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

Third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 26 January 1988, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. AHMAD (Pakistan)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES FOR INCORPORATION IN THE DOCUMENT OR DOCUMENTS TO BE ADOPTED AT THE SPECIAL SESSION (continued) (A/42/46)

1. Mr. JAYASINGHE (Sri Lanka) said that at the third special session devoted to disarmament, the General Assembly should attempt to relate the principles and objectives laid down in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament to recent political, military, economic and social developments, particularly those which had taken place after the second special session. That approach would broaden the scope of the Final Document in order to take account of changing situations that affected the arms race and disarmament. The Assembly should identify positive and negative trends influencing the disarmament process and recommend measures to be taken.

2. It was widely recognized that the lack of political will had partly contributed to the failure of the second special session. Recent developments, however, such as the signing of the INF Treaty and the adoption of a concrete set of proposals on confidence- and security-building measures in Europe had given rise to hope for progress in disarmament.

3. The ultimate aim of disarmament efforts should be to pave the way for general and complete disarmament under effective international control. At the third special session, the General Assembly could draw up a comprehensive disarmament strategy based on short-term and long-term measures. The short-term measures could include the elimination of all types of nuclear weapons; the reduction of conventional armaments; the prohibition of the development, production and possession of chemical weapons; the prevention of an arms race in outer space; naval disarmament; international security and related measures, including the establishment of zones of peace; new technological advances and their effects on the arms race and disarmament; confidence-building measures; the relationship between disarmament and development; and the need to strengthen the role of the United Nations in disarmament.

4. At the third special session, the Assembly should carry out a brief survey of recent political, military, economic and social developments, assess the implementation of the measures recommended at the previous special sessions devoted to disarmament, and prepare guidelines for future disarmament and arms-control measures. The Assembly should make every effort to adopt its decisions and recommendations by consensus in order to ensure the full co-operation of Member States.

5. Mr. ARSEENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the signing of the INF Treaty by the Soviet Union and the United States represented an historic breakthrough in efforts to bring about nuclear disarmament, and had created a favourable political and moral climate for disarmament efforts in general. At the third special session devoted to disarmament, the General Assembly should build on the positive results already achieved and become a powerful catalyst for disarmament.

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6. Nuclear disarmament was one of the most important questions to be discussed at the third special session. The proposals made by the Soviet Union in that regard focused on concrete practical measures that took account of the security interests of all States. The Assembly should strive to draw up specific recommendations in the field of nuclear disarmament and promote efforts to eliminate chemical weapons.

7. The question of conventional weapons must also be considered at the third special session. The far-reaching proposals made by the socialist countries in that regard and their desire to reduce arsenals of conventional weapons to levels adequate for exclusively defensive purposes were well known. The role and responsibility of the United Nations in solving global problems, particularly with regard to halting the arms race, were increasing. The Organization could do more by becoming a world centre for co-ordinating the activities of States aimed at eliminating the material basis for preparations for war and setting up practical mechanisms for the destruction of weapons. At the third special session, the General Assembly should give serious consideration to the special role which the Security Council, the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and other multilateral organs could play in that regard.

8. Taking into account the current state of affairs in the field of disarmament, the Assembly should also recommend specific practical measures to be taken. That would be a valuable contribution to the establishment of a comprehensive system of international security. In that regard, he stressed that the principle of consensus was essential. World public opinion must be fully informed about the process of disarmament and efforts to halt and reverse the arms race, particularly the nuclear-arms race. In addition to Governments, various specialized agencies of the United Nations, research institutes and non-governmental organizations should play a role in that field. His delegation supported the recommendation contained in the Preparatory Committee's most recent report (A/42/46) concerning the role of such organizations. All the means brought into play during the World Disarmament Campaign should be used.

9. The information media could do much in that regard. The flow of information should be without bias or prejudice. His delegation was prepared to inform the mass media about the activities carried out in the Ukrainian SSR to promote peace. Lastly, he stressed that a spirit of co-operation aimed at achieving concrete results and a democratic dialogue taking into account the views of all parties involved would lead to success at the third special session.

10. Mr. DJIENA (Cameroon) said that the third special session devoted to disarmament would give all delegations an opportunity to engage in a constructive dialogue aimed at promoting multilateral efforts in the field of disarmament. The preparatory work for the special session should be realistic and balanced, and must focus on substantive questions in order to identify the essential elements to be included in the final document. In that regard, he stressed the importance of the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament. Particular attention should be given to the specific security needs of each region and the search for ways to strengthen trust at the regional and subregional levels.
(Mr. Djiena, Cameroon)

Specific regional needs must be taken into account in formulating general guidelines on the questions of disarmament and security.

11. At the third special session, the General Assembly should focus on the role of the United Nations in disarmament, the relationship between disarmament and development, and conventional disarmament. In that regard, he stressed the danger which the conventional-arms race posed for the developing countries. Consideration should also be given to non-military threats to the security of States, particularly the developing countries, which were facing very grave economic problems. The question of verification and the halting of nuclear tests were also very important. Lastly, he underscored the need for goodwill on the part of all delegations if progress towards the objectives of disarmament was to be made.

12. Mr. Fagundes (Brazil) stressed the need to consider global questions such as disarmament on a multilateral basis. The disarmament process could not be reduced to accommodating the strategic interests of the major military alliances. His country noted with satisfaction the recent signing of the INF Treaty by the United States and the Soviet Union, which would open up new avenues towards more comprehensive agreements. Due attention must be paid to the need to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and to ensure that the measures to be adopted were equitable. The bilateral deliberations between the United States and the Soviet Union should be closely linked to efforts undertaken in multilateral forums.

13. Brazil supported the view that an additional session of preparatory work would be necessary before the third special session was convened. The third session itself should be forward-looking, with the emphasis on the need for the complete implementation of the Programme of Action of the first special session devoted to disarmament, and on the new technological developments in the production of weapons of mass destruction. A sterile review of the institutional machinery of the multilateral forums devoted to disarmament should be avoided. In that regard, he stressed the need for a forward-looking approach which, without prejudice to the need for more objectivity in multilateral efforts, would recognize the responsibility of the most heavily armed States for the lack of progress in multilateral disarmament efforts in recent years.

14. Mr. Fischer (Uruguay) stressed the basic importance of the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament and said that the third special session should be approached in a realistic and flexible manner. Among the questions to be covered in the Final Document of the third special session, priority should be given to nuclear disarmament. The recent bilateral agreements should be viewed as initial stages in the overall process of disarmament, and it should be stressed that such agreements should not lead to an increase in arms expenditures in other areas.

15. Careful consideration should be given to the question of conventional disarmament and the fact that all current wars were being waged with conventional weapons. The basic imbalance between military expenditures and the legitimate defence needs of States should be emphasized. It should be pointed out that...
regional conflicts constituted one of the main causes of the arms race and jeopardized the entire system of international security. The question of regional disarmament should be given due consideration. The uncontrolled growth of the international weapons market transcending geographic boundaries and ideologies was a very important issue. Consideration should be given to the question of chemical weapons and the need to draw up a comprehensive international agreement aimed at controlling all types of such weapons.

16. In the light of the military programmes of the two space Powers, the final document to be adopted at the third special session should deal with the issue of disarmament in outer space, for which both space Powers bore responsibility. Current initiatives had concentrated on limiting the arms race in outer space, whereas what was required was a legal régime banning the militarization of space. The relationship between disarmament and development should also be reflected in the final document.

17. Mr. ROCHE (Canada) said that his delegation remained committed to the views it had expressed at the second session of the Preparatory Committee. For the third special session to meet with success, its targets must be attainable, the international climate must be supportive and extensive preparations must be undertaken. In fact, progress was being made in all those respects. The agenda agreed upon at the end of the second session of the Preparatory Committee was well balanced and forward-looking, reflecting a pragmatic view of the current state of affairs. The agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union on intermediate-range nuclear forces marked an unprecedented step in disarmament. The Preparatory Committee should seek to build on the momentum thus generated by encouraging the continuation of meaningful bilateral negotiations on further reductions in nuclear weapons. Similarly the Committee should seek to re-energize the multilateral approach to the limitation of chemical and conventional weapons, and should stress the importance of a multilateral focus on verification.

18. Expectations for the third special session were bound to be high in the current climate, and some delegations had suggested topics that were unlikely to generate a consensus. More limited goals were to be preferred, since objectives that were too ambitious invited the risk of failure. Accordingly, the emphasis should be on topics such as further reductions in nuclear weapons, confidence-building, reductions in conventional and chemical weapons, and verification and compliance. A concise document reflecting such concerns was more likely to generate a consensus and prove to be a confidence-building event in itself.

19. The CHAIRMAN invited members of the Committee to comment on items included in the provisional agenda for the third special session.

20. Mr. ZAPOTOCKY (Czechoslovakia), referring to item 10 of the provisional agenda, said that while progress had been made in negotiations on disarmament at various levels, little real disarmament had so far taken place. Nevertheless, the Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union on the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear forces represented a historic achievement and was a
factor for stability. The next step should be a 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive weapons. At the third special session, the General Assembly should facilitate negotiations by establishing conditions in which arms-control agreements could be implemented.

21. His delegation trusted that the necessary political will could be found in the Conference on Disarmament to resolve the remaining issues relating to the prohibition of chemical weapons. Alongside of initiatives to limit nuclear weapons, conventional disarmament should be pursued with greater vigour, taking due account of the characteristics of different regions, particularly Europe. Conventional disarmament was a complex issue, given the ubiquity of conventional forces and their importance in preserving the military balance in any disarmament process. Talks on conventional disarmament in Europe would soon open in Vienna as a logical sequel to recent developments in nuclear disarmament.

22. Little progress had so far been achieved on the question of preventing an arms race in outer space. The militarization of space posed a threat to mankind as a whole and undermined security, thus delaying general disarmament. Activities in outer space should be carried out in accordance with international law in the interest of maintaining international security, a goal that would be made more attainable by the establishment of a world space organization.

23. The question of naval armaments was also of particular concern. There was a need for negotiations on the limitation of naval armaments so as to devise confidence-building measures and maintain the security of maritime lines of communication.

24. Progress had been made in the area of verification, and his delegation trusted that the forthcoming session of the Disarmament Commission would result in further gains. Arms-limitation agreements should provide for comprehensive and effective verification measures that would extend to military bases in foreign territories. The General Assembly, at the third special session, should adopt concrete recommendations in that regard. The United Nations could become the focal point of an international verification system intended to guarantee the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

25. In addition to the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission, the General Assembly itself, through its resolutions, was an important factor affecting the status of disarmament initiatives. There was a need for more detailed analysis of ways of improving the working methods of disarmament bodies, as well as a need for guidelines for further initiatives. At the third special session, due attention should be paid to the Final Document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

26. Mr. KOETTER (German Democratic Republic), referring to item 12 of the provisional agenda for the third special session, said that the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons was a task of the highest priority, since the prevention of nuclear war was a prerequisite for man's continued existence. The conclusion of the agreement on the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear forces
was a historic achievement and the first practical consequence of the awareness that, in the nuclear and space age, more weapons did not equal more security.

27. All nations had a vital interest in negotiations on nuclear disarmament, since the existence of nuclear weapons in the arsenals of some States directly jeopardized the vital security interests of both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States. Accordingly, bilateral and multilateral initiatives should complement each other. In view of the rapid development of military technology, it was important to quicken the pace of negotiation on nuclear disarmament, which must be the central element in negotiations on security and disarmament. In that context, the Geneva Conference on Disarmament had an important role to play by complementing bilateral negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States. The Conference should elaborate on paragraph 50 of the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament, and submit recommendations on how best to initiate multilateral negotiations, with adequate verification measures, in appropriate stages. Such an endeavour could be facilitated by the Security Council, which could discuss the main questions relating to nuclear disarmament, in accordance with Article 26 of the Charter.

28. Agreements on nuclear disarmament should provide for strict and effective verification measures, encompassing national and international means, including on-site inspections. The question of establishing an international verification body, perhaps under the auspices of the United Nations, should be examined. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the Stockholm Declaration recently adopted by six nations. All relevant proposals made by other States should of course be taken into account.

29. At the third special session, the General Assembly should give new impetus to nuclear disarmament by underlining the urgency of effective agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the termination of the arms race on earth, the limitation of nuclear weapons, and the strengthening of strategic stability. His delegation would also like the Assembly to take the following action at the third special session: emphasize the need for bilateral and multilateral disarmament negotiations to complement each other; appeal to the Soviet Union and the United States to reduce their strategic offensive weapons by half and initiate steps to completely eliminate such weapons; take note of the negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States on the limitation and cessation of nuclear tests; stress the need for other nuclear-weapon States to join the process of nuclear disarmament; request the Conference on Disarmament to elaborate a programme of nuclear disarmament and start negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty; call for the cessation of all nuclear-weapon tests; encourage negotiations on the elimination of tactical nuclear weapons and the limitation of armed forces and conventional armaments; promote the consolidation of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the creation of additional zones; and declare the 1990s as a decade for a nuclear-free and non-violent world.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.