DEVELOPED TO DISARMAMENT

Third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 31 August 1977, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ORTIZ de ROZAS (Argentina)

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77-56511
The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The provisional agenda was adopted.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

2. The CHAIRMAN said that he wished to pay a tribute to the spirit of co-operation and the flexibility shown by all delegations during the informal meetings, which had made it possible to agree on a series of measures that could be formally adopted at the present meeting.

3. The SECRETARY recalled that, at its 14th meeting on 20 May 1977, the Preparatory Committee had decided to ask the Secretariat to prepare a number of background papers on the disarmament topics listed in the summary of that meeting. The Secretariat had attempted to produce as many as possible of those documents for the present session. The documents available in English were A/AC.187/67, A/AC.187/69, A/AC.187/71, A/AC.187/72 and A/AC.187/76. Some of those documents were also available in languages other than English. The Secretariat had also prepared document A/AC.187/51/Add.1, which contained additional replies from Member States pursuant to operative paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 31/189 B (XXII). The full set of documents would be available in all languages used by the Committee as soon as possible. Documents in the final stage of preparation, which would be issued very shortly, were A/AC.187/68, A/AC.187/70, A/AC.187/73, A/AC.187/74 and A/AC.187/75. In accordance with the Committee's decision, the Secretariat was also publishing documents submitted by non-governmental organizations in A/AC.187/INF.4.

4. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in accordance with the wishes of many delegations, only one formal meeting each afternoon should be scheduled during the session, leaving the mornings free for consultations. Additional meetings could be held in the morning if they became necessary, and a formal meeting could at any time be replaced by an informal meeting if delegates so wished.

5. It was so decided.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

6. The CHAIRMAN said that Conference Room Paper No. 2/Rev.1, containing the draft provisional agenda of the special session, was being distributed to delegates. It was the same as the previous version except for the reversal of the order of items 6 and 7, which had been decided upon at the informal meeting held on the previous day. The draft agenda in its updated form was therefore before the Committee for consideration, and it should not cause any difficulty since it had already been debated in great detail. If adopted, it would become a document of the Committee.

7. Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) observed that the debates had been conducted in an exemplary manner during the informal meetings and that the Committee had probably completed 80 per cent of its work by the beginning of the present formal session.
Concerning the draft agenda for the special session, he wished to bring to the attention of members the matter of the reports to be considered by the special session. Under item 6, only the report of the Preparatory Committee to the special session was mentioned. He thought it advisable to make provision for a special report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, which submitted an annual report to the regular sessions of the General Assembly. Since that was the practice at the regular sessions, it would be difficult to explain why at the special session on disarmament there was no report from the only multilateral body for negotiations on disarmament, which was also the only standing body concerned with the question.

8. Mr. PERRETIT (Italy) supported the proposal made by the representative of Mexico.

9. Mr. JAROSZ (Poland) said that he had no objection to the proposal but thought it would be more appropriate if the initiative came from the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament itself, since the Preparatory Committee could not make the decision on the latter's behalf. It would also be logical, if the Preparatory Committee were to go beyond the scope of its own work that it should not restrict itself to a report of CCD but should ask for a report from the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference. Item 12 of the draft agenda made specific mention of a world disarmament conference, and it would be logical and pertinent for the Ad Hoc Committee, as a competent General Assembly organ, to submit a report containing proposals on all relevant aspects of the convening of such a conference. In reply to a question by the Chairman, he added that he was not proposing a separate item on the subject for the special session but was suggesting that a report of the Ad Hoc Committee should be included in the review. If the Preparatory Committee took a decision to approach the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, it should treat the Ad Hoc Committee in a similar manner.

10. Mr. KOWYDA (Iran) supported the proposal of the representative of Mexico. It was important for the special session to have a report from the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. The question was whether such a report should be included as a separate agenda item. He had no objection to requesting a report from the Ad Hoc Committee, but it was not necessary for that report to appear as a separate item; it could be included among the documentation for the special session. The delegates to the special session could not fail to be aware of the work done by CCD and the Ad Hoc Committee. It would therefore be wiser to maintain the present wording of item 6 and ask for reports to be submitted by CCD and the Ad Hoc Committee as part of the documentation for the special session. With reference to the observations made by the representative of Poland, he wished to point out that most of the members of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament were present as members of the Preparatory Committee and that a decision could therefore be taken on its behalf by the Preparatory Committee.

11. Mr. HARRY (Australia) said that the purpose of item 6 of the provisional agenda seemed to be to provide a place for the report of the Preparatory Committee, which was the principal United Nations document for the special session. However, the inclusion of that item did not mean that everything in the report of the Preparatory Committee would be debated at that point. He had assumed that the debate on the report would take place under items 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. The question raised by the representatives of Mexico and Poland, as well as by his own delegation, was whether an additional item should be included in order to provide complete documentation.

...
12. Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) said that he could not give an immediate opinion as to whether a specific item should be included for a special report by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament or should be dispensed with on the understanding that, if a report was submitted, its contents would be discussed when the substantive points were considered in relation to items 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the agenda. The matter required further consultation, and no immediate decision need be reached. With reference to the point raised by the representative of Poland, his view was that the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament was answerable not to the Preparatory Committee but to the General Assembly. The Assembly sometimes asked that Committee to send special reports on specific topics, such as the total cessation of the use of nuclear weapons. Any representative could propose to the Assembly that CCD should be asked to submit a report to the special session.

13. The CHAIRMAN said that a decision on the matter need not be reached at the present meeting. The Preparatory Committee could, after further consultation, include the proposal of the representatives of Mexico and Poland among the recommendations it would adopt.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK OF THE SPECIAL SESSION

14. The CHAIRMAN noted that at the informal meetings a consensus had been reached that the date for the opening of the special session should be 23 May 1979. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to ratify that informal agreement.

15. It was so decided.

16. The CHAIRMAN said that in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/189 B, the special session was to be held in New York. In the light of information from the Secretariat concerning the remodelling and expansion of the plenary hall of the General Assembly as decided by General Assembly resolution 31/195, the Preparatory Committee had unanimously agreed at its informal meetings that it should recommend to the thirty-second session of the General Assembly that a decision be taken to reverse the phases of construction work at Headquarters, so that the work in the General Assembly hall scheduled for 1978 would be done during 1979. A decision along those lines would make it possible for the special session to make use of the plenary hall. Administrative measures to reschedule the programme were, however, required at an early date, and a decision must therefore be made by the General Assembly at its next regular session by 15 October. He therefore took it that the Preparatory Committee agreed by consensus to include in its report to the General Assembly a recommendation to reverse the order of work on expanding and remodelling the General Assembly hall.

17. It was so decided.

18. The CHAIRMAN said that, with regard to the duration of the special session, three views had been expressed during the informal consultations, favouring alternatively a session of four weeks, a session of four weeks which could be extended to five weeks, and a session of six weeks. The representative of Mexico
had asked for a report on the number of meetings held on disarmament topics in the First Committee at the twenty-ninth, thirtieth and thirty-first sessions of the General Assembly. In reply to that request, he could report that, at the twenty-ninth session, 40 meetings had been scheduled and 32 held, lasting approximately 26 working days. At the thirtieth session, no specific number of meetings had been allocated to the subject, and 37 meetings had been held, lasting approximately 26 working days. At the thirty-first session, 30 meetings had been allocated, and 33 meetings had been held, lasting approximately 22 working days. Consultations were now in progress concerning the duration of the special session, and it was hoped that the matter could be settled by consensus.

19. Mr. HOSEYDA (Iran) said that the number of meetings to be held by the special session should be kept to a minimum, out of consideration for economic factors and for the experts working with the Committee, whose services were also needed elsewhere. At the same time, he reminded members of the Preparatory Committee that the work of the two last special sessions at the General Assembly had had to be completed under pressure because of insufficient time, resulting in the production of some documents which were less polished and consistent than might have been desired. He hoped that the Preparatory Committee could strike an appropriate balance in that regard during informal consultations.

20. The CHAIRMAN said he felt that there was a broad foundation for consensus in the Preparatory Committee and that in a day or two, during which he would have consultations with delegations, it should be possible to settle the matter.

21. In their informal discussions, the members of the Committee had reached a consensus that the number of Vice-Presidents of the special session should be the same - 17 - as at the regular thirty-second session of the General Assembly. It was understood that there could be substitutions of Vice-Presidents within the quota allowed for each geographical group.

22. The CHAIRMAN said it had been suggested that the special session should establish a Committee of the Whole, which could establish working groups as and when necessary. All such working groups would be open-ended. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Preparatory Committee ratified its agreement that a recommendation to that effect should be included in its report.

23. It was so decided.

24. The CHAIRMAN said it had been agreed that the composition of the Credentials Committee of the special session should be the same as at the thirty-second session of the General Assembly. If he heard no objection, he would make a recommendation to that effect in the report.

25. It was so decided.

26. The CHAIRMAN said he had received suggestions that the General Committee of the special session should consist of: the President of the thirty-second session of the General Assembly, the 17 Vice-Presidents, the Chairmen of the seven Main /...
Committees, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole of the special session, and the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee. It had also been suggested that the Chairmen of the Main Committees, like the 17 Vice Presidents, could be replaced by other members of the delegation or regional group to which they belonged. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Preparatory Committee ratified its agreement to include a recommendation to that effect in its report.

27. It was so decided.

28. The CHAIRMAN said it had been agreed in informal consultations that the rules of procedure of the General Assembly would also apply in the special session, on the understanding that every effort would be made to ensure that all decisions on matters of substance at the special session were adopted by consensus. If he heard no objection, the Preparatory Committee’s report would contain a recommendation to that effect.

29. It was so decided.

30. Mrs. SHELLEY (Office of Public Information), replying to points raised in informal discussions by the representatives of Poland and Sri Lanka, said that while the production of the brochure mentioned in item A.1 (b) of Conference Room Paper No. 3/Add.1 would be within the work programme of OPI and would therefore entail no additional expenditure, additional funds would be needed for the translation and publication of the brochure in the various languages listed under that item.

31. Mr. FONSECA (Sri Lanka) requested that the word "official", appearing in item A.1 (b) of the "Pre-Session Information Activities" section and in item (a) of the "Post-Session Information Activities" section of Conference Room Paper No. 3/Add.1, should be replaced by the word "working". He also asked where the Duri language was spoken, since his own inquiries on the matter had proved fruitless.

32. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Preparatory Committee agreed to the request of the representative of Sri Lanka. He confessed that the Secretariat did not know where Duri was spoken, but he promised to make the information available as soon as possible.

33. Mr. VALDEERRAMA (Philippines) requested that the word "Tagalog", appearing in item A.1 (b), should be replaced by the word "Filipino".

34. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Preparatory Committee approved the request of the representative of the Philippines.

35. It was so decided.

36. Mr. WULYE (India) asked whether a complete list of the languages into which the brochure would be translated could be provided.
37. Mr. HARRY (Australia) commented that, while there was clearly broad agreement that the material on the special session should receive wide international distribution, the Preparatory Committee should not impose the use of particular languages on OPI. He suggested that Conference Room Paper No. 3/Add.1 should use a more general formula, "in all languages possible" might be thought appropriate.

38. Mr. HOVEYDA (Iran) agreed that a more general formula should be used. The important thing was the dissemination of information about the activities of the special session to the masses of the people, and not the details of any given OPI publication.

39. Mr. HARRY (Australia) and Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland) expressed support for the views put forward by the representative of Iran and said that stress should be laid on the role of individual Governments in publicizing the work of the special session.

PRINCIPAL DOCUMENTS OF THE SPECIAL SESSION

40. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had before it documents A/AC.107/55 A/AC.107/56 and A/AC.107/60, submitted by the non-aligned countries, by Mexico and by Mauritius, respectively. Other documents had been received from Romania and from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. They would be placed before the Committee as soon as possible. Those documents would deal with substantive matters which would be taken up in due course. In the meantime, he urged all delegations to take part in consultations with a view to reaching a consensus on the various issues.

ORGANIZATION OF FUTURE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

41. The CHAIRMAN said that, during the informal discussions, a consensus had been reached on the dates for two sessions of the Preparatory Committee in 1970. The fourth session would run from 24 January to 24 February, and the fifth from 10 to 21 April. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the consensus was ratified by the Preparatory Committee.

42. It was so decided.

CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE TO THE THIRTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

43. The CHAIRMAN said that there would be ample time, as the work of the Preparatory Committee progressed, to provide a provisional text of the draft report to delegations for their inspection and comment.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.