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

Fourth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 22nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 25 January 1978, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ORTIZ de ROZAS (Argentina)

CONTENTS

Organization of work of the special session
Principal documents of the special session

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.

78-55086

/...
The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK OF THE SPECIAL SESSION

1. The Chairman reminded members that, as reflected in its report to the thirty-second session of the General Assembly (A/32/41), the Committee had decided to recommend to the General Assembly a provisional agenda of 12 items for the special session. The Assembly had endorsed the Committee's report. It would be advisable to decide when the special session should begin its general debate so as to enable the Secretariat to make the necessary preparations for opening the list of speakers. It was his personal opinion that the special session could complete the first seven agenda items on the first day, 23 May, and that it could begin item 8, general debate, on the second day, 24 May. He urged members who might wish to make suggestions in that regard to do so as soon as possible so as to enable the Secretariat to begin its preparations at an early date.

PRINCIPAL DOCUMENTS OF THE SPECIAL SESSION

2. Mr. LEPRETTE (France) said that in the view of his Government, the failure of recent efforts to solve the problems of disarmament was due not so much to a lack of sincerity as to a lack of clear thinking. That was why France had in some cases had reservations which, it felt, had been justified by events.

3. A new and positive approach was therefore required. Such an approach was not to be found in unilateral measures. France could not improve international security by renouncing its own security, nor could it commit itself to steps which, it was clear from experience, would lead to an impasse. On the contrary, goals must be defined, obstacles identified and specific steps outlined.

4. The goal could not be the Utopia of a totally disarmed world. The right of all nations to safeguard their security must be acknowledged and defined, but the limits of that right must be established in order to avoid abuse.

5. The obstacles to disarmament were the excesses brought about by the exercise of that right. The resulting instability gave rise to mistrust, the arms race and, finally, conflict. Disarmament efforts must therefore seek to deal with the elements of instability, which must be viewed in the proper geographic and strategic context.

6. Conditions had changed greatly in the past 10 or 20 years. The world no longer followed the lead of the super-Powers or even of the military blocs surrounding them. It had both a universal and a pluralistic dimension. The problem of nuclear weapons concerned everyone; it was posed in different terms in areas where nuclear weapons were an element of the over-all balance and in areas where their introduction would create a serious imbalance.

* The full text of this statement will be issued as document A/AC.187/90.
7. The principles of disarmament were the same everywhere, but their practical application must be adjusted to specific situations. His Government proposed that action should be taken at three different but complementary levels, namely, at the world-wide level, at the level of non-nuclear regions, and at the level of nuclear regions.

8. At the world-wide level, disarmament must be carried out with the agreement, under the control and for the benefit of all. The forthcoming special session would provide an opportunity to seek agreement. A permanent smaller forum, equally representative and linked to the United Nations, would, however, be more effective. The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament should be replaced by a new forum, with a different membership and different procedures. France would have proposals to make in that regard. On the question of control, his Government would propose the creation of a world observation satellite agency. To ensure that the measures taken would be beneficial to all, his Government would propose the establishment of a special fund financed by a tax levied on excessive armaments.

9. At the level of non-nuclear regions, the problem was twofold. Non-nuclear areas must remain so; at the same time, they must be prevented from engaging in a costly and dangerous conventional arms race. While the States of such regions were responsible for preventing nuclear proliferation, they must also be assured that they would not be discriminated against from the standpoint of progress and of security. A strict non-proliferation policy must nevertheless allow them access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. France would actively work towards that end and set an example. With regard to security, the nuclear Powers must not seek to gain political or military advantage over the non-nuclear States. France would therefore take a positive position of principle with regard to the creation of demilitarized zones on continents or substantial portions of continents. His Government was prepared to consider entering into specific agreements in that regard. It hoped that States in the non-nuclear areas would take the initiative in seeking ways to prevent a conventional arms race in each of the major regions of the world. France was prepared to make its contribution to that end provided that the States in the region concerned unanimously desired to halt the arms race and provided that there was no discrimination among suppliers.

10. At the level of nuclear regions, the one extending from the Atlantic to the Urals was crucial to world peace and to the security of France; nowhere was it more necessary to take a new approach to disarmament. Under the conditions prevailing in that region, security meant for France the maintenance of an adequate level of credibility for nuclear deterrence. Nuclear weapons had become an element of balance, and the threat of instability lay in the factors that might upset that balance, i.e. a quantitative overstockpiling and qualitative race in the field of nuclear weapons and an obvious disparity in the field of conventional weapons. The
responsibility for furthering progress with regard to nuclear weapons lay with the United States and the Soviet Union, and France viewed their efforts favourably. Nevertheless, the level at which they proposed to stabilize their nuclear stockpiles would still enable them to annihilate each other several times over. Efforts in the field of conventional weapons must not be limited to Central Europe but rather must be extended to all States concerned. Priority must be given to promoting trust and reducing the more unsettling elements in the present situation. Naturally, such efforts should be carried out jointly by all those States which, in signing the Final Act of Helsinki, had expressed their willingness to contribute to European security and co-operation. In that spirit, and after having made the necessary contacts, his Government would propose a European conference on disarmament whose sphere of competence would extend from the Atlantic to the Urals.

11. Mr. OGISO (Japan), introducing the working paper contained in document A/AC.187/86, said that the increasing transfer of conventional arms was one of the major factors contributing to international tensions. If that trend continued, it would intensify the potential for conflict. Four fifths of world military expenditures were for conventional weapons. If they continued at the present rate, efforts to assist the developing countries would be greatly weakened. The peoples of the world expected the special session to take up that vital question. His Government therefore proposed that a comprehensive study of the conventional arms race should be initiated as a preliminary step towards general and complete disarmament; that did not mean, of course, that attention should be diverted from nuclear disarmament, which deserved the highest priority. Many issues were involved in the international transfer of conventional weapons, including domestic production of weapons, global and regional security, and the security of recipient States. It was an important issue which must be dealt with.

12. Reading out paragraph 6 of document A/AC.187/86, he stressed three principles that must be recognized in a declaration on disarmament in order to emphasize the relevance and importance of conventional arms control and disarmament. In the first place, it must be recognized that most of the world's military expenditures were being devoted to the acquisition and maintenance of conventional military power. In the second place, the increasing build-up of conventional arms produced a potential risk of endangering international peace and security. In the third place, conventional arms control and disarmament would contribute to the achievement of general and complete disarmament.

13. Reading out paragraph 7 of the document, he outlined the measures which his Government suggested for incorporation within the framework of the programme of action on disarmament. Initially, comprehensive studies should be made of all aspects of conventional arms control and disarmament. At the same time, the General Assembly should request major arms-supplying countries to start consultations on voluntary restraint measures, regional conferences on arms limitation should be convened on the initiative of the States of the region, and a request should be made to the Secretary-General or a watch-dog committee to follow developments concerning
all related issues. As to future steps, after a certain time a review of the implementation of the initial steps should be conducted.

14. His Government held the conviction that, without conventional arms control, it would be very difficult to channel the resources currently being wasted for military purposes to aid for developing countries or to achieve general and complete disarmament.

15. The comments he had just made must be considered in the context of document A/AC.107/14, which set forth the views of the Japanese Government with regard to the five issues that should be given highest priority by the special session.

16. Mr. FONSEKA (Sri Lanka), introducing the non-aligned working document (A/AC.107/55/Add.1), said that paragraph 1 (a) on page 5 of the English text should read "renunciation of the use of nuclear weapons". In paragraph (e) on page 8 of the English text, the word "process" should read "processes". In that same paragraph, the "relevant provisions" referred to were Chapters VI and VII of the United Nations Charter.

17. Although the arms race had continued to intensify since the Second World War, the international atmosphere had changed in the past 10 to 15 years, with the cold war giving way to the acceptance of coexistence. Under the circumstances, it was difficult to understand why there had been so little progress on disarmament, and that was the starting point for the interest of the non-aligned group in the special session. Furthermore, it was generally agreed that the General Assembly was the body principally responsible for accelerating the pace of disarmament.

18. The non-aligned working document was an amalgam of the views that had emerged in the group, which was not always unanimous. It also took full account of other interests and views, as expressed in the First Committee. The document was a refinement of previously expressed views but was framed in language that was intended as a departure from the usual terminology of familiar United Nations resolutions. Reference to previous resolutions was deliberately omitted because those resolutions often had different meanings for different parties. The aim was to make the document easily accessible to a concerned audience outside the United Nations.

19. The Declaration on Disarmament sought to reflect the thinking of ordinary people and to include elements that would facilitate consensus both in the Preparatory Committee and at the special session. The word "alarmed" in the first preambular paragraph might seem strong, but it did reflect existing sentiment. However, the group was prepared to accept any term that the Committee deemed more suitable.

20. The Declaration briefly set forth disarmament priorities as the group saw them. It repeated to some extent the Programme of Action, but that seemed necessary in order to focus attention on certain basic matters which concerned both the Committee and the audience outside. The eight principles at the end of the
Declaration were not, of course, definitive but merely intended as a working guide. After some discussion of the problem, the group felt that it had achieved a reasonable distinction between the notions of a "principle" and a "measure". Actual measures were provided for in the Programme of Action which was the most important part of the document. The group had decided upon what it felt to be a very desirable order of priorities after an intensive discussion and hoped that it would be approved by consensus.

21. The concept of nuclear-free zones had met with limited enthusiasm but was, nevertheless, important to the whole process of disarmament. As to chemical weapons, incendiary weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, perhaps the group had been unrealistic in calling for the conclusion of treaties and agreements which still seemed a long way off. It would have been dishonest, however, simply to call such treaties and agreements desirable.

22. The importance of confidence-building measures was self-evident, and the group sought guidelines for remedying a situation which arose from a lack of understanding among States.

23. With respect to the channelling to development purposes of resources released through disarmament measures, the group was well aware of the controversial aspects of the issue. It appreciated the implications of disarmament for the countries most directly involved and realized that it would not be easy to channel to developing countries the resources which were released. The group also did not wish to create the impression that it was interested in disarmament only because of its interest in those resources.

24. The success of the special session would depend on what was achieved in the Preparatory Committee. The crucial factor was the collective willingness of Member States, especially those with heavy armaments, to depart from established positions and take account of the views of countries which did not themselves have large military establishments but were concerned with the problem. The non-aligned group welcomed suggestions regarding its working document and hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

25. Mr. GARCÍA ROBLES (Mexico) introduced his delegation's working paper entitled "Outline of a draft final document of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament" (A/AC.187/89) and an accompanying "introductory note". The two documents provided a detailed explanation of the proposals and fundamental concepts contained in the draft final document submitted by his delegation. Those proposals and concepts had been developed on the basis of prolonged study and his delegation had already brought many of them to the attention not only of the Preparatory Committee but also of the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee of the General Assembly.

---

Subsequently circulated as document A/AC.187/89/Add.1.
26. He welcomed the decision taken by the Committee at its 21st meeting that the main elements of the final document of the special session should be distributed under the four headings specified in paragraph 33 of the report of the Preparatory Committee (A/32/41). That would virtually eliminate the danger of repetition.

27. He felt that the introduction to the final document should be a summary and synthesis of all relevant facts and that the wording of its concluding paragraph might follow the lines of the text proposed in the paragraph marked "X" at the end of part I (Introduction) of the draft contained in document A/AC.187/99.

28. The Declaration on Disarmament, contained in part II of the draft final document, should be a statement of the fundamental principles underlying the Programme of Action contained in part III. The representative of Sri Lanka had referred to the difficulties encountered by the members of the non-aligned group in deciding whether the Programme of Action should consist of principles or measures. In the opinion of his delegation, the relevant principles had already been set out in the Declaration on Disarmament, so that the Programme of Action should stipulate the practical measures which should be taken.

29. It would be obvious to anyone with some experience of disarmament negotiations that, in the five months which remained before not only the opening but the closure of the special session, it would be utopian to think of completing the formulation of a comprehensive programme of disarmament that would obtain general approval. It was for that reason that his delegation had put forward the idea of making provision, in the Plan of Action included in the working paper, for a Three-year Disarmament Plan covering the period June 1978 to May 1981 as a purely transitional measure. In order to stress the transitional nature of that procedure and the fact that it in no way meant the abandonment of the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, the draft provided for another procedure which appeared best suited for ensuring that, within a period of roughly two and a half years, it would be possible to draft a comprehensive, thoroughly negotiated programme, the implementation of which should lead to the attainment of that goal. The Three-year Plan also included provisions that would enable the General Assembly to keep the manner in which the Plan was being implemented under periodic review and to consider and adopt, at a second special session devoted to disarmament that would be held in May-June or perhaps May-July 1981, the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament which would have been drafted.

30. His delegation had not thought it appropriate to suggest actual measures in the Three-year Disarmament Plan and accordingly had left three blank lines in part III of the working paper. Subsequently, however, a number of delegations had requested examples of such measures. His delegation had therefore prepared a list which would be circulated in the "introductory note". The list contained 15 possible measures but should not be regarded as exhaustive; it merely illustrated the type of measure which his delegation had in mind. He felt that all those measures should be preceded by a paragraph to the effect that all States participating in the first special session would undertake to do everything within their power to implement the measures during the period June 1978 to May 1981.
31. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the modest aims of the two documents which he had introduced would have a constructive impact on the work of the Committee in enabling it to reconcile the different substantive positions held by States on the question of disarmament.

32. **Mr. RAMPHUL** (Mauritius) introduced document A/AC.187/60 and said that it was based on accepted concepts already expressed in United Nations documents and in authoritative statements by the Secretary-General. It was also consistent with views expressed by the developing and non-aligned States and should therefore be close to the common denominator which would eventually emerge from the work of the Committee. His delegation had probably been the first to suggest the structure of the final document to be adopted by the special session.

33. The introduction to document A/AC.187/60 contained a frank statement of the current situation, including the growing danger of the arms race and the limited progress in disarmament to date. The introduction to the final document should not be a mere statement of intent but should represent a strong moral commitment.

34. His delegation attached particular importance to the principles set out in the document because it felt that the special session should be the beginning, rather than the end, of a process. To be successful, the process must be governed by new principles, characterized by the need to democratize international relations. The failure of disarmament negotiations hitherto could be explained **inter alia** by the obsolescence of the principles which had governed those negotiations. His delegation's paper proposed two sets of principles: principles governing the process of negotiation, including the treaty-making initiative, and principles governing the disarmament process itself. Those principles had been inspired by the non-aligned draft disarmament programme of 1970 and by the Zorin-McCloy principles of 1961, which had been endorsed by the General Assembly. The document also dealt with questions of an environmental and institutional nature.

35. In view of the comprehensive character of the paper, which covered all the headings agreed upon for the final document to be adopted by the special session, he hoped that the Centre for Disarmament, in preparing the synoptic presentation of proposals, would include the elements contained in his delegation's paper under all relevant headings. He also expressed the hope that, during the drafting process, full account would be taken of the statement by the Secretary-General at the opening meeting of the Preparatory Committee (A/AC.187/62). The report of the Secretary-General on the economic and social consequences of the arms race (A/32/88) should also serve as valuable reference material.

36. **Mr. LEDNJKH** (Austria) said that his delegation had not submitted a separate working paper because it was in agreement with so many of the ideas presented by others. Nevertheless, those documents did not set out all the ideas of his delegation on the question, and he would take an opportunity at a later stage to develop certain points. In the meantime, he wished to draw attention to several points to which Austria attached particular importance. His Government attached great importance to its status of permanent neutrality and to the obligation to defend it. At a later stage, his delegation would submit a text taking account of
that status. His Government was also concerned at the possibility of disequilibrium developing at either a world-wide or a regional level. He would like to know how the implementation procedure would be initiated and what criteria would be applied. Control and verification had proved to be a formidable barrier to progress in the past, and most of the papers presented had agreed that such control was indispensable. Measures in those fields must be made more concrete. In that connexion, he had taken note of the suggestion made by the representative of France for a control satellite. In general, he believed that less attention should be paid to the technical aspects of weapons and more to the consequences of their employment from a humanitarian standpoint. In conclusion, he wished to repeat that his Government's interests were deeply affected by the question of disarmament. His country's status of permanent neutrality obliged it to participate in the work of all bodies concerned with the question.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.