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

Fourth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 32nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 22 February 1978, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ORTIZ de ROZAS (Argentina)

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consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the
session.
The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that, as agreed by the members of the Committee, the film entitled Nuclear Countdown, produced by the Office of Public Information, would be projected. The OPI representative would then make a statement on the work being done by OPI in connexion with the special session and would reply to any questions which representatives wished to put concerning the film.

2. The film entitled "Nuclear Countdown" was projected.

3. Mr. GRIBKOV (Office of Public Information) said that OPI continued to give extensive publicity to the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and had undertaken or would undertake the following programmes in that respect.

4. With regard to press and publications, two brochures, entitled Special Session on Disarmament and Economic and Social Consequences of the Arms Race and of Military Expenditures, had been produced. Detailed press coverage would be provided during the session, and immediately before the opening of the session a background press release would be issued and a roundtable for senior editors of the mass media from developing countries would be held, at which the main emphasis would be placed on disarmament.

5. With regard to radio and visual services, the film entitled Nuclear Countdown, which had just been projected for the members of the Committee, had been produced. Language versions of that film were being produced, which was currently available in English only. The film would be distributed to all the Information Centres, and to interested non-governmental organizations and information media. The Radio Service continued to provide news coverage of the proceedings of the Preparatory Committee and the preparations for the special session. Developments at the session itself would be highlighted within the framework of the regular news and feature programming of the Radio Service. A special photo exhibit would be displayed in the General Assembly lobby, starting early in May and continuing throughout the special session. A similar exhibit would be displayed at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

6. Through the Information Centres, the External Relations Division of OPI had been giving all possible publicity to the special session. Guidelines and instructions and all available information material were being sent to the Centres. The information material was distributed to the local news media, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions. The Triangular Fellowship Programme which was scheduled to take place in July and August in Paris would pay special attention to the disarmament question. The Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the External Relations Divisions of OPI had given considerable assistance to the non-governmental organization conference on disarmament held in Geneva from 27 February to 2 March and would provide similar assistance to the annual
non-governmental organizations/OPI conference to be held on 6 and 7 April 1978, at which some 500 representatives of various non-governmental organizations affiliated with OPI at Headquarters would devote most of their programme to various aspects of disarmament. An information notice on the special session had been sent to the 58 Information Centres suggesting that non-governmental organizations should hold special meetings devoted to the special session both before and after the session.

7. The Centre for Economic and Social Information was producing for the special session an article on disarmament which would be published in various languages, together with a booklet which would be available in all the official languages before the special session.

8. Post-session information activities would include a round-up press release of the decisions of the session and a brochure summarizing its results, issued by the Press and Publications Division. The Radio Service would prepare a variety of programmes reflecting the discussions and results of the session.

9. With regard to the financial implications of those activities, the working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.187/83) indicated that the Office of Public Information could absorb most of the costs involved. However, additional funding would be required for some of the projects included in the programme, namely the production of a brochure on the special session in languages other than the official languages ($15,000), the production of a colour poster in several languages ($12,000), external services in connexion with a photographic exhibit during the special session ($2,000), the reproduction of photographic and other display material and its shipment to Information Centres ($10,000), and the production of a post-session brochure in languages other than the working languages ($26,000). The items mentioned came to a total of $65,000. That figure had been mentioned at the previous session of the Committee, but no decision had been taken in that connexion. If the Committee considered that OPI should proceed with the planned programme of activities it might wish to recommend that those expenses should be defrayed from the resources allocated for the special session.

10. Lastly, he wished to refer to the question of the financing of the services to be provided by OPI during the special session. In considering the OPI estimates for those services, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had recommended that they should be reduced from $84,800 to $74,800, since it had felt that most of OPI's requirements could be met from within the resources already approved for the Office. The Fifth Committee and subsequently the General Assembly had approved that reduction. Consequently, OPI had revised its requirements downwards to $15,400 for press services, $9,400 for radio and visual services and $30,000 for communications engineers, making a total of $54,800.

11. Although those estimates had been calculated on the basis of two meetings a day, OPI would be prepared to undertake full coverage of the special session on the assumption that no more than two meetings would be held simultaneously and that there would be no night meetings. However, if it was decided to have three simultaneous meetings and/or night meetings, OPI would have to request additional
staff for a period of two to three weeks, which would cost $11,800. Without that additional amount, OPI would not be able to provide press or radio coverage of the third simultaneous or night meeting, the typing pool would be unable to produce the releases on the same day, and long delays would be experienced in relaying cables to the Information Centres.

12. Mr. WEILER (United States of America) said that the figures concerning the provision of services for the special session which had just been presented were new. He presumed that the figures would be presented in written form, but wondered what the Committee could do in that connexion, since it was his understanding that it was not empowered to authorize expenditures.

13. The CHAIRMAN replied that the Committee was indeed not empowered to authorize the expenditures in question, but it could make a recommendation to the General Assembly, which would take a decision on the matter.

14. Mr. BARTON (Canada) observed that in 1977 a programme had been submitted to the Assembly indicating the funds allocated to public information activities. According to the OPI representative, however, additional funds were required, since otherwise the scope of the information activities would have to be limited. He therefore wished to know whether the OPI representative wanted the Preparatory Committee to recommend that the General Assembly should provide additional funds.

15. Mr. GRIBKOV (Office of Public Information) said that OPI felt additional funds would be needed if during the special session more than two meetings were held simultaneously, or if the special session continued after the set closing date. Furthermore, in connexion with the long-term programme and bearing in mind the fact that the question had been left pending, OPI would like to know whether it should proceed with that programme or confine itself to what was currently being done.

16. Mr. JAIPAL (India) said that he could not support the proposal to recommend that the Assembly should allocate additional resources to cover the expenditures in question. Both public opinion and Governments were fully aware of the problem of disarmament and excessive publicity on the special session and related activities would only create expectations which perhaps could not be realized.

17. The CHAIRMAN suggested that a paper should be prepared for the following Friday indicating the necessary additional expenditures and summarizing the reasons justifying the allocation of additional resources so that the Committee could make the appropriate recommendations to the Assembly if it seemed it necessary. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee accepted that suggestion.

18. It was so decided.

19. Mr. WEILER (United States of America) said he was surprised that in the film which had been shown no reference was made to the special session devoted to disarmament.
20. Mr. GRIBKOV (Office of Public Information) said that reference to the special session had not been deliberately omitted. Preparations on the film had begun two years earlier and its primary purpose was to create greater awareness on the part of the public of the problem of the arms race. To mention the special session would have limited its scope, since once the session was over the film would then have been obsolete.

21. Mr. WEILER (United States of America) considered that explanation unacceptable, since in the film reference was made to other historic events and in any case the film would be obsolete once the special session had been held since it did not mention the session.

22. Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic) said that there was always criticism after a film had been shown. He therefore found that the proposals which had arisen in the Committee were quite natural but he felt that if the film was exhibited after the special session the public would want to know the results obtained, and those results were impossible to foresee. Consequently, he did not think it would be advisable to include in the film any reference to the special session.

23. Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico), supported by Mr. MIJESINOVIC (Yugoslavia), said that everyone was interested in having the greatest possible publicity given to the holding of the special session and that mention of it should therefore be made in the film.

24. Mr. GRIBKOV (Office of Public Information) said that he did not think it would be possible to make a correction in the film at that stage but, in any case, he would like to be given some time to consider the problem.

25. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the representative of OPI should give a reply on the matter on Friday, 24 February. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee agreed to that suggestion.

26. It was so decided.

27. Mr. RIOS (Panama) said that the film shown during the meeting was a simple one compared to others which he had had occasion to see and he thought that the two super-Powers could be asked to co-operate by sending material which would make a greater impression.

28. Mr. FALASE (Nigeria) requested the representative of OPI to evaluate the impact which the information activities in general had on the public. He would like in particular to know whether those activities had been successful at the world level.

29. Mr. GRIBKOV (Office of Public Information) said that OPI used every means at its command to reach the public but its possibilities were limited. Nevertheless, it was doing and would do everything possible to disseminate fully information on the problem of disarmament.
MACHINERY FOR DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS (continued)

30. Mr. JANKOWITSCH (Austria), referring to the question of machinery for future disarmament negotiations, said his delegation subscribed to the view that the main prerequisite for achieving progress in the field of disarmament was the political will and determination of Governments to seek agreements which would be as far-reaching as possible. There was no question that appropriate machinery was required for that purpose, for whatever the documents adopted at the special session might be, the success of the work on disarmament would depend to a large extent on the organizational framework decided upon during the session.

31. In the view of his delegation, if the United Nations was to be able to play its central role in the field of disarmament it must have at its disposal three different bodies with distinct functions and responsibilities. Firstly, the main task of the General Assembly's First Committee should be to review and assess the progress achieved during the previous 12 months and, in co-operation with all Members of the United Nations, formulate appropriate directives for future action. To that end, its working procedures should be improved and in that connexion the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament should be taken into account. Many delegations had proposed that in future the First Committee should deal exclusively with disarmament and related questions. His delegation would like to modify or interpret those proposals in such a way as basically to ensure that the First Committee would continue to deal with all the items allocated to it during the past two sessions of the General Assembly, whereas other political issues examined in the past by the First Committee and any new items of political significance which might arise should be allocated exclusively to the Special Political Committee, the name of which could be changed accordingly. That would ensure the necessary continuity.

32. Secondly, all delegations agreed on the need for an effective negotiating body with limited membership. In the past that had been the main task of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, which however, suffered from a number of short-comings. In spite of that, his delegation did not consider that CCD had failed completely as a negotiating body. On the contrary, it was convinced that CCD should be allowed to continue carrying out its important functions, provided that a number of essential changes in its structure and working procedure were made. It felt that CCD should have the character of a United Nations body, although with certain characteristics of its own such as the rule of consensus for decision-making. Also, the co-chairmanship of CCD should be replaced by more democratic procedural arrangements, such as rotation of the chairmanship among all its members on a monthly or sessional basis, as was done in certain high-level political bodies such as the Security Council. In that connexion he expressed his gratitude to the delegation of France which, by its active participation in the Committee, had given ample proof of its interest in the success of the common effort to promote disarmament in general.

33. Austria, as a State which was not a member of CCD, would support all measures
aimed at providing possibilities for wider participation of all interested States Members of the United Nations in its work. Those measures could comprise arrangements for non-CDD members to attend meetings of CDD as observers, submit proposals or views and take part in the relevant deliberations. Also, the possibility of introducing the principle of rotation for membership in CDD should be considered. In its view, it should be possible to establish the principle of rotation, not excluding the possibility of re-election, without jeopardizing the element of continuity which was necessary for the successful work of such a negotiating body. His delegation wished to make clear that it preferred a system of rotation to increasing the number of members of CDD.

Thirdly, his delegation considered it necessary to establish a body which could be truly deliberative. In that connexion, he referred to the statement made at an earlier meeting of the Committee by Mr. Vellodi, Secretary to the Government of India, and totally supported his reasoning. The body in question should have approximately the same size as the Preparatory Committee and should be entrusted with the task of outlining broad policies in the disarmament field. That task could take the form of elaborating a comprehensive programme of disarmament measures which might in due time be submitted to a possible second special session devoted to disarmament. The First Committee could not take on that important function nor could CDD, which should concentrate on negotiating concrete agreements in the field of disarmament and arms limitation. It should be noted, in addition, that the three-tier structure which he had just outlined would not be something new in the United Nations system, since in the social and economic fields a similar system had been successfully developed.

35. His delegation would like to consider the proposals made by a number of delegations regarding the convening of a second special session devoted to disarmament within the larger framework of adequate follow-up mechanisms to be established by the special session. For instance, it could be envisaged that the new deliberative body that had been discussed could act as a preparatory committee for a possible second special session. The interval between the two sessions could be determined when a clearer picture had emerged of the time framework in which the immediate and/or short-term measures to be included in the Programme of Action would be carried out.

36. With regard to the future role of the United Nations Secretariat in the field of disarmament, his delegation supported measures aimed at strengthening and reorganizing the United Nations Centre for Disarmament. It was important to ensure that the Centre had sufficient capacity to prepare the relevant reports and expert studies, and consideration should also be given to the possibility of setting up an advisory board, elected on a basis of rotation, which would provide the necessary guidance.

37. Finally, his delegation considered that the role of the United Nations in the implementation of disarmament agreements could and should be further strengthened and that the United Nations, together with its specialized agencies and IAEA, could in the future play an increasingly important role in that field.
38. Mr. ULUCDEV (Turkey) said that effective mechanisms relating to disarmament negotiations not only contributed to the generation of the necessary political will of nations, but would also help to translate such political will into concrete disarmament measures.

39. In his delegation's view, all nations of the world had a positive role to play in the field of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, and the United Nations was the most suitable forum to draw up guidelines for disarmament negotiations and to watch over and review all disarmament efforts in general. However, his Government had not lost sight of the fact that the chances for success would be greater if negotiations were carried out through bodies set up for specific purposes, such as the CCD. Such bodies, which should be of a manageable size, should provide balanced political and geographical representation and reflect a wide range of interests. It was of particular importance that the disarmament negotiating machinery should include all nuclear-weapon States and all militarily significant countries. Consequently, his Government fully supported the proposals designed to facilitate the participation of all such States in the existing negotiating body or in bodies which might be created by decision of the special session devoted to disarmament.

40. In that context, of particular importance was a possible system providing for a number of rotating memberships in the CCD, or in other appropriate bodies that might be set up in the future. A limited system of rotation would make it possible for all States, and particularly those whose co-operation was necessary for progress in the field of disarmament, to acquire membership at certain intervals in the relevant body and, at the same time, would forestall constant increases in the number of members, which would inevitably reduce its effectiveness. Furthermore, such a system would stimulate the interest of many countries in disarmament matters.

41. There was no need to stress that disarmament questions were related as a whole to the national security of all States, so that it was essential that disarmament measures should reflect the broadest possible consensus and that the negotiating body should function on the basis of consensus procedures.

42. His delegation considered favourably the proposals providing for a limited increase in the size of the CCD and for the active participation of non-member States in its work. It was also essential to improve opportunities for the public to follow the activities of disarmament bodies, in order to generate wider public interest in disarmament questions.

43. The consensus reached on the convening of the forthcoming special session devoted to disarmament demonstrated the willingness of a large number of countries to play a direct and more active role in the policy-making and negotiating process on disarmament. The success of the special session devoted to disarmament would be measured, to an important degree, by the effectiveness of the negotiating machinery it established to respond to the demands of the international community and the current political and military realities of the world.
44. Mr. WEILER (United States of America) said that, at the thirty-second session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General had been requested to compile the recommendations contained in the 1974, 1976 and 1977 reports of the group of experts on military expenditures, to ascertain which States had been willing to participate in a field trial of the model military expenditures reporting instrument proposed in the recommendations of the 1976 and 1977 reports and to report on the results of that inquiry to the special session devoted to disarmament. He wished to take the opportunity to announce United States willingness to participate in such a field trial, to submit data on its national military expenditures and to assist actively in the effort to develop a more effective mechanism for reporting.

45. Increasingly widespread reporting of military expenditure data would be an important contribution to the building of confidence among countries and to the possibility of effective military expenditure limitation agreements. Such agreements, although they were not a near-term prospect, were undoubtedly an objective worthy to be pursued, since they would permit the releasing of resources for economic and social development, to the benefit of the developing countries.

46. Mr. OGISO (Japan) said that, in order to halt the arms race and to proceed with the gradual reduction of nuclear weapons until their ultimate elimination, the following immediate measures should be adopted within the framework of the Programme of Action: immediate cessation of nuclear explosions in all environments and immediate conclusion of a complete nuclear test ban treaty to that effect; the earliest possible conclusion of an agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union with regard to the strategic arms limitation negotiations; the cessation of the production of fissionable materials for military purposes and the utilization of natural and enriched uranium for peaceful purposes; further strengthening of international efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, based primarily on adherence of States to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the system of safeguards of the IAEA, assuring, at the same time, the inalienable rights of the non-nuclear weapons States to develop nuclear energy for peaceful uses.

47. With regard to the question of disarmament in the field of conventional weapons, he said that the international community was confronted with a tremendous arms build-up in many parts of the world. If the conventional arms race continued at its current rate, the prospect of using the resources absorbed in military expenditures for the improvement of economic and social conditions throughout the world, particularly in the developing countries, would be further diminished. In addition, there was the danger that the conventional arms race would develop into conflicts which would lead to the involvement of the nuclear Powers, touching off the outbreak of a nuclear war before the United Nations could reach agreement on the necessary measures for nuclear disarmament.

48. Consequently, his delegation proposed the control and reduction of stockpiles of conventional weapons and that attention should be turned to the control of the arms trade, which was a crucial problem in the arms race. His delegation wished to make it clear that to take up the question of conventional arms did not at all mean diverting attention from the question of nuclear disarmament. Japan had experienced
the ravages of nuclear weapons and had therefore always insisted that nuclear disarmament was the most urgent and important task of the current time, which should be accorded the highest priority, and that the nuclear weapon States had grave responsibilities in furthering nuclear disarmament measures.

49. In conclusion, his delegation wished to submit an additional working paper concerning nuclear disarmament.

50. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee would continue its deliberations in the Working Group.

The meeting rose at 5:50 p.m.