DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 12 October 1978, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. VELLODI (India)

- Adoption of report on organizational matters to the General Assembly

This record is subject to correction.

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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.

78-70532
The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

ADOPTION OF REPORT ON ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The CHAIRMAN: I said yesterday that it was my hope that at this afternoon's meeting we would be able to consider the draft report to be submitted to the thirty-third session of the General Assembly. The representative of Bulgaria asked whether the draft report would be ready in all the languages and in fact suggested that we not meet until tomorrow morning. I appealed to him to agree that we begin consideration of the draft report in the English text, which alone could be made available for the present meeting. If members feel that the report should not be adopted until available in all the languages we will have to meet for that purpose tomorrow morning. I hope that we might complete our exchange of views on the draft report this afternoon. Formal adoption of the draft report would take place tomorrow morning when it will be available in all the languages.

Having said that, I would like to draw attention to the draft report of the Commission contained in Conference Room Paper No. 1 which has now been distributed. It is a brief report and I am sure that members will have had time to glance through its contents.

I wish to make one or two corrections which I would request members to incorporate in the draft.

The first correction is on page 2. After paragraph 5, there should be the following heading: III. Paragraph 6 onward relates to recommendations.

On page 4, the last paragraph should read:

"The Disarmament Commission considers that at its substantive session to be held in May-June 1979 ..."

the word "that" to be inserted after "considers".

One last suggestion that I would like to make is that the sentence relating to the possible need of a Committee of the Whole, which is now the final sentence of the draft report, should be moved to paragraph 6 as the third sentence in that paragraph.
(The Chairman)

I should like to make it quite clear that the intent of this paragraph should be clearly understood. We are not suggesting or recommending that a Committee of the Whole should be established. All we are doing at this stage is to mention that possibility in the report to help the Secretariat study its implications and to report to us when the Disarmament Commission's report is taken up in the First Committee. Obviously, simultaneous meetings in plenary and in a Committee of the Whole will have fairly serious financial and perhaps logistical implications but that should not prevent us in the Disarmament Commission from mentioning that possibility. When this item is taken up in the First Committee, we would expect the Secretariat to give us the Committee's reaction and tell us what the implications are. I wanted to make that quite clear. It is not to be taken as a decision. It is for the Disarmament Commission itself later on to decide, depending on the work allocated to it, whether it would need to meet simultaneously in two parallel bodies.

One last point regarding the dates of the session, I said yesterday that we could meet for four weeks beginning on 2 May. However, we have been informed by the Secretariat that it would not be possible to provide the required facilities in the first part of May and that they could make services available only from 14 May. That is why we had to change the date. The suggested dates are now 14 May to 8 June inclusive, which is exactly four weeks.

I now invite representatives to comment on the draft so that we can proceed with the finalization and adoption of the report.
Mr. IMAM (Kuwait): I should like to ask for clarification on two procedural matters, one which you raised yourself, Mr. Chairman, and another which emerges from the report.

I believe I heard you mention that the report of this Commission would have to be submitted to the First Committee. Is that so, and what is the reason? Is not this Commission a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, and is not the First Committee also a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly? And if that is so, why is there any need for us to report first to the First Committee and then to the General Assembly?

My second question relates to the part of paragraph 10 of the draft report on page 4 which states that...

"...it might be useful for the Commission to meet towards the end of the thirty-third session to consider the relevant decisions of the thirty-third session of the General Assembly and decide on the agenda of the first substantive session of the Commission to be held in May-June 1979."

Is the implication there that we should meet before the General Assembly adjourns and that when we have agreed to the agenda of the first substantive session that agenda will have to be submitted to the General Assembly for approval?

The CHAIRMAN: I shall try to answer the two questions raised by the representative of Kuwait.

First, regarding the Commission's reporting procedure, the special session of the General Assembly, when it set up the Disarmament Commission clearly stated in paragraph 118 (a) of its Final Document that the Disarmament Commission should be a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly. The First Committee is not in that sense a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly: the First Committee is one of the main committees of the General Assembly. When a subsidiary organ, whether it be Outer Space Committee or the Commission on Human Rights, reports to the General Assembly it is for the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, to decide which committee shall take up a particular item. At this thirty-third session the General Committee has already recommended, and the plenary General Assembly has adopted the recommendation, that the report of the Disarmament Commission, which will be submitted to the General Assembly, should be allotted to the First Committee.
As far as the second point is concerned, the intention - it is only a suggestion and I shall not assume that there is a decision or agreement on this - is that, since the work of the Disarmament Commission in its substantive session in 1979 will have to be guided by the decisions taken in the General Assembly, which is its parent body, and in order to give Governments adequate time to prepare for the substantive discussion in May-June, there might be some advantage in having a short meeting of the Disarmament Commission after the First Committee had completed consideration of disarmament. Its purpose would be to try - I am not saying we would succeed, but we would certainly try - to consider which of the various decisions of the First Committee had a bearing on our work. For instance, it was felt that if the First Committee should decide that four or five items should be referred to the Disarmament Commission for further study, a short meeting of the Disarmament Commission in December might be able to review the relevant decisions of the General Assembly and perhaps even succeed in agreeing on the order of priority for considering the items, which would give Governments three or four months to prepare for the discussions.

If, on the other hand, we did not have such a meeting and have to decide on priorities when we meet in May, it might be too late for Governments to make adequate preparations, because it is quite likely that if the General Assembly refers six items to the Disarmament Commission the Commission may not be able to take up all six items at its first substantive session. This was just a thought, to see whether this suggestion would be a practical one.

If, however, the First Committee, when it takes up the Disarmament Commission's report, is in a position to indicate that, that will be another possibility. But, as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, I would submit that the intersession priorities in our work in the Commission we should decide ourselves. That is my personal view - that the order in which items are taken up should be decided by the Commission. It is in that context that the suggestion has been made in the draft report, but we have specifically said that "it might be useful" for the Commission to meet towards the end of the current session. It is not a recommendation.
Mr. FISHER (United States of America): At the outset, Mr. Chairman, I should like to add the voice of the United States to the voices of those that have already congratulated you and your colleagues of the Bureau on your election. I do not propose to gild the lily or further refine the gold by saying why I offer congratulations not only to you but to the Commission itself for having made a wise decision, but I shall leave the matter with heartfelt congratulations to ourselves.

I do have some points to raise on the draft report. At the top of page 3, in paragraph 6, there seems to be a decision that the session beginning on Monday, 14 May 1979, should last for four weeks, rather than not exceed four weeks. I had not understood that that matter had been the subject of a discussion or consensus. Clearly, we are committed by the resolution of the special session of the General Assembly not to exceed four weeks, but I do not think we are committed to make it four weeks if we do not think that would be useful, and I feel that we are not in a position now to make a decision that we should. We shall all be here, and I certainly have no objection to 14 May, and if we decide that we have to meet for the full four weeks we can do so, but I do not see that it is necessarily wise for us to make that decision in advance.

We could even make a reference in the report to the fact that this was the subject of a General Assembly decision - that we should have a meeting not to exceed four weeks. Clearly, 14 May is not the General Assembly's decision; it is ours, and, as I say, I certainly have no objection to it.

Proceeding to my second point, the first full paragraph on page 4 of the draft report, in paragraph 10, says that

"... a comprehensive programme of disarmament should be accorded the highest priority at [the Commission's] first substantive session to be held in May-June 1979."

I am not at all sure that this is one of the three items that were referred to this Commission, and while I certainly agree that it is an important item, to say that it should be accorded the highest priority seems to me to go a little further than I thought was indicated by the consensus of this body at our last meeting, or by our discussion at the special session.
Turning to the penultimate line of the next paragraph, we find the words "decide on". With reference to the meeting to be held towards the end of the present session of the General Assembly, the United States has no objection to having a meeting of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to consider agenda matters, but I do have a point. Perhaps it is a legal point and if so perhaps I may be forgiven for it. Should that meeting decide on the agenda for the next session, or should we merely consider it so that we can get back and discuss it with our Governments and be in a position when we meet on 14 May to come to a prompt decision on it?

The final point refers to the last paragraph. I have absolutely no objection to your lucid explanation of what was intended by the last paragraph. It seems to me that this is a possibility and that the necessary study should be made. On the other hand, listening to the Chairman's extremely lucid explanation and reading this paragraph I come out with slightly conflicting signals. If both of the sentences were changed along the lines that it might be necessary to set up a Committee of the Whole, it would be necessary for a study to be made to see what the administrative problems were.

I would hope that in view of the fact that verbatim records are now being taken, and I do not think anyone in particular would want to read what I said, I would hope that we could have the verbatim record of the Chairman and take what he said and put it in the last paragraph. That would be quite satisfactory to the United States.

Mr. PFEIFFER (Federal Republic of Germany): To begin with I would like to thank you for the draft of the report which we have now received and I take it, Mr. Chairman, that in inviting our comments on this draft, you are expecting our remarks in all openness and friendliness.

If I may be allowed to start with the end of page 2, we find that the Disarmament Commission should meet for a period not exceeding four weeks, yet we consume the whole four weeks on page 3. In addition to that, we say also that there will be an organizational meeting in December 1979, for the purpose of electing the next Bureau.
Now this, if my sums are right, adds up together to more than four weeks. I wonder whether we are ready to enter into this binding commitment that we have to meet for four weeks. Can we not find a formulation which is more in harmony with what was decided by the special session on disarmament, namely that we shall meet for up to four weeks.

The next point is point 10 on page 3, "Agenda for the 1979 session". Under subparagraph (c) the Commission is, inter alia, to consider the elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament.

It is stated in the next paragraph that this item should be accorded the highest priority. Now we are certainly of the opinion that the item should be dealt with at the next meeting of the Disarmament Commission but we do not find the wording "the highest priority" in line with what was the spirit of our discussion of this item at the special session. I myself would prefer a mere indication that the matter would be considered at our next session without any reference to giving it high priority. I can certainly imagine other items which have at least the same high degree of priority.

It is then suggested that the Commission should meet at the end of the thirty-third session of the General Assembly in order to consider the agenda for the meeting to be held in May-June 1979. I wonder whether this is necessary. My delegation is of the view that Governments should be given time to review the results of the decisions taken by the General Assembly, and then to make up their minds as to what essential matters should be dealt with by the Disarmament Commission. I would therefore suggest that our report should not refer to any decision on the agenda having to be taken at our December meeting.

I suggest that Governments be asked to consider, in the light of the decisions taken at the General Assembly, the points which could be taken up by the Disarmament Commission at its first substantive session in May-June 1979. The views of Governments would be communicated to the Bureau which, in January or February, could prepare a draft agenda upon which we can decide when we reconvene in May.
I myself do not find it necessary or even required that we should now decide upon an agenda. My Government and no doubt others, will need some time to consider and evaluate the results of the General Assembly session and to make proposals as to what should be dealt with at the next Disarmament Commission session.

I repeat that while a draft agenda can be prepared, no decision on it can be taken before our first session on 14 May.

One final point. Reference is made in the last paragraph on page 4 to possible meetings of a Committee of the Whole. I take it that this is merely a precautionary measure which does not commit the Disarmament Commission to setting up such a Committee if it does not find it necessary to do so.

Turning once again to the discussion of the comprehensive disarmament programme by the Disarmament Commission, I should like to take this opportunity to make it clear that in our view consideration of an item by the Disarmament Commission does not preclude its discussion by other organs as well.

At the summer session of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament we had a situation where we could not agree to reconvene the expert group on the study of a comprehensive disarmament programme because we had to wait for elements to be submitted by the Disarmament Commission. We accepted that position in a spirit of compromise but we must make it clear that in our view the Disarmament Commission cannot take up items and at the same time introduce a kind of closed shop debarring other forums from dealing with the same questions.
Mr. ADEYEMI (Nigeria): Since we have just received the draft report of the Disarmament Commission, I should like merely to make a few comments on points that have attracted our attention. First, on page 2, paragraph 2, a minor point. I think it would be clearer to add in the first line after the words "Final Document", the words "of the tenth special session of the General Assembly". In that way we shall know what Final Document we are talking about.

The Chairman suggested that after paragraph 5 we should insert the general heading "Recommendations". I am really not sure, bearing in mind what paragraph 5 contains, whether that heading should or should not in fact be after paragraph 4. However, I shall leave that entirely to the Chairman's wise judgement.

On page 3, paragraph 9, we read that there should be "an organizational meeting to be held in December 1979, before the conclusion of the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly, for the purpose of considering the question of the composition of the Bureau for 1980". It would appear to me that that formulation might lead us to what I am sure the Bureau did not have in mind. I do not think it was the intention of the Bureau for us to reopen the question of the composition of the Bureau as such, composition in the sense of how many members would be on the Bureau and how many from each region. I believe that has already been determined. I think what the Bureau had in mind was an organizational meeting for the purpose of electing the Bureau for 1980. If that is so, I would suggest that we substitute the word "electing" for the word "considering", so that it would read "for the purpose of electing the Bureau for 1980". In that way, the organizational meeting would be concerned merely with electing the Bureau on the basis of the agreement that we have already reached with respect to the number of its members.

Having made that minor point, I should like to refer to one of the points which both the representative of the United States and the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany made with respect to paragraph 10. On page 4 we note the recommendation that the Commission should accord the consideration of the elements of a comprehensive programme some degree of priority. My own delegation agrees with that recommendation of the Bureau, basing itself on the discussion that we had yesterday. I thought that the purport of our discussion yesterday had been to indicate that since it was virtually the wish of all of us that the elements of a comprehensive programmes ought to
be accorded some degree of priority and since the special session in its wisdom had assigned the elaboration of a comprehensive programme to the Committee on Disarmament (CD) but had also assigned the consideration of the elements of the programme to the Disarmament Commission, it was only fair for the Disarmament Commission to be given the opportunity of considering the elements and making its recommendations to the General Assembly before the Committee on Disarmament took up the elaboration of a comprehensive programme. The General Assembly, in turn, would pass that on to the Committee.

The work of the Committee should not be unduly delayed by the work of the Disarmament Commission, and I therefore think it would be desirable for us to submit our recommendations to the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly. The Disarmament Commission can do that only if it considers the item at its substantive session in May/June 1979. After all, that is the only substantive session which we envisage for the Disarmament Commission in 1979. I therefore think that the recommendation contained here is in keeping with the discussion which we had yesterday.

Perhaps the difficulty created by the use of the words "should be accorded the highest priority", could be obviated by merely saying that "the consideration of the elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament should be accorded priority in the consideration by the Disarmament Commission of its agenda items for the May/June 1979 session". In other words, the use of the term "highest priority" might be creating some difficulty. Perhaps we might allay the fears of those who had indicated certain reservations by stating that the whole intention of this is to enable the Disarmament Commission to make appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly so that they may be passed on to the Committee on Disarmament itself.

I would certainly hope that we would not do anything to hamper the work of elaborating a comprehensive programme by not making it possible for the Disarmament Commission, which my delegation believes should be given the first opportunity to discuss it, at least to consider the elements of a comprehensive programme at its May/June 1979 session. After all, I think we must bear in mind that if the General Assembly had originally assigned this task to the CCD in resolution 2602 (XXIV) and if during the special session the General Assembly then believed that there was need for another body to consider certain
(Mr. Adeyemi, Nigeria)

elements of a comprehensive programme, we cannot ignore that decision
and presume that the negotiating body can in fact take up the subject without
the deliberative body having had the opportunity of considering the elements.

Mr. GHAREKHANI (India): Mr. Chairman, I hope it is in order for
me to extend our congratulations to you and also to all the other members of
the Bureau on their election.

My delegation has seen this draft report for the first time this
afternoon and since our own working language is English, we have had no
particular difficulty in going through it and in coming to our own tentative
conclusions with respect to it. We find that the report is satisfactory and
takes care of the preoccupations not only of the Indian delegation but, I
am glad to say, of most members of the Commission.
I would like to make a few observations on some of the points that have been raised by preceding speakers who have expressed some reservations about paragraph 6, which contains the recommendation concerning the Commission meeting for a period of four weeks next year.

The representative of the United States, Ambassador Fisher, for whom I have the highest respect, said that the special session's Final Document has laid down very clearly that the United Nations Disarmament Commission should meet for a period not exceeding four weeks during 1979. You yourself, Mr. Chairman, referred to this matter yesterday, and you agreed that this was a fact, and at the same time you expressed the hope that delegations would be reasonably flexible on this question of four weeks.

Ambassador Fisher said that we should not specify that we would meet for a period of four weeks. It might be less than four - I think this is what he said. But from the practical point of view, from the point of view of conference facilities - the arrangements for interpreters, and so on - I think it would be wise for us to provide for a session of four weeks at this stage. If we do not, it will be difficult and perhaps impossible for us to continue for four weeks if we think it necessary to do so at that time. If we made a provision here for only three weeks, for example, and one week in December 1979, then it would be very difficult for the Commission to meet for four weeks in May-June next year unless provisions were made by the General Assembly at its thirty-third session. I therefore hope that the representative of the United States will not press his point and will find his way to agreeing to our providing for a period of four weeks beginning 14 May next year. It would be open to the Commission to meet for less than four weeks if that were desirable at that time.

I agree with the representative of Nigeria that in paragraph 9 the word "composition" might be replaced by the word "election". I was just wondering whether that particular session in December 1979 would be only for the purpose of electing the Bureau for 1980. Perhaps we might say, "considering the question inter alia of the election of the Bureau", because at that session we might find it necessary to give some thought to the organization of the work of the Commission at its substantive session in 1980. Perhaps the addition of the
words "inter alia" might be in order in that sentence.

Almost all the preceding speakers have referred to the comprehensive programme for disarmament and consideration of the elements thereof being given the highest priority at the first substantive session next year.

It is my delegation's view that consideration of the elements of the comprehensive programme should indeed be given first priority at the substantive session next year. While advocating this point of view, we do not believe that the question of the comprehensive programme is the most vital, most important or most urgent question in the field of disarmament as a whole. Certainly not. We believe that, for example, the questions of nuclear disarmament, chemical weapons and the comprehensive test ban are all much more significant and vital than the question of the elaboration of the elements of the comprehensive programme. However, we feel that these individual questions of a comprehensive test ban and chemical weapons and so on are already over-ripe for detailed negotiations, and they will, we hope, be coming up for concrete negotiations in the Committee on Disarmament next year.

As far as the comprehensive programme is concerned, it was the spirit of the special session, and the spirit to which my friend from the Federal Republic of Germany referred, that the totality of the membership of the United Nations should first be given an opportunity to consider this question, to give their views on it and then to pass on these views and recommendations to the Committee on Disarmament through the General Assembly. When these elements go to the Committee on Disarmament through the General Assembly it will not necessarily follow that the Committee on Disarmament itself will give the highest priority to the comprehensive programme for disarmament. The Committee on Disarmament would decide on its own priorities. But unless and until the General Assembly transmits the recommendations of the Commission to the Committee on Disarmament that Committee would not be in a position really to take up the question of the comprehensive programme. Therefore, unless at our next session we give the highest priority to this question of the comprehensive programme, the Committee on Disarmament will not be able to take up this question in 1980. So the earliest the Committee on Disarmament would be able to take up this question would be in 1980, provided the Disarmament Commission itself gave this question the highest priority next year. Therefore, in order to clarify this point a little
more, my delegation would like to offer a slight amendment to this paragraph on page 4. It would read something like this:

"Keeping in mind its mandate, as stated above, and in order to enable the Committee on Disarmament to take up the question at the earliest possible date ..."

the rest of the sentence remaining unchanged. This, I think, would clarify the intentions which the Bureau presumably had in making the recommendation in this particular paragraph.

Concerning the next paragraph, some speakers have referred to the sixth line, regarding the agenda of the first substantive session to be held May-June 1979. My delegation sees some merit in the points raised by the delegations concerned, and we feel that it might not be a bad idea to put a full-stop after the word "Assembly" in that line. In other words, the short session at the end of the thirty-third session of the General Assembly would consider the relevant decisions of the thirty-third session of the Assembly. We would not at that time go into the question of deciding on the agenda of the first substantive session. One reason for this is that if we decide to accord the highest priority to the question of the elements of the comprehensive programme, which I hope we will, then it might not be necessary to go into the details of the agenda at the December session.
I should add, however, that my delegation does not have any strong objection to retaining this sentence as it is, but at the same time we feel that we do not add anything by having this phrase in our report.

On the last paragraph in the report which would go, as you say, to page 3, my delegation has no objection and we share the understanding of some other delegations that there is no commitment to setting up a Committee of the Whole at our substantive session next year. This paragraph is included here for the purpose of making the necessary practical arrangements and provisions in the budget of the United Nations.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. Chairman, first of all permit me to extend to you on behalf of the Pakistan delegation our warm felicitations on your election to guide the Disarmament Commission through this phase of its genesis. We are confident that the Commission, under your leadership, will be able to accomplish its task and to find its place in the important galaxy of machinery on disarmament set up at the special session.

We should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau, and especially our friend and colleague, Mr. Otegui of Argentina, who is to be our Rapporteur.

We have followed with deep interest the discussions in the Commission over the last two or three days and have read with great interest the draft report which you have very kindly circulated to us this afternoon.

First let me very briefly make some procedural remarks on some minor points and then come to the main question of the mandate and the agenda, which is the focus of our discussion here. As regards the rules of procedure, paragraph 7, we should like to say that there is no need further to elaborate paragraph 118 (b) of the Final Document and we are quite satisfied with its reflection here. At the same time, for the record we should like to note the difference between the formulation of this paragraph and the formulation of the relevant article concerning the work of the Committee on Disarmament, and I think that the difference between the two will have to be borne in mind in determining the nature of the work that we are to conduct here.
As far as the composition of the Bureau is concerned, we agree by and large with the remarks which have been made earlier, especially by our colleague from Nigeria just a moment ago, and we would suggest a few minor drafting changes in this paragraph. In the first line, perhaps instead of saying "the present Bureau should continue until the end of the thirty-fourth session" it might be somewhat more elegant to say "the present Bureau should serve in office until the end of the thirty-fourth session".

Secondly, as regards the last line, I think there is some ambiguity here. It might be of benefit to us all if we were to remove it by changing the wording of the last sentence to read:

"The Commission also recommends that an organizational meeting be held in December 1979, before the conclusion of the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly, for the purpose of, inter alia, electing the Bureau of the Commission for 1980."

Some such wording would be more direct and more forthright, I think, about what should be the purpose of that meeting.

I turn now to the substantive question, the question of the mandate of this body, and of what we are supposed to be doing here, not only at this session but at the forthcoming session next year. My delegation attaches importance to all the three functions that have been given to this Commission.

First of all, as regards the question of considering and making recommendations on various problems in the field of disarmament, we think this is an important function, and it should include, to our mind, things such as an overview of the negotiations that are being conducted, either bilaterally, trilaterally or in restricted forums. When those negotiations become stuck I think it is the work of this Commission, and it will be the work of this Commission, to give them further impetus and some 'go'. Secondly, this function also includes, to our mind, the consideration of such situations that may arise in the field of disarmament as make it necessary for the international community to meet and consider them. Situations of this kind do not always arise during
the three month period of the regular sessions of the General Assembly, and I think that for that reason as well the Disarmament Commission is the body which should take cognizance of such situations. So this is an important function to us.

Regarding the follow-up of recommendations of the special session on disarmament, we have had a very interesting debate here on paragraph 125 of the Final Document, and we agree with your interpretation, Sir, of how action on that paragraph will proceed. But I should like a clarification, and should perhaps give the understanding of my delegation that the function of this Commission relating to follow-up of the special session on disarmament is not related exclusively to paragraph 125. There are other matters in the Final Document which require to be followed up, which require further consideration and deliberation, and they are matters we hope it will be possible for this Commission to take up and consider.

With regard to the comprehensive programme, we agree with the view that has been expressed here by many delegations that this is an important task. It is a long delayed task that should have been well under way by now but which so far has not gone ahead because of difficulties of which we all know. We hope that the Commission will be able to play an active part in the drafting of this comprehensive programme. At the same time, we do not think that we wish to be drawn into another excruciating exercise where we shall lose sight of the real dangers and priorities of disarmament for the sake of drafting another good-looking programme. I think that if we are going to look at the comprehensive programme we shall have to negotiate that. We shall have, as I think the Secretary-General put it, to go beyond a rehash of generalities into more substance concerning what is to be done in various fields. It is in that spirit that we would support giving priority to the consideration of the programme at our next session.

At the same time, we would favour some change in the formulation as contained in the paragraph in our report, because as it is presently phrased it would give the impression that the highest priority is to be given to consideration of the programme only at the session next year, and perhaps this is not the intent of it. I do not think that any of us believes that
the work of the Commission relating to this subject will be finished next year, so perhaps we could say: "should be accorded the highest priority, especially at its first session in 1979". But with some reformulation we think that we could accept and go along with that recommendation.

Mr. DZEVAD (Yugoslavia): Mr. Chairman, since I am taking the floor for the first time in the Commission, I should like to extend to you the congratulations of the delegation of Yugoslavia on your election to your very important post. Because of your vast experience, knowledge and capabilities, I am sure that this Commission will be presided over by a most suitable person in this initial stage of its work.
My delegation has had the privilege of profiting greatly from working with you, Sir, in both bilateral and multilateral activities, and especially during the preparation and the proceedings of the special session devoted to disarmament. I wish to assure you of the closest co-operation of the Yugoslav delegation.

As a member of the Bureau of the Commission, the Yugoslav delegation has already commended the Rapporteur and the Secretariat for having prepared this very good draft report, and there is no need for me now to repeat that, as we see it, the text reflects the content of the discussions that have taken place in the course of this first session of our Commission. But since we have entered into the consideration of several items, I should like to offer some of our views on them.

Firstly, as far as the duration of the first substantive session is concerned, I tend to agree with Ambassador Gharekhan of India that, for practical purposes, we should somehow seek to put into the report the maximum time we intend to meet at the spring session of the Commission, in order to help the Secretariat in planning the necessary conference services. I am sure that all of us are very eager to participate actively in the work of the Commission, and four weeks would hardly be sufficient for all of us to say what we shall have to say and to contribute what we shall have to contribute. Therefore, I would prefer the text as it is, without changes.

With regard to the priorities and the mandate of the Commission, I think that preceding speakers have covered most of what I had intended to say on that subject, so I shall not waste time in repeating the ideas expressed by the representatives of Nigeria, India and Pakistan. I should merely like to add one more point, namely, that, at the initial stage when we started working on the preparations for the special session, and during that session, my delegation favoured the setting up of an ad hoc committee to work on the elaboration of a comprehensive programme. But, in the course of exchanges of views and discussions, all of us realize that it would be better to have that done by the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which provides broader scope for the involvement of all the States Members of the United Nations in deliberations on the basic elements of the future comprehensive programme.
Mr. Dzevac, Yugoslavia

Although we do not know exactly what is meant when we speak of "elements" of the comprehensive programme - which remains to be clarified by all of us, and by the replies of our Governments - we feel that the very fact of not knowing exactly what "elements" means adds an additional element of urgency to the need to decide to take up as the highest priority consideration of these elements of the comprehensive programme, so that the interrelationships now established between the deliberative and negotiating bodies could be expedited without prejudice to the timetable of the work of the negotiating body, the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva.

As our colleague from Pakistan rightly said, we shall be considering this as the highest priority at the first substantive session, but we might feel the need to revert to clarifying, reviewing and discussing some of these elements at the later stages of our work.

Therefore, I should prefer to keep the word "highest" in front of the word "priority", although its deletion would indicate that the priority given to the elaboration of the elements of the programme would be given also to the other items which will be dealt with during the work of the Commission.

As far as the remarks on the penultimate paragraph of the draft report are concerned, my understanding is that we were supposed to come to this session prepared on the subject of how we intended to implement the decisions and recommendations of the special session. Accordingly, my delegation, at least, will participate actively in the consideration of the item, "Implementation of the decisions of the special session on disarmament", and will be offering some ideas as to how to proceed further. I am sure that most delegations will do the same. Therefore, we expect that, after the consideration of that item, it should not be too difficult to draw up the elements of the agenda for the first substantive session of the Commission to be held in May-June 1979. Hence we could keep the phrase as it is, except perhaps for replacing the words "decide on" by the word "including", so that the phrase would read:

"... it might be useful for the Commission to meet towards the end of the thirty-third session to consider the relevant decisions of the thirty-third session of the General Assembly, including the agenda of the first substantive session of the Commission to be held in May-June 1979".
That would give enough scope for the consideration of the possible elements of the agenda, and we could then decide at that meeting whether we were able to accept the elements of the draft agenda, which would be communicated to our Governments for consideration, so that when we came in May we should not be running the risk of wasting our time in quarrelling about what the agenda of the substantive session should be.

Mr. KLESTIL (Austria): I shall be very brief, since I have already had an opportunity at this morning's meeting of the Bureau to express my delegation's views in detail with regard to the various paragraphs of the draft report.

But since this afternoon exactly the same kind of reservation I took the liberty of expressing and drawing the Bureau's attention to this morning has been raised with regard to paragraph 10 of the draft report, I should like to come back to what we thought this morning might be a compromise formula concerning the phrasing of this paragraph.

Mr. Chairman, you have already been kind enough to include in subparagraph (c) of paragraph 10 the words "inter alia", which I think brings the phrasing much closer to the mandate as it is phrased in paragraph 118 (a) of the Final Document.
On page 4 where paragraph 10 of the draft report reads, "accorded the highest priority", we thought this morning that a compromise might be simply to say "high priority", and if I understood him correctly the representative of Nigeria made the same point. Since at this stage the elements of the comprehensive programme are not known to us, since there are countries that may have a particular interest perhaps in singling out and identifying one or the other issue for an in-depth discussion, and since I am not sure whether this is going to be included as an element of the report, I think this formula would cover both points of view.

The CHAIRMAN: I must indicate at this point, as I should have indicated at the beginning, that this draft report is not a report from the Bureau. It is a document for which I take the responsibility. The representative of Austria is quite right when he said that he, and certainly one other member of the Bureau, had reservations on that part.

Mr. BROOK (Australia): Mr. Chairman, may I on making our first remarks to the Commission, join other members in extending congratulations to you and to the other members of the Bureau on your election to office.

I think a number of representatives have made some very useful suggestions on changes in the wording of the draft report which we have before us. I do not want to go over what had already been mentioned, but rather to deal with two points very briefly.

The first is in fact the point which has just been dealt with by my near neighbour in the Commission, namely, the point concerning some other formula in the description of the agenda. He has suggested "high priority". I think that the representative of Nigeria had earlier suggested simply "priority", with some other modifications, and one or the other, I feel, might well get over what I would see as the main problem, namely, that in spite of the preceding words "without prejudice to any decisions" we are taking at this stage what, it seems to me, might be a slightly premature decision on at least one aspect of the agenda without waiting for the thirty-third session to give us its instructions.
The only other point I wished to mention very briefly has to do with the length of the first substantive session. I wonder whether the problems which have been raised here today by the representative of the United States and, I think, at our previous meeting by the representative of the United Kingdom, might not be overcome, and the viewpoint of others equally met, simply by inserting at the top of page 3 the two words which appear in the Final Document that is to say, "not exceeding", in place of the word "of".

Mr. FONSEKA (Sri Lanka): Let me first thank the Bureau for having prepared this draft report within the short time they have had. We have heard several arguments for and against some of the amendments proposed to it and some of the questions raised on it.

I shall get down to the issues that have been raised by the speakers who have preceded me. Having listened to the discussion that is taking place this afternoon, I would make the general comment that I am reminded of the kind of debate and discussion that took place over the composition of another body of our General Assembly, and, for lack of a better word to use, the fate that might be overtaking it. I have in mind something called the Committee of the Whole, which came out of the Second Committee last year. Those of us who have had some connexion with that might recall that the type of discussion taking place here and the arguments raised are not dissimilar.

On the question of the time that we should spend in the first substantive session of this Commission, as representatives have reminded us the Final Document states very clearly that it shall not exceed four weeks. That is true, and, if my recollection is correct in the working groups, during the special session the words "not exceeding four weeks" were used precisely to give the kind of assurance which was sought by those delegations that had apprehensions that this might be an unending talkathon, that this Commission might become just another forum for an unending debate with no conclusions.
After the whole question of whether it need be established at all had been discussed and overcome and the duration of its sessions was being considered, some assurance was necessary for those who had their doubts. I believe that these words "not exceeding four weeks" gave that assurance.

If I follow the tenor of today's discussion by those who want precisely that and nothing else, I think I will not be wrong in making the deduction that they would like to see it last less than four weeks, or that there is already a presumption that there is not sufficient to talk about for four weeks. I will not fall into the error of stating that there will be enough to talk about for four weeks. But those of us who have attended these meetings will well remember that procedural items take quite a bit of time in the beginning.

Some might say that because we have four weeks we will go on talking. I can appreciate the sentiments or fears behind that kind of argument, but let us not extend this too long. If just saying "not exceeding four weeks" will settle the question, my delegation has no strong objections, but let it not be concluded therefrom that it will have to be substantially reduced from four weeks. My delegation would like to see it stated here as four weeks. It would set our minds clear and, not least of all, it would help the Secretariat, the organizers, who have now to plan.

The only other question on this which I would put to you, Sir, is this: If it is in the stage that it could be done in less than four weeks, are we prepared to tell the Secretariat that now?
If somebody is prepared to say that I am sure they would also be able to give the reasons why it could be less than four weeks. Then we could give an answer. We would prefer to go on the other side, but there are matters of substance. There are matters which we could discuss -- not frivolously, not because there are these four weeks -- and we would like to see it stated as four weeks. If this is going to become an issue my delegation is quite content to leave it as not exceeding four weeks.

The representative of Yugoslavia suggested an amendment to the penultimate subparagraph on page 4, under paragraph 10 of the draft report, which I hope will help resolve the doubts raised in some minds whether the meeting which it is proposed should be held at the end of the General Assembly could decide on the agenda. The use of the words "including the agenda" should take care of that. My own impression is that at a short meeting of this Commission we would not be in a position really to decide. It is my understanding that it is the normal practice for the Commission when it meets to have before it something called a draft agenda, and if some thought could be given to it earlier it would reduce the time that would otherwise be spent on deciding whether or not it was to be the agenda when the first substantive session of the Commission convened. So I do hope that the use of the words "including the agenda" would remove the objections or fears that some delegations have expressed on this matter.

Thirdly, I come to this question that has been discussed at length on whether the elements of a comprehensive programme should have the highest priority. We are all well aware that the mandate of the Commission has been laid out in the Final Document of the special session, and paragraph 10 of the draft report which the Bureau has placed before us sets it out clearly enough.

Paragraph 10 (c) states, "inter alia, to consider the elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament ...". The reservations are about the use of the words "highest priority". When I commenced my remarks I made a reference to that other Committee which has run into some problems and my reference has relevance here. I believe that in that Committee also there is a great deal of argument about what items should appear on the agenda, about which has the higher priority or the highest priority, and there has been an
unending debate on that. May I express the hope that we shall not have the same problem here.

Paragraph 10 (a) of the draft report says, "to consider and make recommendations on various problems". I do not wish in any way to reduce the validity of that particular phrase. It is there, it has meaning, but to my mind it has a certain generality that will not allow this Commission to come to grips with the problem. It is something in the nature of an item which provides occasion for a general debate and, if I recall correctly, some delegations have already expressed the necessity for us to cut that kind of discussion to a minimum. If it is the intention or the wish of some delegations to provide an item on the agenda which allows delegations to make statements or to engage in a general debate, well, that is all right. But if the Commission's work is going to end on that note I fear we are not going to have very much coming out of it.

If the reference to a comprehensive programme of disarmament is causing some uncertainty may I remind the delegations who were present at the special session and took part in the working groups that we had a fairly long debate on this matter in those groups. We have paragraph 109 of the Final Document, which sought to set out the task of the forthcoming Committee on Disarmament, and lower down the mandate of this Commission has been set out.

I recall the debates that took place, the differences, the controversies, the fears, whatever one may like to call them. They were there. And these two paragraphs were drafted bearing in mind the reservations expressed by those who thought that this Commission might interfere in the work of the negotiating body and those who thought otherwise. At the end of it all we did arrive at the formulation of elements of a comprehensive programme which this Commission is expected to undertake. Listening to the discussion that took place, I have the impression that those fears had not subsided. For my own part, I think we should lay those fears to rest. There is no desire on the part of this Commission to get in the way of the negotiating body. I think the two bodies have a complementary role, and we would like it to be that.
My delegation is not familiar - and that is putting it mildly - with the kind of work so far undertaken by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, but my understanding is that what is described as a comprehensive programme of disarmament was taken up by it some time ago and was by no means given much priority, shall I say. It has been referred to one of its subsidiary bodies, and has lain there for some time.
If this Commission can help to accelerate the process of considering that comprehensive programme we may be doing a small service - and I do not mean service to the negotiating body but service to all who are interested in disarmament.

Speakers who have preceded me have explained very clearly that the use of the words "highest priority" was not intended to upset anyone's plans or intentions. It is because the Commission must undertake some work and the elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament constitute one of the items of the mandate of this Commission. If the negotiating body has up to now not given the subject much priority, as I have said, would there be any serious objection to this Commission's giving it greater priority?

My delegation has no problem with use of the words "highest priority", but, as the representative of Nigeria has suggested, if some amendment is necessary that could be undertaken. I have heard two amendments suggested. One was "higher priority" instead of "highest priority". As I have said, my delegation would much prefer it to remain "highest priority", but if that is going to raise a problem I would rather not have the words "higher priority"; it would be much better to leave it as just "priority".

Another issue raised in the discussion was the question of the setting up of a Committee of the Whole. The draft report does not contain such a decision; it is more in the nature of a recommendation, as I understand it. It says "it might be necessary to set up a Committee of the Whole". Personally, I would have preferred some other name. "Committee of the Whole" has so many connotations, which does not give me any feeling of comfort, but if that is the suggestion it is acceptable to my delegation. However, as you, Mr. Chairman, very carefully explained at our previous meeting, we shall have to give some thought to this if we intend to set up some bodies. "Sub-commissions" and "working groups" have been mentioned; the phrase does not matter. We have to get ourselves organized and there, again, it is a question of alerting the Secretariat to the possible need for the organization of facilities for setting up such a body.
(Mr. Fonseka, Sri Lanka)

I can agree with this particular paragraph now appearing on page 4. It has been moved higher up. My own delegation would prefer that it stay.

Mr. BOEL (Denmark): First, may I join with my colleagues in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Undoubtedly, you have the background, the experience and personal qualities required to make the work of the Commission successful.

I should like to take this opportunity to say that my Government thinks the Disarmament Commission has an important job to do and we shall certainly do our best to help it work successfully.

On the draft report before us, I should like to make only two points, which I made in a meeting of the Bureau this morning.

The first relates to the first full paragraph on page 4, and the phrase "the highest priority" which has been mentioned often here. As I said this morning, we feel that the agenda of the Disarmament Commission and its priorities will necessarily be greatly influenced by the deliberations of the General Assembly and the First Committee. We therefore feel it would be premature at this stage to say that any particular field of activity set out in the Commission's terms of reference should have the highest priority. That is why we would favour the use of the words "high priority".

My second point relates to the penultimate paragraph on page 4, where it said that "it might be useful for the Commission to meet towards the end of the thirty-third session..." It seems to us that Governments would need time to digest the results of the deliberations of the First Committee, to analyse the recommendations which will have been made and to think through the problems of what the Commission should focus its attention upon during its first substantive session. A different procedure, which we would support, would be to leave time for the thinking in our capitals to take place and then to have the Bureau deal with this matter in the light of informal consultations between different groups and on that basis to work out a draft agenda. That would greatly facilitate discussion at the substantive session, so that the agenda could be adopted quickly. Of course, we agree on the need for preparation of the discussion on the agenda during the substantive session.
Mr. RAHMAN (Bangladesh): My delegation would like to join in the tributes paid to you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of the Bureau on your election to guide our deliberations.

We should like to concentrate at this time on the two issues that have dominated our discussion: the functions of the Disarmament Commission and the possible agenda for its first substantive session.

We have listened very carefully to the statements made by other delegations and we feel that they have served to clarify the draft report and to bring us closer to a convergence of various ideas. We have looked very closely at the draft report and we feel there is a certain logical order in it as it stands. If one looks closely at paragraph 10 one sees that the first portion defines the functions of the body. It does not accord any priorities between the three categories of functions that have been assigned to the Commission as part of its mandate. Some delegations have rightly pointed out the importance of each one of them.

With regard to category (a), the representative of Pakistan pointed out the importance of a review of negotiations that are proceeding, the review of any new situation that might arise inter-sessionally; with regard to category (b), the importance of paragraph 125 of the Final Document and other proposals made that were not included in the recommendations of the special session, inter alia, as is pointed out in the draft report, the elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament. That portion in itself relates to the over-all mandate and does not assign any priority to any particular subject but refers to the general importance of all three categories.

The second portion of paragraph 10 relates to the first substantive session of the Commission. There we have assigned certain priorities, and rightly so, because we are operating within a certain time framework which requires that we concentrate on one particular aspect, the comprehensive programme, because of the very nature of the time element. Moreover, that item in itself constitutes a degree of specificity, so that Member States may consider in depth and submit proposals by 15 May so that for the one-month period of the session there will be something tangible for the Commission to consider.
(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

Even there the second portion says that this is without prejudice to any decisions that the thirty-third session of the General Assembly may take. So it is indeed quite flexible, a degree of priority has been attached, but it is not exclusive. It has in fact left it open for any decisions that may be taken at the thirty-third session to be brought up at the special session.

Now, the third question, as has been pointed out, is the propriety of holding a meeting at the end of the thirty-third session to review the progress of the situation and to see how the decisions taken at the thirty-third session could in fact fit into the work of the first substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. Here we tend to agree with the suggestion made by Yugoslavia that, instead of deciding on the agenda, we may improve on the agenda, or leave it flexible and open so that further discussions could illuminate what it could be.

In the discussions that were held yesterday quite a few useful suggestions were made, among them one concerning a possible general debate which could encompass all the important points in the mandate assigned to the Committee, and also a specific committee of the whole to carry on with the elements of the draft programme. So in a sense that meeting at the end of the thirty-third session could further illuminate what could be done.

As of now I think the document that the Chairman has presented is flexible enough to accommodate the various views. I do not think that any particular degree of priority that has been attached to any one of the functions that have been assigned to the Commission, and generally we should like to express our appreciation. We believe that the views that have been discussed could in fact be accommodated within the framework that has been established.

Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus): I do not want to waste much time because we had the opportunity at the meeting of the Bureau to express our views very briefly on these issues. What really concerns me at this time is that these differences do not seem to be very important. It is really splitting hairs to argue about whether we should say "high" priority, "highest" priority, "first" priority, or just "priority", or whether we should say "four weeks" and not
"exceeding four weeks". If we have a common purpose to do something towards disarmament, then we should not be arguing about these things so extensively and so strongly. Is the essence of this matter to reduce the time? If it is not, then if we say "four weeks" it is just the same as saying "not exceeding four weeks".

All this seems to us illogical unless we are at cross purposes. If some did not want any progress on disarmament, or any progress in discussing disarmament, then I could understand it. But I do not suppose anyone will say we are at cross purposes here, for there is nothing worse than to discuss matters at cross purposes. If we did so we would be going in different directions and we could never agree, particularly when we have a body that works by consensus. How could there be consensus on anything?

The purpose of this body should be to work effectively towards making a contribution - perhaps an essential contribution. Because the concept of a disarmament commission has always been in the minds of the United Nations all through the years. I remember there was much discussion in 1968 and 1969 about having a disarmament commission, and then it was postponed. Now we have the Disarmament Commission because public opinion throughout the world wants something to be done to stop the arms race, wants progress towards disarmament. That is obvious from the fact that we had the special session and that we have now this Disarmament Commission. Let this Commission work as diligently as possible with a consensus of mind and a consensus of purpose. The consensus of purpose will bring consensus of mind to resolutions which will be effective.

So I appeal to all. I know all have at heart the important task of stopping the arms race, which is really a threat to the very survival of mankind, and nothing less than that, and of proceeding towards disarmament. Let us get over our difficulties and agree to this document, which I do not think contains anything really objectionable.

Mr. PEREZ (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): I shall endeavour to be very brief in making a few comments on the document as a whole, but more specifically on those problems that have been somewhat controversial.
First of all my delegation attaches great importance to this Committee's avoiding the same pitfalls as those which ultimately engulfed its predecessor, which was unable to work adequately. In the course of the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament many delegations participated and many of the speakers were extremely bitter in their criticisms and in their statements regarding the inability of the United Nations or any of its organs to draw up a comprehensive disarmament programme, and to a large extent an idea was gaining ground to the effect that one of the elements of the future activities of this Commission, and of the Disarmament Committee to be created, should be that as soon as possible we be guaranteed a comprehensive disarmament programme on the basis of which we could act.

Taking this into account the problem of the highest priority, or that of priority alone, should not be unduly exaggerated. We know that defining the elements that might be components of a comprehensive programme of disarmament must be one of the fundamental activities of the Commission, and we should not be forced to wait too long before we start upon it.

In the course of the preparatory work for the tenth special session of the General Assembly we and our Governments were working on ideas to be included in a comprehensive programme of disarmament, and that this was something that was brought out very clearly in the course of the general debate. In other words, what we are doing is following up on what has already been done and continuing a process that will lead to something that is in itself not new, namely, a comprehensive programme of disarmament.

Almost all countries are already prepared, within a very short space of time, and quite adequately and quite comprehensively, to make known their views regarding that programme of disarmament. So this is not something new that is being foisted on us. It is a matter of priority.

Now, whether it is to have the highest priority, or high priority, or higher priority is something of small importance to us. It is one of the basic objectives that this Commission must bear in mind and to which it must direct its efforts.

Some delegates have referred to the fact that if a word might disturb a delegation then we should drop that word. But, by the same token, we must guarantee the general content of our agreement, that is that the basic mandate of this Commission is to draw up the components of a comprehensive disarmament programme. That is the first question I wanted to bring out.
The second question I wish to raise is a practical one, namely, whether or not we are going to set a precise period during which the session is to take place. Will it be four weeks, less than four weeks or more than four weeks? I think that the representative of India explained very clearly why we should set a four week limit. The General Assembly told us that we should have a session of not more than four weeks. That does not mean to say that we can discuss this matter in three weeks. But for practical purposes, as the representative of India pointed out, we should take into account all contingencies. The general debate might last longer than two or three weeks and we would be covered so that practical measures could be taken to allow us to complete our work. Therefore, I entirely support the representative of India in his views on this matter.

The third question I wish to raise refers to paragraph 9 of the draft report, the composition of the Bureau. I quite agree that in the last line of the paragraph we should replace the word "composition" by the word "election". The question of the composition is something that we have already inherited in a mandate handed down to us by the previous session. However, the election of the Bureau and the date of its election are matters for which we must adopt certain measures. This has to be done now in order to ensure the continuity of our work and in order to have the present Bureau continue in office until 1980. We should therefore consider the last line of paragraph 9 as referring to the question of the election of the Bureau for 1980. We have our Bureau up to 1980 and there is no problem in that respect.

Mr. LENNUYEUX-COMENNE (France) (interpretation from French): I should like to state first that, of course, since this document has been submitted to us in English, it is not possible for the French delegation to take a stand on it now. It is a short document, it consists of only four pages, and one third of the text consists of quotations which already exist in French; I am therefore surprised that the document could not have been made available to us in French this afternoon.
Secondly, referring to page 4 of the English text, I wonder whether it would not be possible to consolidate two paragraphs which concern, on the one hand, the comprehensive programme of disarmament which should be accorded the highest priority and, on the other, the study of the agenda of the substantive session which must be carried out by this Commission at the end of the thirty-third session of the General Assembly.

I find that there is a certain contradiction in the procedures as set forth. On the one hand, we state in the paragraph which begins with the words "Keeping in mind its mandate", that we recommend that the Commission take a decision on an order of priority concerning the comprehensive programme of disarmament, without prejudice to any decisions that might be taken by the thirty-third session of the General Assembly. I find that this recommendation is precisely prejudicial to a decision that might be taken by the thirty-third session of the General Assembly.

On the other hand, we see in the next paragraph that it would be appropriate to convene the Commission immediately after the end of the thirty-third session of the General Assembly to decide on the agenda of the first substantive session to be held in 1979.

I therefore wonder, since we are asking Member States to take a position on the order of priority, whether we could perhaps also request their views on the programme of work. I believe that these two areas are related and, in the circumstances, I do not see any purpose in holding a meeting at the end of the thirty-third session.

I think that we should try to consolidate these two paragraphs and to obtain the views of Governments on the order of priority and on the agenda. Once that is done, by 15 March 1979, the Bureau would have the information at its disposal and would be able to propose to the substantive session in 1979 an agenda which, I believe, would be acceptable to all delegations. That agenda could very well be established on the basis of the views of Governments and the Bureau would then be able to suggest an order of priority.

I think this would enable us to overcome the deadlock which we are now facing and it would also be satisfactory to the majority of delegations.
Mr. VAL BUUREN (Netherlands): Mr. Chairman, I should like first of all to add my voice to those who have spoken before and to congratulate you on your election as Chairman and, through you, to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

Much of what we have in mind has been said by the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany. I should like to concentrate on just one point, which has also just been made by the representative of France. There does seem to be in our present wording of the draft report a certain amount of contradiction when we state that we do not want to prejudice the decisions and deliberations of the First Committee and then go on and in a sense prejudice the outcome of our deliberations. My delegation sees the crux of the debate this afternoon as turning on the question of setting our priorities right concerning the questions with which the Disarmament Commission will have to deal. At this stage it is not a matter of deciding what should or should not be on the agenda. I am thinking here of paragraph 125 of the Final Document on which the First Committee will also have to decide as to what to do with respect to the subjects mentioned. Therefore, it is just a matter of priorities. It seems to us that those priorities will become clear only as we go along in our deliberations in the First Committee and that we shall have willy-nilly to hold informal consultations alongside the First Committee. Perhaps they will culminate in informal consultations, as suggested by the representative of Denmark, at the beginning of next year through the Bureau, or perhaps it will be necessary to have a brief session of this body at the end of this session of the General Assembly. We have an open mind on this matter. I just wish to make the point that it does seem premature at this stage to indicate any kind of priority on the matters which the Disarmament Commission will have to discuss.
Mr. PALMA (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, my delegation wishes to echo the congratulations you have received on your election and to offer you our full co-operation. At the same time, we take advantage of this opportunity to congratulate the other members of the Bureau, and particularly our friend the Rapporteur, the representative of Argentina.

I should like to refer to the question of "high priority" and "highest priority" regarding the elements of the comprehensive disarmament programme. We believe that that priority arises naturally not only because of the urgency and importance a number of delegations have attached to preparation of the comprehensive disarmament programme and its elements but also because another organ, the Committee on Disarmament, has already been entrusted with working on the same matter. In this case my delegation wishes to stress that, when he addressed this Commission on its opening day, in speaking of the machinery established, the Secretary-General said that it is a cardinal feature of the machinery now established that the two organs should be mutually reinforcing and that the output of the one should be channelled into the other. That is why my delegation feels this is a valid approach to the problem confronting us.

We therefore feel it is the Commission that can make that recommendation since it is the Commission that is called upon to decide upon priorities, and it is this priority that obviously must be attached to preparation of this comprehensive programme.

Regarding the work to be undertaken at our substantive meetings, a number of statements have been made, and I think the matter has been clarified sufficiently. It seems obvious that the four-week period is at least adequate as a minimum to cope with the problems with which we should have to deal and, regarding the possible establishment of a subsidiary body, whether we call it a committee of the whole or by any other name, I think the practical arguments are worth taking into account. It would be most lamentable if at the beginning of our work at the substantive session we were to find ourselves forced to call a meeting of that sort of organ and, for practical reasons that are perfectly well understood, it were to be found impossible for such a meeting to take place. Therefore I think we should take this contingency into account.
My delegation feels that, not only so far as we are concerned but so far as many other delegations are concerned, we should at the end of the year be able to have a clear idea of the agenda - and if not an agreed upon and approved agenda regarding the substantive session, at least an outline. That would help us enormously. We feel that the sooner we have put before us a refined blueprint regarding the substantive work of the Commission at that session the better we shall be able to prepare ourselves for it. I am sure many delegations share this view.

Mr. GHAREKHAN (India): I am sorry to speak again, but we hope that we shall be able to adopt this report if not today then certainly tomorrow morning, and to facilitate its adoption my delegation is prepared to agree to many of the suggestions that have been made by some delegations. I shall now point out the amendments my delegation is prepared to accept in a spirit of compromise and in the interest of consensus.

My delegation could accept the wording given in the sixth line of paragraph 6: "in 1979 it should meet for a period not exceeding four weeks". My delegation would prefer the words "up to four weeks", which for stylistic reasons is better from our point of view, but if the words "not exceeding" are more acceptable to the delegations concerned, then my delegation can go along with them, but on the clear understanding that the necessary provisions for having a session of up to four weeks would be made by the Secretariat and would be provided for in the budget of the United Nations for next year. On that clear understanding, my delegation could accept the addition of the words "not exceeding" or "up to".

Concerning page 4, as I said earlier, we feel that this question of consideration of the elements of the comprehensive programme should be accorded the highest priority at our session next year. But, again in a spirit of compromise, we could accept deletion of the words "the highest", so that the text would read, "should be accorded priority at the first substantive session". We could accept deletion of the words "the highest" without their being replaced by any other word or words.
Concerning the penultimate paragraph on page 4 and the words "and decide on the agenda of the first substantive session" near the end of that paragraph, as I said earlier I can see the point of those delegations that have difficulty with this formulation, and I have suggested deletion of this phrase altogether. Consideration of "the relevant decisions of the thirty-third session of the General Assembly" is quite a broad provision and would not preclude the Commission's discussing the agenda at its meeting later this year, so I could accept deletion of this phrase. Or, if the amendment proposed by Yugoslavia is acceptable to those delegations, it is acceptable to my delegation also.

I would recall that I have proposed an amendment to the first paragraph on page 4. I should now like to amend that amendment. I had proposed that after the words "as stated above" the words "and to enable the Committee on Disarmament" should be inserted. Perhaps the word "enable" might give rise to some misgivings in certain delegations. I therefore propose replacing the word "enable" by the word "facilitate".

The CHAIRMAN: We have had a fairly extensive exchange of views on this draft, and I think I should at this point sum it up and give some indication as to my own reaction to the various proposals that have been made.

The representative of France inquired why we could not have even this draft in the French language. I explained yesterday that we had decided we should have a meeting of the Bureau. It completed its work only after 1 o'clock this afternoon, and it was quite impossible for us to have the text translated into all the languages, not just French. But the revised draft - revised, that is, in the context of the discussion here this afternoon - will be available in all the languages by 10.30 a.m. tomorrow, when we shall meet and, it is to be hoped complete our work before lunch.
If I may go through this draft report page by page and indicate the various questions which have been raised and also my own reactions to them, members might take note of them.

On page 2 in the first line, the representative of Nigeria suggested a minor amendment, to include the phrase "of the tenth special session of the General Assembly" after the words "Final Document".

He also mentioned that it might be more appropriate to have a heading, "Recommendations" appear before paragraph 5 and not before paragraph 6, as I had suggested. I tend to agree with him and I would therefore suggest that we have a subheading "Recommendations" before paragraph 5.

We now go on to page 3. Here we have the first problem which appears to have caused considerable concern to some delegations. Quite frankly, I am not able to understand the difficulty. It is true that the special session did indicate that the Disarmament Commission will meet for a period not exceeding four weeks. It would seem to me rather futile for the Disarmament Commission at this session, when we are discussing organizational matters, to repeat the same thing and say that our substantive session next year should meet for a period not exceeding four weeks. Surely we are expected to say something more than that, particularly since what is required at this stage is for the Secretariat to make the necessary facilities available and to make the necessary financial appropriations. This will have to go to the Fifth Committee, perhaps before that it will have to go to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, so surely it is necessary for us to be a little more precise and indicate that the Commission will meet for four weeks. This is also important from the point of view of the Committee on Disarmament. Certainly the Committee on Disarmament will want to know when and for how long the Disarmament Commission is meeting. I think it has been expressed here - and I tend to agree - that as far as possible every effort should be made to avoid a clash in the schedule of meetings of the Disarmament Commission and the Committee on Disarmament. It applies to Governments also; Governments will certainly be interested in knowing for how long this Disarmament Commission is going to meet so that they can make arrangements in regard to their
delegations. We are not saying anything against what has been said in the special session. So I would appeal very strongly to the representative of the United States - because I have not heard objections from any other source - to agree to our saying that the Commission should meet - or will meet, or whatever the word is - for a period of four weeks beginning on Monday, 14 May. If we do not do this, the Secretariat will have to prepare a paper for the Fifth Committee or for the First Committee, saying how much it will cost if it lasts for one week, how much for two weeks, so we have to be precise. In the special session it was said that it should not exceed four weeks. That meant that the maximum period should be four weeks. That is precisely what we are saying now.

In paragraph 9 the representative of Pakistan suggested a minor change in the first line: instead of saying "should continue" to say "should serve in office until the end of the thirty-fourth session" and another suggestion was made by the representative of Nigeria at the end of the paragraph which, along with one or two other suggestions which have been made, would now make that last line read: "for the purpose of, inter alia, electing the Bureau for 1980".

Then we come to paragraph 10, particularly that part appearing on page 4. I think there has been a great deal of discussion of the words "the highest priority" and it is fairly clear now to me that it would not be appropriate for us to say that this "should be accorded the highest priority". That phrase would not appear to have a consensus in this Commission. Therefore, and taking into account the suggestions made by the representatives of Nigeria, India and one or two others, I would suggest that the paragraph should read:

"Keeping in mind its mandate, as stated above, " - and here there is an insertion - "and in order to facilitate the Committee on Disarmament to take up the question of the elaboration of a comprehensive programme of disarmament, the Disarmament Commission recommends that ..." and we go on until the fifth line, and there it should say:

"... a comprehensive programme of disarmament should be accorded priority at its first substantive session to be held in May/June 1979".
Then the rest of the sentence will be left as it is. The representatives of France and, I think, of the Netherlands, said that there was some contradiction. I think they are right; if we were to use the words "highest priority", but if we are merely saying that priority should be given to this, I do not think there will be any contradiction.

On the penultimate paragraph on page 4 there has been some discussion regarding the last two lines. Perhaps that discussion was due to the fact that I may not have explained clearly the intent of that paragraph. What I had in mind — and at least to me it was very clear — was that it would be useful — all we are saying is that it might be useful — for the Commission to have a meeting. What I had in mind was that the Commission could then take into account the decisions taken at the thirty-third session and then decide on its own agenda, or work programme or whatever, for the May/June 1979 session, so as to give Governments adequate time to prepare for the discussion of those items. But I believe the representative of Sri Lanka was the one who quite correctly referred to the fact that the adoption of the agenda and the priorities is something that the Disarmament Commission should undertake at its substantive session in May 1979. Keeping that in mind, let me make this clear, that when we think in terms of this brief session it is primarily to consider the question of the work programme for the 1979 session, not for anything else. It should not be to review all the decisions taken at the thirty-third session, so I should like to submit the following amendment to the last three lines:

"to consider the relevant decisions of the thirty-third session of the General Assembly in an effort to draw up a draft agenda for consideration at the first substantive session of the Commission to be held in May/June 1979."

In other words, what is being suggested is that the Commission might meet — there is nothing definite about it — to consider the decisions taken in an effort to draw up the draft agenda. I think Ambassador Fonseka was right in saying that it can only be a draft agenda, or a provisional agenda, until the Commission meets in May 1979. But even that draft provisional agenda will help member States and Governments to prepare for the 1979 session.
I come now to the last paragraph, which will be inserted at another point. The representative of the United States said that he would very much like to see that paragraph redrafted in the sense which I had indicated earlier. In order to save time, I shall just read out an alternative text which I have attempted to draft:

"The Disarmament Commission considers that, at its substantive session to be held in May-June 1979, it might become" - not "be" - necessary to set up a Committee of the Whole and to allow both the Commission and the Committee of the Whole, should one be set up, to meet simultaneously. The Commission would request the Secretariat to inform the General Assembly at the current session, before the First Committee takes up the report of the Commission, of the administrative and financial implications of this proposal - or "of this suggestion".

In other words, a decision on this would be taken only after we have had the benefit of the advice of the Secretariat regarding the administrative and financial implications of having parallel meetings of two forums of the entire membership of the United Nations.

Those are the suggestions which I wanted to make. If there are any immediate comments on them, I should like to hear them now; otherwise I propose to have a revised draft along the lines I have indicated prepared in all the languages by 10.30 tomorrow morning.

Mr. LENNUXEUX-CONNENDE (France) (interpretation from French): This is not a comment on the suggestions you have just made, Mr. Chairman. I simply wish to ask for an additional clarification.

If our Commission were to meet at the end of the thirty-third regular session of the General Assembly, on what basic document would it work? Could we then expect a report from the Secretary-General which would reflect the relevant decisions of the thirty-third session and deal also with the agenda of our substantive session?
The CHAIRMAN: I should like to indicate again that we are not in this report recommending that there should be another meeting. We are only indicating that it might be useful.

Quite obviously, if the Commission were to meet in December there would have to be a document, one which would at least indicate the issues or items which the First Committee, under various resolutions, had referred to the Disarmament Commission for further study. That is the important thing. It is on the basis of that document that the Commission would have to consider its own agenda for the next session. So, there could be and there would be a paper indicating the decisions in the form of resolutions adopted in the First Committee and the plenary Assembly. It should not be too difficult to have a paper indicating that.

Mr. OGISO (Japan): I wish to ask for one clarification about the relation between paragraph 8 and the last paragraph on page 4 of the draft report, which has been revised in accordance with your suggestion, Mr. Chairman.

Will the verbatim records, which it has been recommended should be continued for the meetings of the Commission, cover the meetings of the committee of the whole also, or only the plenary meetings of the Commission?

The CHAIRMAN: I imagine that verbatim records would be confined to plenary meetings of the Commission, but that is of course a matter that the Commission itself will have to decide if a body such as that referred to should be set up. I would suggest that when the Secretariat prepares the paper on the financial implications it might consider both possibilities, saying what it would cost to provide verbatim records for both bodies and the cost of providing them for the plenary Commission alone.

Mr. OKEYO (Kenya): Since this is the first time that my delegation has spoken in the Commission, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau. We are confident that, as has already been demonstrated, you will guide us very effectively in our deliberations now and at the coming meetings next year.
I should merely like a clarification on your last point when you said that the United States delegation had raised the question of financial implications. I had the impression that you do not want us to take any decision before the financial implications are available and discussed. I thought that that was taken for granted and that there was no need for us to repeat something that is general practice. I say this because I feel that once we begin writing such things or accepting such things we are introducing some pressure manoeuvres from some quarters, so that if our Commission wants to take a decision it is always told that it must first of all wait for the financial implications.

Do we want to have a committee of the whole or not? Do we think that it would be useful or not? The financial implications will be given to the General Assembly, which will approve our report. If the General Assembly does not believe that it is a useful thing, it will cancel it. There is no need for us to include it in our report. It is a sort of manoeuvre to apply pressure in favour of waiting until the financial implications are available. It is a dangerous precedent.

The CHAIRMAN: I want to mention that the Disarmament Commission, being a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, does make recommendations to the General Assembly, and this report which we are required to send to the Assembly now should cover as much as possible of the organizational aspects of our work in the future.

The only question is whether the Disarmament Commission, when it meets in 1979, will comprise two, three or four forums. My own feeling is that the decision whether there should be a committee of the whole, sub-commissions or working groups is something that the Commission itself will have to decide on the basis of its work-load and the types of issues which are referred to it.

But the representative of Argentina yesterday quite correctly said that it is necessary to warn the Secretariat that this might become necessary, so that we are not told at the last moment that we do not have the financial provisions for it.
(The Chairman)

I should like to tell the representative of Kenya that the financial implications are important, because when the Commission is meeting during the General Assembly the financial implications are almost nil, as we are practically taking the place of the First Committee. But when we are meeting intersessionally - and, for example, there is a suggestion that Arabic should also be included as a working language - the financial implications are different. If we were thinking in terms of two separate forums meeting in parallel, there would then be certain implications.
I must assure the representative of Kenya that I mentioned the words "administrative" and "financial" not because the United States delegation or anyone else had mentioned them. In fact, I do not think that there has been any mention of them at all. It was suggested to me by the Secretariat that, because of the construction going on in the United Nations building, there might be difficulty in providing two large rooms. All we wanted to do was to warn the Secretariat that this might become necessary. In any case, I will take into account the observation made by the representative of Kenya while drafting that part of the paragraph.

Mr. PFEIFFER (Federal Republic of Germany): I think that we have had a very useful debate this afternoon, and I thank you especially, Mr. Chairman, for the effort you have made to inform us fully about the proposed wording and formulation of the report we are going to make.

I find it all very much improved, but may I be allowed to take up just one item, the one on page 4 which states that it might be useful to meet again towards the end of the thirty-third session. May I be allowed to come back to the suggestion, made by the representative of Denmark and mentioned also by the representative of France, that we should ensure that Governments have time to consider the outcome of the thirty-third session of the General Assembly.

I fear that it might be a bit too early to expect that the Commission could meet at the end of the thirty-third session of the General Assembly, even to draw up an agenda. I wonder whether it would not be more useful to entrust that task to the Bureau, which could meet to consider the outcome of the Assembly and draw up a draft agenda which it could make available to us for comment. I wonder whether it is necessary to convene a meeting of the plenary Commission in order to draft an agenda.
The \textit{CHAIRMAN}: I cannot of course speak for the whole Bureau, but I can speak for myself, and I must make it very clear that it is not possible for the Bureau to undertake that task. What is involved is consultations. The Bureau cannot decide on the agenda of the 1979 session without consulting others. How is the Bureau to do this during January and February? As far as I am concerned, it is impossible for me to be here continuously between now and May next year. How else can the Bureau do it? Somebody suggested why not write letters to Governments and ask them what they would like in terms of priority. The replies to these letters would arrive and they would reflect various views. How will the Bureau then be able to discuss the agenda?

I have no objection if it is the general feeling that we should not meet in December. I would be more than happy, because I would not have to come back for three or four days. But if we do not have a meeting in December the priorities and the order of the agenda items can be decided only in May. This is very clear because the Bureau alone cannot decide. I do not want to undertake to do something which I know cannot be done. This can only be discussed in the whole Commission, because the views on it will be very different. It is something which can be discussed only in the whole Commission so that a consensus can be reached.

This is why I had suggested that we meet to consider the decisions taken at the thirty-third session of the General Assembly in an effort to draw up a draft agenda. If that is not done and if it is left to the substantive session in May my apprehension still is that the Commission will probably spend almost a week of its four weeks on just the order of the items.

The representative of the Federal Republic of Germany said that Governments must be given time. I must confess that I do not quite understand that. If we were to look at the decisions taken at the thirty-third session of the General Assembly in December, surely the delegations here should be in possession of the views of their Governments, because their own priorities, their own interests are known to them in regard to the items relating to disarmament. I do not believe that merely postponing the meeting from December to May is going to make it much easier, and it has the definite disadvantage that if the order is
decided only in May it does not give the Governments any time to participate effectively in the discussion.

In any case, I am in the Commission's hands, and if there were a general feeling that the paragraph relating to the meeting in December should not be there, I would have no serious difficulty. All I am saying is, please do not replace it by one asking the Bureau to do it, because that is not possible.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.