DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 2 December 1985, at 3 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. AHMAD (Pakistan)

- Opening of the session
- Adoption of the agenda
- Election of the Chairman and other officers
- Review of the draft resolutions adopted by the First Committee of the General Assembly at its fortieth session relating to the Disarmament Commission
- Draft provisional agenda for the 1986 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages, preferably in the same language as the text to which they refer. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also, if possible, incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

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.

85-64736 6496V (E)
The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: We are meeting today for a brief session to deal with organizational matters including in particular the election of the Commission's officers for 1986 and its draft provisional agenda for the next substantive session.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The CHAIRMAN: The Commission has before it the provisional agenda for this session, in document A/CN.10/L.17. If I hear no objection I shall take it that the Commission agrees to adopt it.

The agenda was adopted.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN AND OTHER OFFICERS

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with the principle of rotation of the chairmanship of the Commission, the candidacy for the chairmanship for 1986 should come from the Group of Western European and Other States. In that connection I am pleased to report to the Commission that I have received a letter from the Chairman of that Group informing me that the Group has endorsed the candidacy of Ambassador Henning Wegener of the Federal Republic of Germany for election to the post of Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for the year 1986.

If I hear no comments I shall take it that it is the Commission's wish that the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, Ambassador Henning Wegener, be elected Chairman by acclamation.

It was so decided.
The CHAIRMAN: I now declare that the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Henning Wegener, has been elected Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for 1986. Ambassador Henning Wegener, as we all know, is a distinguished diplomat of his country, with very diverse knowledge, experience and diplomatic skills. He is known in United Nations circles, both in New York and in Geneva, as a member of the First Committee and other bodies dealing with disarmament and as head of his country's delegation to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva since 1981. I personally have had the pleasure of knowing him well in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and have found him a most co-operative colleague, very active in the work of the Conference and very dedicated to the work of the Conference in general. I would like to convey to him my warmest congratulations and wish him success in the conduct of the Commission's work during 1986.

I should now like to proceed to the election of the other officers of the Committee, namely, eight Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur, for the year 1986. I have received information that the Group of Western European and Other States has put forward the candidacy of Australia for Vice-Chairman, and that the Group of Eastern European States has endorsed the candidacy of the People's Republic of Hungary and the People's Republic of Poland for Vice-Chairmen of the Committee. The Group of Asian States and the Group of African States have endorsed, respectively, the candidacies of Burma and Cameroon for Vice-Chairmen.

If I hear no comment, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect the representatives of the countries I have just indicated—Australia, Hungary, Poland, Burma and Cameroon—as Vice-Chairmen of the 1986 session of the Disarmament Commission, by acclamation.

It was so decided.
The CHAIRMAN: As for the remaining officers of the Committee, I understand that consultations are under way within the regional groups concerned to select candidates for the Bureau for 1986.

I now call upon the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. WEGENER (Federal Republic of Germany): I am deeply honoured to have been elected to the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for 1986. I am grateful to all delegations for the confidence they have thus placed in me. May I assure them that I will undertake to the very best of my ability to justify that confidence. I would also like to welcome those of my fellow officers who have already been elected, and to congratulate them warmly.

You, Mr. Chairman, have demonstrated over the past year in an exemplary fashion how the Disarmament Commission needs to be led. In a masterful, extremely well-organized and persuasive manner, you presided over the Commission's substantive session in May of last year. Dignity, calmness and fairness – in addition to your widely recognized competence in the field – have been the characteristics of your tenure as Chairman. At one moment, when obstacles were placed in the way of the smooth functioning of the Commission's work, you cleared them away with tact and determination. Your example will be a source of inspiration to your successors – among them, myself, as the first to shoulder the responsibilities you have assumed over the past year. I would be reassured if, throughout the coming session, I could count on your wise counsel and assistance.

As we all know, the Disarmament Commission is an important organ of the multilateral disarmament process. Its functions and its mode of operation are clearly spelt out in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The Commission affords the unique opportunity for all States Members of the United Nations to participate in an in-depth consideration of important disarmament agenda items with a view to elaborating
specific recommendations for the benefit of the General Assembly itself. In contrast with the hectic pace that usually prevails during the annual session of the First Committee, where every aspect of the disarmament process is to be reviewed, it is the privilege of the Commission to select, from among the items assigned to it, a few for more complete and more serious treatment.

The advantage of the Commission's format thus lies in the possibility of subjecting individual issues to rational, argumentative consideration, illuminating them from all sides and examining all relevant proposals. This presupposes a well-structured work programme for the Commission and makes it imperative that when the Commission convenes for its substantive session no time is lost in procedural controversy and that the in-depth work process can begin at the very commencement of the session.

The basic pattern of the organizational arrangement of the Commission's work in past years has been conducive to such serious work: the bare minimum of general debate and the early establishment of working groups on a limited number of subjects provides, in principle, the recipe for the successful elaboration of specific recommendations on a limited number of agenda items.

The application of that formula would certainly be facilitated by a process of consultations preceding the substantive session. There is no reason why a well-structured consultative process should not last throughout the period between the present organizational session of the Commission and its substantive meetings in May of next year. The higher the level of agreement on the organizational arrangements for the substantive session, the more propitious the early stages of the Commission's work in May.
Traditionally, as in the First Committee of the General Assembly, the Commission's meetings are attended by colleagues both from Geneva and from New York. It would therefore seem opportune to involve both delegations in Geneva and delegations in New York in the consultative process. In order to allow delegations to focus on the needs of the Commission's substantive work early on - and provided delegations agree - I should therefore like to benefit from my present sojourn in New York by having a first round of informal consultations for those delegations that wish to participate in them. I have made arrangements with the Secretary for a first meeting of approximately one hour on Friday, 6 December. The meeting will be announced in the Journal.
I should be grateful if delegations would participate in this informal meeting, which will serve to clear our minds on how best to approach the various items on the agenda and to achieve a level of consensus on any outstanding procedural issues at the earliest possible time. I would expect to hold a second consultative meeting in New York around 15 March 1986. At the same time, I would plan to consult colleagues in Geneva on an ongoing basis.

The challenge of the 1986 session of the Disarmament Commission is obvious. In the first place, important disarmament agenda items have been entrusted to the Commission by the General Assembly this year, and they deserve full and serious examination by the Commission. As in the past, those underlying General Assembly resolutions that have been adopted by consensus will be the most promising ones upon which specific consensus recommendations can be based. It would be my hope, and certainly my ambition, that at least some of the subjects on the Commission's agenda that would lend themselves to specific recommendations could be dealt with by the Commission in a definitive manner, obviating the need for them to stay on the Commission's agenda for many additional years.

The challenge that is provided by those important agenda items is heightened by the overall political situation in which the organs of the multilateral disarmament process find themselves at this juncture. The Commission will meet shortly before the second summit meeting of the two major Powers is expected to take place. Benefiting from the much-improved atmosphere between the Soviet Union and the United States and from their undertakings to accelerate the various disarmament negotiations now under way, the Commission should feel compelled to make its own contribution to the present stage of the disarmament process, a contribution that could help, however modestly, to create the propitious circumstances under which the two leaders could at the second important summit
meeting forcefully build upon the success of their recent first meeting. We are all convinced that disarmament can best be achieved by the combined thrust of bilateral, regional and multilateral disarmament steps. Bilateral and multilateral disarmament must proceed in constructive parallelism, mutually reinforcing one another. In this sense, the Commission's 1986 session takes on added importance.

It is my hope that all delegations to the forthcoming substantive session will feel this challenge and seriously determine to make the best possible use of the Commission's time and to produce tangible and future-oriented results.

REVIEW OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FORTIETH SESSION RELATING TO THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

The CHAIRMAN: As members of the Commission are aware, the First Committee has at its current session adopted seven draft resolutions which have a direct relevance to the Commission's work. Those draft resolutions will of course be adopted by the General Assembly later in plenary meeting. For ready reference, I should like to refer to those draft resolutions one by one.

The first is draft resolution A/C.1/40/L.12, adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 62, "Reduction of military budgets". Operative paragraph 4 of that draft resolution reads as follows:

"Requests the Disarmament Commission to continue the consideration of the item entitled 'Reduction of military budgets,' and, in this context, to finalize, at its substantive session in 1986, the principles that should govern the actions of States in the field of freezing and reduction of military expenditures".

The second is draft resolution A/C.1/40/L.36, adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 68, "General and complete disarmament," with regard to study on the naval arms race. Operative paragraph 7 of that draft resolution reads:
"Requests the Disarmament Commission to consider, at its forthcoming session in 1986, the issues contained in the study on the naval arms race, both its substantive content and its conclusions, taking into account all other relevant present and future proposals".

The third is draft resolution A/C.1/40/L.40, adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 59, "Implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa: nuclear capability of South Africa". Operative paragraph 7 of that draft resolution reads:

"Requests the Disarmament Commission to consider during its 1986 session ... South Africa's nuclear capability, taking into account, inter alia, the findings of the report of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research on South Africa's nuclear capability".

The fourth is draft resolution A/C.1/40/L.41, adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 65 (a), "Report of the Disarmament Commission". There are, as delegations will recall, five operative paragraphs in that draft resolution. I should like at this stage to draw attention to operative paragraph 3, which reads:

"Requests the Disarmament Commission to continue its work in accordance with its mandate, as set forth in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, the first special session devoted to disarmament, and with paragraph 3 of resolution 37/78 H, and to that end to make every effort to achieve specific recommendations, at its next substantive session, on the outstanding items on its agenda, taking into account the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly as well as the results of its 1985 substantive session".

The fifth draft resolution, A/C.1/40/L.46/Rev.1, was adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 68 (I), "General and complete disarmament: curbing the naval arms race: limitation and reduction of naval armaments and extension of
confidence-building measures to seas and oceans". Operative paragraph 5 of that draft resolution reads as follows:

"Requests the Disarmament Commission to continue the consideration of this question as a matter of priority in an appropriate subsidiary body, taking due account of the proposals made and the views expressed on the subject-matter contained in the replies of Member States to the Secretary-General, in the verbatim records of the Disarmament Commission, in the working papers and in the United Nations study on this question, as well as of future initiatives with a view to submitting its recommendations to the General Assembly at its forty-first session".

The sixth is draft resolution A/C.1/40/L.58/Rev.1, adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 65 (m), "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session: implementation of the recommendations and decisions of the tenth special session". Operative paragraph 6 of that draft resolution reads as follows:

(The Chairman)
"Calls upon the Disarmament Commission to intensify its work in accordance with its mandate and to continue improving its work with a view to making concrete recommendations on specific items on its agenda".

The seventh is draft resolution A/C.1/40/L.72, adopted by the First Committee under agenda item 68 (g), "General and complete disarmament: review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament". Operative paragraphs 1 and 2 read as follows:

"Requests the Disarmament Commission to continue its consideration ... with a view to the elaboration of concrete recommendations and proposals ... on the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament ...;

"Further requests the Disarmament Commission to submit its report on the subject, including findings, recommendations and proposals ... to the General Assembly at its forty-first session".

Those are the seven draft resolutions that have a direct relevance to the Commission's work.

DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE 1986 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

The CHAIRMAN: I draw the attention of delegations to Conference Room Paper A/CN.10/1985/CRP.3. In preparing that paper, account has been taken of the relevant draft resolutions approved by the First Committee and to be adopted later by the General Assembly and of the recommendations in the Commission's report to the fortieth session of the General Assembly (A/40/42, Supplement No. 42) as well as of General Assembly resolution 39/63 E regarding the consideration of guidelines for confidence-building measures.

This is a draft provisional agenda and has been circulated for the preliminary information and consideration of delegations.

In his statement Ambassador Wegener indicated that he would himself be holding informal consultations, the first in a series, on Friday, 6 December, at which
organizational questions, including the agenda for the Commission's 1986 session, will, I am sure, be taken up.

Mr. NEYCHEV (Bulgaria): We have just received this document containing the provisional agenda for the 1986 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission (A/CN.10/1985/CRP.8) and we have not yet had the time to examine it very carefully. My delegation, therefore, is in a position only to take the document under consideration for the present.

We have some questions with regard to its seventh item, for, with regard to curbing the naval arms race, the limitation and reduction of naval armaments and the extension of confidence-building measures to the seas and oceans, we feel the need for more time for consultations and to receive some instructions from our Foreign Ministry.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to add that in item 4 of the draft provisional agenda in A/CN.10/1985/CRP.8, "Reduction of military budgets," sub-paragraph (b), the sixth line, the language of the relevant draft resolution is: "taking into account the provisions of General Assembly resolutions ... with a view to finalizing the principles which should govern further actions of States," instead of "identifying and elaborating the principles". "Finalizing" is the word used in the relevant draft resolution adopted by the First Committee at this session. I would ask delegations to make that correction in the paper that has been distributed.

Since there are no further comments on the draft provisional agenda, the Commission has concluded its consideration of the items on its agenda for this meeting. I thank delegations for having attended this afternoon's meeting and declare the 1985 organizational session of the Disarmament Commission closed.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.