Chairman: Mr. VELLODI (India)

- Election of the Chairman and other members of the Bureau for 1980
- Review of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session relating to the Disarmament Commission
- Provisional agenda for the session of the Disarmament Commission to be held in May/June 1980
- Other business

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 A-3550, Alcoa Building, 886 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.

79-70715
The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU FOR 1980

Mr. MULLOY (Ireland): On behalf of the nine member States of the European Community, I should like to pay a tribute to you, Mr. Chairman, both for your particular contribution to the first special General Assembly session devoted to disarmament and for the effective manner in which you presided over the previous session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We are all familiar with the dedication which you have shown throughout your many years of service on behalf of this world Organization. Your personal commitment to the success of the United Nations Disarmament Commission has indeed been an inspiration to us all.

For our part, the nine would be very happy to see you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of the Bureau who have so ably assisted you, re-elected for 1980, so that the valuable contribution you have made to the success of the work of our first substantive session in 1979 may continue during 1980. In offering this suggestion, we understand that it is generally accepted that a principle of rotation would apply as from 1981 as regards the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. In this regard, we know that you are aware of our existing interest, but in these early stages of the work of the revitalized Disarmament Commission it is important to ensure continuity by re-electing our serving officers for a second term.

Mr. Riaz KHAN (Pakistan): Let me first express the deep appreciation of the delegation of Pakistan for the excellent work accomplished by the Disarmament Commission in the course of this year. For this achievement we owe our gratitude to the members of the Bureau of the Commission, and especially to you, Mr. Chairman. We greatly admire your wisdom, dedication and skill and the vast experience in the field of disarmament with which you so ably guided the work of the Commission to which you made an invaluable personal contribution.

At this meeting we must take a decision about the election of the Bureau of the Commission for 1980. We share the view that elections to an important body like the Disarmament Commission are a serious matter which involves various
principles, procedures and practices relevant to the matter. However, my delegation shares the view that one of the foremost considerations guiding our decision should be to ensure, in every possible way, the effectiveness of the Commission in carrying out the important tasks which lie ahead of it. Motivated by this consideration, my delegation is of the opinion that continuity should be retained in the Bureau for the next year in order to enable it to maintain and further strengthen the momentum already achieved in the work of the Commission.

It is my delegation’s understanding that there have been consultations within and among the regional groups, and that there is a general consensus that the present Bureau should continue in office. It therefore gives great pleasure to my delegation to propose the re-election of the existing Bureau of the Commission for the year 1980. Let me emphasize, of course, that this proposal is without prejudice to any of the commonly recognized principles which normally apply to elections in United Nations bodies.

Mr. KOSTOV (Bulgaria): On behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, I should also like to join previous speakers in supporting the proposal for your re-election, Mr. Chairman, and of the Bureau, for the next session.

At the same time, we should like to emphasize that the principle of rotation is a very important one in our Commission. But we are prepared to join in the consensus which seems to have emerged on this matter.

Mr. RABETAFAKA (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, I should first of all like to associate my delegation and, indeed, the members of the African Group, with the tributes paid to you and to the members of the Bureau for the most satisfactory work which you have done during 1979.

We have today held intensive consultations in the African Group, and I am pleased to inform you that, on the whole, the African Group is in favour of the re-election of the members of the Bureau. I was asked, however, to stress that it would be desirable, in the election of members of the Bureau of a Commission
as important as ours, that preliminary consultations should take place in good time.

The African Group realizes also that, for the sake of the effectiveness of the Commission's work, continuity in the Bureau ought to be preserved. But we must also bear in mind a principle which we in the United Nations observe - that of rotation. Accordingly, while joining in the consensus which seems to be emerging in favour of the re-election of the members of the Bureau of the Commission, the African Group reserves the right to put forward suggestions concerning the distribution of the various posts for 1981 and, perhaps, for subsequent years as well.
Mr. ROJAS (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): First of all I should like to concur with what has been said by the previous speakers. My delegation would like to express its satisfaction and appreciation for the work done by the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission this year and also to express our thanks to all members of the Bureau. We view with great favour the idea of re-electing the members of the Bureau for the next session.

Mr. CHEBELEU (Romania): Before going into the substance of my intervention, I should like to register the Romanian delegation's satisfaction at having worked this year in this Disarmament Commission under your chairmanship. Indeed, your great competence, your vast knowledge of disarmament matters and your diplomatic skill have greatly contributed to what we consider a successful start to the work of the Disarmament Commission, reactivated by the General Assembly at its special session devoted to disarmament. The way you conducted our deliberations in the substantive session this year confirmed once again the outstanding role played by India in United Nations disarmament activities. May I add that my delegation also highly appreciates the contribution of the other members of the Bureau which assisted you in the difficult task of chairing the Commission's deliberations.

Having said that, I should like to express the position of the Romanian delegation on a matter of principle related to the composition of the Bureau. I asked for the floor in order to state my delegation's position regarding the suggestion that has just been made by the representatives of Ireland and Pakistan that the present Bureau should continue to serve during the 1980 session of the Disarmament Commission. My delegation strongly believes that there are no serious grounds for proceeding in that way and thus to go against our own agreement reached last year at the organizational session of the Commission. May I recall, Mr. Chairman, that it was you who, when we discussed organizational matters last year, stated the following:

"During my informal consultations and in the very useful discussion the officers of the Commission had yesterday, two specific issues came up, one relating to the life of the Bureau and the other concerning the records of the Commission's meetings. On the first question I believe that there is general consensus that the principle of rotation should apply to the composition of the Bureau. At the same time, it is obvious that, from the
practical point of view, the present officers should continue to serve until the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly has completed consideration of the Commission's report.

"It is therefore my submission that the Commission should hold an organizational meeting sometime in December 1979, before the conclusion of the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly, to consider the question of the composition of the Bureau for the following year, namely, 1980."

(A/CN.10/PV.3, pp. 3-5)

Now my delegation attaches the greatest importance to the observance of the principle of rotation in the Bureau of this Commission, a principle which we consider to be one of the bases of the democratic procedure and methods of work in international conferences, including the activities of the Disarmament Commission. As a matter of fact my delegation accepted a consensus on the composition of the Bureau last year on the understanding that that principle would apply.

Ambassador Ene of Romania, speaking on behalf of the Romanian delegation, stated the following on 11 October 1978:

"The first point which I want to make concerns the question of the constitution of the Bureau. My delegation subscribes to the view that you put forward that the Bureau of the Commission should be re-elected at each annual substantive session. By that, we understand that the regional groups will abide strictly by the principle of rotation in nominating their candidates from among countries which express interest in becoming members of the Bureau." (A/CN.10/PV.3, p. 37)

Similar points were made by other delegations and can be found in the verbatim records of the proceedings for those days.

I recalled all this in order to emphasize that extensive consultations were conducted last year on the question of the composition of the Bureau and that a clear agreement was reached to apply the principle of rotation. My delegation is of the firm opinion that we should abide by that agreement. How we understand from the short consultations in which we took part that the prevalent view now is that the present Bureau should be re-elected for another term of office. In a spirit of goodwill and co-operation my delegation is ready to accept a consensus to that effect, as suggested by the representatives of Ireland and Pakistan, provided that the consensus includes the understanding that the renewal of the mandate of the present Bureau is an exception and that for the following year, namely, 1981, we shall
proceed to the election of a new Bureau in accordance with the principle of rotation.

Mr. FISHER (United States of America): We agree with the position of the representative of Romania that the principle of rotation should apply, but we think that this year is a special case. We, the United Nations Disarmament Commission, are just beginning. One can put forward the historical argument that we existed in 1951, but we really have started this year, under your chairmanship, and we think that the present Bureau should be retained. Now, once we get going, and the United States is confident that your leadership will give us a very strong start, we think that we should have an annual rotation. We think we should re-elect the Bureau, but maintain the principle of annual rotation. I should like to point out, in support of the Irish delegation, that it is our hope that when a new Bureau is set up in 1981 a West European might be actively considered for the position of Chairman.
The CHAIRMAN: We have before us the proposal made by the representative of Ireland and supported by other representatives that the present Bureau should continue to serve for a further year, that is during 1980. Reference has been made to the need to follow the principle of rotation followed in other forums of the United Nations and the records of the Commission's meeting will make this very clear.

Much as I wish that I could have avoided saying this, I feel obliged to respond to the observations of the representative of Romania, because he referred to a statement that I made last year as Chairman of the Commission. I wish only to mention at this stage that we had agreed in the Disarmament Commission that we would strive very hard to work on the basis of consensus. As far as I am concerned personally, I assure representatives that I had indicated that I would continue to serve as the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission only if there was consensus among its members about my doing so. I made this very clear, not only to individuals but also to regional groups, several months ago.

I thank the representative of Romania for his understanding and for going along with the consensus, as he put it, but it is for me personally a matter of some regret that this matter of the election of the Bureau for 1980 should have given rise to some controversy in this Commission.

May I take it that the proposal made by the representative of Ireland is generally acceptable to members of the Commission? Since I hear no objection, I take it that the Commission agrees with that proposal.

It was so decided.

Mr. NOLAN (Australia): On behalf of the Australian delegation I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the rest of the Bureau on your re-election for the 1980 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

The Australian delegation wishes to make it clear that in endorsing the continuation of the Bureau for a further year, it does not regard this as in any way prejudicing the principle of rotation. The Commission is young and we concede some advantage in having continuity - but as an exception.

It is our understanding that we are now endorsing continuation of the present Bureau during 1980, on the understanding, as has been said by other representatives who spoke before me, that the principle of rotation will be applied for the 1981 session and thereafter. We are confident, Sir, that under your guidance and in a spirit of co-operation and goodwill, the Commission will be able to deal
successfully with its work during 1980. May I assure you of the co-operation of the Australian delegation in working towards this end.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to take this opportunity, on my own behalf and on behalf of the other members of the Bureau, to express to you all our deep appreciation of the confidence which you have shown in us in deciding that the Bureau should continue to serve for one more year. I also wish to assure you that I shall strive to the best of my ability to live up to your expectations in carrying out the important functions entrusted to the Disarmament Commission. I should also like to express our gratitude to the regional groups for the understanding which they have shown in dealing with this issue.

REVIEW OF THE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION RELATING TO THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

The CHAIRMAN: At its current session the General Assembly has adopted three resolutions which have a direct relevance to the work of the Disarmament Commission. I shall refer to them one by one.

First, there is the resolution which, after its adoption in the plenary Assembly, has become resolution 34/75. For the sake of clarity, I should also mention that it was considered and adopted in the First Committee, as draft resolution A/C.1/34/L.18/Rev.1 It was adopted by the plenary Assembly earlier this week, on 11 December.

The text of the resolution, as recommended by the First Committee and adopted by the General Assembly, is contained in paragraph 8 of document A/34/74/Add.1, which is the report of the First Committee on agenda item 34, under the title "Consideration of the declaration of the 1980s as a disarmament decade". Operative paragraph 2 of the resolution

"Directs the Disarmament Commission, at its substantive session of 1980, to prepare elements of a draft resolution entitled 'Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade' and submit them to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session for consideration and adoption".
Next, we have the resolution which, after its adoption by the plenary General Assembly, has become resolution 34/85 H. It was considered and adopted by the First Committee as draft resolution A/C.1/34/L.27/Rev.1. The text, as recommended by the First Committee and adopted by the General Assembly, appears under the heading "H - Report of the Disarmament Commission" on page 23 of document A/34/752, which is the report of the First Committee on agenda item 42, "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session".
In operative paragraph 2 of that resolution, the General Assembly:

"Requests the Disarmament Commission to continue its work in accordance with its mandate, as set down in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly and, to that end, to meet for a period not exceeding four weeks during 1980, beginning on 12 May 1980". (resolution 34/83 H, para. 2)

In operative paragraph 3 of the same resolution, the Assembly:

"Further requests the Disarmament Commission to continue the consideration of the agenda items contained in section II of resolution 33/71 H, with the aim of elaborating, within the framework and in accordance with the priorities established at the tenth special session, a general approach to negotiations on nuclear and conventional disarmament". (ibid., para. 3)

In operative paragraph 4 of the resolution the Assembly:

"Requests the Disarmament Commission to submit a report on its work and its recommendations on paragraph 2 above to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session" (ibid., para. 4)

Finally, we have the resolution which, after its adoption in the plenary Assembly early this week, bears the symbol 34/83 F. The number of the corresponding resolution as considered in the First Committee was A/C.1/34/L.24. The text of the resolution, as recommended by the First Committee and adopted by the General Assembly in a plenary meeting on 11 December, appears under the heading "F", "Freezing and reduction of military budgets", on pages 21 and 22 of document A/34/752 which contains the Report of the First Committee on agenda item 42. Operative paragraph 1 of that resolution reads:

"Considers that, in the light of the above-mentioned provisions of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, a new impetus should be given to endeavours to achieve agreements to freeze, reduce or otherwise restrain, in a balanced manner, military expenditures, including adequate measures of verification satisfactory to all parties concerned". (resolution 34/83 F, para. 1)

In operative paragraph 2 of the same resolution, the Assembly:

"Requests, to this end, the Disarmament Commission to undertake during 1980 to examine and identify effective ways and means of
(The Chairman)

achieving such agreements". (Ibid., para. 2)

Those are the three resolutions adopted at the current thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly which appear to me to have relevance to the substantive work of the Commission during 1980. There are, of course, other items carried over from the last substantive session of the Disarmament Commission which we shall consider under item 5 of our agenda.

As far as agenda item 4 is concerned, I believe that I have indicated in some detail what we have to do and which resolutions adopted at the thirty-fourth session of the Assembly have relevance to the work of the Disarmament Commission.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE SESSION OF THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION TO BE HELD IN MAY/JUNE 1980

The CHAIRMAN: I believe that I have already mentioned, in connexion with a resolution adopted at the current session of the General Assembly, that the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission in 1980 will be held for a period not exceeding four weeks, beginning on 12 May 1979. That provision is contained in one of the resolutions adopted at the current session of the General Assembly. If we utilize all the four weeks provided for in that resolution, for which I understand that the Secretariat has made arrangements, and which in my opinion we shall need the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission will be held between 12 May and 6 June 1980.

When we consider the question of the draft provisional agenda for our substantive session in 1980 we shall, as I hinted a little while ago, also have to take into account not only the resolutions adopted at the current session of the General Assembly but also the items carried over from our last substantive session. In this connexion, I should like to refer to paragraph 21 of the Report of the Disarmament Commission to the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly which is contained in document A/34/42.
Paragraph 21 of the report – which was endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 34/83 H – reads:

"Since the Disarmament Commission was unable to consider in detail items 4 to 7 of its agenda (see sect. II, para. 9 above), it recommends that those items be included in the agenda of the Commission's session in 1980."

As the General Assembly has endorsed the Commission's report, that paragraph will be relevant in our consideration of the draft provisional agenda for our session in May-June 1980.

The items referred to in paragraph 21 are listed under numbers 4 to 7 in paragraph 9 of document A/34/42, and read as follows:

"4. Consideration of various aspects of the arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, in order to expedite negotiations aimed at effective elimination of the danger of nuclear war.

"5. Harmonization of views on concrete steps to be undertaken by States regarding a gradual agreed reduction of military budgets and reallocation of resources now being used for military purposes to economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries, noting the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

"6. Letter dated 1 February 1979 from the Secretary-General addressed to the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission (A/CN.10/3)."

I should like to remind representatives that that was the letter by which the Secretary-General transmitted to the Disarmament Commission – as he did also to the Committee on Disarmament – the various proposals contained in paragraph 125 of the Final Document of the special session.

The other item left over from the last session of the Disarmament Commission was:

"7. Letter dated 8 March 1979 from the Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid addressed to the Secretary-General (A/CN.10/4)."
Those are the four items which, according to paragraph 21 of the Commission's report to the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly, are to be included in the agenda of the 1980 session of the Commission.

I should now like to turn to the specific question of the draft provisional agenda for our next substantive session to be held in May-June 1980. We should normally have, apart from the routine items of the opening of the session and so on, the seven substantive items, namely, the three issues referred to the Commission by resolutions adopted at the current session of the General Assembly and the four items carried over from our May-June 1979 session. However, I am certain that most representatives will have observed that there exists a direct relationship between some of these items. Specifically, item 4 of the agenda of the Commission's last substantive session and the question covered by resolution 34/83 II, adopted at the current session of the General Assembly, are interrelated to some extent, because they both in a sense deal with the problems of the arms race. Similarly, agenda item 5 of the Commission's last session and the issue covered by resolution 34/83 F are in a way related in as much as they both deal with the question of the reduction of military budgets.

Taking all those aspects into account and benefiting from the deliberations we had in the Bureau yesterday, a tentative draft provisional agenda for our 1980 session has been distributed to representatives. I understand from the Commission Secretary that it has been circulated in all languages and will be given the symbol A/CM.10/II/CFP.3. That is only a suggestion which I have made on the basis of the consultations and discussions that we had in the Bureau yesterday.
(The Chairman)

I understand that part B of item 5 is missing from the French text of this conference room paper, and I shall now read out item 5 B so that French-speaking delegations can take it down from the interpretation. The text is:

"Examination and identification of effective ways and means of achieving agreements to freeze, reduce or otherwise restrain, in a balanced manner, military expenditures, including adequate measures of verification satisfactory to all parties concerned."

I would suggest that we might proceed expeditiously with our work if members would first direct their attention to that document A/CN.10/II/CRP.3, and comment upon the suggested draft provisional agenda for our 1980 session contained therein.

Mr. MULLOY (Ireland): On behalf of the nine member States of the European Community I should like to offer some observations on the provisional agenda for the second substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, to be held from 12 May to 6 June 1980, as contained in document A/CN.10/II/CRP.3.

Clearly the United Nations Disarmament Commission has an important role to play within the over-all disarmament process. As yet, however, it is still at the stage of seeking to establish its separate identity and special contribution within this larger process. The extent to which it will succeed in meeting the expectations set for it will depend upon the success of all of us in utilizing to the full those special features of the Commission which distinguish it from other United Nations bodies active in disarmament. I have in mind our common desire within the United Nations Disarmament Commission to reach decisions by consensus, which ensures that our deliberations will be different in form and emphasis from those of the United Nations General Assembly and the First Committee, and ensures also the universality of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and its deliberative role, which distinguishes it from the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva.
In seeking to establish the framework for the United Nations Disarmament Commission session next May, we should in our opinion try to reflect these special features of the Commission and proceed with the care and prudence required by our collective involvement in a revitalized institution still at a very early stage in its work. In particular we should seek to concentrate our agenda on specific issues and avoid over-generalized debate and duplication of effort so as to ensure that the role and contribution of the United Nations Disarmament Commission will be as useful and effective as possible.

At its last substantive session the United Nations Disarmament Commission successfully completed its deliberation of item 3 of its 1979 agenda. That task has now been taken a stage further in the recent decision of the General Assembly to refer the elements of a comprehensive programme to the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva. Item 3 of the agenda of the United Nations Disarmament Commission has therefore been finalized, although of course the Commission should be free to draw on elements of the comprehensive programme as a point of reference in its future deliberations.

Our examination of United Nations Disarmament Commission-related issues at the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly focused in particular on resolution 34/83 H, introduced by Yugoslavia, relating to the report of the Disarmament Commission, as well as on resolution 34/83 F introduced by Romania, on the freezing and reduction of military budgets, and resolution 34/75, introduced by Nigeria, on the Disarmament Decade.

In our opinion the United Nations Disarmament Commission should in May 1980 proceed to a balanced consideration of the various aspects of its agenda as set out in those resolutions so as to stimulate progress in the areas concerned, while avoiding unnecessary duplication of discussion of issues that have already been thoroughly debated or are under detailed consideration elsewhere. In this connexion we welcome the reference to conventional disarmament in operative paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 34/83 H as offering possibilities for a first discussion of that subject.

We also attach importance to discussion within the United Nations Disarmament Commission of the reduction of military budgets. We would, of course, consider it important that discussion of this topic should take fully into account the work done to date or on-going in this field and have as its starting-point the need for an agreement on standardized and verifiable reporting instruments for military expenditures.
Similarly, in establishing objectives for the Second Disarmament Decade, we should bear in mind the decisions already taken on the elements of a comprehensive programme so that unnecessary duplication of effort is avoided. Through a concentration on specific topics based on a careful division of work and a balanced apportionment of time to the various aspects of our agenda, we can collectively ensure the success of the next substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and facilitate the over-all contribution which the Commission can make to the achievement of the objectives established by the first special session on disarmament.

The CHAIRMAN: May I say that in general I share the views expressed by the representative of Ireland as regards the conduct of our work during the special session. I would, however, like to submit to the members of the Commission that the organization of our work for the substantive session and the way in which we are to deal with the various items on the agenda is a matter that will require consultations and a decision when we start our substantive session in May 1980.

We must, however, remember that the Commission is bound by the directives given it by the General Assembly in the various resolutions. I think all members will have observed that in some of those resolutions we are specifically asked to submit our report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session, and there are other items which are extremely important. But the manner in which we are to consider the various items during the special session - which will, after all, last only four weeks, and certainly we do not intend to go beyond that - is something that all of us will have to reflect deeply upon. As the representative of Ireland has said, we must ensure that all the items receive adequate attention.

One of the resolutions - which I might refer to as the Nigerian resolution - asks us to prepare the elements of a draft resolution entitled "Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade". As I understand that resolution, it requires us to complete work on that item at our substantive session and to send our report on it to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.
Operative paragraph 4 of that resolution asks the Secretary-General to seek the views and suggestions of Member States and relevant specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency on this issue and also calls upon him not only to give all necessary assistance to us in this matter but to undertake the preparation of a working paper. I should like to express the hope to the Assistant Secretary-General, whom we are very happy to see with us today, that this working paper, which obviously will be prepared on the basis of the comments provided by the Member States and the relevant specialized agencies, will be available to the members of the Commission in good time.

Mr. FISHER (United States of America): At the risk of being my usual difficult self, I have looked at our agenda for the United Nations Disarmament Commission last year. Once we had adopted the first two items on the opening of the session and the adoption of the agenda, and leaving aside "other business" at the end - it had six items. We dealt with one. We are now proposing an agenda that is somewhat longer. Now, to the extent that we are mandated to do so by resolutions of the General Assembly, which most of us have voted for, I suppose we have to do it. But I would just ask, in the spirit of realism, in view of the fact that out of the six substantive agenda items adopted last year we dealt with one, is it sensible to adopt right now another six items - two of which have subparagraphs, making eight in all? If it is the sense of this body that we should do so, that is fine, and I will not run feverishly from the room. But to the extent that the agenda represents what we can realistically expect to accomplish I would ask, does the provisional agenda now being proposed indeed represent something that we can realistically expect to accomplish? Or are we merely accepting politely things sent to us by the General Assembly - things which we all voted for - or by the Secretariat or other organs? It does seem to me that if I were compiling an agenda representing what we expected to be accomplished I could not expect that we could deal sensibly with this in four weeks. I am not objecting to it, but I am entering a caveat, a dubitante. Do we really expect that we can do it? I do not think we can. We could not last year, and I do not think we can this coming year.
The CHAIRMAN: The representative of the United States has raised an interesting point, and I should like to respond.

I think the justification for putting these various items on the agenda is fairly clear. Ambassador Fisher referred to the items on the agenda of the Commission's substantive session last May. There were altogether nine items. But if members look at the items they will see that the first two and the last two were of a routine nature in the sense that items 1 and 2 dealt with the opening of the session and the adoption of the agenda, item 8 was entitled "Adoption of the report of the Disarmament Commission to the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly", and item 9 was "Other business". That left five items out of the nine.

Out of that five, it is true, we dealt with only one. It was for that reason that the Committee, in its report to the General Assembly - which, I repeat, was adopted by the Assembly at its current session - made the recommendation, now endorsed by the General Assembly, that

"Since the Disarmament Commission was unable to consider in detail items 4 to 7 of its agenda ... it recommends that those items be included in the agenda of the Commission's session in 1980". (A/34/42, para. 21)

That is why these four items have to appear on the draft provisional agenda - and I repeat that it is a draft provisional agenda.

The other items which are included in Conference room paper No. 3, which has been circulated, are a direct consequence of resolutions adopted at the current session of the General Assembly. We are asked by the General Assembly first, as far as the Nigerian proposal is concerned, in a sense to complete work on it and to submit our findings on the elements of the Declaration to the thirty-fifth session.

As far as the other resolution is concerned, on the broad issue of the arms race, again, it is fairly clear because it asks the Commission to submit a report on its work and its recommendations to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.
(The Chairman)

With regard to the item relating to military budgets, again the General Assembly resolution has directed us: "to undertake during 1980 to examine and identify effective ways and means of achieving agreements on military budgets." Therefore, I believe that we are doing the correct thing in putting these items on the draft provisional agenda of our substantive session for next year. I did indicate a few minutes ago that it is for the Commission to decide, when we meet in May and June, how we are going to deal with all these items.

I entirely agree with Ambassador Fisher that it would perhaps be somewhat naive for us to think that we can complete - and I repeat the word "complete" - the consideration of all these items during the four weeks we have in 1980. But then, as I read the General Assembly resolutions - and I think they are very clear - we are not necessarily expected to complete the consideration of all these items. There are some on which we are required to submit a final report - and that refers specifically to this resolution relating to the Declaration. Concerning the other items, we are asked to undertake an examination - to consider. How we do it, whether we are able to deal with only a part of it, will of course depend very much how we organize our work during the substantive session.

I sincerely hope that the members of the Commission will have time to reflect on this, and when we meet in May we will have some clearer idea about what it is that we feel we can achieve during those four weeks. But, as far as the draft provisional agenda is concerned, I submit that we have no alternative but to include these items, its being quite clear that it is for the Commission to decide how we deal with them and whether we will be in a position to deal with them fully, adequately or only partly. That is something that we shall have to consider. But we have to respond to the directives given to us by the General Assembly and also by ourselves when we put off the consideration of certain items last time.
Mr. KOSTOV (Bulgaria): I should like to point out that there appears to be an error in paragraph 4 B. The relevant part of the resolution contained in document A/C.1/34/L.27/Rev.1 refers to resolution 33/71 H, whereas in Conference Room Paper 3 reference is made to resolution 34/71 H.

The CHAIRMAN: The representative of Bulgaria is absolutely right, and I apologize for the typographical error. At the beginning of the second line of paragraph 4 B, the number of the resolution should be 33/71 H.

Mr. FISHER (United States of America): I think the Chairman, whose capabilities I admire enormously, is quite right in saying we have to put this on the agenda. On the other hand, that means that we have a subagenda. When everything is on the agenda nothing is on the agenda.

Even though this operation is required by the General Assembly in resolutions for which I voted, it means that we cannot possibly do it. While I am prepared to recognize the error of my ways and vote for consideration of what I have already voted that we should consider, I think that none of us in this room should fool ourselves that this represents anything related to a work programme for a four-week operation. It does not, and we know that. It contains everything we have said we would consider but will not have time to consider adequately. As one who originally had doubts about the United Nations Disarmament Commission but went along with it in the consensus at the special session, I think that the worst thing that could be done to the Disarmament Commission is to give it an agenda that we recognize we cannot possibly live up to.

I will vote for this out of my respect for the Bureau but I must confess that I will do so feeling that this is not a realistic agenda and that in a period of four weeks we cannot possibly deal with all these items set forth in the document that has been distributed. This is not being critical. As you know, Mr. Chairman, I am not a critic of yours - quite the contrary - but I think we are all petting ourselves on the back for agreeing to deal with a number of items with which we know we cannot deal. We can tell the General
Mr. SHUSTOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. Chairman, thank you for so clearly explaining the items appearing in the working paper, which is the agenda for the forthcoming session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. You have very properly referred to three questions which emerged from the resolutions adopted at the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly and which will have to be discussed at the forthcoming session.

With regard to the so-called Nigerian resolution, the wording of that item does not cause any particular problems at the present time. However, I should be very grateful if the sponsors of this proposal would give us further elucidation of their views regarding the elements of the draft resolution to the effect that the 1980s would be declared the second disarmament decade.

With regard to items 4 and 5 of the provisional agenda, we have certain queries. In the resolution adopted at the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly on the report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission we were requested in paragraph 3 to continue our consideration of the agenda items contained in section II of resolution 33/71 H. These items were in fact reproduced in the provisional agenda as items 4 A and 5 A, but it is difficult to understand for what reason paragraphs 4 B and 5 B are included as separate subitems of the agenda. For example, if we refer to item 4 B, its wording is to be found in fact in paragraph 3 of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at the thirty-fourth session on the report of the Disarmament Commission, and that wording refers to the purpose of considering the items which were on the agenda this year. In other words, nothing is really added to the agenda items by this; it simply disguises the purpose.
A similar query is prompted by paragraph 5 B. We have the
same subject matter here as is mentioned in paragraph 5 A; it simply
refers to some details. This is also included in the resolution adopted
at the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly. I should like to
have some clarification as to how these items 4 B and 5 B can be regarded
as separate agenda items. Would it not be better to consider them
as the General Assembly at the thirty-fourth session has requested us to
do, that is, to continue our consideration of the items we already have
on the agenda but in the light of the resolutions adopted at the thirty-fourth
session?

The CHAIRMAN: Before I try to respond to the specific questions
put to me by the representative of the Soviet Union, I should like to make
one point clear. I think we agreed that this would be an organizational
session of the Disarmament Commission, that we should not go into the
substantive issues but respond to the decisions taken at the current session
of the General Assembly — in other words, that we should go strictly by
the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly which have relevance to
the work of the Disarmament Commission.

The representative of the Soviet Union first asked about what we
normally refer to as the Nigerian proposal regarding the Declaration.
With all due respect to the representative of the Soviet Union, I submit
that it would perhaps not be quite appropriate or fair to open a debate
now by asking the sponsor of that proposal to give a detailed clarification
concerning how the elements of the draft resolution are to be prepared.
This is a resolution that has been adopted by the General Assembly.
I very humbly submit that it would perhaps not be appropriate for us
at this time in this body to reopen a discussion of something which
perhaps should have been discussed in the First Committee. In a sense
it might have been discussed, but I personally was not present during
those meetings of the First Committee. In any case I would submit that
the resolution does ask the Secretary-General to seek the views of
Member States concerning how the suggestion initiated by Nigeria
should be implemented.
I am quite certain that Member States will have an opportunity to express their views, just as we had an opportunity to express our views on the elements of the Comprehensive Programme. When in its organizational session a year ago, the Disarmament Commission decided to include an item relating to the Comprehensive Programme, I recall very vividly that there were several delegations which had serious doubts as to what precisely was meant by elements of the Comprehensive Programme. But, on the basis of comments and replies received from Member States and our discussions in the Disarmament Commission, we were able to agree on a consensus report.

As far as the items which have been suggested, let me say once again that this is a draft provisional agenda. It is for the Disarmament Commission, when it meets in May, to examine it and adopt a final agenda. At the present stage, where delegations have reservations, those reservations will certainly be recorded, but we are not adopting this agenda: it is only a suggestion as to what might be considered by the Disarmament Commission when we meet in May.

Item 2 of the draft provisional agenda, as you see, is entitled "Adoption of the agenda" and when we consider that item there will certainly be opportunity for members to comment on the remainder of the items in that draft agenda. Let me repeat that we are here at this organizational session merely to respond to the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

The only reason that, following discussions we had in the Bureau, I suggested listing items as 4 (A) and (B) and 5 (A) and (B) instead of as separate items to give us a total of 11 rather than the present 9 items, was because I think all of us see a connexion and a relationship between the items listed as subitems of agenda items 4 and 5.

I certainly understand and appreciate the concern that the representative of the Soviet Union has expressed, but I should like to submit that what we are now doing is merely suggesting a tentative provisional agenda which the Commission itself will have to adopt at its May session before it begins its substantive work. Unless the representative of Nigeria wishes to reply to the question asked by the representative of the Soviet Union, I would appeal to members not to enter into substantive discussions on issues which we are considering here only as a consequence of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.
Mr. NWACHUKU (Nigeria): My delegation does not wish to enter into any controversy over the provisions of the draft resolution, which, as you have pointed out, Mr. Chairman, has already been adopted by the General Assembly. We would rather leave things as they stand unless and until a need arises in the future for us to review the subject once again. At such a time my delegation will shed further light on the resolution.

OTHER BUSINESS

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to point out that the organization of our work for the May-June session of the Disarmament Commission is something which we shall have to consider at a later stage. I am sure that delegations will wish to consult among themselves on how we might organize our work, keeping in mind our experience at the last session of the Disarmament Commission when, on one hand, we were able to set up a working group and, on the other hand, we had only one substantive item to consider, namely, the elements of the Comprehensive Programme, whereas this time we shall have a more extensive agenda.

This is, then, a matter we might consider and on which we might hold consultations closer to the session in May.

I should like to express my very deep appreciation to all members for the co-operation and understanding they have, as always, shown to the Chair. I believe that at this stage we have completed the work of this organizational session. We shall meet again at our substantive session on 12 May 1980. I declare the organizational session closed.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.