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

Fourth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 30 January 1978, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ORTIZ de ROZAS (Argentina)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico), commenting on the Secretariat working paper containing a tabulation of proposals (A/AC.187/93), noted that it dealt with only two of the four main elements of the final document. On the other hand, the working paper was very encouraging since it highlighted the identity of views contained in the various proposals. He felt that it was very important to decide on the format of the final document; although his delegation was ready to discuss alternative suggestions, it still believed that the Committee's recommendation to the Assembly on that matter was the best one.

2. One possible outline for the final document, which his delegation had proposed in document A/AC.187/89 and Add.1, took the form of a concise introductory draft resolution followed by the four sections of the final document itself, namely, an introduction, a declaration on disarmament, a programme of action and guidelines for disarmament negotiations. He hoped that a decision would be reached as soon as possible to the effect that there would be one final document, with four sections so entitled.

3. Mr. THUNBERG (Sweden), introducing a working paper which his delegation was submitting, explained that it contained some key elements concerning the programme of action and the machinery for disarmament negotiations. Thus, it should be regarded as complementary to other proposals before the Committee. The document was focused on subjects in which Sweden had long taken a special interest, including nuclear disarmament, disarmament and development, particularly inhuman weapons, the reduction of military budgets, reorganization of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, and strengthening of the United Nations Centre for Disarmament. It also contained the Swedish proposal that a second special session should be convened in 1982, with a view to following up the decisions and recommendations of the first special session and ensuring that continuing attention was given at the highest political level to the need for concrete action. A decision on a second special session would greatly influence the character of the elements to be included in the draft programme of action; early agreement in principle would establish a clear time-frame for the implementation of a substantial part of the disarmament measures on which the special session would decide, and it would facilitate the drafting work. The question of the most appropriate date for the second special session could then be discussed.

4. Turning to the other measures proposed in the Swedish working paper, he said that nuclear disarmament was certainly the most important of the sets of measures in a programme of action. The points enumerated under the heading of nuclear disarmament followed very closely those suggested in document A/AC.187/55/Add.1.

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* Subsequently circulated as document A/AC.187/95.
5. The Nordic countries had already proposed that the special session should initiate a study on the relationship between disarmament and development, and the General Assembly, in resolution 32/88 A, had requested the Secretary-General to appoint an ad hoc group to elaborate a possible framework and terms of reference for the study and to report on its work in time for the special session. His delegation's present proposal was simply a follow-up to the Assembly's decision, and called for the special session to initiate an expert study, the terms of reference for which would be formulated by the Assembly on the basis of the report of the ad hoc group.

6. With regard to the question of particularly inhuman weapons, the Committee would recall that the Assembly had decided, in resolution 32/152, to convene in 1979 a United Nations conference on that question. It was essential that the special session should give an outline of what the conference should achieve, in particular by mentioning the kind of weapons on which the session should seek agreement.

7. Sweden's proposal for a reduction of military budgets, which logically derived from Assembly resolution 32/85, would have the Secretary-General organize a pilot test of a system for reporting military budgets, with the participation of States representing different geographical regions and different military budgeting and accounting systems; it would also have the Secretary-General appoint an ad hoc panel of budgetary experts to give guidance to States supplying the required data, to further refine the system and to develop recommendations for large-scale application. Despite the difficulties which many States would have in accepting even those modest proposals, his delegation believed that it was necessary to move ahead in order to find common ground for all States in their reporting of military budgets and thus promote confidence among States with a view to reducing military expenditure on a world-wide scale.

8. Turning to the question of machinery for disarmament negotiations, he reiterated Sweden's view that two different types of disarmament organs were required, on the one hand a negotiating body with limited membership and, on the other, a forum at the highest political level comprising all Members of the United Nations. While the existing institutional set-up roughly corresponded to that general concept, there was a strong need for some organizational improvements. His delegation also suggested that the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, while continuing to negotiate with the highest priority in the nuclear disarmament field, should be reorganized. The United Nations should be kept fully informed of all bilateral and multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament. All Members of the United Nations must be permitted to take an active part in the work of the Conference. Furthermore, the institution of co-chairmanship must be replaced by a system that more adequately reflected the present political situation. A possible model could be a bureau consisting of one chairman and three vice-chairmen: two members of the bureau would be selected from the States belonging to the military blocs and the other two from the group of neutral and non-aligned States. The chairmanship could rotate in alphabetical order on a monthly or sessional basis among all members of the Conference.
9. Finally, his delegation proposed a strengthening of the United Nations Centre for Disarmament in the light of the new tasks that would be entrusted to it, especially in the field of studies and of follow-up of disarmament agreements.

10. **Mr. Jay** (Canada) said he fully agreed with previous speakers that the aim in the Committee and at the special session itself should be to express important ideas in as clear-cut a fashion as possible and that delegations should remain free to make proposals as the work of the Committee proceeded. All Member States had a stake in ensuring that the final document was of the highest possible quality in terms of tone and credibility.

11. He would also like to know whether the Secretariat would be preparing a tabulation on the programme aspects of the final document and, at a later stage, a further tabulation on the question of machinery for disarmament negotiations.

12. The **CHAIRMAN** replied that that was his understanding.

13. **Mr. Idrat** (Iran) observed that the increasing interest of Governments was imparting new vigour to the Committee's deliberations and pointed to a more fruitful exchange of views during the coming months. His delegation fully shared the view regarding the need for a coherent, consistent and unambiguous text for the final document which would provide the framework for future disarmament negotiations. He felt that the structure of the final document needed to be further discussed. The multiplicity of working papers before the Committee suggested that some initial exchanges were needed in order to clarify the scope and meaning of the headings of the various sections of the final document and the orientation of each section.

14. His delegation also endorsed the view that the failure of disarmament efforts was due to the large number of ambiguous proposals, however well-intentioned. That also applied to the Committee's present undertaking. The results of the special session would be judged not by the number or length of documents but by the clarity and cohesiveness of goals and priorities. What was needed was a clear understanding of the practical measures aimed at overcoming obstacles.

15. A number of documents before the Committee suffered from a lack of clarity; the differing interpretations of the wide range of ideas put forward could be seen from the tabulation of proposals in document A/AC.187/93. While the variety of views was helpful in promoting a better understanding of the varying shades of opinion concerning the final document, there was a need for a clear notion of the titles and content of its various sections. It must be decided whether the introduction to the final document should be an exposé of the present situation in the disarmament field or whether it should highlight the principles governing the forthcoming negotiations.

16. **Mr. Stashevsky** (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) agreed that it would be useful for the Secretariat to prepare further tabulations of proposals concerning the programme of action and the negotiating machinery. He also felt that the Committee should take a formal decision to the effect that the final document or
documents would consist of four sections. In his delegation's view, however, it would be premature to decide now whether to have one, or more than one, final document; that would distract the Committee from the task of preparing the document itself.

17. The CHAIRMAN agreed that it was not the intention to take a decision on the latter point at the present stage.

18. With regard to the opening of the special session, he informed the Committee that, following consultations and in the light of experience, it was felt that the Assembly would be able to complete consideration of the initial, procedural items at two meetings, after which the General Committee would probably require only one meeting in order to consider the organization of work. On the assumption that the Assembly opened the special session in the afternoon of 23 May, the general debate could therefore begin in the afternoon of 24 May and end on or about 9 June. He suggested that delegations consider the matter so that the Committee could take a decision at its next formal meeting.

19. As to the list of speakers for the general debate, he pointed out that the Secretariat was aware of the disadvantages of the system followed during the past two sessions of the Assembly under which delegations had lost a great deal of time in trying to ascertain their position in the list. It was accordingly suggested that the Assembly revert to the former, well-tried system. In order to avoid an unseemly rush by delegations to include their names in the list, the Secretariat suggested that no date for the opening of the list should be mentioned. Instead, delegations would be requested to indicate a preferred date on which they wished to speak, together with two alternative dates. In the light of their stated preferences, the Secretariat felt that it would be able to satisfy delegations' wishes. When the dates of the opening and closing of the general debate had been fixed, the Secretariat would make an appropriate announcement to that effect and would request delegations to indicate their preferences.

20. In conclusion, he announced that the Committee would continue its discussions as a Working Group.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.