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

Third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 28 January 1988, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. AHMAD (Pakistan)

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

1. Mrs. Cazeau-Sceur (France) said that, in order to ensure the success of the third special session devoted to disarmament, it was essential to work out a consensus document reflecting the current international situation. A realistic approach was necessary. Problems which had been discussed for many years could not be solved overnight. Accordingly, the primary task was to identify new elements on which consensus could be reached by carefully analysing the current international situation and the work carried out by the United Nations in the field of disarmament in recent years. Such elements should serve as the basis for constructive dialogue in the future. In that connection, she stressed the need to take account of the legitimate security concerns of all States.

2. The final document of the third special session should include an analysis of prospects for disarmament, particularly the bilateral negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States on nuclear weapons and outer space. The paramount objective of nuclear disarmament was to bring about substantial, balanced and verifiable reductions in the immense strategic arsenals of those two countries. Her Government's position on the role which France might play in the process of multilateral nuclear disarmament was well known. France had recently reaffirmed in the General Assembly the conditions which it had laid down in that regard.

3. The regional approach to the reduction of conventional armaments and the initiatives taken in the past two years both at the regional level and within the United Nations should be carefully considered, and general conclusions should be drawn. Further elements for inclusion in the final document were the role of the international community in preventing an arms race in outer space, confidence-building measures, problems linked to the verification of and compliance with agreements, and specific measures which could be taken in that regard, negotiations on the general prohibition of chemical weapons, the reduction of military budgets, measures to ensure objective information on military matters and greater transparency, and the results achieved at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development. The consideration of those questions would make it possible to define more clearly the role to be played by the United Nations in the future, and specific measures which could be taken to enhance its role.

4. Mr. Tanase (Romania), referring to items 12, 13 and 14 of the provisional agenda for the third special session, said it had become clear that nuclear weapons could not guarantee the security of States. Indeed, such weapons constituted the major threat to peace and to the existence of mankind. Recent developments justified a new approach to disarmament with the aim of curbing and ultimately eliminating nuclear weapons and of achieving substantial reductions in conventional weapons and armed forces, and hence in military expenditure. A central element in
such an approach would be a prohibition of nuclear tests, chemical weapons and weapons of mass destruction, accompanied by confidence-building measures and a commitment on the part of all States to renounce the use of force in international relations.

5. The third special session should promote regional disarmament initiatives, such as the establishment of nuclear-weapon- and chemical-weapon-free zones, particularly in Europe, given that it contained the greatest concentration of armed forces. The General Assembly should, at the special session, adopt the principles on the reduction of military budgets formulated in the Disarmament Commission.

6. Special attention should be paid at the session to averting the application of scientific advances to weapons systems and to avoiding an arms race in outer space. The relationship between disarmament, on the one hand, and development and other issues, on the other, should be stressed, with a view to the reallocation of the resources that would be made available by a reduction of military budgets. In that connection, it would be useful if the fourth report of the United Nations group of experts on the economic and social consequences of the arms race could be issued as a basic document for the special session.

7. With regard to item 13 of the provisional agenda, consideration should be given to improving the effectiveness of United Nations disarmament machinery and to expanding the role of multilateralism, in an endeavour to complement bilateral negotiations. The Assembly could conduct an annual review of negotiations in existing bilateral and multilateral forums or, perhaps, periodically convene a conference to review the implementation of existing arms agreements.

8. The work of the Conference on Disarmament and of the Disarmament Commission should be better co-ordinated; the Commission could prepare the ground for negotiations at the Conference, with a view to the formulation of specific agreements. Further, the Conference should simplify its procedures so as to allow non-member States to contribute to the negotiating process. The role of the Secretary-General in disarmament negotiations should also be strengthened. Consideration should be given to establishing an international disarmament agency, under United Nations auspices, as a co-ordinating body for all negotiating forums and as a means of monitoring disarmament agreements. The United Nations might also establish a research centre to assist in resolving the practical problems that arose in disarmament negotiations, such as the comparability of data and the relationship between nuclear and conventional weapons.

9. Mr. LAWSON-HEJUM (Togo) said that a number of recent developments, including a reduction in international tension and the conclusion of the INF Treaty, had demonstrated increasing awareness of the imperative need to establish a more secure international climate. The Assembly, at the third special session, should consolidate those gains by initiating an irreversible process that would halt the arms race. It was of particular importance to conclude a nuclear-test-ban treaty that would provide for appropriate verification measures. Such a treaty would help to curb qualitative improvements in weapons systems and avert the militarization of
space. The international community should encourage the Soviet Union and the United States to further reduce and gradually eliminate their nuclear arsenals. Multilateral negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament should complement bilateral initiatives to that end. Nuclear weapons were not so much a means of security as an instrument of self-destruction. Accordingly, the Assembly should emphasize the urgent need to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, in Africa and elsewhere.

10. Recent East-West inspections of military installations bore witness to a degree of transparency that could only increase confidence and dissipate mutual suspicion. Further, the current talks on the balance of conventional forces in Europe indicated the importance of a regional approach to disarmament. In that connection, African Governments attached importance to the role of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, which was already active in promoting confidence-building measures.

11. Mr. FAGUNDE (Brazil), referring to item 10 of the provisional agenda, said that his delegation attached the utmost importance to the completion, in the Conference on Disarmament, of the convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. The convention was consistent with the principles of universality and non-discrimination, and assured the right of all States to develop a chemical industry for peaceful purposes. With regard to item 11, Brazil believed that the Assembly should expedite the adoption of the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament as a framework for future negotiations.

12. Item 12 was of particular importance. The third special session should be forward looking in the sense of building on the foundations established in the Final Document of the first special session without altering the principles and priorities contained therein. Various trends and developments anticipated at the first special session, including the arms race in outer space and the establishment of zones of peace, should be examined.

13. Mr. BUTLER (Australia) said that the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament was unique and should be used as a basis for future work. The final document of the third special session should clearly define what was to be done on a multilateral basis as opposed to a bilateral basis. It should set forth an agenda for multilateral disarmament and recommend mechanisms for achieving concrete results. With regard to item 10 of the provisional agenda, the General Assembly should acknowledge the unique significance of the Final Document of the first special session and take note of the reports submitted for the third special session by the relevant bodies active in multilateral disarmament. It should also take note of progress made in other negotiations, particularly those conducted between the two super-Powers.

14. Referring to item 11 of the provisional agenda, he said that work on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament should be concluded. Although not all of its elements were agreed upon, the Programme remained a relevant document. In dealing with item 12, the General Assembly should ensure that consensus on the
items under consideration led to a relevant disarmament agenda, possibly covering the period up to the end of the twentieth century. Elements for consideration should include continuing progress in nuclear disarmament, the problem of conventional weapons, the elimination of chemical weapons and the prevention of arm race in outer space. In that regard, it was essential to adopt a general approach and avoid concentrating on very specific issues, on which consensus was unlikely.

15. The remaining items on the provisional agenda related to machinery for achieving objectives. Although the disarmament machinery set up 10 years earlier was basically sound, improvements could be made. In that connection, he stressed that the States which felt they could make a contribution should have access to such machinery. That in turn raised the question of whether access should be provided on the basis of the traditional political or geographical groups. The existing barriers might be overcome if those who spoke about a new openness in their national life were prepared to ensure effective multilateral diplomacy.

16. The question of disarmament and development and the impact of the massive arms expenditures on all countries must be given in-depth consideration. The General Assembly must identify the steps to be taken in the disarmament process on a multilateral basis, and must take account of what was being done bilaterally, in order to understand the relationship between multilateral and bilateral efforts. The approach should be realistic, for it was unlikely that States with major military capabilities would be prepared to conduct negotiations on weapons reduction, at least initially, with parties other than their direct competitors. However, certain systems of weapons, such as chemical weapons were of global concern, and negotiations on them could be effective if conducted on a multilateral basis. If the General Assembly could define the real disarmament agenda and allocate tasks under that agenda to multilateral and bilateral forums, it might be possible to ensure that all such forums maintained a constructive relationship with one another. In that way, disarmament would play its indispensable role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

17. Mr. AZIKIWE (Nigeria), referring to items 10 to 12 of the provisional agenda for the third special session, recalled General Assembly resolution 42/34 on the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. That resolution made it clear that the vast majority of the members of the international community were in favour of implementing the Declaration. His delegation wanted Africa to be a nuclear-weapon-free zone. That question should be reflected in the draft final document under a subheading on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

18. His delegation was concerned at South Africa's activities with regard to uranium enrichment. South Africa had intensified its efforts to develop industrial infrastructures to support the production of fissileable materials for use in nuclear weapons. It was also producing "tactical" nuclear weapons. The draft final document should deal with the development of tactical nuclear weapons as part of the new dimensions in nuclear-weapons technology.
19. Mr. CAPPAGLI (Argentina) said that the consensus achieved with the Final Document of the first special session was alive and well.

20. Referring to item 10 of the provisional agenda for the third special session, he said that particular attention should be devoted to the state of the negotiations on nuclear disarmament and on the complete prohibition of nuclear tests. The assessment of the implementation of previous decisions and recommendations should be objective in that it should clearly reflect the factors that had hampered the disarmament process; it should be constructive in that it should be focused on achieving tangible progress towards removing the constant threat of nuclear war. His delegation hoped that the General Assembly would be able to conclude the work of the third special session with the adoption of the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament.

21. The Assembly should determine the thrust and significance of new nuclear-weapons technologies, and re-evaluate the role of conventional weapons. Account should be taken of technologies that could be used for both peaceful and military purposes. The importance of the exclusively peaceful use of outer space should be stressed, and concrete measures should be formulated in that regard.

22. The naval arms race should also be discussed, in view of the geographical proliferation of nuclear arms at sea. In adopting any measures in that area, the Assembly should take into account the treatment of the topic in the Disarmament Commission. His delegation welcomed the establishment of a zone of peace in the South Atlantic.

23. The final document should refer to the progress achieved at the recent International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development. Mention should also be made of the proposal contained in the recent Stockholm Declaration that during the third special session, an integrated multilateral system should be set up within the United Nations as an integral part of the multilateral framework necessary to guarantee peace and security.

24. Mr. JAYASINGHE (Sri Lanka) repeated his delegation's support for item 10 of the provisional agenda for the third session. His delegation felt that discussions at the third special session and recommendations from the General Assembly at that session would provide impetus for the ongoing discussions in the Conference on Disarmament and reaffirm the international community's concern that all States should refrain from actions that could spread the arms race.

25. With respect to chemical weapons, it was heartening to hear that 90 per cent of the work connected with the drawing up of a convention had been completed and that the rest seemed to be nearing completion. The General Assembly at the third special session might therefore seek to expedite negotiations for the conclusion of the convention, and call upon Member States to become parties to it, ratify it without delay and comply with all its provisions.

26. As the convention would take some time to enter into force, the Assembly might also call upon States to refrain from the production, procurement and deployment of
chemical weapons and from any other action which might undermine the provisions of the convention, pending its entry into force.

27. The focus at the third special session should also be on naval arms systems, which increasingly jeopardized peace and security. Naval forces could very easily be perceived as threatening the security interests of States, and that situation could easily result in a naval arms race. Some 25 per cent of nuclear weapons were now intended for naval deployment, and ballistic missiles were replacing guns as the standard main weapon of navies. The Assembly might also profitably examine, inter alia, qualitative and quantitative restrictions on the use of naval forces, verification and compliance, and regional and global peace and security.

28. While the INF Treaty was an encouraging start, it should be borne in mind that even with a 50 per cent reduction in strategic weapons, mankind would still be able to annihilate itself. The assessment of progress made in curbing the nuclear-arms race since the first special session might therefore focus on ways of eliminating nuclear weapons altogether. The measures to that end might include the following: reducing existing nuclear arsenals with a view to their elimination, preferably within an agreed time-frame; prohibiting new additions to existing arsenals; stopping horizontal proliferation; banning improvements to nuclear weapons; dismantling all missiles carrying nuclear warheads; ensuring that new technology would not be used to develop new weapons or improve existing ones; prohibiting the production, supply and use of fissionable materials for the manufacture of nuclear weapons; promoting a comprehensive nuclear test ban; and ensuring that nuclear energy was used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.