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

Third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 22nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 8 October 1981, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. VENKATESWARAN (India)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

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

CONSIDERATION OF OTHER RELEVANT QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE SECOND SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS THEREON, INCLUDING THOSE IN RESPECT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the item under consideration arose directly from paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 35/47 and said that it might be helpful to recapitulate some of the issues addressed by the Committee during its second session in May 1981.

2. The Secretariat had set aside the period from 24 May to 9 July 1982, within which the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament could be held. At the preceding session of the Committee it had been the view of the Bureau that the 1982 special session should last up to five weeks. Accordingly, among the recommendations to be made by the Committee to the General Assembly were those concerning the dates and duration of the special session.

3. With regard to other questions, in most cases the Committee had already decided, at its 15th meeting, to follow the pattern of the tenth special session. The matters concerned, on which the Preparatory Committee might wish to make recommendations to the General Assembly, included the following items: the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Main Committees, the Credentials Committee, the General Committee, the rules of procedure, the level of representation, public-information activities, and the facilities to be accorded to non-governmental organizations.

4. He drew the Committee's attention to the record of the 15th meeting, at which it had been decided that the recommendation concerning the level of representation should be expressed in general terms, for example, that the second special session devoted to disarmament should be attended at the highest political level possible. At that meeting, the Committee had also decided to give further consideration to the suggestion that world religious leaders should be invited.

5. Concerning public-information activities, he reminded members of the paper prepared by the Secretariat and distributed as document A/AC.206/CRP.5.

6. Concerning the participation of non-governmental organizations and peace-research institutes, he recalled the Chairman's statement at the 11th meeting of the Preparatory Committee to the effect that there was an understanding in the Bureau that the participation of non-governmental organizations at the second special session on disarmament would not be less than it had been at the 1976 special session.
7. Turning to the second part of item 5 of the Committee's agenda, concerning the implementation of the decisions and recommendations adopted by the Assembly at its tenth special session, he invited comments from the Committee. That part of the item was in many respects related to item 6, "Future work of the Preparatory Committee".

8. Mr. MAREI (Egypt) said that, although there had been an extensive exchange of views on agenda item 4, the Committee must now undertake the actual elaboration of a draft provisional agenda, to be adopted by consensus, and the preparation of its report to the General Assembly. Accordingly, he suggested that a small informal working group should be established to deal with those tasks.

9. Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) recalled that he had previously expressed doubts about the number of meetings devoted to the discussion of agenda item 5: those doubts now seemed to be justified by the fact that no representatives were listed to speak on that item. Moreover, the Committee had not yet concluded its work on agenda item 4, and therefore he firmly supported the proposal made by the representative of Egypt. Such an open-ended drafting group could start immediately to summarize the exchange of views on agenda item 4, so that at the beginning of the following week the Committee could take practical steps towards reaching the necessary consensus on the basis of the group's work.

10. Mr. MELESCHU (Romania), referring to the Chairman's summary of discussions on possible elements of a draft of the provisional agenda of the second special session devoted to disarmament (A/AC.206/CRP.6), said that, in his opinion, a generally acceptable agenda should be as concise as possible, but it must also cover and clearly define those issues which the replies received from Governments and the statements made by representatives indicated as being of particular importance. Accordingly, a draft provisional agenda should comprise both items and subitems, so as to include specific issues on which the work of the special session should focus.

11. In particular, he felt that draft agenda item 8 should be action-oriented, so as to ensure that the appropriate conclusions could be drawn from the assessment of the armament situation and of the current deadlock in the disarmament negotiations, taking into account the decisions of the first special session devoted to disarmament. Draft agenda item 9, as he understood it, could also include the work of deliberative and negotiating bodies, such as the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Committee on Disarmament. In view of the importance of their work and the fact that both bodies had been asked to submit reports to the General Assembly at the 1982 special session, he felt that a specific item should be devoted to the report of each body.

12. In connexion with draft agenda items 10 and 11, his delegation supported the wording as formulated by the Chairman in his summary of discussions. It also felt that draft agenda item 12 should be kept in the agenda, so that any multilateral disarmament agreement which had been negotiated and finalized in time could be adopted at the 1982 special session. Draft agenda item 14 should,
in his delegation's opinion, be divided into two separate items: the first concerning measures aimed at increasing the central role of the United Nations in disarmament negotiations, and the second concerning measures to mobilize world public opinion in order to halt or limit the arms race. One practical result of the discussion of the latter item should be the launching of the World Disarmament Campaign.

13. With regard to draft agenda item 15, his delegation believed that the existing wording was sufficiently flexible to keep open all the options of Member States.

14. In the light of the Chairman's summary of discussions, the valuable working paper submitted by Mexico (A/AC.206/13), and other proposals, the Committee must now decide how to proceed. It had been recommended at a previous meeting that delegations should submit written comments on each of the draft agenda items; accordingly, his delegation would submit its current statement in written form. He supported the proposals made by the representatives of Egypt and the Soviet Union on the establishment of an open-ended working group to prepare the actual wording of the provisional agenda, and he hoped that progress could be made in that direction the following week on the basis of existing documentation and the comments to be submitted by delegations.

15. In conclusion, he expressed profound sadness at the death of Mr. Anwar Sadat, the late President of Egypt. Romania had considered President Sadat to be a very important figure of contemporary political life who had worked actively to achieve peace and well-being for his people and to create a climate of security and co-operation in the world. The late President had also made a very important contribution to the development of co-operation between Romania and Egypt in all fields.

16. Mr. ESPECHE-GIL (Argentina) said that, although his delegation was not opposed to the proposal made by the representative of Egypt, it felt that the establishment of the working group should perhaps be postponed until the Chairman and members of the Committee had been able to study the working paper on the comments submitted by delegations which was to be prepared by the Secretariat. In the light of that document, it might not be necessary to establish a working group.

17. Mr. AYEJAH (Nigeria) stressed that, in order to fulfil its mandate, the Committee must deal not only with the technical and organizational aspects of the 1982 special session but also with its political aspects, a task which was necessary in order to ensure that the special session would be action-oriented and result-oriented and would ultimately be a success.

18. Item 5 of the Committee's agenda went beyond item 4 and focused on the special session itself. Accordingly, he suggested that the substantive discussion of item 4 should be continued but that delegations should think about item 5 in the light of the recommendations of the first special session devoted to disarmament, which were also included in the Committee's mandate.
19. The actual establishment of the open-ended working group should, in his
delegation's view, be deferred until there had been additional discussion of the
provisional agenda itself.

20. The CHAIRMAN said that there appeared to be a need for further discussion on
the ways in which the Committee should fulfil its mandate and finalize the draft
provisional agenda. He therefore urged delegations to be prepared to speak on
item 5 at the Committee's next meeting.

STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF UNESCO

21. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of UNESCO had asked to make a
statement to the Committee. He recalled that at the Committee's first session in
December 1980, it had been decided to invite the specialized agencies concerned
with disarmament questions to participate, as observers, in the Committee's work.

22. Mr. MARKS (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)
recalled the statement made by the Director-General of UNESCO at the first special
session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, identifying UNESCO's
competence in the field of disarmament as arising from the fact that its
Constitution assigned it the task of advancing, through the educational and
scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world the objectives of
international peace and of the common welfare of mankind for which the United
Nations was established and which its Charter proclaimed. UNESCO's Constitution
likewise affirmed that any peace, if it was not to fail, must be founded upon
the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind and not simply on governmental
arrangements.

23. He recalled that the Final Document of the tenth special session had given
UNESCO a direct or indirect mandate in four areas. Paragraphs 99-102 and 123 of
that document related to the dissemination of information about the arms race and
mentioned the specialized agencies. Paragraphs 103 and 123 concerned study and
research and made specific reference to UNESCO's activities in that area,
particularly in developing countries. Paragraphs 104 and 106 concerned, inter alia,
relations with non-governmental organizations, which was an essential means
through which UNESCO sought to meet the expectations created by the Final Document.
Last and most important, paragraphs 106 and 107 were devoted specifically to
disarmament education and UNESCO's programme in that area.

24. UNESCO's activities in the field of disarmament had begun in the late 1950s.
More recently, the general approach to the subject had been defined in UNESCO's
medium-term plan for 1977-1982 as part of the objective of that plan concerning
the promotion of peace research. For the programme and budget for 1981-1983,
the immediate mandate of UNESCO was set out in resolution 3/01, concerning the
social science programme, and in resolution 11/1, entitled "Creation of a climate
of public opinion conducive to the halting of the arms race and the transition to
disarmament". That latter resolution referred specifically to the first special
session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and welcomed the decision
to hold another special session in 1982. The General Conference of UNESCO had also
invited the Director-General to make an appropriate contribution to the preparation of the 1982 special session. It was in application of that provision that he was speaking to the Committee. The General Conference had further invited the Director-General to maintain co-operation with the institutions of the United Nations system, particularly with the United Nations Centre for Disarmament and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), attached to the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. That co-operation, realized through regular contacts between the units concerned, through the ad hoc interagency meetings and through mutual representation at meetings, had led to a satisfactory division of labour, avoiding duplication of effort between UNESCO and other United Nations bodies. In the case of UNIDIR, the co-operation had led to exploring joint activities of interest to researchers, and, in the case of the Centre, to the dissemination of public information based on studies carried out by the United Nations.

25. Turning to UNESCO activities carried out pursuant to the recommendations of the tenth special session, he stressed that UNESCO's general approach had been to respect the high standards of scientific rigour and the plurality of views on controversial matters, always with the aim of meeting the needs of educators and playing a responsible role in the field of public information.

26. UNESCO's work with regard to education had been carried out essentially in connexion with the World Congress on Disarmament Education. UNESCO had been actively involved in working out a draft action plan of the Congress which contained activities to cover the entire Second Disarmament Decade. UNESCO also issued publications on disarmament and planned a series of regional training seminars for university teachers of the subject, the first one being held at Caracas for the region of Latin America and the Caribbean in October 1981.

27. A recent issue of the periodical Impact had been devoted to the subject of "Weapons from Science". However, the main activity in connexion with science was a joint meeting UNESCO was organizing with the Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs, to take place in February 1982, on "Scientists, The Arms Race and Disarmament", with a view to making a contribution to the 1982 special session. That undertaking stemmed from a common concern at the fact that a high proportion of scientific endeavour was devoted to the development of weapons, particularly nuclear weapons. Such a distortion of the image and purpose of science had to be rectified by scientists' practical reaffirmation of their true calling, which was to serve mankind and help to improve the standard of living in the world. The Pugwash Conference felt, in particular, that emphasis should be given to the efforts of scientists to counteract the arms race and that scientists in all countries should be called upon to contribute to such efforts.

28. In the social sciences, UNESCO had already issued a number of publications, which were at the disposal of the members of the Committee, while in the field of culture, preparations were being made for an international research project and meeting on the theme of images of war and peace as conveyed through various forms of cultural expression.

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29. Turning to communication and information, he mentioned the special issue of the UNESCO Courier which had been published and the contributions made to Disarmament Week. Research activities on how the information media treated disarmament questions would also be undertaken.

30. It was clear that UNESCO's disarmament-related activities had not developed independently of United Nations efforts but had, instead, been strictly limited to UNESCO's field of competence and had been harmoniously co-ordinated through the competent United Nations bodies in order to be complementary to United Nations action.

31. Referring to UNESCO's capacity to respond to any requests made by Member States at the second special session devoted to disarmament, he said UNESCO had been pleased to note that the summary of the discussion on possible elements of the draft provisional agenda for that session included items of direct interest to UNESCO. For example, agenda item 13, entitled "Comprehensive programme of disarmament", which would seem to require an educational component, appeared to be one area in which UNESCO could make a contribution. Three subitems of item 14, namely, those relating to disarmament education, seminars and training, to public-information activities and to the World Disarmament Campaign, were also of particular relevance to UNESCO. The tenth special session had already given special responsibilities to UNESCO in the field of disarmament education, and numerous activities on the subject had been organized. UNESCO would be willing to submit a report on that subitem to the General Assembly at the 1982 special session. As that special session would be held a few months before the General Conference of UNESCO met in extraordinary session to adopt a second medium-term plan, a renewed mandate from the special session in the field of disarmament education could be considered almost immediately by the States members of UNESCO. He assured the Committee that it could count on an active contribution by UNESCO in the field of public-information activities. Furthermore, UNESCO had been actively associated with the study of the World Disarmament Campaign. If the General Assembly decided to launch such a campaign, UNESCO would be willing to accept special responsibility for educational activities. Although it was proposed that such a campaign should be under the over-all guidance and co-ordination of the Secretary-General, the proposal did not preclude giving UNESCO special responsibilities in that area, which was directly relevant to its field of competence. The sharing of human and financial resources would undoubtedly enhance the impact of the campaign.

32. Drawing the Committee's attention to another existing form of effective co-operation between the Centre for Disarmament and UNESCO, he mentioned the study on the economic and social consequences of the arms race and military expenditure, which had been popularized by UNESCO through a special issue of the UNESCO Courier in April 1979. That issue had been so successful that the United Nations had ordered thousands of additional copies, which were distributed through United Nations Information Centres around the world. At the suggestion of the Centre, UNESCO was now considering similar action in connexion with the study on disarmament and development. Similar co-operative efforts to disseminate new perspectives offered by certain of those studies would be envisaged.

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33. In conclusion, he recalled that the Director-General of UNESCO had ended his address to the tenth special session by declaring that the reduction and progressive elimination of armaments would be the most striking proof that mankind had at last become reconciled with itself and could one day look forward to experiencing the peace, justice and fraternity which had been its aspiration from time immemorial. The challenge had only grown since 1978, and so had UNESCO's commitment to meeting it.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.