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

Fourth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 8 February 1978, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ORTIZ de ROZAS (Argentina)

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Principal documents of the special session (continued)
The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

PRINCIPAL DOCUMENTS OF THE SPECIAL SESSION (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that two new documents had been submitted to the Committee, namely the tabulation of proposals relating to the proposed programme of action (A/AC.187/100), which had been requested by the Committee, and a working paper on disarmament and verification, which had been submitted by Austria (A/AC.187/101).

2. He wished to point out that, in document A/AC.187/100, the title of heading IV should be "Implementation" and not "Studies to facilitate further measures".

3. Mr. VINCI (Italy) said that his Government had repeatedly stressed the need for a comprehensive and balanced programme of action specifying the priorities and key steps of a gradual disarmament process. The practical contribution of Italy to the preparation of a comprehensive programme for general and complete disarmament dated back to the beginning of 1960 and had been continued over the years in the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament, the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee, the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and the General Assembly. His delegation was convinced more than ever of the need for a coherent, comprehensive programme which would be different from, and more inclusive than, a frame of priority measures. Together with nine other Western delegations, his delegation had co-sponsored document A/AC.187/96, which contained a number of practical measures of arms control and disarmament that could be carried out without unnecessary delays and would pave the way for further and wider measures. In introducing its own working paper (A/AC.187/97), his delegation wished to supplement the document of the 10 Western Powers. What his delegation had in mind was a clearer definition of an over-all programme of work, including suggested measures for both the short and the long term. Accordingly, the working paper had also been tabled with CCD in Geneva. Some of his delegation's suggestions were very similar to those which had appeared in document A/AC.187/96 and had been included so that the two or three consecutive stages through which a comprehensive programme of action could be carried out would be more readily understood. While favouring the adoption of short-term realistic measures, his delegation wished to give a sense of direction and purpose to the whole exercise. The ideas contained in his delegation's working paper had already been amplified in his statement in the First Committee on 20 October 1977 (A/32/C.1/PV.9).

4. The suggestions were based on the assumption that the fundamental role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security must be strengthened and that a disarmament strategy must be accompanied by greater and more sustained efforts aimed at putting an end to the present underlying causes of instability. The working paper was divided into three main parts. The first part pointed specifically to certain principles which should constitute the core of any well-articulated programme of action. Basically, those principles were: flexibility in the schedule and time-table for the consideration and negotiation of specific international instruments; a balance between the measures to be taken in the various disarmament sectors, namely those of nuclear and conventional arms; an appropriate co-ordination of global and regional initiatives in the field of...
disarmament; a step-by-step approach in order to prevent imbalances and destabilization, and effective verification measures to ensure that disarmament obligations were being fully complied with by all parties.

5. The second part concerned itself with the main elements of the disarmament programme and was intended to offer a set of priority measures affecting not only nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction but also conventional and other weaponry systems. Those measures were intended to set in motion bilateral and multilateral initiatives capable of fostering a climate of confidence and trust. The measures also envisaged the setting up, under Article 29 of the United Nations Charter, of subsidiary bodies of the Security Council in which all interested parties could participate on an equal footing with a view to reducing the level of weapons and armed forces on both a global and a regional basis.

6. The third part dealt with the question of strengthening international peace and security and was intended to stress that, to be effective, any progress along the path to genuine disarmament must be coupled with adequate collective security measures. The starting point could be the establishment of reliable procedures for the peaceful settlement of disputes and, always in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, renewed efforts to supplement, by means of appropriate guidelines, the arrangements concerning the peace-keeping operations of the United Nations. Studies and/or negotiations should be undertaken with a view to recruiting a permanent United Nations police force, as provided for in Article 43 of the Charter, and to establishing an international organ to supervise the application of disarmament agreements in force. He hoped that his delegation's working paper would provide a positive contribution to the work of the Committee and to the studies which the Secretary-General had been requested to carry out in section IV of the working paper of the 10 Western Powers (A/AC.187/96).

7. Mr. SUCHARIPA (Austria) said that he wished to introduce a working paper (A/AC.187/101) which concerned itself with the question of verification. That question was of fundamental significance, and indeed the inability to reach agreement on specific disarmament texts might to a large extent be attributed to a divergence of views on that point. The successful implementation of arms limitation or disarmament measures depended on the degree of confidence which each party had that all other parties were acting in compliance with the agreement. In that context, verification played an important role. In virtually all the papers which had been presented to the Committee, the need for adequate verification had been stressed in one way or another. There was as yet, however, no agreed understanding about the role which verification could and should play within the framework of disarmament negotiations. The problem therefore merited a thorough examination in the course of the preparations for the first special session; as a first step, he proposed that the Secretariat should be entrusted with the preparation of a background paper which would help to pinpoint different problem areas as well as possible ways of approaching them. Such a background paper should include the following elements: proposals for commonly agreed definitions; a listing of different functions of verification measures and a discussion of the corresponding requirements for verification measures; a discussion of the concept of adequacy of verification and the role of verification as a confidence-building measure; a survey
of various means, methods and types of verification, followed by an indication of their potential usefulness in relation to different disarmament agreements, and an outline of the impact of modern technology on verification. On the basis of the experience gained through such a background paper, the Committee might later wish to propose an in-depth study of those and related questions. In addition to the paragraphs on verification in the part of the draft declaration dealing with principles guiding disarmament negotiations, the Committee might wish to include in its draft programme of action a proposal for the preparation of such a study.

8. The second part of the Austrian working paper contained a preliminary list of areas in which, on the basis of such a study, principles concerning verification could be formulated. In that connexion, his Government attached great importance to confidence-building measures such as could be obtained from an understanding on what could be regarded as a reasonable degree of assurance about compliance with a given agreement. He believed that future discussions would be facilitated if Governments presenting new disarmament proposals were to provide indications about corresponding verification measures. Furthermore, all parties to an agreement must have the right to obtain full access to relevant data. That principle would have particular significance in relation to such agreements as a comprehensive test-ban treaty and a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

9. The third part of the working paper contained suggestions on verification for possible inclusion in the draft Declaration. The last paragraph contained a preliminary proposal for a paragraph to be included in the draft programme of action concerning studies to be carried out in order to facilitate future disarmament negotiations.

10. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Preparatory Committee approved the proposal of the representative of Austria that the Secretariat should prepare a background paper on the question of verification.

11. It was so decided.

12. Mr. WEILER (United States of America) said that, while he welcomed the constructive progress which was being made by the Committee, quicker action was required if an adequate single working text was to be available in time for the special session. The drafting of the Declaration was already proving to be a major task, but the negotiation of a programme of action would be even more difficult. One clear problem which had emerged was that of reconciling action focusing on the short term with the longer-term goals of disarmament. A number of texts which had been submitted had concentrated on the short term. If agreement was to be achieved on a programme of action, it was essential that it should be generally understood that what was under discussion was guidelines for a limited period. Progress could be facilitated by annual reviews in the General Assembly and by a reappraisal, after an appropriate period, of the achievements flowing from the programme of action. His delegation was therefore prepared in principle to support the proposal that a second special session on disarmament...
should be held, provided that the programme of action which was eventually adopted was specific and realistic and not of too general a nature. A second special session at too early a date, such as 1981, would, however, be unwise. Time must be allowed for progress to be made in the efforts to implement the programme of action. His delegation would prefer that a second special session should not be held before 1983.

13. Mr. HAMILTON (Sweden) said that his delegation agreed with the representative of Austria that verification must be an essential element in any agreement on disarmament. He therefore welcomed the Committee's decision that the Secretariat should be requested to produce a background paper on verification, as had been suggested by the representative of Austria.

14. He noted that his delegation's suggestion on the date of a second special session had been included in the Secretariat's tabulation (A/AC.187/100) under the heading of "Implementation", rather than, as had been suggested in document A/AC.187/95, under "Measures". He therefore asked that his delegation's suggestion should be placed under heading "III. Measures".

15. He supported the proposal of the United States representative concerning the second special session and hoped that the Committee would adopt a decision on that question as soon as possible.

16. Mr. PALMA (Peru) said that he welcomed the Committee's decision to ask the Secretariat to prepare a background paper on verification. That was an essential element which required clarification and must be included both in the Declaration and in the programme of action.

17. Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) said that he welcomed the statement by the representative of the United States in favour of a second special session. His delegation had always regarded a second session as not only a means of monitoring compliance with the decisions taken at the first session but also as an instrument through which a comprehensive programme of action could be implemented. He continued to believe, however, that a period of three years between special sessions was sufficient, and he would therefore continue to support 1981 as the most appropriate date for the second special session.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.