DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-EIGHTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 23 May 1989, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire)

- Statement by the Chairman

- Reports by Chairmen of subsidiary bodies (continued)

- Organization of work

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): Last week the Disarmament Commission had a substantive consideration of all the items on its agenda. All the subsidiary bodies have held meetings either to identify matters related to these items or to enter into negotiations on draft texts to be recommended to the Commission. So we are now entering the crucial week which will determine the outcome of the work of this session of the Commission.

As scheduled, we shall hear today the second series of oral progress reports to be submitted by the Chairmen of the various subsidiary bodies. This will enable us to see what the situation is on the various issues before us and will facilitate our work in the final stage of substantive deliberations on all the agenda items before us.

REPORTS BY CHAIRMEN OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES (continued)

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): 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): During the past week the Contact Group on Agenda Item 4 continued its second reading of the set of recommendations that we approved to that end. During that reading, the Group established that some of the recommendations it considered would be in the set of draft recommendations in the form in which they were, with the square brackets remaining, in that there was no convergence in the positions of States.

On some of the other recommendations that were considered, the Group was able to renew the text so that the content would keep up with developments that had occurred since the last session of the Disarmament Commission.
Most of those recommendations still have square brackets since general agreement was not possible on the texts.

Thirdly, the Group agreed on the text of some recommendations on a preliminary basis during the second reading. After that, some delegations raised the question of the need to come back and consider them again. Consultations on those texts are continuing.

At yesterday's meeting the Group was able to agree on an important recommendation on banning chemical weapons. Consultations are still under way on a number of recommendations the Group will submit before the conclusion of our work. We intend to conclude by Friday this week.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I thank the Chairman of the Contact Group on Agenda Item 4, on the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament, for his positive report and some of the agreements reached in his Group.

I now call on the Chairman of the Consultation Group on Agenda Item 5, concerning the reduction of military budgets.

Mr. FIOREAN (Romania): Since our last progress report the Consultation Group has continued its work and has held two meetings as well as a number of informal consultations. In keeping with its mandate, and following the recommendation you, Mr. Chairman, made at the 137th plenary meeting, the Group gave priority in its work to the conclusion of the discussion of paragraph 7 with a view to adopting that paragraph. It concentrated its discussion in particular on the last sentence of that paragraph. Many proposals were put forward.

During the meetings of the Group and during the informal consultations, it became evident that the great majority of delegations preferred to work on the basis of a formulation proposed by the Chairman, contained in Conference Room Paper 1, which reads as follows:
"Meaningful negotiations on the freezing and reduction of military budgets would require that all parties to such negotiations have accepted and implemented transparency and comparability. The elaboration of agreed methods of measuring and comparing military expenditures between specified periods of time and between countries with different budgeting systems would be required. To this end States should utilize the reporting system adopted by the General Assembly in 1980."

While most delegations accepted that wording for the last sentence of paragraph 7 as a compromise, some other delegations expressed their preference for a formulation that would stress that it is essential that States utilize the United Nations reporting system.

Although there are no substantive divergencies as regards the text of the paragraph as a whole, the Group still faces difficulties in reaching an agreement on paragraph 7.

As I have reported to the Commission, at the plenary meeting on 16 May, some delegations continue to insist on the reopening of discussion on other paragraphs that had been agreed upon earlier. One delegation linked its acceptance of paragraph 7 to a parallel discussion and modification of some other paragraphs, and stressed that it would not be in a position to accept any text for paragraph 7 unless that requirement was fulfilled.

A few other delegations, while not objecting to a further discussion of paragraph 7 on the basis of the text provided in Conference Room Paper 1, reserved their final agreement on that paragraph until there was a possibility for modification of some other, already agreed, paragraphs. The other delegations, however, do not accept the reopening of the discussion on the principles already adopted. In their view operative paragraph 4 of resolution 43/73 only requests the Disarmament Commission to conclude its work on the last outstanding paragraph. It
was therefore suggested that after agreement had been reached on paragraph 7 the Consultation Group should report to the Commission on the outcome of its work. Thereafter, informal consultations should be held on other problems raised by some delegations concerning some other already agreed principles.

In the light of the different approaches, the Consultation Group reached an impasse and was unable to overcome the difficulties and continue its work to find a unanimously acceptable formulation for paragraph 7. I should therefore like to suggest that you, Mr. Chairman, in your capacity as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, use your authority to conduct informal consultations with the delegations concerned in order to identify solutions that would guide us in both the finalization of paragraph 7 and the consideration of the issues raised in connection with the other principles.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I thank the Chairman of the Consultation Group on Agenda Item 5, concerning the reduction of military budgets, for his clear, comprehensive report, which has informed us of the stage of work at which the Consultation Group has arrived. We shall return to his suggestion later.

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

Mr. JAYASINGHE (Sri Lanka): The Working Group on the nuclear capability of South Africa has held five meetings since we last met. The Group finished the second reading of the Chairman's text and is on its third reading. Last Friday the African Group submitted a working paper on proposals in connection with the text contained in document A/5-15/3. Yesterday various Western countries responded to that working paper with proposals or amendments. There are still 10 outstanding paragraphs in the text, as I mentioned at the last plenary meeting.
We are hoping that in the brief time remaining we can narrow the differences and find compromise language acceptable to all. We are meeting today, directly after this meeting, and if necessary I will hold informal meetings with interested delegations this afternoon in order to make progress in that direction.
The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I thank the Chairman of Working Group I on agenda item 6, concerning South Africa's nuclear capability, Ambassador Edmond Jayasinghe of Sri Lanka, for his clear report, which gives us an overview of the work done by that Group.

I now call on the representative of Nigeria, who will speak for the Chairman of Working Group II on agenda item 7, concerning the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, in place of Ambassador Paul Engo.

Mr. ADEYEMI (Nigeria): Since I last reported to the Commission in plenary meeting on the progress we have made so far in Working Group II, dealing with the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, we have been able to hold three meetings. At the last meeting, which took place yesterday, we were close to finishing the "first reading" of one of the documents before us, annex III to the substantive report submitted by the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its third special session devoted to disarmament, document A/S-15/3.

In carrying out our mandate we were somewhat flexible. We found useful some sections of the Chairman's report - paper A/S-15/AC.1/WG.III/CRP.2/Rev.1 - issued at the third special session devoted to disarmament on his own responsibility, and they were immediately used in the discussions in the Working Group. For example, we used the Chairman's report in dealing with two subsections of the report before us. One, under the heading "Machinery", dealt with the role of the First Committee and of the Conference on Disarmament. The passages in the Chairman's report facilitated agreement in those areas, although we have yet to agree on the formulation to appear in the text. What I have done so far is to farm out some of the tasks to interested delegations, so that among them we can work out a compromise text for consideration by the entire group.
Furthermore, again under the heading "Machinery", we were able to reach agreement on the role of the Disarmament Commission. I must stress once more that while we seem to have reached agreement on the elements that should be reflected in the subparagraph dealing with the Disarmament Commission, we have yet to agree on the precise formulation.

My intention is to have all the various proposals made by delegations juxtaposed against those in the text, in order to facilitate whatever we shall do - and I think we shall be starting very soon - during the "second reading" of the entire document before the Working Group.

I must say that progress in the Working Group has been rather slow, but in the last two or three meetings I have discerned some flexibility in the approach by various delegations, and I am cautiously optimistic that by Friday we shall be able to produce some text for consideration by the Committee of the Whole.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I thank Ambassador Adeyemi, who is currently chairing Working Group II on agenda item 7, concerning the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, for his comprehensive report on its work. I note his optimism, and hope that his work will succeed.

I now call on the Co-ordinator of the Consultation Group on agenda item 8, concerning naval armaments and disarmament, Ambassador Nana Sutresna.

Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia): The Consultation Group on agenda item 8, naval armaments and disarmament, has had one meeting - held yesterday morning - since its last report to the Commission in plenary meeting on 16 May.

As was agreed during an open-ended informal consultation held on 19 May, which you so willingly chaired, Sir, yesterday's meeting was devoted to a general exchange of views on the subject.
This afternoon the Group is to begin its substantive consideration of the subject.

Eleven representatives took part in the consideration of the subject yesterday, presenting their respective points of view. Four documents have been submitted for consideration by the Consultation Group: document A/CN.10/119, presented jointly by Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; documents A/CN.10/121 and A/CN.10/129, presented by Sweden; and document A/CN.10/130, presented jointly by Finland, Indonesia and Sweden.

The Chair hopes to produce a draft working paper in the next few days to help structure the discussion and deliberation of the item within the Group. We also hope that by Friday we shall be able to submit a draft report to the Commission in plenary meeting, in accordance with your expectations, Sir. I have great hopes that delegations will continue to demonstrate their co-operation and understanding of this delicate subject, thus enabling the Chairman to present the Consultation Group's draft report to you, Sir, in due course.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I thank Ambassador Sutresna, Co-ordinator of the Consultation Group on agenda item 8, concerning naval armaments and disarmament, for his report and for communicating developments with respect to the work programme of his Consultation Group. We shall also carry out consultations in that framework.

I now call on the Chairman of Working Group III on agenda item 9, concerning conventional disarmament, Ambassador Skjold Mellbin of Denmark.
Mr. MELLBIN (Denmark): Working Group III, on conventional disarmament, has held five meetings since my last report to the Commission.

Following a general exchange of views the Group undertook the task of drafting its report. Satisfactory progress has been made, and in quantitative terms - to the extent such terms apply - tentative agreement has been achieved on approximately one third of the substantive content of the report.

The agreement so far achieved relates to such issues as priorities and principles, developments in recent years in the United Nations and elsewhere, and the need for and possible ways of achieving conventional disarmament.

It is not possible at this juncture to predict with any certainty how much progress the Group will be able to make in the course of the four meetings that remain to it.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I thank the Chairman of Working Group III for his report.

Lastly, I call on the Chairman of Working Group IV on agenda item 10, regarding the declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade.

Mr. RAVIX (Haiti) (interpretation from French): Since I reported on our work at the last plenary meeting of the Commission, on 16 May, Working Group IV on agenda item 10, declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade, has made progress in the course of the three meetings it held last week.

On the basis of the views expressed in meetings of the Working Group and in consultations held by the Group, on 17 May I submitted to the Group an informal paper by the Chairman. At that time my aim was to bring all these views together in a co-ordinated and balanced text in order to facilitate the preparation of the elements of the future Declaration. That paper was well received, and the next two meetings were devoted to hearing the views of members on its format and substance.
At our last meeting, on 19 May, after having held further consultations with many delegations, I felt that the best way to organize our work would be to establish an informal, open-ended contact group to decide upon the elements of a draft resolution to be submitted in our report. I therefore proceeded in that manner, and I invited Ambassador Douglas Roche of Canada to lead the work of the contact group. Ambassador Roche agreed to assist me, and he has my full support as well as the trust of the members of the Working Group. I am convinced that he will carry out successfully the task entrusted to him within the time available.

The contact group set to work immediately on the Chairman's informal paper last Friday and has held two meetings to hear various views and suggestions.

In finalizing the various elements of the draft resolution a vital element will be the determination of delegations to ensure that the future Declaration sets the tone for the 1990s. I hope that the spirit of co-operation that has been evidenced so far will enable us to submit a consensus proposal next week.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I thank the Chairman of Working Group IV on agenda item 10. I congratulate Ambassador Douglas Roche for the trust that members of Working Group IV have placed in him by selecting him to head the contact group that will finalize the Group's draft Declaration. I also wish to thank all the Chairmen of subsidiary bodies for the comprehensive reports they have submitted and for their contribution to the Commission's work.

With regard to the report submitted by the Chairman of the Consultative Group on item 5, Reduction of military budgets, I would express to Mr. Florean, in particular, my gratitude for his efforts to arrive at a draft text on principles pertaining to that question. That item has been on the Commission's agenda for a long time, and it should therefore be settled as rapidly as possible. We are pleased to see that at this session we have been able to resolve the basic,
(The Chairman)

theoretical differences among delegations, namely, that the use of the international system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures proposed by the United Nations has been universally accepted. In that connection, I am convinced that, with the co-operation of interested delegations, a compromise formulation will be found and that a finalized version of that text will be established. At the request of the Chairman of the Consultation Group on item 8, I shall undertake further consultations on that item. As Chairman of the Disarmament Commission I shall do all that I can to achieve a settlement of that question.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): Concerning our programme of work for this week, I wish to emphasize that all of the subsidiary bodies should complete their reports by Friday, 26 May, at 6 p.m., so that on the following Tuesday, 30 May, the Commission may be able to consider them in all the United Nations working languages and adopt them in plenary meeting.

I would also ask delegations that wish to speak at the closing session on Wednesday, 31 May, to be good enough to give their names to the Secretariat. The list of speakers is now open with the Secretary of the Disarmament Commission.

Are there any other questions to be considered?

Mr. AKALOVSKY (United States of America): Mr. Chairman, at our last meeting, following the report by the Chairman of the Consultation Group on the reduction of military budgets, you stated that you hoped there would be agreement in the Group on paragraph 7, and you also expressed your hope that the Chairman of the Group would continue his consultations on other questions that might arise within his Group.
Later in our proceedings on that day, a week ago, in response to a brief remark by me, you stated that while priority in the work of that Consultation Group should be given to paragraph 7, any other question arising in the Consultation Group should be the subject of consultations by the Chairman of the Group so that the consensus rule could be applied. We are now in the third and final week of our work here, and the Consultation Group has dealt with nothing but paragraph 7; therefore your instructions to give priority to that paragraph have been complied with. Unfortunately, no consultations within that group have taken place on other issues that certain delegations have raised in connection with the rest of the text.

Mr. Chairman, I am happy that you are now undertaking consultations on the item "Reduction of military budgets".

Indeed, the resolution referred to by the Chairman of the Consultation Group requests the Disarmament Commission to continue consideration of the item and, in that context, to conclude its work on paragraph 7. The mandate of the Disarmament Commission and, by extension, of the Consultation Group, is therefore consideration of the item. I hope, Sir, that in your further consultations you will take into account the views, comments and requirements of certain delegations with regard not only to paragraph 7 but also to the rest of the text dealing with the item on reduction of military budgets. Those delegations that wish to look at the text as a whole are not making anything conditional on something else. It is a standard procedure in any working group or in the process of developing any text that, before final approval is given, the entire text is reviewed. Regrettably, no such review has been conducted by the Consultation Group.
The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I think that the Chairman of the Consultation Group has complied with the directions given him by the Commission, that priority be given to paragraph 7. In the report he has just submitted, he asks that the Chairman of the Commission also continue consultations on all matters relating to the various principles already adopted, and on the principles not yet adopted by the Working Group. Accordingly, with the consent of all delegations, I shall continue, and intensify, the formal and informal consultations within the Working Group with a view to the possible conclusion of its work. All the concerns that have just been expressed will constitute my terms of reference: to continue the consultations to see to what extent members of the Consultation Group can achieve consensus on paragraph 7 and the other paragraphs.

Mr. KRASULIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Despite the impression gaining ground recently, that the United States and the Soviet Union see eye to eye on everything, in this case I cannot agree with what has just been said by the representative of the United States. I do not agree that the Working Group on the Reduction of Military Budgets has dealt only with paragraph 7, and thus complied with its terms of reference. Paragraph 7 is still not agreed; and a small group of delegations has, in the last two weeks, stubbornly resisted completing work or continuing the efforts at reaching agreement on it. Indeed, for two weeks we have not been really working on paragraph 7, the sole remaining paragraph not to have been agreed on since 1986. By 1986, as everybody is aware and as is noted in the report of the Commission to the General Assembly, all the other paragraphs had been approved by consensus. Therefore, we have not been working on paragraph 7 itself but have been involved in procedural disputes: whether we should be discussing paragraph 7, which the overwhelming majority of delegations were in favour of, or whether before concluding work on paragraph 7 we
should have a so-called second reading of the entire text - in other words whether we should reopen consideration of all paragraphs.

Moreover, contrary to what the proponents of a "second reading" suggest, it would not be that simple: it would entail the production of a virtually new document. In other words, we would be opening a Pandora's box - and it is doubtful whether we would be able to complete the document at this session, let alone in the course of many other sessions.

As I said in the Working Group, it is only superficially a procedural discussion. We have to make a political evaluation of what is happening there, because the procedural suggestions and proposals, at least in the view of the Soviet delegation, demonstrate a clear reluctance by a number of delegations to complete the document on which we have been working for many years. If only we could conclude that work it would speed up deliberations in the General Assembly, and possibly in other international forums, on the freezing and reduction of military budgets.

The Soviet delegation therefore fully supports the proposal made by the majority of delegations and by the Chairman of our Commission that priority be given to completion of work on paragraph 7.
Mr. KENYON (United Kingdom): My delegation shares the view expressed by the delegation of the United States. We very much welcome your intention, Mr. Chairman, to try to find consensus on the document on the reduction of military budgets as a whole. We do not share the interpretation of the mandate which was just given by the representative of the Soviet Union. In fact, in the report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its special session last year, there was a statement to the effect that the Consultation Group noted that in the absence of agreement on principle 7, there is no final agreement on all principles.

I would like to assure you, Mr. Chairman, and the rest of the Commission that my delegation is as keen as anyone else to complete the work on this item and to report on it. We have no hidden agenda whereby we are trying to stop the work of the Group.

Mr. NOETZEL (German Democratic Republic): Allow me at the outset of my brief statement to join in the thanks to the Chairmen of the Working, Contact and Consultation Groups on the reports they have submitted to the plenary meeting today. My delegation would also very much like to support the proposal to have consultations headed by you, Mr. Chairman, in order to help solve the problems relative to item 5. We are convinced and hopeful that these consultations will contribute towards the finding of a consensus solution.

My delegation has asked to speak today in order to express its concern with regard to the problems now occurring in the work of the Consultation Group on item 5, "Reduction of military budgets". At the same time, we wish to emphasize that we continue to believe that it will be possible for the Commission to fulfil the mandate contained in General Assembly resolution 43/73:

"to conclude ... its work on the last outstanding paragraph of the principles that should govern further actions of States in the field of freezing and reduction of military budgets"
and to fulfil that mandate in the remaining time if all sides display the required degree of flexibility.

Thanks to the intensive efforts and great personal commitment of the Chairman of the Consultation Group, Mr. Floreen, and to the attitude of the overwhelming majority of representatives, it has been possible to submit, with the formulation in conference room paper 1 of 12 May 1989, a compromise text which we believe somehow reflects all of the positions voiced during the deliberations. It appears that the adoption of that text would no longer require long, substantive discussion but political will and a political decision.

Our conviction also derives from the fact that a similar formulation, to that used in conference room paper 1 can also be found in resolution 43/75 G in which the General Assembly recommends

"that all States, in particular nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States, should implement the international system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures".

That formulation has not only been supported by those who still have some reservations as regards the formulation in conference room paper 1, but was even initiated by them.

After achieving agreement on the last outstanding paragraph of the principles, we assume that the complete text will be before the Commission for referral to the General Assembly. That stage of our work, we believe, would by no means preclude minor editorial changes of the text, in accordance with the usual practice of United Nations bodies. My delegation cannot, however, share the approach of establishing a linkage between the substantive consideration and adoption of paragraph 7 and the resumption of the discussion on the substance of those principles that have already been agreed upon, an approach which would mean
partly reversing the meaning of principles already agreed upon through renewed substantive consideration of them.

In our opinion the reasons given for such an approach are not convincing. To give another example: last year the Disarmament Commission concluded its work on the guidelines for confidence-building measures. Their elaboration had begun at approximately the same time as the work on the principles for the reduction of military budgets. One could thus have argued that considerable changes have taken place since 1983 in the field of confidence-building measures too, which would indeed have justified clearer and more direct reflection in the guidelines. But the socialist States refrained, for instance, from insisting on a renewed substantive reading of the guidelines in order to make full use of the potential offered by a speedy adoption of the guidelines on confidence-building measures.

In addition, and in conclusion, I should like to mention that the Warsaw Treaty States, in the communiqué adopted at the Berlin meeting of their foreign ministers, agreed to speak out in favour of

"the continuation of efforts to elaborate criteria for a comparison of military budgets, making use of the international system for the standardized reporting of military expenditure as adopted by the United Nations Organization." (A/44/228)

That formulation, we believe, largely accommodates the views of those who consider the utilization of the reporting system as an essential condition. We are now looking forward to a constructive response in order to be able to conclude the consideration of the principles for the reduction of military budgets as early as this year, so as to fulfil the mandate under General Assembly resolution 43/73, a resolution adopted, after all, by consensus.
Mr. AKALOVSKY (United States of America): I should like to make a brief comment on what was said by the representative of the Soviet Union. At one point in his remarks he maintained that some delegations refused to continue discussion of paragraph 7 and insisted on dealing with other issues. I did not hear any delegation call for such a procedure. Certainly, my delegation never refused to continue discussion of paragraph 7. What my delegation did insist upon, however, was that we deal in parallel with other paragraphs as well, and it refused to accept a procedure under which consideration of other paragraphs or issues that have arisen in connection with the text would be ignored completely, with the entire discussion devoted solely to paragraph 7.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The next plenary meeting of the Disarmament Commission will take place next Tuesday, 30 May.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.