UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE NINETEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 4 June 1979, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman

Mr. VELLODI (India)

- Report of the Working Group
- Organization of work

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79-70351
The meeting was called to order at 11.30 a.m.

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the Rapporteur, who has served as Chairman of the Working Group and its Drafting Group, to give the Commission a report on the work that has been conducted in those two groups during the past two weeks.

Mr. OTEGUT (Argentina), Rapporteur (interpretation from Spanish): The open-ended Working Group has met four times since it was established by the Commission. On 24 May it decided to set up a Drafting Group, which also was to be open to all members of the Commission. The Drafting Group of course considered the same basic documentation as the Working Group - that is, document A/CN.10/1 and Add.1-4, containing the opinions of Governments as transmitted to the Secretary-General, plus the proposals contained in documents A/CN.10/5, A/CN.10/6, A/CN.10/7 and Rev.1, and A/CN.10/8, and, of course, the opinions expressed in the plenary meetings of this Commission, which appear in the relevant verbatim records.

In addition, the Working Group and the Drafting Group received 18 conference room papers containing various proposals. The last of these documents, A/CN.10/WG/CRP.18, is a working paper prepared by the Chairman of the Working Group. It was considered at the last meeting of the Drafting Group, on Friday last. It attempts to summarize the elements considered by the Working Group. I shall now briefly describe that document and inform the Commission of some of the remarks that were made about it.

Basically that conference room paper comprises six main sections, as will be seen from the index appearing on its page 1. The first section is an introduction, and the other five deal with: objectives, principles and priorities; measures; disarmament and development; disarmament and international security; and machinery and procedures for the adoption and implementation of the comprehensive programme of disarmament.

One might describe the consideration given to this working paper in the Drafting Group as a general exchange of views on its contents. Thirty-four delegations made statements expressing general opinions on the structure of the paper or their views on some of its contents. Because of the short time available for considering the document, it was not possible - nor had it been intended - to try to reach agreement on specific texts.
This document was possibly useful as a catalyst of the opinions of delegations. Let me briefly mention some of the points which were commented upon more extensively by delegations.

In the section entitled "Introduction", one of the points most debated was the nature of the relationship between the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament and the Programme of Action contained in the Final Document of the special session devoted to disarmament. One view was once the United Nations agreed to and adopted the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament, it should replace the Programme of Action in the Final Document of the special session devoted to disarmament. Other delegations felt that the function of the Comprehensive Programme was to supplement and complement the provisions of the Programme of Action of the special session.

As regards section II entitled "Objectives, Principles and Priorities", a preliminary agreement was reached on the first three paragraphs. The major difference of opinion in this section related specifically to the principles which should govern the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament. While some delegations were in favour of a general reference to all the principles set forth in the Final Document of the special session devoted to disarmament, other delegations advocated specific reference to or development of the principles which seemed to them to be particularly useful for the Comprehensive Programme. Some delegations, too, were in favour of the idea that reference to some of the principles should be included under a general heading in the next section, that is to say section III entitled "Measures".

Now, as regards measures, it is divided into two parts: (A) Disarmament Measures, and (B) Other/Associated Measures. That was the heading given to the other part.

As regards disarmament measures, the Working Group agreed on a classification. This agreement was of course a preliminary one and subject to review by the plenary meeting. But, at any rate, this is the classification that appears in Conference Room Paper 18 which begins with the subject of nuclear weapons. In general, both this section and the following ones deal with nuclear weapons,
weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons, reduction of armed forces, military expenditures and other related measures, while section (B) deals with other/associated measures.

There was an extensive exchange of views on the need for some of these measures to be included in the drafting of definitions, as well as on the need to include measures which are not contained in this paper.

With regard to section IV entitled "Disarmament and Development", most delegations felt it desirable to have this section become a separate chapter, although of course there were differences of views on the specific wording to be used. In particular several delegations mentioned the need to refer to the contribution which the reallocation of resources now used for military purposes to economic and social development would make for the establishment of the New International Economic Order. The same holds true for section V entitled "Disarmament and International Security". The basic concepts contained herein were generally approved, but there were differences of opinion once again as to language.

With regard to section VI entitled "Machinery and Procedures for the Adoption and Implementation of the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament", there were different points of view regarding each of the subsections which appear there.

In short, the Working Group considered in detail all of the proposals before it, and I believe that in those debates it was not possible to single out points on which there was agreement, and others in respect of which we have not yet reached complete agreement. It is my hope that the activities of the Working Group will have proved useful for the continuing work of the Disarmament Commission.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to express my personal thanks to the Rapporteur for the report that he has given and also to express, on behalf of all of us, our appreciation to him for the manner in which he conducted the meetings of the Working Group and of the Drafting Group.
ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: We have now come to the final stage of our work in the Commission and it is the final week. We have to complete our work by the end of the week, by the afternoon meeting of Friday, 8 June, which means that we have exactly five days or a little less left. It seems to me that while there have been fairly detailed exchanges of views, and possibly even signs of consensus on several of the parts that will have to form our report to the General Assembly on the item relating to the Comprehensive Programme, there is still need for further intensive work on item 3.
Certainly in the work remaining to be done on agenda item 3 we shall be assisted by the discussions that have taken place in the working group and in the drafting group, but it is clear that we shall have to complete the drafting on agenda item 3 in another couple of days. Certainly we should attempt to do so by Wednesday evening, that is, the day after tomorrow, or by mid-Thursday so that there may still be time for the Commission to consider the draft report that we shall have to submit to the General Assembly.

As some of you are aware, I have held fairly extensive consultations, both with the officers of the Commission as well as with others as to the best way in which we can continue with our work, and there appears to be general agreement that the most constructive and perhaps the only practical way in which we can proceed with our work would be for us to continue discussion on agenda item 3 in an informal open-ended drafting group of the whole Commission where we shall obviously have to go through all the documents we have before us. The Rapporteur referred to document A/CN.10/WG/CRP.18, on which, as he explained to us, there was a fairly lengthy discussion held on Friday afternoon, 1 June. But I have no doubt that delegations will wish to make observations and additional suggestions about what was done on Friday.

During the consultations that I held, it also seemed that there was agreement that at the end of the consideration of item 3 in the drafting group I would, as Chairman of the Commission, attempt to submit a paper to this Commission and that, in doing so, I should take into account the views that have already been expressed in the drafting group and in the working group and views that may emerge during the next two days.

In order to save time and utilize to the best advantage the time left at our disposal, and bearing very clearly in mind the point made by the representative of Mexico that we should not confuse the work of the working group and the drafting group with that of the plenary Commission itself, I suggest that we adjourn the plenary meeting this morning and work in an informal drafting group in a more or less similar way to the way we worked in the past two weeks. Obviously, since it would be a drafting group of the whole Commission I, as Chairman of the Commission, would preside over the meetings of that group.
Even were we to focus our attention only on one paper, namely, document A/CN.10/WG/CRP.18, it seems to me that a detailed page-by-page discussion in which all delegations could participate would take, not one, but four or five meetings. We do not have the time for such a detailed discussion. I would therefore submit for the consideration of members of the Commission that we follow the procedure that I shall indicate to them.

If we can adjourn the plenary meeting of the Commission now, we could start work in the informal group at 12 noon or immediately thereafter, and in the drafting group delegations will have opportunity to make comments on document A/CN.10/WG/CRP.18, bearing in mind other documents that delegations have either singly or collectively submitted; but in doing so, in order to try to save time, they should refrain from raising points that have already been presented, because it is only on the basis of such an exchange of views - which I hope can be completed in a meeting or so, that is, by the end of this evening, that the Chairman can attempt to produce a paper - if that is the general desire. Obviously, such a paper would have to be made available sometime tomorrow if we are to complete our work on this by the day after tomorrow, Wednesday.

In order to give me the opportunity to produce a paper that will reflect as far as possible the views of all delegations, I would want discussion in the drafting group to be completed by the end of today, and this can be done only if delegations co-operate by not referring to points that have already been made and taken note of not only by the other members of the Commission but by me as its Chairman.

As members are aware, in addition to item 3 we have other items on the agenda. We also have to decide what to do regarding those items and we shall have to adopt a report, a draft of which will have to be made available to delegations by Thursday morning. So this is what I should like to submit for your consideration.

I also wish to make one other point clear, and that is that we shall have meetings of the plenary Commission on Thursday and Friday so that delegations wishing to make statements, either on the comprehensive programme of disarmament or on the entire agenda, will have occasion to do so, possibly in connexion with the report that we shall submit to the General Assembly. But I appeal to members not to get into that exercise at this plenary meeting because we
have a fairly considerable amount of work to do before we get to that stage. Therefore, while it is certainly not my intention to deny delegations that may wish to make statements an opportunity to do so, I would address a strong appeal to them not to make them at this plenary meeting so that we may start our informal drafting group of the Commission this morning.

Mr. PFEIFFER (Federal Republic of Germany): Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much for your statement. We certainly fully share your concern with regard to the completion of our work and I think that you are fully aware of the support on which you can rely from us.

You rightly mentioned at the beginning that working papers had been introduced and that in the drafting group papers had also been introduced to assist the Commission in finding the right approach for working out the elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament. I understood last Friday, when there was discussion on document A/CH.10/WG/CNP.18, and there was introduced a similar paper, at least one that served the same end, namely, A/CH.10/WG/CNP.10, by my delegation together with other States, that we would have a general exchange of views and we were looking forward, Mr. Chairman, to the summary you announced of the results of Friday's discussion.
My delegation refrained from going into the details of the two working papers because we understood that, in response to the appeal made by Mr. Otegui, there was to be just a general exchange of views. We are very grateful that in the open-ended drafting group of the Commission we are being given the opportunity to express our views with regard to special items in Conference Room Paper 18. To express general views is one thing, but we have to take into consideration that the final essence is in the wording, and we would take the liberty of doing what we announced last Friday we would do, namely, take up matters of particular concern to us and then present our views to the open-ended Drafting Group in a more precise manner than we did last Friday when we had just the general exchange.

May I take this opportunity while I am speaking to ask you, Sir, if we really must go to Conference Room 7. I expect that participation will be as great as in the Drafting Group, and even at the level of the Drafting Group many delegations had difficulty in finding the seating accommodation to which they all certainly had a right. Could we not possibly consider continuing the Drafting Group here in this more convenient room so that delegations which want to take an active part in the discussion need not compete for a place and a microphone to enable them to follow the discussions. If we stayed here it might help to facilitate and expedite our consideration, but, of course, I am in your hands.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to thank the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany for the point that he made at the end of his statement about the convenience of delegations when they participate in the work of the informal drafting group. He is quite right in saying that we might have some logistical problems in Room 7, particularly in terms of accommodation, if all delegations want to participate, as I presume they will. Therefore, I am quite prepared to accept his suggestion that we should continue with our work in this room. We shall see as we go along whether we come up against any practical problems, but at least to begin with we can continue in this room.
The Chairman

So far as concerns the other point he made, about documentation, I think I have made it very clear that we do have documentation. Our discussions will not be restricted to any one working paper. Delegations have submitted papers and those papers are all before us. Since the Rapporteur, when he presented the report of the Working Group to us, made some references to Conference Room Paper 18, I also made a reference to that, but that does not take away the importance of any other document. Conference Room Paper 17 currently is also an important document.

If no one else wishes to make a statement it is my intention to adjourn this plenary meeting and to continue working in this room in a more informal manner - in other words probably in a closed session. The next plenary meeting will be on Thursday morning, tentatively, but that will depend on the progress we make in the informal group. Are there any other observations?

Mr. IMAM (Kuwait): On a point of clarification, Mr. Chairman. You mentioned that you would be preparing a paper of your own, but you did not explain to us what your paper would be. The paper before us could be described as an informal single negotiating text - if I may borrow an expression from the Law of the Sea Conference. Would your paper be a revised single negotiating text, or something else?

The CHAIRMAN: As I think I have already indicated, I did not understand Conference Room Paper 18 to be a single negotiating text. It is an attempt to bring together the various views that have been expressed, but the other documents are still there and delegations are free to refer to them when they want to make any particular point. When, as Chairman, I submit a paper - if my suggestion is acceptable to delegations, and I am glad the representative of Kuwait made this point - that paper will have to have the status of what may be called a single negotiating text or the text on which the informal group will have to take a decision. I want to make that point clear. My endeavour will be to try to produce a paper that will certainly make use of other documents, not necessarily just Conference Room Paper 18, and when I submit such a paper I hope that thereafter the discussions which we will have tomorrow afternoon and possibly on Wednesday, will be directed to that one single document.
Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to speak, not on the point to which you have just referred, Mr. Chairman, since my delegation agrees completely with the procedure you have just outlined, but on the following.

You told us this morning in the Working Group that you would endeavour to give as complete a summary as possible of what transpired last Friday at the meeting of that group. Later, perhaps, in the light of the comment I had taken the liberty of making, it was the Chairman of the Working Group who gave us the summary. It seems that that is the appropriate procedure. However, you told us that when you had given your summary each delegation would be free to make any comments it might desire to complement, supplement, correct or endorse what you had said.

I understand, Mr. Chairman, that it is unlikely that you will be giving us that summary now, since it has been given by our Rapporteur, who presided over the Working Group. I must point out, however, that the Rapporteur, who probably had not prepared himself to present a summary of what had taken place on Friday, found himself obliged to give one in the most general terms.
I have no difficulty in accepting that procedure, on condition that these general terms apply uniformly and everything is left general. But, although this in no way means I am criticizing the Rapporteur, it is quite obvious that, because of the short time available to him, he has left out some very important questions. I shall refer to just one of them which is of special importance to my delegation.

The Chairman of the Working Group said he would specifically mention only a few questions which "had been the subject of more emphatic comments" or "on which delegations had commented more emphatically". The question that, in my opinion, was unfortunately omitted in the summary is one which appears as No. 8 in the section on "Disarmament measures", on page 5, that is to say, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

That question was specifically spoken of, at greater or less length, by at least 10 of the delegations which participated in the deliberations of the Working Group. I recall, for example, those of Nigeria, Morocco, Venezuela, Pakistan, Mexico, India, Brazil and Kuwait. And it seems to me fitting to mention Kuwait last because the delegation of Kuwait said something which is very true: that the wording which has been included as No. 8 on page 5 reflects the thinking of what might be called a very small minority, an almost insignificant minority, in light of the deliberations of the Working Group.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.