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

Third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 6 September 1977, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ORTIZ de ROZAS (Argentina)

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The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m.

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

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that, in informal discussions since the previous meeting, members of the Preparatory Committee had reached a consensus on the draft provisional agenda of the special session as contained in Conference Room Paper No. 2/Rev.1. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee adopted the following draft provisional agenda:

"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."

2. It was so decided.
3. The CHAIRMAN said that a consensus had also been reached on the following draft recommendations as contained in annex 1 of Conference Room Paper No. 9:

"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 Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference 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."

4. Mr. SKINNER (Canada), referring to the recommendation that the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament should be asked to submit to the special session a special report on the state of the various questions under consideration by the Conference, asked how that special report would differ from the annual report regularly submitted by CCD.

5. The CHAIRMAN said that the "special" report would be special only in that it would be drawn up before the Conference in Geneva was over and would therefore cover the state of the various questions under consideration only up to the date of its submission.

6. Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) informed the Preparatory Committee that during CCD his delegation would express the view that a report covering so short a period would be limited and not very useful. It would suggest that the report should provide an idea of the state of all the questions on the agenda of CCD in order to provide the special session with a full picture of the debate in CCD.

7. Mr. MORENO (Italy) agreed with the views expressed by the representative of Mexico. He observed that CCD would have to make its own decision as to the form and content of its report, but, since it also had many other difficult problems to deal with, it was to be hoped that it would not use too much valuable time in reaching that decision.

8. The CHAIRMAN observed that the Preparatory Committee could not dictate the form of the CCD report. It could, however, emphasize the potential value to the special session of a report on the state of the various questions under consideration by CCD. Since there seemed to be a general consensus in the Committee on that point, he took it that the Committee agreed to adopt the following recommendations contained in Conference Room Paper No. 9:

"1. Draft provisional agenda of the special session

Subject to agreement on the text of the recommendations attached as annex 1, the draft provisional agenda circulated as Conference Room Paper No. 2/Rev.1 has been agreed upon by the Preparatory Committee.
(The Chairman)

"2. Organization of work of the special session

(a) Duration

The special session will be held between 23 May and 28 June 1978.

(b) Level of representation

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

9. It was so decided.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK OF THE SPECIAL SESSION (continued)

PRINCIPAL DOCUMENTS OF THE SPECIAL SESSION (continued)

ORGANIZATION OF FUTURE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE (continued)

10. The CHAIRMAN said that, during informal consultations, members of the Committee had reached a consensus that the special session would last from 23 May to 28 June 1978. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee ratified that consensus.

11. It was so decided.

12. The CHAIRMAN said that, in view of the importance of the special session, Members of the Committee had informally agreed to recommend that States Members should be represented at the session at the highest possible level. If he heard no objection, he would take it that that agreement had been ratified.

13. It was so decided.

14. Mr. CHAMPENOIS (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the European Economic Community, said those countries believed that it was too early and not really necessary to come to a decision on the number and form of documents to be submitted to the special session.

15. During informal discussions, the representative of Iran had suggested that two working groups should be set up to deal with the drafting of documents and other substantive matters at the beginning of the fourth session of the Committee in January 1978. Many delegations had expressed the desire to begin working on substantive matters as soon as possible at the beginning of the fourth session. His own delegation felt that to have two working groups would create problems of communication and co-ordination. Instead, it proposed that the complete Preparatory Committee, under its present Chairman, could reconvene, as a working group, for the fourth session. As a working group, it would be open-ended and would be empowered to create more specialized subgroups as and when necessary.

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16. Mrs. THORSSON (Sweden) said that her delegation associated itself with the informal proposal made by the representative of Iran. The Committee should decide to establish a single working group to draft documents at the fourth session so that work on matters of substance could start at the very beginning of the session.

17. Mr. SUCHARIPA (Austria), Mr. VAERING (Norway) and Mr. RODRIGO (Sri Lanka), the latter speaking for the non-aligned countries, expressed agreement with the views of the representatives of Iran, Sweden and Belgium.

18. Mr. BROWIN (Australia) said he recognized that the negotiation of texts of a declaration on disarmament and a programme of action would have to take place during the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee. He felt, however, that it was important to reach some agreement now on the nature of the documents to be negotiated and to establish that any member of the Preparatory Committee would be entitled to participate in the working group or groups set up for that session.

19. While not wishing to impose any rigid guidelines, his delegation felt that the Committee could profitably conduct informal discussions on the drafting of a comprehensive report to be adopted at the special session. An introductory part would contain information about the antecedents of the special session, the reasons why it had been convened and the work of the Preparatory Committee. It might also include a review of the general debate at the special session. The documents adopted by the special session, including a declaration on disarmament and a programme of action - both of which should be adopted, if possible, by a broad consensus - would be included in the report. Proposals for implementation machinery could be included in the introduction and programme of action, or they could appear in a separate section.

20. His delegation wished to submit a draft framework of a declaration on disarmament, believing that if a measure of agreement could be reached now, the later work of the Committee in reconciling texts submitted to it would be greatly facilitated. While it did not propose to submit the text of a suggested outline formally, the following were the main elements which, in its view, should be included:

- An introductory section should provide a review of the present disarmament situation and its implications for world peace.

- A second section should deal with general objectives. These would fall broadly into three categories: the strengthening of international peace, security and stability, and the elimination of the possibility of war; a call for an intensification of efforts by all States to conclude multilateral disarmament measures, and a call for the reallocation of resources currently devoted to military purposes.

- A third section would deal with the major principles governing relations among States. It would urge the renewal of States' commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and would exhort them to commit themselves to the adoption of defensive postures and to confidence-building measures designed to relax international tensions.

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24. There should be a section on the principles governing disarmament negotiations. It would emphasize the need for the widest possible consensus on all matters relating to disarmament, the principle of balanced agreements providing undiminished security for all States, and the need for effective measures of verification.

25. A fifth section should deal with general measures of disarmament and the priorities to be adopted. It would cover: multilateral disarmament measures (perhaps with subcategories for the different types of weapons), regional measures of arms control and disarmament, the reduction of military budgets, other measures of arms control and disarmament, and the adoption of international confidence-building measures.

26. There should be a section on the need to strengthen the international machinery for disarmament negotiations.

27. Finally, a concluding section should reaffirm the ultimate goal, appealing to all States to do everything possible to promote general and complete disarmament. It should also seek to mobilize international opinion for that purpose.

28. He stressed that the report, the declaration on disarmament and the programme of action should be designed to be read by as many people as possible. They should therefore be drafted in clear, simple language, making minimal use of technical vocabulary and containing as little "UN-ese" as possible.

29. Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland) said his delegation felt that the substance of the documents to be submitted to the special session was a matter of great importance. For the moment, it favoured the submission of two documents: a declaration on disarmament with a section stating the principles on which all agreements and relations between States should be founded, and a programme of action, which would state what should be done and how.

30. His delegation would not oppose the submission of just one document or the creation of just one working group, but it felt that such decisions could better be taken in January 1978, when the Committee could work in the light of the decisions taken at the thirty-second session of the General Assembly.

31. Mr. GAVIRIA (Colombia) said that his delegation was in favour of the Iranian proposal that the present session should decide whether the Committee would, at the next session, work as an open-ended working group to study the documents to be submitted to the special session. In that connexion, he believed that initially the Committee should work as an open-ended working group and that, if the need arose, it could then establish various subgroups.

32. Mr. ULUCEVIK (Turkey) said his delegation shared the view that no time should be lost at the next session on matters of procedure. It believed that the Iranian proposal regarding the future work of the Committee was a useful one. Much progress could be made if the Committee worked, at the next session, as an open-ended working group.
33. Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) noted that he had previously set forth the tentative conclusions of his delegation regarding the possible structure of the main document to be submitted to the special session. His delegation was open to other views and did not exclude the idea that there could be several documents if that was the wish of the majority. From the statements made, it appeared that most were in favour of the idea of a single document, and his delegation believed that that was the best way to proceed.

34. His delegation had been surprised to read in press release DC/969 of 1 September 1977 that at the 16th meeting he had stated that if the eighth special session could not agree on a programme of action, then another special session on disarmament should be held in 1981. As everyone knew, he had said no such thing. He hoped that the press release on the present meeting would more accurately reflect his statement.

35. With regard to the statement just made by the representative of Australia, his delegation believed that apparent differences could be overcome if delegations made efforts to comment on statements made by others. The representative of Australia had said that the introduction to the proposed declaration on disarmament should refer to the work that had been done leading up to the special session. His delegation believed that that would be out of place in a document such as the proposed declaration. In that connexion, his delegation saw two possibilities: The final act of the special session could contain a summary, even a detailed one, of the entire background of the work leading up to the special session. Such a summary could include the work done as far back as 1957, when the General Assembly had first taken up the question of disarmament. It would then be stated that, as a result of that work, the special session had adopted the final act. Such a summary, however, should not be in the declaration itself. Alternatively, as the General Assembly had done on previous occasions, a resolution could be adopted which would include in its preamble a summary of the background of the work leading up to the special session. The operative part of that resolution could then say that in the light of that work the General Assembly had adopted the final act. Whatever the format decided on, the point was that it should be a suitable one that would maximize the impact of the final act.

36. His delegation felt that the proposal by the representative of Iran represented the best way to proceed at the next session in January. It also fully supported the proposal by the Nordic countries in document A/AC.187/80 for a United Nations study on disarmament and development. Of course, four studies had already been made, but none of them referred to the basic conditions for a successful redeployment of resources released as a result of disarmament measures.

37. Mr. BROWN (Australia) said that the representative of Mexico might have gained the wrong impression of the statement he had made. He did not believe that the declaration on disarmament should be weighed down with the entire background of the work leading up to the special session. What he had said was that if there was to be a single document submitted to the special session, then the first part could be a sort of introduction summarizing the work that had led up to the special session. His delegation certainly had not envisaged that the preamble of the declaration would be a lengthy or complex one.
38. Mr. RODRIGO (Sri Lanka) said that his delegation wished to reiterate what it had previously said on behalf of the non-aligned countries. The final document adopted at the special session should include a brief introduction, a declaration stating the problem and the difficulties encountered in the field of disarmament, a programme of action on measures to accelerate the disarmament process and, finally, a section on machinery for implementing the programme. It would be premature at the present stage to decide how those four components, which should be complementary, would be presented or whether there should be one or more documents.

39. Mr. KAYAL (Nigeria) said that his delegation wished to thank the Nordic countries for their proposal submitted in document A/AC.187/80. It was a worthy contribution which reflected the concern of those countries for development throughout the world. Such a study on the effects of armament/disarmament on development would be a timely one, since the current trend was for assistance to developing countries to take the form of military hardware. It now appeared that the relationship between the developed and developing worlds lay primarily in the field of armaments.

40. Studies had shown that if the developed countries were to reduce their expenditures on arms by 10 per cent and use those funds to aid the least developed countries, there would be an additional $3 billion annually earmarked for development assistance. A thorough study on the effects of armament/disarmament on development was most important, and his delegation therefore commended the Nordic proposal to the Committee. Such a study, however, would be meaningful only if its purpose was to show the world how the misused resources could be redeployed to aid all mankind in an unequal world and if it sought to demonstrate the futility of the arms race.

41. The CHAIRMAN said that the useful exchange of views that had taken place had apparently led to a consensus on various issues. Firstly, with respect to the principal documents of the special session, all delegations seemed to be quite flexible and it appeared that there was agreement in principle that the document or documents should include an introduction or preamble, a declaration on disarmament, a programme of action and, finally, a section on the machinery for negotiations leading to disarmament. That did not, of course, exclude the possibility of submitting other documents which the Committee might feel would be important for the special session. Secondly, there seemed to be some flexibility on the question of whether a single document or two or more documents should be submitted, although most appeared to prefer the idea of a single document. He shared the view that it was not necessary to decide on that matter at the present session. What was important was that the consensus achieved should be maintained so that delegations could now concentrate on the four elements of the basic document or documents.

42. There also seemed to be a consensus on the organization of the work of the Committee at its next session. In that connexion, he wished to express his gratitude to the representative of Iran for raising the subject of how that work should be approached. It appeared that the consensus was that the Committee should, at the next session, work as an open-ended working group which would deal with the basic themes to be submitted to the special session, leaving open the
possibility that, if it so desired, the Committee could establish two or more subgroups as circumstances dictated. At the next session, it would also decide on how it would meet, that is, formally or informally.

43. The representatives of Mexico and Nigeria had supported the Nordic proposal contained in document A/AC.187/80, and that proposal was still open for discussion in the Committee.

44. He believed that there was now a consensus on the role of the Office of Public Information regarding public information activities for the special session. It appeared that the Committee was now prepared to approve the recommendation that, as far as possible, OPI activities should fall within the Office's regular budget.

45. Mr. WEILER (United States of America) said that his delegation appreciated the way in which the Chairman had conducted the work leading to a consensus on various issues. It now expected that much progress would be made at the next session and had profited from the useful exchanges of views held both in the Committee and during informal discussions.

46. With regard to the activities of OPI, his delegation noted that at the meeting in May 1977 of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC), that body had stated that OPI's funds for 1978-1979 were in excess of the guidelines approved by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session and had recommended that the General Assembly, at its thirty-second session, should instruct OPI to reallocate resources from lower-priority items. His delegation hoped that the General Assembly would follow that recommendation and did not therefore wish any action of the Preparatory Committee to be taken as an endorsement of OPI's general funding programmes. Accordingly, while his delegation would support OPI's programme of activities for the special session, it felt that those activities could be carried out through a reallocation of resources, and he hoped that the report of the Preparatory Committee to the General Assembly would reflect that view.

47. The CHAIRMAN said he believed that any recommendations which the Preparatory Committee might adopt with respect to OPI would be limited to the draft programme of action because, while the Committee could make its views known on budgetary matters, the relevant financial implications would be revised by the General Assembly at its thirty-second session. Any decision on those financial implications would have to be taken by the General Assembly, and in particular by the Fifth Committee. The United States delegation and other delegations with strong views on the matter would then be able to make those views known.

48. If there were no other comments, he would take it that the Preparatory Committee approved the draft programme of action by OPI regarding public information activities for the special session.

49. It was so decided.

50. The CHAIRMAN said that the Preparatory Committee still had to take a decision on the Nordic proposal contained in document A/AC.187/80.
51. Mr. WEILER (United States of America) said that his delegation had not had time to complete its study of the Nordic proposal and hoped that the Committee would agree to postpone a decision on it.

52. The CHAIRMAN said that the matter would be postponed until the next meeting.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.