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

Second session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York
on Tuesday, 10 May 1977, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. ORTIZ de ROZAS (Argentina)

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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.
The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that, in accordance with the decision adopted by the Committee at the previous meeting, the Secretariat would circulate document A/AC.187/INF.2, which contained a list of communications concerning disarmament received from non-governmental organizations and research institutions.

2. Under the provisions of the Charter and the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, it was customary to invite the specialized agencies to take part in meetings of the Assembly or of its subsidiary organs by sending them a copy of the announcement of the convening of each session, and that was presumably an adequate procedure for inviting the specialized agencies to send observers to take part in the proceedings. Since resolution 31/189 B, in which it was decided to convene the special session devoted to disarmament and to establish the preparatory committee for the session, made no mention of the specialized agencies, he proposed that, if there was no objection, agencies concerned with disarmament should be invited to take part in the work of the committee with observer status.

3. It was so decided.

GENERAL DEBATE

4. Mrs. THORSSON (Sweden) emphasized the urgent need for the special session devoted to disarmament and her Government's determination to make an active contribution to it. The session should be a starting point for a new phase of joint disarmament efforts aimed at the gradual solution of specific problems within a reasonable time-frame. Sweden had repeatedly stated that the two super-Powers had a special responsibility for the future of the world since their combined armaments amounted to 60 per cent of the world total. Accordingly, substantial early progress in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) between the United States and the Soviet Union was one of the fundamental ingredients of world disarmament efforts. As in the case of SALT, progress towards a comprehensive nuclear-weapon test-ban agreement and towards the prohibition of chemical weapons depended ultimately on the mobilization of the necessary political will. Disarmament was a matter of serious concern to every nation, and efforts towards that goal must necessarily be multilateral. Sweden had from the very beginning attached the highest importance to the multilateral disarmament negotiations being conducted within the framework of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament at Geneva.

5. Early agreement on a draft agenda would facilitate the work of the Preparatory Committee. Her delegation felt that the agenda of the special session should be drafted in broad terms which indicated the type of action that the session was expected to take. The session should not devote too much time to an evaluation of past developments; if there was a real desire to achieve results, it should concentrate on future action. The views of delegations on the events which had led to the present situation could be recorded in a general debate but should not
be the subject of lengthy negotiations. Towards the end of the present session of the Committee, a decision should be taken on the intersessional work that was to be done. It was essential to maintain the momentum created by the General Assembly's decision to convene a special session devoted to disarmament. The preparation of drafts of the final documents should start as soon as possible.

6. Sweden's reply to the note of the Secretary-General (A/AC.187/19) gave an account of her Government's thinking on issues of substance relating to disarmament. It was largely modelled on the structure of the informal paper prepared by a number of non-aligned countries. The reply contained comments on a possible declaration of principles which would provide a new basis for the efforts of the international community in the field of disarmament, a programme of action which would give highest priority to nuclear disarmament, and, finally, organizational measures for the future, particularly with regard to the urgent problem of preventing further proliferation of nuclear weapons. The conventional arms build up in many parts of the world, involving ever more sophisticated weapons, was also cause for concern.

7. At the same time, she wished to stress the weight given in the Swedish reply to the need to clarify, in as concrete terms as possible, certain important aspects of the interrelationship between disarmament efforts and economic and social progress. Sweden proposed that the United Nations should undertake a new study of the subject which would deal in greater detail with certain very complex questions such as the effect of military spending on economic growth, inflation, the balance of trade, the supply of raw materials and other aspects of the economy. The study should also examine methods to be employed for a well-planned, controlled conversion of resources now being used for military production.

8. Her Government felt that the success of the special session could be ensured only through effective follow-up action on the decisions and recommendations adopted at the session. In that connexion, the United Nations Centre for Disarmament should be given an increased opportunity to carry out studies and information activities in the disarmament field. With regard to the possibility of convening a world disarmament conference, her Government had concluded that the prospects for convening such a conference with the participation of all the permanent members of the Security Council were unfortunately not very promising at the present time. The fact that her Government had proposed the convening of another special session devoted to disarmament after a period of three to five years should be viewed in the light of that assessment.

9. Mr. HOVEYDA (Iran) said that it was essential to the smooth functioning of the Preparatory Committee and, eventually, of the special session that the Committee should develop a collective theme and agree on a set of generally acceptable objectives for that collective venture.
10. The multitude of replies received so far contained numerous ideas and proposals relating to the objectives of the special session; although they were all important, it would be unrealistic to project all of them as goals for the session. It was imperative to determine by a process of selection those areas where there was a reasonable chance of obtaining results. The main objectives of the special session could best be elaborated by taking account of the following current trends: an unrestrained arms race and the growth of nuclear arsenals to an unbelievable level capable of destroying the whole world many times over had made disarmament more than ever an urgent and truly global problem in which the entire world had a vital stake; multilateral and bilateral treaties and agreements in the field of arms limitation and control had been of marginal value and had not resulted in the elimination of a single nuclear weapon; there was thus a need for a reassessment of the effects of the arms race on the economic development of all nations, especially the non-nuclear countries and those without significant military power.

11. There seemed to be a measure of agreement among most Member States as to the format within which the objectives of the special session could be achieved. In that connexion, the adoption of a declaration of principles and a programme of action was widely regarded as of cardinal importance. The Preparatory Committee should seek to direct its attention as soon as possible to the elaboration of an outline of those two basic documents.

12. The declaration should embody a set of guiding principles and contain, in broadly acceptable, clear terms, the essentials of a new approach to the complicated problem of disarmament. It should reflect current trends and realities and should re-emphasize old but still valid assumptions. It should cite the basic premises which underlay the decision to convene a special session, and it should provide a general framework for the substantive and institutional approaches necessary for action.

13. Although general and complete disarmament was the ultimate goal, short-term and immediate objectives should not be ignored. The necessary attention should be given to controlling the growth of armaments and also to the underlying sources of insecurity and the continuing conflicts and threats which created the demand for weapons. In preparing a declaration of principles, account should be taken of technological and political changes and of new economic realities, thoughts and trends. In a document intended to provide directions for follow-up measures, a broad outline of priorities was an essential element. Of no less importance was reasonable, realistic consideration of the varying degrees of responsibility of different countries on the basis of priorities in the field of disarmament.

14. A programme of action was a logical concomitant of a declaration of principles, and it was in the programme of action that the value of the special session would be determined. The desired aim was obviously not a hasty agreement on abstract priorities or a rigid programme and schedule of action. It was recognized that the implementation of any programme of action in that field was influenced by political and security considerations of the highest order and that an international atmosphere of distrust, in which goodwill and a willingness to co-operate were
lacking, would hardly be conducive to meaningful efforts to achieve disarmament. The programme of action should reflect those realities and offer a reasonable, balanced approach embodying the fundamental interests of the international community.

15. In the identification of particular areas of arms limitation where action was required and in the establishment of priorities for future negotiations, the following considerations seemed to be of particular importance: there seemed to be a measure of general agreement that nuclear arms limitation and reduction should be given the highest priority and should be pursued with the greatest urgency; all areas of nuclear arms control and, in particular, a comprehensive nuclear test ban called for careful attention at the special session; consideration should be given to the possibility of strengthening the non-proliferation régime by re-emphasizing the fundamental elements of the non-proliferation treaty, which included horizontal and vertical proliferation and the vital area of the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Other matters of concern were the security of non-nuclear-weapon States and progress in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks.

16. The programme of action should also deal with a number of other important issues, such as other weapons of mass destruction, confidence-building measures, the regulation of conventional armaments and review of disarmament machinery. His delegation would, when appropriate, express detailed and more specific views on those issues.

17. Mr. DÂTCU (Romania) said that the holding of a General Assembly session on disarmament was of special importance, not only because it was the first time in the history of the Organization that Member States would be considering the question of disarmament at a special session but also because the session would be prepared and held at a time when the whole world was endeavouring to institute a new international economic order.

18. The United Nations was far from having accomplished the mission entrusted to it on the subject of disarmament, although it had been dealing with the problem since its establishment. Negotiations on disarmament had gradually drifted away from the United Nations and those that were still being conducted under its auspices had, in actual fact, lost their original content. Three decades had elapsed since its foundation and the United Nations was still not exercising direct competence in the matter of negotiations on military disengagement and disarmament. Furthermore, Governments had not taken resolute action to reduce or do away with armaments and make mankind safe from another war. The international conventions and treaties concluded thus far had certainly helped to create a climate of greater understanding, but had not succeeded in curbing the armaments race or ensuring the application of effective disarmament measures. In the present circumstances, which were characterized by immobility in disarmament negotiations, the armaments race had intensified, as had the development, diversification and the stockpiling of nuclear and conventional arsenals. While billions of dollars were being spent on armaments, problems of under-development and economic inequality were worsening. It was clear that the strategy, measures, proposals, approaches, rules and procedures applied so far were not yielding the desired results.
19. The time had come to make radical changes in disarmament negotiations and in proposed approaches and measures, as well as in the machinery for the conduct of negotiations. The United Nations certainly had special responsibilities and competence in the matter. The President of Romania, Mr. Ceausescu, had stated that the special United Nations session on disarmament should make it possible to move towards the adoption of concrete disarmament measures and, first and foremost, nuclear disarmament.

20. In a position paper circulated at the thirtieth session of the General Assembly, Romania had submitted its views and specific proposals on a disarmament programme. It had also stated that it was in favour of holding a world disarmament conference.

21. The time had come for disarmament talks to be placed under the auspices of the United Nations, and held in forums open to all States and under the control of world public opinion. In order to discharge its fundamental duty of defending the peace and security of peoples, the United Nations should exert its authority in matters relating to negotiations on disarmament and the adoption of appropriate measures, as well as on the supervision of their implementation. The first General Assembly session on disarmament would have a very important function, since it would be the forum for the adoption of decisions vital to international peace and security. Principles, decisions and measures would be adopted to institute a new era of negotiations, the era of real and concrete disarmament, under strict and effective international control.

22. The special session would need careful preparation, and in that connexion the Committee would have an important part to play, since the guidelines, strategies and documents to be adopted and the future structure of negotiations would largely emerge from its work. It might be said that the special session began with the deliberations of the Committee and, consequently, the Committee had the duty to give the General Assembly the opportunity to adopt clear-cut, specific and constructive documents and to set the disarmament negotiations on the right path. The Committee's activities should be conducted in such a way as to ensure that all interested States could participate in the proceedings and negotiations and that closed groups were avoided.

23. The agenda for the special session should be clear and precise and be strictly linked to the subject-matter, so as to show the dangers of the armaments race and the short-comings in the negotiations held so far on the subject, and an effort should be made to outline measures to be adopted in the future. The agenda should include the following items: consideration of the situation created in the field of nuclear and conventional armaments and the status and results of the negotiations on disarmament; measures to be adopted by the United Nations to ensure that disarmament negotiations could start moving, so that viable agreements could be concluded leading to general and complete disarmament, and especially nuclear disarmament; and the function of the United Nations in the disarmament field.
24. The Declaration should set forth the principles governing disarmament negotiations, their objectives and priorities, the strategy and the tactics for all action relating to disarmament.

25. The Programme of Action, covering various phases, should contain concrete measures to promote confidence and co-operation among States.

26. The Committee would also have to prepare draft decisions and recommendations on the negotiating machinery providing for the establishment of viable structures with full authority that were also flexible and operated in accordance with democratic working rules and procedures, and allowed for the participation of all States interested in disarmament negotiations.

27. In order to discharge its functions the Committee must work at a faster pace. One of its first tasks would be the preparation of the provisional agenda for the special session. However, it would also have to begin to prepare drafts for the Declaration, the Programme of Action and documents on negotiating machinery, since any delay in those tasks could jeopardize both quality and content. The Committee would also have to make the maximum use of the time at its disposal.

28. **Mr. Jaroszek** (Poland) said that the Government of Poland had already stated its well-substantiated position on the preparations and agenda for the special session in document A/AC.187/12, submitted in response to the note from the Secretary-General. That position was based on three inseparable political components: first, that the most important and pressing task of the international community was to put an end to the arms race and achieve effective disarmament agreements; secondly, that the imperative need for disarmament was necessitated by considerations of strengthening world security and eliminating the threat of a new world war, and that it represented the basic foundation for ensuring irreversibility of the processes of political détente; thirdly, that progress in limiting the arms race and in disarmament could truly and effectively serve the establishment of a new international economic order. That position derived from the genuine conviction that international relations in the present-day world could only be based on détente and co-operation and that the trends in that direction would continue to develop and take firmer root. It was therefore both feasible and necessary to promote the processes of détente so that they extended to all nations, which implied the elimination of sources of tension and conflict, and so that those processes also extended to new spheres of international endeavour, including, in the first place, the military sphere, which necessarily implied efforts to limit the arms race and achieve progress in disarmament.

29. Poland was determined to persist in its efforts to promote disarmament on all planes, including the United Nations, which had an important role to play in that field. Nothing should be done to weaken existing disarmament machinery whose establishment had taken three decades.
30. The Government of Poland had supported the idea of holding a special General Assembly session devoted to disarmament, because it was an incentive for mobilizing the efforts of Governments towards more meaningful disarmament measures. In that connexion there was a direct relationship between the special session and the world disarmament conference, the idea of which had originated with the non-aligned countries and had subsequently been proposed in the General Assembly by the Soviet Union. In view of those considerations the agenda for the special session should include: (1) a general debate on disarmament; (2) preparations for the holding of a world disarmament conference; (3) the function of United Nations in the field of disarmament; and (4) the adoption of the final document or documents.

31. In fact, Poland's position coincided with that of the non-aligned countries regarding other aspects of the special session end of disarmament. For example, it was important that the special session should discuss the military, political, economic and social consequences of the arms race and define the relationship between disarmament, development and the restructuring of international economic relations, especially since the arms race was increasingly obstructing mankind's progress. In the Soviet memorandum of 28 September 1976, a comprehensive programme of action had been submitted which took account of the world situation and the ideas put forward in the Colombo Political Declaration which could be useful for the work of the Committee.

32. It was to be hoped that at the special session consideration would be given to a wide range of issues in the field of nuclear disarmament, and to measures to put an end to the arms race and limit armed forces and conventional armaments. The special session should take account at the same time of the basic security requirements of all States. In the view of the Polish Government, progress could only be made if the approach to disarmament was based on realistic premises, namely on the principles of undiminished security of every State, respect for inadmissibility of unilateral military advantages, universality of disarmament, effective limitation and reduction of military potentials, strict adherence to and full implementation of accepted obligations, refraining from actions detrimental to disarmament efforts and the adoption of global and regional measures to promote further strengthening of détente and growth of international confidence.

33. Given those conditions, one could envisage the possibility of viable agreements for prohibiting the use and production of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, reducing their number and finally eliminating them. Those objectives would be furthered by agreements on the general and complete prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, the banning and destruction of chemical weapons, the establishment of zones of peace and nuclear-free zones, and effective action to consolidate the non-proliferation régime.

34. One prerequisite for meaningful progress in that regard was the universality of disarmament processes. Without underestimating the role, capacities and
obligations of the nuclear-weapon States, it must be borne in mind that disarmament was an historic necessity, incumbent upon all States without exception, and that States large and small, developed and developing alike should make their contribution to disarmament. It was therefore essential that all States should participate not only at the discussion stage but also in the implementation of disarmament measures.

35. If it was to prove effective, the disarmament process must not only be comprehensive in scope and universal in character but also reflect an agreed, common approach to disarmament on the part of participants. Decision-making by consensus and the equitable participation of all groups of States in the preparatory process were therefore pre-conditions for success. He observed that, because of the mechanical application of a formula which might have been valid in other bodies, the socialist States were seriously underrepresented in the composition of the Preparatory Committee. In disarmament efforts, a proper reflection of the existing world relationship of forces was a consideration that could not be ignored. His delegation therefore hoped that the current imbalance in the Committee would be duly rectified.

36. His delegation felt that the preparations for the special session and the session itself represented an important step in the over-all disarmament effort. The United Nations had made an outstanding contribution to that effort, and the agendas of successive sessions of the General Assembly had seen dozens of disarmament initiatives submitted by Member States. With a view to profiting from what had been achieved to date, his delegation proposed that, for the next session of the Preparatory Committee, the Secretariat should compile a document listing disarmament proposals officially submitted to the United Nations. The list should present the substance of the proposal, the date and country of submission, and the status of its follow-up. He was convinced that such a document would be very useful both to the Committee and to the special session of the General Assembly. In accordance with its traditional position, his delegation stood ready to participate in the preparations for the special session with a view to ensuring the latter's success.

37. Mr. AMERASINGHE (Sri Lanka), speaking on behalf of the members of the Preparatory Committee belonging to the Group of Non-Aligned Countries, submitted a draft agenda for the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. He recalled that the idea of holding such a session had first arisen at Belgrade in 1961 during the First Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries. The Fifth Conference of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Colombo in 1976, had revived that proposal because of its deep dissatisfaction and disillusionment at the failure of the various negotiations on disarmament and its conviction that one of the factors contributing to that failure was that such negotiations took place in an exclusive forum. For those reasons, the Conference had felt that it was appropriate to urge the convening of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and had welcomed with great satisfaction the adoption by consensus of General Assembly resolution 31/189 B.
38. The first item on the agenda proposed by the Group of Non-Aligned Countries called for review and appraisal of the present international situation in the light of the lack of progress in the field of disarmament, since the non-aligned countries believed that the situation was seriously affecting international conditions in general. In that connexion, emphasis should be placed on the close link between economic development and disarmament, which the non-aligned countries regarded as extremely important. It was no secret that the inflation currently afflicting the world was the result of the huge sums spent on armaments. Although the non-aligned countries did not believe that the resources released by a reduction in arms expenditure should necessarily be used to promote economic development through assistance to the developing countries, they felt that doing so would benefit both the developed and the developing countries.

39. If the entire international community was to participate in discussion of the disarmament problem, it was essential to reach an agreement on the principles which were to govern the matter. The non-aligned countries therefore gave high priority to the adoption of a declaration of principles on disarmament and to its logical corollary, a programme of action which would make those principles effective. Experience showed that the United Nations as a whole did not play an important role in discussions of disarmament, and the non-aligned countries believed that that situation should be brought to an end.

40. In proposing the convening of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Colombo, had referred to three main subjects which should be dealt with at that session, namely, the problem of disarmament, the drawing up of a set of priorities and recommendations, and the convening of a world disarmament conference as part of the international machinery of negotiations on that subject. In conclusion, he stated that the Group of Non-Aligned Countries was always prepared to hold consultations with other States or groups of States belonging to the Committee and hoped that through such consultations it would be possible to reach a consensus on the agenda with a view to avoiding lengthy debates which would take up the limited time available to the Committee.

41. Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) recalled that, in accordance with a suggestion made by the Chairman at the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee, held on 29 March 1977 (A/AC.187/3R.2), the Committee had decided to request the Secretariat to begin the preliminary work on such factual background papers on disarmament as might be needed for the Committee's work, including a presentation of all disarmament resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, a paper on the existing principles and proposals for the conduct of disarmament negotiations and a description of existing structures and machinery for disarmament negotiations. He inquired whether those factual background papers were already available and if not, when they would be made available.

42. In accordance with the invitation issued by the General Assembly in operative paragraph 3 of its resolution 31/189 B, some Member States had communicated their views on the agenda and all other relevant questions relating to the special...
session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. His delegation felt it would be desirable, as on a previous occasion, for the Secretariat to prepare a document in which, under appropriate headings, it would classify and summarize the replies received from Member States, setting forth the gist of their views and including quotations from them. The reply from the Government of Mexico (A/AC.187/34) mentioned 10 subjects on which, in that Government's opinion, working papers should be prepared. His delegation felt that such papers would be very useful both to the Preparatory Committee and to the special session itself.

43. The CHAIRMAN observed that the representative of Mexico had made three suggestions: the first involved a question to the Secretariat concerning the stage reached in the preparation of the background documents mentioned at the second meeting.

44. Mr. ALEM (Secretary of the Committee) recalled that at the second meeting of the current session of the Preparatory Committee three documents had been mentioned: a presentation of disarmament resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, a paper on existing principles and proposals for the conduct of disarmament negotiations and a description of the existing structures and machinery for disarmament negotiations.

45. The Centre for Disarmament had made great efforts to complete the papers but had encountered some difficulties. Many documents dated back to 1946 and were very difficult to obtain, while others were not United Nations documents and were not available in all languages. The paper on existing principles and proposals for the conduct of disarmament negotiations and the description of existing structures and machinery for such negotiations were provisionally expected to be available at the end of the current week. The presentation of disarmament resolutions adopted by the General Assembly could also be made available at the end of the current week, if the Committee wished to have it in English.

46. The CHAIRMAN requested the Secretariat to circulate the English text of the presentation of resolutions as soon as possible, without prejudice to the ongoing task of translating the text into the other languages.

47. With regard to the second suggestion by the representative of Mexico, the Secretariat would certainly wish to study it quietly and evaluate it before providing a detailed reply concerning the method of preparing a paper comparing the replies received. With regard to the third proposal of the representative of Mexico, in connexion with which mention had been made of the 10 documents referred to in the reply of the Government of Mexico, he wished to point out that all the comments and proposals made in the Preparatory Committee would serve to guide and orient its work, and he regarded as most constructive the proposals of Mexico and the draft agenda submitted by Sri Lanka, which contained interesting elements that would enable the Committee to have a fruitful exchange of ideas.

48. Mr. BORDEN (Canada) said it would be desirable for the Secretariat to prepare an informal paper listing the items regularly included in the agenda of General
Assembly sessions, such as the minute of silent prayer or meditation, examination of credentials, and so on. It would also be desirable to set up a system whereby the Fifth Committee would consider draft resolutions or decisions that might have financial implications.

49. The CHAIRMAN said the Secretariat had informed him that it would prepare an informal list as requested by the representative of Canada.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.