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

Organizational session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 5 December 1980, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. ADEWUYI (Nigeria)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF DR. FRANCISCO SÁ CARNEIRO, PRIME MINISTER OF PORTUGAL

1. On the proposal of the Chairman, the members of the Preparatory Committee observed a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of Dr. Francisco Sá Carneiro, Prime Minister of Portugal.

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF AMBASSADOR SHIRLEY AMERASINGHE, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA AND FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2. On the proposal of the Chairman, the members of the Preparatory Committee observed a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of Ambassador Shirley Amerasinghe, President of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea and former President of the General Assembly.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (continued)

3. The Chairman said that, as a result of the consultations held, the conclusions had been reached that the Preparatory Committee should hold two substantive sessions during the coming year, one between April and May or between May and June and the other during the regular session of the General Assembly, with a view to facilitating attendance by delegations participating in the work of the First Committee and sparing them an additional journey. The meetings of the Preparatory Committee should by no means coincide with those of the Committee on Disarmament Commissions at Geneva or with those of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The six-month period between 20 April and 20 May 1981 proposed by the Secretariat did not, therefore, seem convenient. However, the regional groups had indicated that they would prefer that the meetings of the Preparatory Committee should be held first and then immediately afterwards those of the Disarmament Commission. If that was done, in order to ensure that the convening of those meetings did not coincide with the meetings of the Committee on Disarmament at Geneva the earliest date that could be envisaged for the start of the meetings in question would be the 1 May, so that between 4 and 15 May the meetings of the Preparatory Committee would be held and between 10 May and 12 June those of the Disarmament Commission.

4. The most convenient dates for the convening of the second substantive session would probably be from 5 to 16 October. The Secretariat had informed him that, in order to be able to hold that session, it would be necessary for the General Assembly to decide to make an exception to the provision that subsidiary organs should not meet during regular sessions of the General Assembly.

5. Mr. FAMBIAO (India) said that the convening of the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, which was to deal with the preparatory work for the Conference on the Indian Ocean, was scheduled between 1 and 19 June. The Secretariat could perhaps propose some other possible date so that there would be no conflict between the convening of the meetings. His delegation would have problems in attending the two sessions if they were held simultaneously.

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6. The CHAIRMAN said that it would be necessary to ask the Secretariat to make some minor readjustments in the calendar of conferences so that it would be able to service all the meetings. Subject to the Secretariat's being able to reorganize the dates for the sessions envisaged and provided the General Assembly decided to approve the exception he had mentioned earlier, he would take it that the Preparatory Committee agreed to the dates he had suggested.

7. It was so decided.

8. Mr. CSILLAG (Secretary of the Committee) said that he would contact the Department of Conference Services immediately in order to find out about the possibility of making the necessary arrangements. However, the Committee should know that during the first two weeks of June the Secretariat would have to service an unprecedented number of meetings. Although everything possible would be done to satisfy the wishes of the Committee, it might prove necessary to change the date of the session of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean.

9. Referring to the statement made by the representative of Mexico at the preceding meeting, he drew the Committee's attention to the list of documents contained in the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament (Supplement 1, A/S-10/1, vol.1, paras. 11 to 13). It was clear that many of those documents required updating. For example, document A/AC.107/29 and Corr.1 contained resolutions on disarmament adopted by the General Assembly from 1946 to 1976 inclusively; an addendum had also been prepared containing the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in 1977.

A compilation of disarmament-related resolutions adopted since that date could be prepared. Document A/AC.107/30 and Corr.1 included the existing principles and proposals for negotiations on disarmament. In view of the existence of the Final Document of the Special Session Devoted to Disarmament, the preparation of a new document might be dispensed with. Document A/AC.107/31 contained a presentation on the previously existing structures and machinery for the conduct of negotiations on disarmament. A document could be prepared on the structures and machinery elaborated since the Special Session. Document A/AC.107/67 contained a brief synopsis of disarmament and arms limitation negotiations - including the results - carried out within the framework of the United Nations since 1955, on a regional basis or bilaterally, with an indication, where appropriate, of the procedures followed to keep the United Nations informed. That information might be brought up to date.

10. Document A/AC.107/68 contained a comparative study of the scope originally proposed or aimed at in draft multilateral disarmament treaties of a universal character concluded under United Nations auspices and the scope finally fixed in those treaties, including the contemplated measures for expanding that scope. A document could be prepared covering the intervening period. Document A/AC.107/69 contained a comprehensive study of official proposals or declarations made and decisions taken by the General Assembly on the procedure of unilateral or negotiated moratoria as a provisional measure for the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, as well as their application by any State. An updated document on the subject could be prepared. Document A/AC.107/70 and Corr.1 contained a synthesis of the arguments adduced for and against each of the four proposals for the creation of
nuclear-weapon-free zones (Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and the South Pacific) and the proposal for the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, including a subject and country index. An updated document on the subject could be prepared. Document A/AC.107/71 contained a comprehensive study of the origin, development and present status of the various alternatives proposed for the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. An updated document on that subject could also be prepared.

11. Document A/AC.107/72 contained an analytical summary of United Nations studies describing the effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, bacteriological (biological) weapons and napalm and other incendiary weapons, as well as those dealing with reduction of military budgets, with the economic and social consequences of the arms race and disarmament and with the relationship between development and disarmament. In that connexion, a document could be prepared containing a summary of similar studies carried out by the United Nations since the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament. Document A/AC.107/73 contained a comparative study of global military expenditures and development assistance since 1945 as stated in available official and unofficial sources. In view of the fact that a major study concerning the relationship between disarmament and development was at present being carried out by the United Nations and the report on that study was expected to become available at the time of the thirty-sixth regular session of the General Assembly, the Secretariat believed that the Preparatory Committee might wish to revert to consideration of the necessity of updating that document in the light of the information to be supplied by that study. Document A/AC.107/74 and Corr.1 contained a report on the human and material resources available to the Secretariat of the United Nations for its work on disarmament and the organization of that work. A similar report could be prepared. Lastly, document A/AC.107/75 and Corr.1 contained a list of disarmament and related proposals officially submitted to the United Nations. That list could be updated.

12. The Secretariat could initiate at an early date the preparation of the documents indicated by the Committee, thereby contributing to the efficient use of the time available to the Committee for its work.

13. Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) thanked the Secretariat for the speed and efficiency with which it had complied with the request made by his delegation at the first meeting.

14. Mr. ARTEAGA (Venezuela) suggested that another document should be prepared showing in detail the measures that had been taken under the auspices of the United Nations to disseminate information on the Organization's efforts to curb the arms race and its harmful consequences, in particular with regard to nuclear weapons. The document could also include the most recent recommendations of the First Committee, in particular the recommendation on the launching of a world disarmament campaign.

15. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the recommendations of the Secretariat with regard to documents A/AC.107/29 and Corr.1 and A/AC.107/30 and Corr.1, suggested that the Committee should adopt those recommendations.
16. Mr. Lidgard (Sweden), referring to document A/AC.187/31, suggested that the Secretariat should bear in mind that there would be a special report from the group established to study the question of United Nations institutions devoted to disarmament, which could facilitate the updating process.

17. The CHAIRMAN expressed the view that the recommendations of the Secretariat with regard to documents A/AC.187/57, A/AC.187/68 and A/AC.187/69 were useful.

18. Mr. García Robles (Mexico), referring to document A/AC.187/70 and Corr.1, noted, as a new factor bearing on the topic in question, that Israel had voted for the first time in favour of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East region. He also said that he believed it would be preferable to add a supplement to the documents that required updating.

19. Mr. Jenzi (Canada) asked for an estimate from the Secretariat concerning the financial implications of updating the documents.

20. Mr. Burbin (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that, since there were no important new developments, the Committee should be satisfied with the existing documents.

21. Mr. Cillar (Secretary of the Committee), replying to questions on the financial implications of issuing the documents, said that in preparing the Second Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament the Secretariat had based its work on the experience gained during the previous session, and that the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly had approved an appropriation of funds for the preparation of the Second Special Session Devoted to Disarmament. The Secretariat would naturally try to use those funds as economically as possible. As far as the documents to be published were concerned, the decision was in the hands of the Preparatory Committee.

22. The CHAIRMAN said that there were sufficient resources to reissue the documents mentioned and to update some of them. With regard to document A/AC.187/70 and Corr.1, it would be sufficient to add to it a supplement including the most recent events relating to nuclear-weapon-free zones and the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. Similarly, document A/AC.187/71 could be updated. The updating of document A/AC.187/72 seemed especially useful in view of the number of studies on the subject that had appeared since the first special session devoted to disarmament. With regard to document A/AC.187/73, the Secretariat's suggestion seemed reasonable, namely to defer its updating in the expectation of the publication of the report on the relationship between disarmament and development, which was to be submitted to the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Similarly, it seemed appropriate to update documents A/AC.187/74 and Corr.1 and A/AC.187/75 and Corr.1.

23. Mr. Gy (Senegal) said that the list of documents contained no document referring to security guarantees for non-nuclear States. If document A/AC.187/71 did not deal with the matter, it would be appropriate to issue a study on that important topic.
24. Mr. SAVOSTOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the preparation of
documents for the special session devoted to disarmament was a complex task, in
which it was necessary to take into account the usefulness of documents, their
financial implications and the fact that many of the documents were already quite
well known and others did not need to be updated or supplemented at all. The
decision as to whether a document should or should not be published should not be
taken hastily; furthermore, Governments should submit their views on the subject.
That would not prevent delegations from submitting proposals, which should be
included in the record of the meeting, but the final decision should be deferred
until a later time.

25. Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) suggested that a mixed procedure might be
appropriate; studies already mentioned did not require a new decision, since the
Preparatory Committee for the First Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted
to Disarmament had approved their publication by consensus. They only required
updating. On the other hand, delegations could propose the preparation of new
studies, and in that case the approval of Governments would be required.

26. The CHAIRMAN said that at the first special session of the General Assembly
devoted to disarmament the report of the Preparatory Committee to the General
Assembly and the background documents had been extremely useful. Furthermore
decisions had not yet been taken concerning the preparation of new studies, and
the only proposals on the subject had been those made by the delegations of
Venezuela and Senegal. The proposal of the delegation of Venezuela seemed very
useful, but since the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to
disarmament was still two years away, it was not necessary to take a decision now
on the publication of that document.

27. Mr. ARTILAGA (Venezuela) agreed with the Chairman that the adoption of a
decision on the document he had proposed could be deferred to some later time.

28. Mr. EESHARRAPA (Egypt) agreed with the representative of the Soviet Union that
a decision on documents to be published should not be taken without previously
considering the views of the various Governments. The decision could be taken in
the following year when the Preparatory Committee met again.

29. The CHAIRMAN explained that the Secretariat needed to have time to prepare the
documents before the Committee met in the following year.

30. Mr. BURuhl (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that a detailed study should be made
of all the available documents and in particular those of the Committee on
Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee.

31. Mr. SHILDOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) asked whether the
decision to be taken by the Committee covered only the list of documents for the
coming session of the Committee or if it also covered documents for 1981 and 1982.

32. It would also be possible to establish general guidelines now and leave the
problem of drawing up a detailed time-table for some later time.
33. Mr. CSILLAG (Secretary of the Committee) said that the Preparatory Committee for the First Special Session had requested that documents be prepared and submitted for its various sessions. Perhaps the Committee would wish to follow the same procedure now.

34. Since the Secretariat was not in a position to guarantee that it could prepare all of the documents requested before the next session of the Preparatory Committee, he suggested that the Committee should indicate an order of priority for the various documents it wished to study. The Secretariat would of course proceed in accordance with the Committee’s decision.

35. Mr. RAHHALI (Morocco) said that the Chairman’s suggestions seemed very much to the point and would give the Preparatory Committee an opportunity to make an adequate study of all the necessary documents.

36. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the request of the Committee Secretary that the Preparatory Committee should indicate priorities for the preparation of documents, said that at its next session the Committee would especially need a basic document containing the views expressed by Member States in conformity with the resolution on the convening of the Second Special Session devoted to Disarmament. It would also be very useful to have the comments made by delegations during the debate in the First Committee at the current session relating specifically to the Second Special Session devoted to Disarmament gathered in a single document.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.