DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 16 May 1989, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGeya (Zaire)

- Statement by the Chairman
- Reports by Chairmen of subsidiary bodies

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): This year at the beginning of its session the Disarmament Commission was able to settle all questions regarding the organization of its work. It also finished on schedule the general exchange of views.

On Wednesday, 10 May, the subsidiary bodies began to consider the agenda items assigned to them, and each group has already held a number of meetings. I wish to express to all delegations my sincere gratitude for the spirit of co-operation that they have shown, which has contributed to the smooth progress of our work. The conference services available have been used efficiently, in accordance with the weekly programme of work.

REPORTS BY CHAIRMEN OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): As scheduled, we are to hear today the first series of oral interim progress reports presented by the Chairmen of the various subsidiary bodies. That will enable us to evaluate the present status of the consideration of various questions and will facilitate our work during the next stage of our deliberations.

I now call on the Chairman of the Contact Group on Agenda Item 4, concerning the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament, Mr. Sergey Martynov of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Mr. MARTYNOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Contact Group 4 on Agenda Item 4 has had four meetings, in the course of which it first decided on its working methods and then began its work. The Group decided to continue its work on the draft recommendations resulting from earlier years' work in the Commission.
The Group gave a "first reading" to its draft recommendation, as a result of which we set aside a group of recommendations requiring more thorough work. We hope that after this concentrated effort it will be possible to reach agreement on certain texts or to update others, taking into account events in the past year.

The Group has begun its "second reading" of a number of recommendations, and that consideration is actively proceeding.

Furthermore, a number of delegations are carrying out consultations on draft recommendations which have not yet been considered in the whole Group. We expect this week to receive the results of those consultations, and we plan to study those drafts in the Group. We shall be ready to report the results of our work this week to the next plenary meeting of the Commission.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): The next speaker is the Chairman of the Consultation Group on Agenda Item 5, "Reduction of military budgets", Mr. Valeriu Floorean of Romania.
Mr. FLOREAN (Romania) (interpretation from French): At the outset I should like to express to you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Commission my sincere appreciation for being allowed to preside over the work of the Consultation Group on Item 5. That Group has held four meetings and has worked in accordance with the mandate assigned to the Committee in General Assembly resolution 43/73. In order to formulate recommendations, we have continued our deliberations on the remaining paragraph of the principles which should govern further actions of States in the field of freezing and reduction of military budgets.

The Consultation Group began its deliberations on the basis of the language of that paragraph, as explained in the report of the Disarmament Commission on its 1988 session. A number of proposals were put forward by delegations, in particular in respect of the last sentence of the remaining paragraph, contained in square brackets, and taking into account the general language of the paragraph as a whole. Although some proposals were very similar in content, there was difficulty in reaching agreement because of different approaches to the drafting of the paragraph and its purpose.

Furthermore, some delegations brought up the question of the reopening of discussion on principles that had been agreed upon earlier by consensus. Other delegations, however, were not in agreement. At the recommendation of the Commission's Bureau, the Consultation Group is at present, in keeping with its mandate, concentrating on the remaining paragraphs of the principles without touching upon other agreed principles. It is trying to agree on unanimously acceptable language for paragraph 7 on the basis of proposals that have been put forward, after which it will be necessary for the Commission to hold consultations on how to solve other problems that have been raised— all this with a view to the final adoption of the document.
This will be a significant work week for the Consultation Group, for what is accomplished will affect the possibility of agreement being reached on the final paragraphs of the principles.

I do not wish to miss this opportunity to observe that in the course of the general debate many positive things were said concerning the chances of completing our consideration of agenda item 5, concerning military budgets, at this session. On this occasion I should like again to appeal to delegations to show flexibility, to be co-operative and to act in a spirit of compromise so that we can complete our work successfully.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): The Commission has heard the appeal of the Chairman of the Consultation Group on Item 5, Mr. Florean of Romania, for co-operation in the work of that Consultative Group. We hope his appeal will be heeded and that there will be agreement in his Group on paragraph 7. We also hope he will continue his consultations on other questions that may arise within his Group.

I now call on the Chairman of Working Group I on Agenda Item 6, South Africa's nuclear capability, Ambassador Jayasinghe of Sri Lanka.

Mr. JAYASINGHE (Sri Lanka): Working Group I on Agenda Item 6 held four formal meetings.

At its first meeting, the Working Group agreed to consider as a basis for its work the text of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Disarmament Commission to the fifteenth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to disarmament. After a general exchange of views the Working Group began the substantive part of its work of examining the texts paragraph by paragraph. By the end of last year's session the Working Group had reached agreement on a total of eight paragraphs. The Group began this year's work on the remaining 10 paragraphs.
Yesterday, at its fourth meeting, the Working Group almost completed the second reading of the outstanding paragraphs of its working paper. Although further discussions are still needed before we can assess the concrete achievements of this session, the Working Group has come close to agreement on a certain number of paragraphs. In that respect I am grateful to the delegations participating in Working Group I for having conducted the discussions in a very constructive atmosphere. I am confident that sustained efforts to harmonize our views and consultations among delegations on the remaining paragraphs under consideration in a spirit of compromise will contribute to a positive and significant outcome of our deliberations on this important issue.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): We shall now hear the representative of Indonesia, who will speak on behalf of Ambassador Sutresna, who is not in New York and was Co-ordinator of the Consultation Group on Item 8, on naval armaments and disarmament.

Mr. WIDODO (Indonesia): In his unavoidable absence, the Co-ordinator of the Consulation Group on Item 8 has authorized me to report to the Commission on the work of the Group. It held two meetings on Wednesday, 10 May. As is known, no meeting of the Group is scheduled this week. Nevertheless the Group is expected to have a round of informal consultations this week with a view to facilitating the work of the Co-ordinator during next week's consultations.

It is worth reporting that some delegations have already submitted their working papers, namely documents A/CN.10/119 and 121, by Bulgaria and Sweden respectively.
The Co-ordinator himself stated last week that he welcomes the submission of such papers, and he urged the other delegations to follow suit. It is the Co-ordinator's wish to attempt to prepare a preliminary paper of his own early next week, taking into consideration the input of participants and pertinent documents, in particular the earlier Chairmen's papers on agenda item 8.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Co-ordinator I would like to thank the participants for their kind co-operation.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I now call upon Ambassador Mellbin of Denmark, Chairman of Working Group III, on agenda item 9, "Substantive consideration of issues related to conventional disarmament".

Mr. MELLBIN (Denmark): Working Group III has held four meetings. At its first meeting, the Working Group decided to tackle the business at hand by having a general debate at the outset of its deliberations to allow delegations that so wished to make their views known. It was felt that such a debate would serve to create the broadest possible basis for the Group's report to the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

That general debate was concluded yesterday. Today, I shall present to the Working Group a draft report in which I have tried to take into consideration the main viewpoints expressed during the general debate, as well as the discussions we had in earlier years and developments since we last met, always bearing in mind that our aim is to come up with a report of substantial content to be adopted by consensus.

From here on, I expect the remaining meetings of the Working Group to be devoted to discussion about and drafting of our report. Time will show what progress can be made.
Before concluding, and in order to expedite the proceedings of the Working Group, I should like to remind delegations that a conference room paper containing the text of the Chairman's draft report of Working Group III, to which I have just referred, is now available at the desk by the exit to this room.

The President (interpretation from French): I now call upon the Chairman of Working Group IV, on agenda item 10, "Consideration of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade," Ambassador Ravix of Haiti.

Mr. Ravix (Haiti) (interpretation from French): Working Group IV on agenda item 10, "Consideration of the declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade", has held three meetings so far.

The first meeting, on 10 May, was devoted to the organization of work. It was decided that the next two meetings would be devoted to an exchange of views, in the light of the fact that this was a new subject embracing a broad range of questions related to disarmament and to international peace and security. The last meeting of the Working Group was reserved for the examination and adoption of the report to the Disarmament Commission.

On 11 May we began the exchange of views and heard statements and proposals from a number of member States. That phase of the work ended with the Group's third meeting on 12 May.

At the present time we have received a number of responses, which are contained in documents A/CN.10/115 and Add.1 and A/CN.10/116, and three working documents submitted by Nigeria, the German Democratic Republic and India. Further responses and proposals are to be submitted by the end of today.

The discussions on the characteristics, structure and elements of a future declaration were interesting and lively. I find it particularly encouraging to note that a spirit of co-operation was manifested by most delegations and that
there was an extensive convergence of views. The importance of the 1990s as the
Third Disarmament Decade was recognized by all, and it is to be hoped that the
declaration will give impetus to the various negotiations and general guidance and
orientation to the process of disarmament in the last decade of this century. All
deleagations also seemed to agree that the document to be drafted should be brief
and that it should contain the elements of a draft declaration. A number of
members suggested that we should use the preamble of the text drafted by the
Chairman of the Commission at the third special session of the General Assembly
devoted to disarmament.

All members agreed that the text should include the positive achievements
recently recorded in the field of disarmament and that it should stress the need to
strengthen and promote such trends.

Various methods were suggested for promoting the objectives and measures for
the new Decade. Differences of view do, however, exist with regard to the order of
priority of the agenda items for the Third Disarmament Decade. Although most
deleagations hope that that will be future-oriented, some warned against the
adoption of overly ambitious and unrealistic objectives. Others considered that we
should draw up a new model for security based on non-violence.

Nevertheless, all delegations appeared very eager to examine all the proposals
presented and to work towards the preparation of a consensus text for the draft
declaration. A powerful unifying factor is the wish of delegations to focus the
attention of the international community once again on the importance that all
disarmament efforts continue to represent and to strengthen the deeply held feeling
that the strengthening of international peace and security is in the interests of
all.
I do not know how we can overcome all the difficulties and obstacles that await us, but I am hopeful that the common positions I have just mentioned and the wish expressed by representatives to adopt a consensus text will enable us to be successful in our work.

In the light of those considerations, I shall hold consultations and may submit a working document to the Chairman on the elements to be included in the draft declaration.

The President (interpretation from French): I now call upon Mr. Adeyemi of Nigeria, who will report on behalf of the Chairman of Working Group II, on agenda item 7, "Review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament".
Mr. ADEYEMI (Nigeria): Working Group II held two formal meetings under the chairmanship of Ambassador Paul Engo. He had to leave after those meetings for an assignment in Harare. After that we had one informal meeting, yesterday morning, in which we tried to look at the various documents available to the Group with regard to forging a consensus document on the review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Many representatives spoke in order to determine which of those documents would be most useful in carrying out our mandate.

There were three documents available. One was annex III to the report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its third special session devoted to disarmament (A/S-15/3), which was also the Commission's report at the substantive session last year. Annex III gives a full report on both the political aspects of the role of the United Nations and the machinery. In our earlier discussions it was presumed that since a great deal of work had already been done on the machinery aspects, particularly during the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, when it looked as if we were about to reach consensus on that part of our mandate, we could devote some time to an examination of the political aspects of the role of the United Nations.

There were two schools of thought. Some representatives felt that on the political aspects annex III was rather long and somewhat repetitive and did not address the issue of the role of the United Nations. Others felt that it was quite comprehensive and that it could be used as a good basis for our work. In the end it was decided that we would use annex III in carrying out our mandate.

We then looked at the paragraphs under the heading "Political aspects" in order to determine which of them would eventually be incorporated into the final document that we are to present to the Commission in plenary meeting. Yesterday we were able to examine about seven of those paragraphs and to make some progress.
Most of the decisions reached were ad referendum. It is hoped that this afternoon we shall continue to look at the other aspects of the document.

By and large, my assessment is that our progress seems to be somewhat tentative, but I perceive a general determination on the part of members of the Working Group to reach some form of agreement. However, whether we shall be able to carry out the mandate in the current session is still a matter of speculation.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): We have just heard the chairmen of the Working Groups and Consultation Groups, who have reported to us provisionally on the progress of the work of their respective groups.

Are there any comments?

Mr. AKALOVSKY (United States): My delegation wishes to recall that at the first meeting of this session you, Mr. Chairman, announced your decision to conduct, in keeping with the arrangements followed in previous years, consultations on the item entitled "Naval armaments and disarmament", under your own responsibility. My delegation has not challenged that decision, nor does it wish to do so. However, it wishes to state for the record that whatever consultations are taking place on that item are not in the framework of a subsidiary body of the Commission, since any subsidiary body has to be established by the Commission, and no such decision has ever been made. Certainly, my delegation would not join in any such decision.

I also wish to comment, Sir, on your remarks following the report of the Chairman of the Consultation Group on Agenda Item 5, "Reduction of military budgets". I understood you to say that the Chairman of the Group should consult on paragraph 7 as well as on any other problems that there might be in connection with the rest of the text. I hope I understood you correctly. If I did, I welcome your remarks to that effect.
The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): With regard to the point about the report of the co-ordinator of the Consultation Group on Agenda Item 8, "Naval armaments and disarmament", we have followed the practice of last year, that the co-ordinator follows the work and is in charge of reporting to the Commission. That is not a new practice; it goes back to previous years. Consequently, we agreed that the Chairman, as Chairman of the Consultation Group, designated the co-ordinator, Indonesia, and that it was the co-ordinator who followed the work and reported to the Commission.

With regard to the report of the Chairman of the Consultation Group on Agenda Item 5, "Reduction of military budgets", we made it clear that he should continue all his consultations so that the Consultation Group's work could be concluded successfully, recognizing the different views expressed within that Group.
Of course, we also recalled that priority in the work of that Consultation Group should be established on the concluding of paragraph 7 of the principles, which is, incidentally, the only paragraph that contains brackets because it has not received the assent of all the members of the Consultation Group. We therefore asked that priority be given to concluding the examination of this question and the adoption of the paragraph. If any other questions arise in the Consultation Group, the Chairman will continue consultations so that the consensus rule can be applied in that Group.

If there are no further comments on the work of the different Working Groups, I think that since the Secretariat must on Friday publish the work programme for next week we will convene a meeting of the Commission's expanded bureau, including the Chairmen of all the Working Groups and Consultation Groups, not on Friday but on Thursday at 5.30 p.m. in Conference Room A, to enable all members of the expanded bureau to approve the work programme for next week so that it can be circulated to delegations on Friday and they can be ready by Monday next.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.