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

Fourth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 24 January 1978, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ORTIZ de ROZAS (Argentina)

CONTENTS

Opening of the session
Adoption of the provisional agenda
Election of the Rapporteur
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 A-3550.

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.

78-55081
The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The CHAIRMAN declared open the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament.

ADOPTION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA (A/AC.187/68)

2. The provisional agenda was adopted.

ELECTION OF THE RAPPORTEUR

3. The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that it had to elect a Rapporteur to replace Mr. Alfarargi of Egypt, who had taken up a post with the United Nations Centre for Disarmament.

4. Mr. Bensmail (Algeria) was unanimously elected Rapporteur.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

5. The CHAIRMAN said the Committee would recall that its recommendations submitted to the General Assembly in document A/32/41 had been endorsed in resolution 32/80, which constituted the mandate for the Committee's work and for the special session itself. The Committee's current session would be its most difficult one. It would need to concentrate on trying to harmonize the positions of delegations in order to draft the various chapters of the final document or documents, the main elements of which would be an introduction or preamble, a declaration on disarmament, a programme of action and machinery for disarmament negotiations. The Committee's work would consist in trying on the basis of consensus to arrive at unified texts for submission to the Assembly at its special session. He hoped that the spirit of compromise, flexibility and desire to co-operate demonstrated by all delegations of the Committee's past sessions would continue to prevail.

6. He drew attention to documents A/AC.187/56, 60, 77, 81 and 87 submitted in connexion with the proposed declaration on disarmament, documents A/AC.187/78 and 82 on the proposed programme of action, and document A/AC.187/79 on the negotiating machinery. The following additional documents concerned other matters closely linked with those three topics: document A/AC.187/55, of which a revised version was being submitted; document A/AC.187/86; a draft final document being submitted by Mexico, and a working document on the declaration and the programme of action submitted by Pakistan. A number of other working documents were also being prepared by delegations or groups of delegations for submission as soon as possible.

7. Following consultations, he wished to suggest on behalf of the officers of the Committee that, as an initial step, the Secretariat should be requested to prepare...
as soon as possible, on the basis of all documents submitted thus far, a comparative table of the views of delegations regarding the four main elements of the principal document or documents of the special session. That would enable the Committee to ascertain the areas of agreement among delegations and to establish the areas of possible disagreement with regard to which further negotiations would be needed in order to elaborate a consolidated text. The comparative table would, of course, be brought up to date as and when the need arose.

6. He also drew attention to paragraph 31 of the Committee's previous report (A/32/41), which referred to the Committee's decision to become an open-ended working group and to leave it to the latter to decide whether to meet formally or informally. The Committee would, of course, need to hold formal meetings from time to time in order to endorse decisions taken by the working group or to hear formal statements by delegations. He himself felt that that would be the most efficient way to proceed. If, in the course of the Committee's work, a sufficient degree of agreement had been reached, it would be possible to begin drafting the final document or documents. At the appropriate time, the Committee could decide whether the working group as a whole would undertake the drafting or whether a small drafting group would be set up. The Committee might also wish to decide at the appropriate time to divide its work between two working groups dealing, respectively, with the preamble and the declaration and with the programme of action and the negotiating machinery.

9. There was also some urgency with regard to adopting a decision concerning the time and duration of the general debate in the special session so as to enable the Secretariat to begin preparing the list of speakers. In view of the Committee's recommendation that Member States should be represented at the special session at the highest level possible, it was especially important that the representatives in question should know the time and duration of the general debate as soon as possible with a view to preparing their statements and making travel arrangements.

10. Lastly, delegations might at some stage wish to consider whether the committee of the whole would function simultaneously with the plenary throughout the period of the general debate.

11. Mr. DATCU (Romania) said that he fully supported the Chairman's suggestions. His delegation, which hoped that the Committee's fourth session would help to impart new vigour to disarmament negotiations, was ready to co-operate with all other delegations to that end. In order to make maximum use of the available time, it was important to proceed as soon as possible to the informal negotiating stage with a view to drafting the chapters of the principal document or documents, either simultaneously or successively.

12. He reminded members that all documents envisaged for the special session were of equal importance. The Committee should also give attention to other relevant General Assembly resolutions adopted at the thirty-second session. The Committee should always bear in mind that the final document or documents should not only include guiding principles in the disarmament field but should also revitalize the
negotiating process by adopting a programme of action and institutional measures. The work of drafting must also proceed in a democratic and efficient framework.

13. Mr. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that the members of the Preparatory Committee had before them a wealth of material on the basis of which to draft decisions which were not only generally acceptable but also made it possible to move from negotiations to genuine action signifying the beginning of disarmament.

14. In the course of its work, the Committee should bear in mind that the declaration on disarmament must give an objective assessment of the current disarmament situation, summing up the achievements to date and formulating the principles on which to base discussions and decisions on slowing down the arms race. Such principles should be as universally applicable as possible and should remain their validity over a long period.

15. In the working documents before the Committee, it was proposed that the Committee should decide on the general lines of action to halt the arms race and on the fundamental tasks to be included in the programme of action for disarmament. There was general agreement on most of those issues, which was a positive sign.

16. It was also proposed that decisions should be taken concerning the machinery for disarmament negotiations. That subject should be approached with caution and only taken up when the specific disarmament tasks had been defined. His delegation saw no need for abandoning or radically restructuring the existing machinery which, it felt, should be utilized as effectively as possible. Long experience showed that the major obstacle to the solution of disarmament problems was not the negotiating machinery but rather the powerful forces in a number of countries which sought to perpetuate the arms race and international tension.

17. The agenda for the special session included discussion of the World Disarmament Conference, a topic to which the Soviet Union attached great importance. The Conference should mark an advance from General Assembly declarations and recommendations to the task of reaching effective agreements on measures in the field of disarmament.

18. New initiatives were constantly needed to clear the way for disarmament, and the Soviet Union had recently taken a number of steps in that direction. It had launched an appeal for a simultaneous cessation by all States of the production of nuclear weapons, including atomic, hydrogen and neutron bombs and projectiles. At the same time, the nuclear Powers could agree to a gradual reduction of their existing arsenals as a step towards their complete elimination. That proposal had been embodied in General Assembly resolution 32/155. His delegation felt that the question of nuclear disarmament should rank high in the draft final documents being prepared by the Committee. Action to avert the threat of nuclear war could also hardly be ignored.
19. Another major step had been taken in the cessation of nuclear tests. The
Soviet Union had expressed its willingness to declare a moratorium on nuclear
explosions for peaceful purposes as well as a complete ban for a limited period on
nuclear-weapon testing. As a result, it should be possible to draw up a treaty
imposing a complete and general ban on nuclear-weapon testing.

20. Unfortunately, plans had also recently been revealed for the development and
deployment of the neutron bomb, which could lead to a new and dangerous spiral in
the arms race. The documents to be drawn up by the Committee should impress upon
States the need to avert that danger.

21. It was essential to supplement political détente by military détente in
Europe, where there had recently been certain changes for the better. At the
Belgrade Conference in October 1977, the Soviet Union had introduced constructive
proposals to that end, which called for an agreement among the participants at the
Conference not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against each other, an
agreement not to enlarge the existing antagonistic military and political groupings
and alliances in Europe, consistent implementation of the confidence-building
measures provided for in the Helsinki Final Act, and an agreement not to conduct
military exercises involving more than 50,000-60,000 men.

22. Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) said that the main purpose of his delegation's
working paper entitled "Outline of a draft final document of the special session of
the General Assembly devoted to disarmament" was to facilitate the practical
implementation of the recommendations made by the Preparatory Committee in
paragraph 33 of the report which it had submitted to the General Assembly at its
thirty-second session (A/32/41). In that paragraph, the Committee, after noting
that there had been a trend in favour of the adoption of one final document at the
special session, had stated that a consensus had been reached, in principle,
regarding the contents of the final document, namely that it should contain the
following four main elements: (a) introduction or preamble; (b) declaration on
disarmament; (c) programme of action, and (d) machinery for disarmament
negotiations.

23. His delegation believed that the most appropriate procedure would be to
concentrate all conclusions and decisions reached at the special session into four
separate sections of one final document. That procedure would make it easier to
organize and co-ordinate future work on disarmament and would avoid the risk of
dispersion of effort which had been so apparent in the case of the many resolutions
on the subject which the General Assembly had adopted year after year; it would also
provide world public opinion with convincing proof that a new approach to the whole
question of disarmament had been adopted.

24. His delegation believed that all principles and rules for future action should
be included in the final document, which should be self-contained. All instruments

---

* Subsequently circulated as document A/AC.187/89.
to be adopted by the General Assembly should be included under one resolution, which, however, should be as brief as possible and should contain the following two paragraphs:

"The General Assembly,

"Convinced that it is imperative to put an end to the arms race, both because it entails a threat to the very survival of mankind and because it is incompatible with the new international economic order,

"Having resolved to lay the foundations of a new international disarmament strategy which, through co-ordinated and persevering efforts within the framework of the United Nations, can culminate in general and complete disarmament under effective international control,

"Adopts the following

'Final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament:

I. Introduction;
II. Declaration on Disarmament;
III. Programme of Action;
IV. Guidelines for Disarmament Negotiations.'"

25. His delegation concurred with the proposal of the Chairman that, before the Committee attempted to harmonize the substantive positions of delegations, it should request the Secretariat to produce an orderly compilation of the documents already available or to be submitted to the Committee under all four headings listed in paragraph 33 of its report. In the meantime, the Committee should begin its work by taking final decisions on paragraph 33. The time which had elapsed since that paragraph had been drafted should make it possible to move from a consensus in principle to a final decision without further delay.

26. Mr. Fohseka (Sri Lanka) said that he agreed with the suggestion of the Chairman that the Secretariat should be asked to tabulate the common features of the documents submitted by groups and by individual countries and that the tabulation should be kept up to date by the addition of new contributions. The Committee must now decide whether it would function as one working group or as two. He felt that it might wish to consider starting as one open-ended working group and that it might later break up into two or more. On the question of substance, the proposed Declaration on Disarmament and Programme of Action would undoubtedly have common features, as they were closely related issues. Documents under one or the other heading might therefore contain much unavoidable repetition. If the Committee started with two working groups, they would tend to work in separate directions from the beginning and it would be difficult to co-ordinate their activities at a
later stage. On the other hand, if a start was made with one working group, additional groups could be formed once a certain degree of basic agreement had been reached.

27. His delegation did not wish to comment yet on the length of the general debate or on the appropriate level of representation. The Group of Non-Aligned Countries felt, however, that representation should be at the highest possible level.

28. Mr. ZACHHAEI (German Democratic Republic) said that the main task of the Preparatory Committee at its fourth session was to elaborate drafts of the final documents of the special session. The results which might be achieved by the session would to a large extent depend on the fulfilment of that task. His delegation was prepared to contribute to the best of its ability in conformity with the great significance attached to the question of disarmament by his Government and by those of the other socialist countries. The working papers contained in documents A/AC.107/81 and 82, which had been submitted to the third session by the delegation of the Soviet Union on behalf of seven socialist countries, including his own, constituted an essential contribution to the current task of the Committee.

29. In recent months, the peoples of many countries had noted with concern and indignation that the arms efforts of certain States had been intensified. On the other hand, his delegation had noted with satisfaction that efforts to halt that dangerous development had recently been intensified. General Assembly resolution 32/155 had been adopted unanimously and represented the basic document on the question of continuing the process of détente and implementing disarmament; resolutions 32/77 and 32/78 reflected the hope that treaties on the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests and the prohibition of chemical weapons had come within the range of possibility; resolution 32/84 called for the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction.

30. If positive results were achieved at the special session, they would represent an important contribution to the convening of a world disarmament conference, the General Assembly, at its thirty-second session, had reaffirmed the view of the overwhelming majority of States that such a conference was necessary in order to solve fundamental problems of disarmament in the interests of all States and peoples.

31. His delegation supported the important proposals made by the Soviet Union on the question of disarmament, which had called for a temporary agreement on the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests and a moratorium on nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, for putting an end to the manufacture of nuclear weapons and proceeding to the reduction and final elimination of stockpiles of such weapons, and for an agreement under which the Soviet Union and the United States of America would renounce the manufacture and introduction of the neutron bomb. It was important to combine long-term objectives, such as that of general and complete disarmament, with partial measures like the prohibition of the manufacture of nuclear weapons and the reduction and elimination of their stockpiles, which would eliminate the danger of nuclear war.
32. His delegation supported the Chairman's proposals regarding the organization of work. World interest in the results of the special session was growing, as was evident from the meeting of European youth and student organizations on disarmament, held in Budapest, and the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations which was to be convened at the end of February.

33. Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan) said that in general his delegation agreed with the Chairman's suggestions regarding procedure. It shared the view of the Mexican delegation that the final document of the special session should consist of four main elements, namely, an introduction, a declaration on disarmament, a programme of action, and guidelines for disarmament negotiations.

34. He wished to stress the importance of ensuring that all the proposals submitted by various delegations were given equal weight in the comparative table suggested by the Chairman. The Secretariat must make every effort to reflect adequately both those ideas on which there was broad agreement and those on which differences of opinion still existed. While it would be fairly simple to prepare a comparative table of proposals regarding the four main elements of the final document, it would be more difficult to classify proposals regarding subitems, since there was no uniformity of format in the various papers submitted by delegations.

35. His delegation had submitted two proposals; they were not designed to provide a comprehensive answer to all the issues to be dealt with in the final document but merely to stress those areas which required greater attention.

36. It would be helpful if the Secretariat included references to the relevant General Assembly resolutions in the comparative table.

37. The CHAIRMAN explained that the Secretariat paper would not establish areas of agreement or disagreement but would merely present positions. It would be up to the Committee to decide where there was agreement and try to overcome the differences of opinion.

38. Mr. SCHLATCH (Federal Republic of Germany) suggested that the Secretariat paper should be distributed in parts, beginning with a comparison of positions regarding the preamble and the declaration. That would be the most practical course, since some groups had not yet presented their proposals concerning the programme of action and other points. The various sections of the Secretariat paper might later be combined into a single document if that was considered desirable.

39. Mr. ROSSIDIES (Cyprus) said that he wished to make a few comments on the substantive question of disarmament. The special session would give the United Nations an opportunity to consider that very serious problem in a more relaxed manner, since it would not be under the same time pressures as during regular sessions.
40. The first concern of the special session and of the Preparatory Committee must be to seek a way to halt the arms race. That was the crux of the problem and the most difficult part of the Assembly's task. The arms race was ingrained in the current world situation because the security of nations was based on an outdated, nineteenth-century concept of the balance of power. It was believed that balance of power meant balance of weapons. A mere reduction of armaments would not halt the arms race.

41. The security of nations must come from the role played by the United Nations, which had been established to replace the system of security based on weapons and balance of power. It was absolutely essential to seek means of giving the United Nations the power and authority intended for it in the Charter. Every Member State, in joining the Organization, had undertaken to comply with the Charter, including Chapter VI on the pacific settlement of disputes. Unless the fundamental principles of the Charter were translated into reality, the efforts of the special session would produce no practical results.

42. Mr. VELLODI (India) said that his delegation agreed with the Chairman's suggestion regarding the comparative table to be prepared by the Secretariat. He was somewhat concerned, however, about the time factor. Could the Secretary or the Chairman give some indication when the paper might be available?

43. He agreed with the suggestion made by the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany that the Secretariat paper should be prepared and circulated in parts.

44. The CHAIRMAN informed members that in November 1977 he had consulted with the Secretariat on the possibility of preparing the comparative table. Thus, the Secretariat was now in a position to produce it in two or three days. The first part would concern the preamble and the declaration and would be followed shortly by sections on the programme of action and machinery. The working paper would be updated as necessary.

45. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided to request the Secretariat to prepare a comparative table of proposals regarding the four main elements that had been suggested for the final document.

46. It was so decided.

47. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided that the main elements of the final document of the special session should be those set forth in paragraph 33 of the Committee's report to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session (A/32/41), namely: (a) introduction or preamble; (b) declaration on disarmament; (c) programme of action, and (d) machinery for disarmament negotiations.

48. It was so decided.
49. The CHAIRMAN, replying to a question put by Mr. BARTON (Canada), said that the Secretariat paper would be prepared in four different sections, each of which would be circulated as it was completed. He appealed to delegations that still wished to submit proposals to do so as soon as possible.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.