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

Second session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 5 May 1981, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. ADENIJI (Nigeria)

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81-55841
The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMEN AND RAPPORTEUR (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that, as a result of consultations held within the regional groups, it had been agreed that the posts of vice-chairmen from the Group of African States would be held by the representatives of Benin and Morocco; from the Group of Asian States, by the representatives of Bangladesh, India and Japan; from the Group of Latin American States, by the representatives of the Bahamas, Mexico and Peru; from the Group of Western European and Other States, by the representatives of Australia and Italy; and from the Group of Eastern European States, by the representatives of Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic and Yugoslavia. It had also been agreed that the post of Rapporteur would be held by Mr. Ersun (Turkey).

2. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee approved the composition of the Bureau thus described.

3. It was so decided.

CONSIDERATION OF VIEWS CONCERNING THE AGENDA OF THE SECOND SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

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

4. Mr. AVEWAN (Nigeria), referring to agenda item 5, elaborated on his Government's views, which were contained in document A/AC.206/2 (pp. 39-41) and which concentrated on the agenda of the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

5. His Government believed that unless States accepted the fact that peace and peaceful coexistence provided the best way to achieve the social and economic development of peoples, it would not be possible to change the international climate for a long time to come. By the same token, the present inexplicable level of armaments and the constant pressure to raise it further caused even greater insecurity. However, the major military Powers did not seem to understand that fact, since they constantly found excuses to arm rather than to disarm.

6. Unfortunately, the uncertain international climate, exacerbated by mounting tensions in various parts of the world, which had served as a background for the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, had not improved. Moreover, it had been only through an act of political courage and sheer determination that Member States had succeeded in reaching a consensus on the Final Document of that session (resolution S-10/2); however, the Final Document had since then become a blueprint for delegations in their consideration of disarmament questions.
7. The second special session would have to assess what impact the Programme of Action had had on the current arms race, and that would require an assessment of the progress made in disarmament in general since the first special session devoted to disarmament. In that connexion, his delegation wished to reaffirm the validity of the established principles for disarmament negotiations and of the priorities set for the implementation of the Programme of Action; in its opinion, those principles and priorities constituted an authoritative basis for further work during the coming special session.

8. The results achieved in the Committee on Disarmament and in the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union prior to the convening of the coming special session would undoubtedly provide a means of measuring the progress made. He welcomed the fact that bilateral talks between the United States and the Soviet Union would be resumed in due course. His delegation had suggested the inclusion of a specific agenda item in order to enable the special session to adopt any specific disarmament measures that might emerge from such ongoing negotiations. In that respect, it would be extremely useful if the representatives of the United States and of the Soviet Union would report at the coming special session on the progress achieved in their bilateral negotiations.

9. It was extremely important to give substance to the concept of time-frames for the disarmament negotiations, in terms of planning and strategy. The convening of the coming special session would be the first major event of the Second Disarmament Decade, during which new impetus should be given to negotiations on nuclear disarmament, within agreed time-frames. In that connexion, his delegation expected the Committee on Disarmament to submit to the coming special session agreed texts on a comprehensive test-ban treaty, on treaties prohibiting chemical and radiological weapons and on a negative security assurances convention. Above all, it expected the Committee on Disarmament to produce an agreed text on the comprehensive programme of disarmament.

10. Referring to agenda item 6, he observed that the second special session devoted to disarmament would need to achieve more positive and specific results than the first. In other words, the mere adoption of a final document would not be enough; it would be necessary to ensure that the political commitment of States translated the comprehensive programme of disarmament into meaningful disarmament measures. Accordingly, the coming special session should be attended at the highest political level, and he hoped that such a consideration would be included in the Preparatory Committee's recommendations.

11. His delegation also thought it extremely important to ensure that all elements of the international community - for example, world religious leaders, the media and non-governmental organizations - were included in disarmament efforts. Accordingly, the Preparatory Committee should consider the possibility of recommending to the second special session devoted to disarmament that certain world religious figures should be invited to promote the dissemination of information concerning disarmament and to participate in the work of the session.

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12. Furthermore, his delegation believed that the United Nations Secretariat should be asked to publish a handbook about the second special session devoted to disarmament as soon as possible after the current session of the Preparatory Committee. The purpose of the handbook, which should be given the widest possible circulation, would be to mobilize public support for disarmament and concern over the current arms race.

13. As to the type of document that should emanate from the coming special session, he said that if specific disarmament measures were in fact adopted, the session should produce a series of documents containing, on the one hand, the specific instruments adopted and, on the other hand, the assessment called for in the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

14. Lastly, the comprehensive programme of disarmament could serve as a centrepiece for the coming special session. The implementation of the programme could be envisaged within a time-frame of 20 years, which would be phased out in five stages, the end of each stage being marked by the convening of a review conference held at the highest political level.

15. Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) recalled the complex preparatory work required for the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which had been held in an international situation somewhat less tense than the present one. In the years since that special session, it had been possible to evaluate the results of the session and assess the real possibilities for further progress along the lines laid down in its Final Document. His delegation intended to participate actively in the work of the Preparatory Committee in preparing the second special session devoted to disarmament. The Soviet position on that session could be found in the letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics concerning the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, contained in document A/36/226.

16. Rapid and profound changes were taking place in military technology, and radically new types of weapons, particularly weapons of mass destruction, were being developed; as a result, they were proving increasingly difficult, and perhaps even impossible, to control or limit. The arms race had entered a new phase, which was disrupting international stability and greatly increased the danger of war. Furthermore, disarmament negotiations had come to a halt, a fact which some sought to justify by claiming that progress in disarmament was linked to progress in other areas of international life. His delegation could not accept such alleged "linkages", which sought to tie the solution of a specific problem to the solution of other problems. The Soviet Union favoured the opposite view, namely, that the solution of a particular problem, especially one of great significance, could facilitate the solution of other problems. His delegation fully agreed with the remarks made by the Secretary-General in an interview with the correspondent of TASS before departing for Moscow, to the effect that the main task facing the United Nations was ending the arms race, in particular as it related to nuclear weapons. The United Nations had adopted a number of useful decisions calling for curbs on the arms race.

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17. To a significant extent, the positive results achieved at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament had been due to the fact that the session had proceeded on the basis of general agreement or consensus. Such a procedure should be adopted for the coming special session as well. Furthermore, the second special session devoted to disarmament should examine the situation with regard to the implementation of the decisions taken by the first. Noting that many proposals had been made at the first special session devoted to disarmament, many of which were referred to in paragraph 125 of the Final Document, he expressed his conviction that the coming special session would also yield many proposals relating to the curbing of the arms race and to disarmament. In that connexion, he drew attention to the proposals put forward by L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, at the recent Twenty-sixth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Those proposals formed an integral continuation and development of the Peace Programme adopted at the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Congresses. The proposals dealing mainly with arms limitation and disarmament, were specific and realistic and covered the main aspects and directions of military détente. Implementation of those proposals would facilitate the solution of the most serious international problems and the establishment of a climate of mutual trust and peaceful co-operation between States in the interest of peace and security. The proposals included the immediate resumption of negotiations with the United States on the limitation and reduction of strategic weapons; negotiations on reductions in the deployment of new submarines by the United States and the Soviet Union and on provisions against the modernization of existing ballistic missiles deployed on such submarines and against the development of new ones; the establishment of a moratorium on the deployment of new medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe by States members of NATO and by the Soviet Union, including nuclear weapons at forward bases of the United States in the region; the extension of confidence-building measures to include the entire European portion of the Soviet Union, providing that a corresponding extension of the zone covered by such measures was made by the Western States; and the establishment of an authoritative international committee that would draw attention to the vital need to prevent a nuclear catastrophe.

18. The Preparatory Committee must also take into account the positive results achieved by the main negotiating body on disarmament, namely, the Committee on Disarmament, and should give consideration to the convening of a world conference on disarmament.

19. Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus) said that today the arms race had acquired greater importance than any other question and the world was on the brink of nuclear conflagration threatening the very survival of mankind. The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament had been the expression of the frustrations of many years over the unproductivity of all disarmament efforts. That special session had adopted a Declaration and a Programme of Action in its Final Document (resolution S-10/2), but thus far nothing had been done to implement them.
20. The Declaration set forth the proper sequence for efforts directed towards disarmament. Paragraph 13 of the Declaration stated that enduring international peace and security could only be created, in the first place, through "the effective implementation of the security system provided for in the Charter of the United Nations" and then through "the speedy and substantial reduction of arms and armed forces". The Programme of Action began with a discussion of the process for the reduction of armaments, without making reference first to international security, but it did emphasize, as it should, the need for international security as an essential part of disarmament. Paragraph 110 made it clear that the necessary measures to maintain international peace and security included the obligation of States to place at the disposal of the United Nations agreed manpower necessary for an international peace force and that arrangements for the use of that force should ensure that the United Nations could effectively deter or suppress any threat or use of arms in violation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations. In his opinion, those provisions constituted the essence of the Final Document.

21. All the efforts of the Committee on Disarmament for the regulation and reduction of armaments would be wasted as long as the arms race continued. It was impossible in the anarchy of the arms race to introduce the order of phased disarmament, which was the objective sought. Therefore the first step towards disarmament should be to halt the arms race, and to that end, its causes must be examined. Foremost among those causes was the concept of the balance of power, used as a means of deterrence but in reality also used with an eye to superiority, each side claiming to prevent the other from dominating the world; the result was more and more armament. That situation had been created by the failure to implement the provisions of the Charter, in particular those of Chapter VII. Without the forces referred to in Article 43 of the Charter, available at the call of the Security Council, the Council's decisions could not be implemented and would lose their validity and effect. Because of the absence of such a force, the United Nations had been deprived of its authority as an instrument of peace and security. Member States, supposedly working within the framework of the United Nations and its Charter, were in fact not doing so if they negated the fundamental purpose of maintaining international peace and security through effective collective measures, stated in Article 1 of the Charter.

22. Subsequent articles of the Charter referred to a United Nations force to give effect to the decisions of the Security Council, with the assistance of a Military Staff Committee. The Military Staff Committee had been established shortly after the founding of the United Nations and was functioning regularly but perfunctorily, owing to the lack of a United Nations force; as a result, the Security Council was deprived of its advice and assistance in taking the steps necessary to implement Council decisions and to ensure that the Council served as a valid instrument of the United Nations.

23. The time had come when there was no longer any margin for failure in giving effect to United Nations instruments. Accordingly, the Preparatory Committee must pave the way for the adoption of effective disarmament measures: it must be
ensured, through appropriate agreements, that there would be forces available at the call of the Security Council to form a collective United Nations force for the maintenance of international peace and security, and the coming special session must advise and urge the Security Council to fulfil its responsibilities in connexion with the international security system and thereby make actual disarmament measures possible.

24. It was essential to establish a degree of order and security in the world, particularly among the smaller countries, through confidence in the effectiveness of the United Nations. Although the destructive capability of contemporary weapons restrained the major Powers, over a hundred minor wars between small countries made even more difficult the establishment of international order and security. As a consequence of the lack of such order and security, the major Powers were making continued efforts to expand their spheres of influence, with all the ominous repercussions of such a process. That unfortunate state of affairs was also the result of the arms race, and therefore the Preparatory Committee must focus on achieving disarmament by halting the arms race through the maintenance of an international security system in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.