafted as to secure the approval of all the members of the Committee and enable
every State to discuss the issues which it considered especially important. For
example, under the item "General debate", the general situation could be assessed
and the results of the first special session evaluated. Undue importance should
not be assigned to the negotiating machinery. Generally speaking, the agenda
should not be too detailed. It therefore seemed unwarranted to assign a separate
item or sub-item to questions already considered at regular sessions of the
General Assembly, such as the various studies on disarmament questions carried
out under United Nations auspices. Any delegation which wished to speak on that
question could do so under another agenda item.

11. Consideration of disarmament questions entailed the study of both earlier
proposals and new initiatives. Given the number of new proposals prepared on the
eve of the first special session, it was probably advisable to devote an agenda
item to the study of new initiatives.

12. As far as the form and structure of the Final Document were concerned, it
might comprise an introduction containing an evaluation of the implementation of
the resolutions of the first session, a section containing the comprehensive
programme of disarmament, and a section on other matters, such as the negotiating
machinery, including the World Disarmament Conference, information issues and the
World Disarmament Campaign.

13. The Committee should base its deliberations on the Chairman's paper
(A/AC.206/CRP.6), with due regard to the useful proposals submitted by Mexico
(A/AC.206/13). His delegation would spare no effort to ensure that an agenda was
adopted at the current session for submission to the General Assembly.

14. Mr. Shitam (Kenya) said that once again the world was being given the
opportunity to reassess its position and decide whether the international
community intended to allow itself to be annihilated in the coming ten years
or the coming century. Unless serious steps were taken to halt the arms race and
resolve the problems which continued to face the world community, mankind was
clearly on the brink of disaster. It was vital, therefore, to seize the
opportunity of carefully reviewing all aspects of disarmament and of reflecting on
the future of mankind.

15. Contrary to the opinion expressed by the representative of the Soviet Union in
his statement, Kenya considered it necessary to reassess the effectiveness of the
negotiating process and to study all aspects of disarmament without exception, in
order to identify the weak points and find appropriate solutions. In particular,
the operation of the Committee on Disarmament should be carefully examined. At
the same time, Kenya agreed with the Soviet Union that the agenda should be both
brief and comprehensive.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.