Preparatory Committee for the Special
Session of the General Assembly
Devoted to Disarmament

DRAFT PROGRESS REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE
FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its thirty-first session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 31/189 B of 21 December 1976, the operative part of which reads as follows:

"1. Decides to convene a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, to be held in New York in May/June 1978;

2. Further decides to establish a Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament, composed of 54 Member States appointed by the President of the Assembly on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, with the mandate of examining all relevant questions relating to the special session, including its agenda, and to submit to the Assembly at its thirty-second session appropriate recommendations thereon;

3. Invites all Member States to communicate to the Secretary-General their views on the agenda and all other relevant questions relating to the special session of the General Assembly not later than 15 April 1977;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit the replies of Member States pursuant to paragraph 3 above to the Preparatory Committee and to render it all necessary assistance, including the provision of essential background information, relevant documents and summary records;

5. Requests the Preparatory Committee to meet for a short organizational session not longer than one week before 31 March 1977, inter alia, to set the dates for its substantive sessions;

6. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-second session an item entitled: 'Special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament: report of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament'."
2. In accordance with operative paragraph 2 above, the President of the General Assembly, after consultations with the Chairmen of the regional groups, appointed the following countries to be members of the Preparatory Committee: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Burundi, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Cyprus, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Guyana, Hungary, India, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Liberia, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire and Zambia.

3. In connexion with the representation of the countries of the Eastern European Group in the Preparatory Committee, the Chairman of that regional group addressed a letter to the President of the General Assembly, dated 3 February 1977, expressing disagreement with the allocation of six instead of eight seats to the Eastern European group and reserving its right to raise the question of allocating additional seats in the Preparatory Committee at the thirty-second session of the General Assembly. 1/ Views to that effect were also expressed at the sessions of the Preparatory Committee and are reflected in the summary records annexed to that report (A/AC.187/SR.1-20).

4. Pursuant to paragraph 3 of the resolution, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale, dated 20 January 1977, to all Member States of the United Nations inviting them to communicate their views on the agenda and all other relevant questions relating to the special session of the General Assembly not later than 15 April 1977. Written replies from 58 States to the Secretary-General's note verbale were circulated as Preparatory Committee documents. 2/

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

5. Pursuant to paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 31/189 B, the Committee met at the United Nations Headquarters in an organizational session from 28 to 30 March 1977, and in substantive sessions from 9 to 20 May and from 31 August to 9 September 1977. During these three sessions the Committee held 20 meetings. The Committee also held seven informal meetings during the period 22-30 August 1977. In addition members of the Committee held intensive consultations during and in between sessions of the Committee. The first meeting of the Committee, held on 28 March, was opened by the Secretary-General who made a statement. 3/

1/ A/31/475.


3/ A/AC.187/62.
6. The Committee elected the following officers:

   Chairman: H.E. Mr. Carlos Ortiz de Rozas (Argentina)

   Vice-Chairmen: H.E. Mr. Ralph L. Harry, C.B.E. (Australia)
   H.E. Mr. Livingston B. Johnson (Bahamas)
   H.E. Mr. Fereydoun Hoveyda (Iran)
   H.E. Mr. Isao Abe (Japan)
   H.E. Mr. Leslie O. Harriman (Nigeria)
   H.E. Mr. Oscar Vaernø (Norway)
   H.E. Mr. Henryk Jaroszek (Poland)
   H.E. Mr. Jaksa Petrić (Yugoslavia)

   Rapporteur: Mr. Saad Alfarargi (Egypt)

7. At the same meeting, the Committee agreed to be governed by the relevant parts of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly in taking decisions. Notwithstanding that fact, it had been generally agreed during consultations that every effort should be made to ensure that, in so far as possible, decisions on matters of substance were adopted by consensus. Should efforts to secure a consensus fail, decisions could then be adopted in accordance with the provisions of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

8. Also at the same meeting, the Committee agreed that States non-members of the Committee could participate in plenary meetings without the right to vote. The following countries attended the Committee's meetings: Bulgaria, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Honduras, Ireland, Israel, Lebanon, Mongolia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal and Syrian Arab Republic. The representative of the Holy See also attended the meetings.

9. At its fourth meeting on 9 May, the Committee agreed to a recommendation made by its Bureau that representatives of non-governmental organizations could be present at meetings of the Preparatory Committee and that in order to facilitate dissemination of information on contributions of non-governmental organizations, the Secretariat would provide lists, for general circulation, of the communications received from the organizations and institutions known to be conducting research in the field of disarmament. The lists would indicate where the communications and any annexed documentation would be available to delegations. 4/

10. At its sixth meeting on 10 May, the Committee decided that specialized agencies concerned with disarmament and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) should be invited to take part in the work of the Committee with observer status. Representatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have attended the meetings of the Committee.

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4/ Lists of communications received from non-governmental organizations and research institutions are contained in documents A/AC.187/INF.2, 3 and 4.
11. At its second meeting, on 28 March, the Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare the following background papers:

(1) Disarmament resolutions of the General Assembly, 1946-1976 (A/AC.187/29);

(2) Existing principles and proposals for the conduct of disarmament negotiations (A/AC.187/30); and

(3) Existing structures and machinery for disarmament negotiations (A/AC.187/31).

12. At its sixth meeting, on 11 May, the Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare a document classifying, under various headings, the replies received from Governments pursuant to operative paragraph 3 of resolution 31/189 B of the General Assembly. At its seventh meeting, on 12 May, the Preparatory Committee approved a list of headings to be used by the Secretariat in fulfilling the task assigned to it. This document was circulated as Preparatory Committee document A/AC.187/51 and Add.1. At the same meeting the Committee requested that the opinions expressed by delegations during its general debate be included in a subsequent document (A/AC.187/76).

13. At its fourteenth meeting on 20 May, the Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare the following working papers:

(1) A brief synopsis of negotiations on disarmament and arms limitation, including their results, held since 1945 within the United Nations, on a regional basis or bilaterally, with an indication, when appropriate, of the procedures following in each case to keep the Organization informed (A/AC.187/67);

(2) 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/AC.187/68);

(3) 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 (A/AC.187/69);

(4) A synthesis of the arguments adduced for and against each of the four proposals for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones that have been included in the General Assembly's agenda (Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and the South Pacific) and for and against the proposal for the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, including a subject index and a country index (A/AC.187/70);

(5) A comparative study of the origin, development and present status of various views proposed for the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons (A/AC.187/71);
(6) An analytical summary of United Nations studies made by describing the
effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons, bacteriological (biological)
weapons and napalm and other incendiary weapons, as well as those dealing with the
reduction of military budgets, the social and economic consequences of the arms
race and disarmament, and the relationship of development with disarmament
(A/AC.187/72);

(7) A comparative study of global military expenditures and development
assistance since 1945, using official and unofficial documentary sources
(A/AC.187/73);

(8) A descriptive report on the human and material resources available to
the United Nations Secretariat for its work on disarmament and on the organization
of that work (A/AC.187/74);

(9) A list of disarmament and related proposals officially submitted to the
United Nations describing the proposal, the date and country of submission and the
follow-up (A/AC.187/75).

14. For reference purposes, the proceedings of the meetings, including the views
expressed by delegations, are contained in the summary records annexed to this
report (A/AC.187/SR.1 to 20).

III. DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED BY MEMBER STATES

15. In the course of the Committee's work the following documents dealing with
substantive questions were submitted:

1. Working paper entitled "Some preliminary ideas concerning preparations
for the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament" -
submitted by Sri Lanka on behalf of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned
Countries (A/AC.187/55);

2. Working paper entitled "Some fundamental principles and norms for
inclusion in the 'Declaration on Disarmament' envisaged in the draft agenda of the
special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, approved by the
Preparatory Committee on 18 May 1977" - submitted by Mexico (A/AC.187/56);

3. Working paper entitled "Elements to be included in the declaration on
disarmament" - submitted by Mauritius (A/AC.187/60);

4. Working paper entitled "Declaration on disarmament" - submitted by
Romania (A/AC.187/77);
5. Working paper entitled "Programme of measures and action" - submitted by Romania (A/AC.187/78);

6. Working paper entitled "Negotiating machinery for disarmament problems" - submitted by Romania (A/AC.187/79);

7. Working paper entitled "Disarmament and development: proposal for a United Nations study" - submitted by Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden (A/AC.187/80);


IV. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

16. At its 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th meetings the Committee decided by consensus to make the following recommendations to the thirty-second session of the General Assembly with regard to the organization of the work of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and the future work of the Preparatory Committee.

A. Organization of the work of the special session

1. Provisional agenda

17. The following provisional agenda for the special session is recommended:
1. Opening of the session in accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

2. Minute of silent prayer or meditation

3. Credentials of representatives to the eighth special session of the General Assembly:
   (a) Appointment of the Credentials Committee
   (b) Report of the Credentials Committee

4. Election of the President

5. Organization of the session

6. Report of the Preparatory Committee to the special session

7. Adoption of the agenda

8. General debate

9. Review and appraisal of the present international situation in the light of the pressing need to achieve substantial progress in the field of disarmament, the continuation of the arms race and the close interrelationship between disarmament, international peace and security and economic development

10. Adoption of a declaration on disarmament

11. Adoption of a programme of action on disarmament

12. Review of the role of the United Nations in disarmament and of the international machinery for negotiations on disarmament, including, in particular, the question of convening a world disarmament conference

18. In connexion with the provisional agenda, the Preparatory Committee recommends that the General Assembly, at its thirty-second session, request the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to submit to the special session a special report on the state of the various questions under consideration by the Conference. The Preparatory Committee also recommends that the General Assembly at its thirty-second session request the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference to submit a special report to the special session on the state of its work and deliberations. These special reports would be submitted to the special session with the report of the Preparatory Committee, as part of the documentation prepared for the special session.
2. **Date and duration**

19. The special session should be held between 23 May and 28 June 1978 in New York in the General Assembly hall.

20. In the light of the programme of alterations scheduled to take place at the Headquarters building in New York in 1978 and 1979, as decided by General Assembly resolution 31/195, the Committee recommends that the thirty-second session of the General Assembly take a decision by 15 October 1977 to reverse the phases of the construction work at Headquarters and thereby make the General Assembly hall available for the special session in 1978.

3. **President**

21. The Committee considers that, following the practice of previous special sessions of the General Assembly, the special session may wish to elect as its President the President of the thirty-second session of the General Assembly.

4. **Vice-Presidents**

22. Vice-Presidents of the special session should be the same as at the thirty-second regular session of the General Assembly, on the understanding that regional groups may make substitutions of Vice-Presidents allocated to each group.

5. **Main Committees**

23. The special session should establish a Committee of the Whole, with as many open-ended groups or subsidiary organs as may be necessary. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole should be elected by the special session itself.

6. **Credentials Committee**

24. The Credentials Committee of the special session should be the same as that of the thirty-second regular General Assembly session.

7. **General Committee**

25. The General Committee of the special session should consist of the President of the special session of the General Assembly, the 17 Vice-Presidents and the Chairman of the seven Main Committees of the thirty-second session of the General Assembly, on the understanding that they may be substituted by members of their delegations or members of delegations of States belonging to the same regional group, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole of the special session and the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the special session devoted to disarmament.

8. **Rules of procedure**

26. The rules of procedure of the General Assembly should apply in the special session without amendments, on the understanding that, regarding the adoption of decisions by the special session, every effort should be made to ensure that, in so far as possible, decisions on matters of substance will be adopted by consensus.
9. Level of representation

27. It would be desirable that States Members be represented at the special session at the highest possible level.

10. Public information activities

28. The Committee recommends adoption of the programme of public information activities submitted by the Secretariat, on the understanding that, in so far as possible, such activities should be carried out within the regular budget of the Office of Public Information (see annex II).

11. Role of non-governmental organizations

29. The Committee recommends that non-governmental organizations concerned with disarmament should be accorded the same facilities at the special session as those which they have received at the Preparatory Committee.

B. Organization of the future work of the Preparatory Committee for the special session devoted to disarmament

30. The Preparatory Committee should hold two additional sessions in 1978 before the convening of the special session: one from 24 January to 24 February and the other from 10-21 April 1978.

31. In connexion with the fourth session of the Committee to be held between 24 January and 24 February 1978, it was decided that the Committee will become a working group open to those members of the Committee wishing to participate in it, leaving open the possibility of establishing one or more subgroups as necessary. A decision as to whether the working group will meet formally or informally will be taken by the working group itself.

C. Other recommendations

32. In connexion with the proposal submitted by Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden contained in the working paper entitled "Disarmament and Development: Proposal for a United Nations Study" (A/AC.1/187/80), the Committee recommends to the General Assembly that it initiate the proposed study, the terms of reference and other aspects of the study to be determined by the General Assembly itself, and further recommends that decisions in that respect be taken by the special session.

V. PRINCIPAL DOCUMENTS OF THE SPECIAL SESSION

33. The Committee reached consensus, in principle, that, without excluding other possibilities, the main elements of the principal document or documents of the special session should be: (1) Introduction or Preamble; (2) Declaration on Disarmament; (3) Programme of Action; and (4) Machinery for Disarmament Negotiations. It was noted that there was a trend in the Committee in favour of one final document, but it was agreed that this question should be decided at a later stage.