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

Organizational session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 29 March 1977, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Ortiz de Rozas (Argentina)

CONTENTS

Organization of work

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages, preferably in the same language as the text to which they refer. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also, if possible, incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room LX-2332.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.
The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the representative of Argentina, nominated Mr. Alfarargi (Egypt) for the office of Rapporteur.

2. Mr. Alfarargi (Egypt) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

3. Mr. Alfarargi (Egypt), Rapporteur, said that disarmament was the single most important problem confronting the international community and required prompt action. The fact that the General Assembly was to hold a special session devoted to disarmament testified to the importance of the problem as well as the desire of all States to take part in dealing with it. Every effort should be made to ensure the success of the session, and he would do his utmost in that regard.

4. Mr. Alzamora (Peru) said that his delegation earnestly hoped that the forthcoming special session would, with the co-operation of the great Powers, respond to the aspirations for peace which had prompted the non-aligned countries to call for it.

5. Mr. Murray (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the nine members of the European Community, expressed support for the decision to permit delegations which were not members of the Preparatory Committee to take part in its deliberations without the right of vote. The nine members of the European Community also felt that the special session could succeed only if the decisions it adopted had the widest possible support. Decisions made in disregard of the vital interests of States or groups of States would not command the authority necessary to ensure their implementation and could jeopardize a unique opportunity to advance the cause of disarmament. It should therefore be the aim of the members of the Committee and of any sub-committees that might be established to conduct their work so as to be able to reach agreement by consensus.

6. The nine members of the Community had no objection in principle to suggestions which had been made informally regarding the possibility of establishing sub-committees of the Preparatory Committee or intersessional working groups. However, no firm decision should be taken before delegations had had time to consider the views of Governments which, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 31/189 B, were to be submitted to the Secretary-General by 15 April. It would be premature to decide precisely how the Committee's work should be organized until members were aware of the main preoccupations of Member States regarding the special session. The appropriate time to consider the establishment of subsidiary groups would therefore be at the second session of the Preparatory Committee in May.

7. In view of the diversity of approaches to disarmament, the special session could hardly be expected to produce instant solutions, but it did offer a unique opportunity for the international community to develop a co-operative approach to the problem, and the nine delegations of the European Community pledged themselves to help ensure that that opportunity was used in a constructive and positive manner.

/...
8. The CHAIRMAN said he agreed that every effort should be made to take substantive decisions by consensus in order to ensure their application, but he felt that other means should be employed when that ideal could not be achieved so as not to paralyse the Committee's work. There also seemed to be general agreement that it was premature to decide on the establishment of working groups and subsidiary bodies before the replies of Governments to the Secretary-General were submitted in April. The consensus therefore seemed to be that such decisions should not be taken before the session which was to begin on 9 May.

9. Mr. CASSELL (Liberia) observed that in the time of the League of Nations many unsuccessful conferences had been held on the question of disarmament but that the world now had a unique opportunity to review a problem which, if ignored, would lead to disaster.

10. Mr. TERADA (Japan) said that his delegation fully supported the idea that a maximum effort should be made to adopt decisions by consensus both in the preparatory Committee and at the special session. His delegation had no objection to the participation of non-members without the right of vote. There was very little time to prepare for the special session, and realistic means should be sought to ensure its success. His own country would do its utmost to that end.

11. The CHAIRMAN said that the General Assembly, in adopting resolution 31/169 B, had foreseen the need for the preparation by the Secretariat of a number of factual background papers to assist in the preparations for the special session and for use at the session itself. The Secretary-General, in his opening statement to the Committee, had made a firm commitment to assist it with all the means at his disposal. Accordingly, and in view of the limited time that was available for the preparatory work, he felt that the Committee might wish to request the Secretariat to begin the preliminary work on such factual background papers as might be needed. That could, for example, include a presentation of disarmament resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, a paper on existing principles and proposals for the conduct of disarmament negotiations, and a description of existing structures and machinery for disarmament negotiations. Since that was only a preliminary proposal, the Secretariat could be asked to present a more detailed plan to the Committee at the next session in May.

12. Mr. HARRY (Australia) said that it was important to know when the Secretariat would have the essential documentation ready. In particular, he wished to know whether the views of Governments would be collated and analysed by 9 May or merely reproduced.

13. Mr. BJORMERSTEDT (Director, Disarmament Affairs Division) said that in view of the limited time remaining not all replies could be expected by 15 April and that the replies would therefore be reproduced as they were received.

14. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that his suggestion was adopted.

15. It was so decided.

...
16. **The CHAIRMAN** said that requests to participate in the special session had been received from non-governmental organizations. According to the Office of Legal Affairs, the sixth and seventh special sessions of the General Assembly provided no precedent for such participation, and the rules of procedure also offered no guidelines. The precedents which had been established in conferences were inapplicable. With respect to the participation of non-governmental organizations in the Preparatory Committee itself, the Preparatory Committee for the seventh special session might offer an applicable precedent, but that Committee was a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council. There could be no objection, of course, to the attendance of non-governmental organizations, since the meetings were public, but the problem was what their status should be. Some of the organizations applying for the right to participate in the work of the Preparatory Committee were seriously involved in disarmament matters, but that was not true of all of them. He therefore urged the Committee to give the matter serious thought, since only the Committee in plenary could take a decision.

17. **Mr. MOHJER (Iran)** said that non-governmental organizations must be involved in the special session and in the Preparatory Committee because they had an important role to play in achieving the session's primary aims, which were to attract general public interest and to mobilize public opinion. The Preparatory Committee had to decide what the role of the non-governmental organizations should be.

18. **Mr. KHALI (Pakistan)**, observing that the role to be played by non-governmental organizations was very important, suggested that the Bureau should examine the list of non-governmental organizations and make recommendations to the Preparatory Committee, which would then decide the matter.

19. **The CHAIRMAN** said that the Preparatory Committee must first decide if it agreed to the participation of non-governmental organizations and then decide on the procedures for such participation and whether it should be broad or restricted. He would welcome informal expressions of views on the matter.

The meeting rose at noon.