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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FORTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 18 May 1981, at 11 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. MICHAELSEN

(Denmark)

- Opening of the session
- Election of officers

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The meeting was called to order at 11.25 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: At the short organizational meeting held on 8 December 1980, the Disarmament Commission bestowed on my country and me the honour of chairing the Disarmament Commission for 1981. I take up this post with a sincere sense of gratitude, as well as a deep sense of responsibility, as the Commission will this year, in accordance with its mandate as set out in relevant General Assembly resolutions, undertake deliberations on very important disarmament issues.

Since its establishment in 1978 by the tenth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to disarmament, the Commission has carried out its responsibilities as a deliberative body and made recommendations on various problems in the field of disarmament under the able chairmanship of Mr. Vellodi of India, who has demonstrated the quality of leadership needed to ensure the success of the work of the Commission.

At its past sessions the Commission has worked diligently and in earnest in the discharge of its functions and responsibilities and has thus been able to achieve agreements by consensus in conformity with the provisions of the Final Document, which stated that the Commission

"shall make every effort to ensure that, in so far as possible, decisions on substantive issues be adopted by consensus (General Assembly resolution S-10/2, para. 118 (b)).

We all realize that if such consensus has been achieved despite some moments of great difficulty it is because during those crucial periods the members of the Commission demonstrated a deep sense of responsibility and a great spirit of co-operation.

There is every reason to believe that the same spirit of co-operation and willingness to achieve progress will prevail during the work of the current session. I am confident and I am certain that members share with me the feeling that, as in the past, the Commission will carry out its mandate and will contribute to the endeavours towards disarmament.

(The Chairman)

The second substantive session of this Commission in 1980 took place against a background of world tension and threats to international peace and security. The prospects for real disarmament were thereby affected, since such prospects cannot be dissociated from the political environment from which they emanate. The general political climate in which we are today opening the third substantive session hardly differs from the one prevailing at the same time last year. Nevertheless, as in 1980, we should not allow the difficulties of the present situation to detract from our universal obligation to strive for real progress in the process of disarmament.

As we begin our work at this session, I place myself at the disposal of the Commission and assure members that I shall lend my utmost co-operation, whether in meetings or private consultations, and seek their co-operation and assistance in order to bring about the most positive results.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The CHAIRMAN: Members will recall that at the short organizational meeting held on 8 and 9 December 1980 to elect its Bureau for 1981 the Commission elected a Chairman and a Rapporteur, but had to postpone the election of its Vice-Chairmen, pending the completion of consultations regarding the nomination of candidates from various regional groups. I am now in a position to report that the consultations, which have since been completed, have resulted in the following nominations by the five regional groups for the vice-chairmanships of the Disarmament Commission: from the Group of African States, Zambia; from the Group of Asian States, Pakistan and Syria; from the Group of Eastern European States, Czechoslovakia and Romania; from the Group of Latin American States, Bahamas and Peru; and from the Group of Western European and other States, Portugal.

In view of the fact that there appears to be general agreement within the regional groups with respect to those nominations, may I take it that the Disarmament Commission wishes to elect the aforementioned countries to the eight vice-chairmanships of the Commission without a vote?

It was so decided.

Zambia, Pakistan, Syria, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bahamas, Peru and Portugal were elected to the vice-chairmanships of the Disarmament Commission.

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Commission, may I extend my congratulations to the Vice-Chairmen. I trust that by their knowledge, experience and ability they will help to bring the work of the Commission to a successful outcome. As I pledge to them my total co-operation, I would like to assure the members of the Bureau that their assistance is needed by the Chairman in the conduct of this session's work.

At this point I wish to propose to the members of the Commission that, since up to now we have had no Bureau to consult on the work of the Commission, we adjourn the meeting in order to give the Bureau its first opportunity to discuss the programme of work of the Commission. Furthermore, following the meeting of the Bureau, it might be useful to leave the afternoon free for consultations among members of the Commission. If that is acceptable to members it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: At the next meeting, tomorrow, I hope to be able to give an outline of the thinking of the Bureau on how to organize our session. Notwithstanding the fact that the agenda has not yet been adopted, the expectations are for a general exchange of views to begin tomorrow. Let me, therefore, invite delegations to inscribe their names on the speakers' list as soon as possible.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.