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

Second session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 9 May 1977, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. ORTIZ de ROZAS (Argentina)

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77-55844
The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The CHAIRMAN said that, at the previous meeting (A/AC.187/SR.3) on 30 March 1977, the Committee had decided to consider the request made by numerous non-governmental organizations and a number of delegations that the officers of the Committee should meet to determine procedures to govern the participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of the Committee. He could report that the officers had unanimously approved the following proposal:

"(1) A well-informed public opinion, be it at national or international levels, can bring significant contributions towards progress in the field of disarmament.

"The non-governmental organizations, whose dedication and interest in this field is well known and highly appreciated by the members of this Committee, could play a stimulating and constructive role in channelling the public concerns in this matter.

"(2) The officers of this Committee are pleased to realize the NGOs' interest in closely following the development of its work and hope that this association will be further strengthened by the continued presence of its representatives in the usual places in this room.

"(3) Notwithstanding the frequent and useful contacts or exchanges that take place between the NGOs and individual delegations, and in order to facilitate the knowledge of non-governmental contributions, the Secretariat will provide lists of general circulation of the communications received from the NGOs and institutions known to be conducting research in the field of disarmament. The lists will indicate where the communications and any annexed documentations will be available to delegations."

2. Mrs. THORSSON (Sweden) said that her delegation had no objection to the recommendation suggested by the officers. She thanked them for their work and recognized that some progress had been made towards making it possible for non-governmental organizations working in the field of disarmament to communicate with delegations.

3. Her delegation was particularly gratified that the Secretariat was to provide a list of communications received from non-governmental organizations, since it had always emphasized the importance of well-informed public opinion as a means of achieving positive results in the field of disarmament.

4. She assured other delegations and the non-governmental organizations, whose competence she acknowledged and admired, that her delegation would always be prepared to consider their valuable views on the difficult task before the Committee.

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5. The CHAIRMAN said that the words of the representative of Sweden echoed the feelings of the officers in making the recommendation, to the effect that non-governmental organizations and institutions working in the field of disarmament were empowered to communicate directly with delegations. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the recommendation.

6. It was so decided.

7. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in order to enable the Committee to carry out its work as efficiently as possible, the first part of each morning meeting should be devoted to general debate and that when the list of speakers had been exhausted, the Committee should proceed to consider any questions that had been raised.

8. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to that procedure.

9. It was so decided.

10. The CHAIRMAN asked delegations to keep their statements to a minimum, since Governments had already had an opportunity to express their views on the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in the replies which they had been requested to submit to the Secretary-General not later than 5 April 1977. He suggested that, as far as possible, the length of statements should be limited to 15 minutes.

GENERAL DEBATE

11. Mr. PETRIC (Yugoslavia) said that the decision to convene a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament had been well received and approved by the whole international community, which had considered it an indispensable step towards the cessation of the arms race and, ultimately, general and complete disarmament.

12. The results of negotiations held so far had related in general to the control of armaments and not to disarmament itself. Furthermore, the existence of the Treaty banning Nuclear-weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water while underground tests were permitted to continue, and the refusal to conclude a treaty on the complete prohibition of all nuclear tests for military purposes, in spite of obligations embodied in the earlier Treaty, pointed to a lack of political readiness on the part of the nuclear Powers to take effective measures to put a stop to the nuclear arms race.

13. Although Yugoslavia welcomed the efforts exerted by the two leading military Powers and the agreements concluded between the United States and the Soviet Union on the control of strategic armaments, such agreements did not amount to disarmament measures but merely regulated the nuclear arms race, since the conventional weapons race still continued.

14. Although the conclusion of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons constituted an attempt to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to new
countries, that action had not met with success, which was hardly surprising in view of the fact that the leading nuclear Powers had continued to improve and augment the quantity of their nuclear weapons, the number of which had increased fivefold.

15. Instead of concentrating on solving major problems, namely, how to prevent qualitative sophistication and territorial spread of nuclear weapons, new tendencies had emerged aimed at limiting the right of all peoples to make use of nuclear energy and technology for the development of their productive forces. In his delegation's view, one of the main tasks of the special session should be to reach political agreement on how to prevent the sophistication and spread of nuclear weapons and how to ensure the free transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes under effective international control. His delegation was fully aware of the difficulties arising out of the delicate and complex character of that matter. It had been precisely those aspects of the disarmament issue that had prompted the non-aligned countries to propose the convening of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The special session should appraise the current status of the problem of disarmament, the results of negotiations, the consequences for and dangers to the process of détente constituted by the continuation of the arms race, and its consequences for the economic and social development of the international community, and should reach agreement on a programme of measures which would effectively solve some basic problems of disarmament and ensure greater and over-all involvement of the United Nations in that field. For that purpose, it was essential to agree on the measures to be implemented jointly, on the measures to be implemented by each State individually, in keeping with their position and responsibility vis-à-vis the international community, and on the negotiating machinery.

16. His Government felt that the agenda of the special session should be conceived in broad terms and include four fundamental items, namely, a general debate, preparation and adoption of a declaration on disarmament, preparation and adoption of a programme of disarmament measures, and the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. The question of convening a world disarmament conference could also be considered within that context.

17. In its reply to the Secretary-General, his Government had enumerated the elements which, in its view, should be incorporated in the declaration on disarmament and in the programme of disarmament measures. His delegation would present those questions during the proceedings of the Preparatory Committee, together with proposals concerning the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and the negotiating machinery.

18. With regard to the date of the special session, the organization of further work of the Preparatory Committee and similar questions, his delegation would co-operate closely with the other members of the Preparatory Committee, especially within the Group of non-aligned countries.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.