DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 5 June 1981, at 11 a.m.

Chairman:  Mr. MICHAELSEN (Denmark)

- Preparation of a report of the Disarmament Commission on its work to the General Assembly at its second special session devoted to disarmament

- Adoption of the report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session

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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.

81-61182
The meeting was called to order at 12.10 p.m.

ITEM 7

PREPARATION OF A REPORT OF THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION ON ITS WORK TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS SECOND SPECIAL SESSION DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

ITEM 10

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: Since our last meeting during which the Commission established two working groups on agenda item 5 (a) and (b) and agenda item 6 with their mandate, those working groups have met during the week and worked against the clock in the discharge of their mandate in order to report to the Commission. Members will also recall that other items on the agenda, including items 4, 7 and 9, were to be discussed by the Commission convened as a Committee of the whole, also to report to the Commission.

At our meeting today, which is the last day of our session, I should like to make the following explanations about the reports on various items to be considered by the Commission and about the order of their presentation. First, I should like to call the Commission’s attention to the documents before us which will be taken up today: document A/CN.10/CRP.13, which is the draft report of the Commission to the thirty-sixth session of the Assembly; document A/CN.10/CRP.14, which is related to item 5 (a) and (b) on the reduction of military budgets; document A/CN.10/CRP.15, which is related to item 6 with the mandate agreed on earlier; document A/CN.10/CRP.16 containing recommendations on item 7, which is the report of the Commission to the second special session; document A/CN.10/CRP.17, which is related to item 4 (a) and (b); and, finally, document A/CN.10/CRP.18 on item 9, relating to the letter of the Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid.
(The Chairman)

Because one of the items, namely, item 9, is still under discussion by a drafting group, it will be discussed during this afternoon's meeting. I would suggest also that we divide the consideration of these items between this morning's and this afternoon's meetings, proceeding in the order I have outlined.

We shall now take up the draft report to the thirty-sixth session which is contained in document A/CN.10/CRP.13. Are there any comments?

As representatives will see, this is the procedural part of the report, about the organization of work and the documentation, and we shall come to the substantive elements when we deal with the respective items.

It is my intention to take up this morning document A/CN.10/CRP.13 and document A/CN.10/CRP.16, and the others in the afternoon. Document A/CN.10/CRP.16 is the recommendations on the report of the Commission to the second special session.

Mr. SHUSTOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): We have studied document A/CN.10/CRP.13 and our delegation thinks that it has been drafted quite carefully. So far we have no comments on it.

As regards document A/CN.10/CRP.16, which you suggest that we take up this morning, we have no comments on its substance either, because everything in this document, of course, depends on its contents. But I have a question to you and perhaps to Mr. Alem, as representative of the Centre for Disarmament: when and how are we going to discuss the report in the Commission, as regards both procedure and the sort of time-frame you have in mind? We are not clear about this.

Mr. DIACONU (Romania) (interpretation from French): At first glance, we have no comments to make about these two texts, A/CN.10/CRP.13 and A/CN.10/CRP.16, but we do reserve our right to speak later in this connexion, in light of all the texts, all the parts of the draft report.
The CHAIRMAN: I call on the Secretary of the Commission to answer the question raised by the representative of the Soviet Union.

Mr. ALEM (Secretary of the Commission): The representative of the Soviet Union, if I understood him correctly, wishes to know when the Commission will prepare its report to the special session. The Secretariat is requested in document A/CN.10/CRP.16 to prepare the procedural part of the report. The document sets out three parts and includes a fourth part related to conclusions and recommendations to be prepared by the Commission at its next substantive session. As far as we are concerned, the Secretariat has set aside enough time for the meeting of the Commission early next year, bearing in mind the schedule of meetings for 1982, should the Commission decide to hold a substantive session and to consider at that time its report to the special session. Should that be the case, the Secretariat would be prepared to allocate the necessary time as decided by the Commission.

Mr. LEGG (Canada): I understood the Secretary of the Commission to say that there was sufficient time set aside next year for the substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Does the Secretary have a calendar available giving the dates, that he could read out to us?

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the Secretary of the Commission.

Mr. ALEM (Secretary of the Commission): I am certain that the members of the Commission who participated in the work of the Preparatory Committee to the second special session are aware that the decisions on the meetings of the Preparatory Committee next year were left for a later session. I am referring to adjustments of the meeting of the Commission along with that of the Preparatory Committee. Of course there are other meetings that will be held elsewhere. The dates of those meetings should be taken into consideration when scheduling any meetings for early 1982.
Mr. SILOVIC (Yugoslavia): In our opinion, it might be a good idea to follow the example that was set by the Preparatory Committee, in view of the tasks which are still before the Commission, particularly one specific item that has to be dealt with, namely, the report to the second special session. The Commission may, of course, be charged with other tasks by the next special session. In view of all the decisions and recommendations which may be reached during the course of this last day of our work, it would be difficult to decide now on the exact dates and duration of the next session and the tasks with which the Commission will be faced next year. Therefore, we feel that it might be appropriate to recommend that the Disarmament Commission hold a substantive session in 1982, in final practical decisions being left to the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

The CHAIRMAN: Does any delegation wish to comment on the suggestion just made that the recommendation on agenda item 7 should be supplemented to include a recommendation that the Disarmament Commission should meet in a substantive session in 1982, on the understanding that the decision on the specific dates will be left to the next session of the General Assembly?

Mr. FLOWERVEE (United States of America): With regard to the proposal that we take a decision now on the session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission in 1982, I believe that we should give this matter rather careful thought. We know that there are going to be meeting conflicts in 1982. We know that the Preparatory Committee for the special session will be meeting some time during the very limited open periods in the disarmament schedule for 1982. I would not be prepared at this time to accept the suggestion just made, but I would certainly take into account other arguments that may be adduced in its favour.
Mr. DIACONU (Romania) (interpretation from French): On this question of the Commission's views on whether or not there should be a session in 1982, perhaps we might say that the Commission deems it necessary that there should be a session, with the final decision being left to the General Assembly. However, if some delegations object to that solution, we might say that many delegations felt that it was necessary to have such a session in 1982 but that the final decision would be left to the General Assembly.

Mr. THORNE (United Kingdom): I should like to support what has just been said by the representative of the United States. I think we are all aware here of the pressures on the disarmament calendar next year with the Preparatory Committee of the special session and the session itself. I think it might be unwise for us at this stage to make any firm recommendation. I would suggest that we should simply leave the question of disarmament meetings in general to the next session of the General Assembly.
Mr. R. KHAN (Pakistan): As regards the Commission's recommendation concerning its next substantive session and the question of dates - when in 1982 that session should be held - my delegation certainly feels the need to have the next substantive session in 1982. But perhaps that question will become more relevant when we have the other parts of the report that we intend to consider in the afternoon meeting.

At present, we are considering the recommendations on agenda item 7 in CRP 16, and certainly we have a mandate for the Disarmament Commission to prepare a report for the second special session. It is also very clear to my delegation that this report cannot be completed at this stage, so we need one substantive session in order to complete that report; and for my delegation, the language which is already there in the paper, which says that part of the report related to conclusions and recommendations will be prepared at the next substantive session of the Commission, leaving it open as to when that will take place, is sufficient and satisfactory. As regards the question whether we should have one substantive session to consider any other questions in 1982, my delegation will have comments to offer when we have the full report before us, but at present perhaps we can proceed to adopt the recommendations in CRP 16 without any further modifications.

The CHAIRMAN: Does any delegation have any observations to make about the proposal by the representative of Pakistan that we adopt it on this understanding?

Mr. THORNE (United Kingdom): With respect to what has just been said by the representative of Pakistan, I wonder if I might clarify my understanding of something which has been relayed to me on the question of the last part of the paper we have before us.
I understood, Mr. Chairman, that you had previously ruled that any meeting of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) which dealt with the report to the second special session would be, as it were by definition, a substantive session, and that in so ruling you effectively left open the possibility of the brief session, which we would expect to take place in the autumn, being able to call itself a substantive meeting and to create such a report if that were possible and if time permitted. Could you just confirm, Mr. Chairman, that my understanding is correct?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not know if the term "ruling" is the correct one, but in answer, when we discussed the problem the other day, I said that meetings at which the Commission dealt with a report including conclusions and recommendations in my view would be more than organizational and that I would feel that such a meeting was of a substantive character.

Mr. ESPEJUE GIL (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): I just wanted to say that, in these circumstances, it seems to me that the proposal made by the representative of Pakistan is a very good one.

The CHAIRMAN: May I ask the Commission if it wants to adopt this Conference Room Paper 16 with the recommendations on agenda item 7 as it stands?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: We started discussing the working paper CRP 13, draft report of the Disarmament Commission - the procedural one - and I should like to ask the Commission if I can take it that this paper can be adopted.
Mr. KAHN (German Democratic Republic): My delegation would like to refer to part III.B of Conference Room Paper 13. The delegation of the German Democratic Republic has submitted Conference Room Paper 1 of working group 2, dated 1 June 1981. That paper was introduced by my delegation on the meeting of working group 2 yesterday, and it was requested that it should be given the same status of a formal document. The documents listed in Conference Room Paper 13, part III.B, page 8.

Therefore, my delegation renews that request in this meeting of the Disarmament Commission and asks that the document of the German Democratic Republic be added to the list in Conference Room Paper 13.
Mr. ALEM (Secretary of the Commission): I apologize for not clarifying the status of the paper earlier for the benefit of the representative of the German Democratic Republic, but if it is his wish that his paper - which is a conference room paper - be considered as a Commission paper to be added to the documentation of the Commission in the report, the Secretariat will very gladly comply.

Mr. de SOUZA e SILVA (Brazil): I should like to call the attention of the Commission to paragraph 11 of the document (A/CN.10/CRP.13) we are discussing.

I have been reviewing the verbatim record from which the decision in that paragraph was taken, and bearing in mind that it deals with two substantive and very important questions - related, namely, to items 4 and 9 - I should like also to make two observations.

The first one is that in the decision taken by the Chairman and embodied in that verbatim record, I do not see that any formal decision to hold informal meetings was taken by the Commission.

My second observation is that your decision, Mr. Chairman, refers to the Committee of the Whole, and I do not see any mention of that subsidiary organ in that paragraph, so I think the paragraph should be redrafted as clearly as possible in accordance with the decision taken by the Commission and announced by you in that verbatim record.

The CHAIRMAN: The Secretariat will see to it that that paragraph is redrafted in accordance with the comments of the representative of Brazil.

Mr. R. KHAN (Pakistan): Yesterday my delegation had made a request similar to the one made by the representative of the German Democratic Republic - that is, that document A/CN.10/B1/WG 2/CRP.2 and any subsequent revisions should be given the formal status of a Commission paper, and this was also agreed to in the Working Group. So I wish to reiterate here my delegation's request.
The CHAIRMAN: I call on the Secretary of the Commission.

Mr. ALEM (Secretary of the Commission): Perhaps at this stage some clarification should be given as to what documents are listed in the report of the Commission.

Section B is entitled "Documents submitted by Member States", and, as such, documents submitted by Member States are listed. Even conference room papers, if so desired, will be listed as Commission papers, but it is not our practice to include reports of the working groups. There are many conference room papers which are revised and amended during the process of negotiation and discussion before a final one is issued, so it is a little difficult for the Secretariat to select or even to pick up the last one and list it as a document, because that document - the final conference room paper - becomes the report of the group which is reflected in the Commission's report as a recommendation.

The CHAIRMAN: As there are no other comments, may I take it that the members of the Commission wish to adopt the draft as amended?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12:45 p.m.