DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 17 May 1982, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: "Mr. WYZNER" (Poland)

- Opening of the session
- Adoption of the agenda
- Election of officers
- Organization of work
- General exchange of views

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82-60528
The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: Let me take this opportunity to extend to members my welcome and the hope that at this session, though short, we shall do our best to achieve progress in the Commission's work. I am also very pleased to welcome among you many old and dear friends, and I hope to gain new ones during this session.

Let me take this opportunity also to reiterate my gratitude for the support of members when they accorded to me the honour of presiding over the Commission in 1982. As I said after my election at the last organizational session in December, I regard it, first of all, as an expression of recognition of Poland's steadfast efforts over the years towards securing a safe and peaceful world for the present and future generations and of its concrete contribution in the field of disarmament and international security. Needless to say, I shall do my best, with the Commission's co-operation and understanding, to carry out our work in the most effective manner.

The Commission convenes on the eve of the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It also meets during a critical and crucial period in international relations. Unfortunately, recent disarmament negotiations have not produced definite results which would meet the expectations of the international community. Questions of utmost importance and priority such as nuclear disarmament and prevention of nuclear war are still to be considered in depth and negotiated upon. Although some progress has been made, in particular in the work of the Committee on Disarmament, such questions as the comprehensive test ban, security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States, a ban on chemical weapons, agreement on banning radiological weapons, to mention just a few, still require concerted and sincere efforts by the States concerned.

In the past year or so, we have observed a kind of immobility in the bilateral negotiations on strategic nuclear weapons as well as on tactical nuclear forces. However, recent developments give rise to the hope that the parties concerned, in response to the dangers of a nuclear outbreak which have instilled great fears in the minds and hearts of peoples, will negotiate in
earnest with a view to reaching agreement on the reduction and, ultimately, the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The arms race has reached such proportions that the international community ought to utilize all the resources available to check and ultimately reverse this dangerous phenomenon. We have also to take into account the fact that in various countries there has emerged a widespread awareness of the urgency of concrete disarmament measures and that those measures are enjoying fast-growing support. I believe that when the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament reactivated the Disarmament Commission, it did so to enable all Member States to participate more effectively in the process of disarmament. Whether the Disarmament Commission has fulfilled those expectations and what can be done to improve its effectiveness are matters for members to judge and to give appropriate answers in our report to be submitted to the second special session on disarmament.
(The Chairman)

I hope that we shall all fully utilize the brief period of time at our disposal in order to carry out our obligations and play our role in the mechanism dealing with the awesome problems of disarmament. To do less would be to fail in our duty and shirk our responsibilities. For while everybody bears a responsibility in this respect, those who have been given the task of dealing with disarmament must account for their work and efforts in this regard.

Whatever the Commission achieves at this session, it must be viewed within the larger picture of the strong sentiments of world public opinion and the overall efforts of the United Nations to bring about a breakthrough in the problems of the arms race which have been eluding solution for the past several decades.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The CHAIRMAN: I should like now to refer members to the provisional agenda which is before them in document A/CH.10/L.9. I believe we should start our efforts to organize the session with the approval of the agenda, with the proviso that item 2, election of officers, should actually become item 3 and item 3, adoption of the agenda, should become item 2. I believe this is the correct order of business.

May I ask whether members have any comments in connexion with the draft agenda? If not, I shall consider it approved.

The draft agenda was adopted.
ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The CHAIRMAN: As members may recall, at the organizational session in December 1981, the Commission, after the election of the Chairman, was not able to complete the election of its officers by electing eight vice-chairmen and a rapporteur, in view of on-going consultations among certain regional groups about their nominees.

Now I am happy to report that as a result of consultations we have been informed of the following nominations by the five regional groups for the officers of the Disarmament Commission, comprising eight vice-chairmen and a rapporteur.

The African Group has nominated Liberia and Zaire; the Asian Group, Iraq and Pakistan; the Eastern European Group, Czechoslovakia; the Latin American Group, the Bahamas and Peru, and the Group of Western Europe and other countries: Belgium and Sweden.

Since 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 above-mentioned countries as officers of the Commission without a vote?

It was so decided.
The CHAIRMAN: We have now elected the officers of the Commission. The only task that remains is the singling out of the rapporteur from among those nine members. This will require some further consultations and members will, I hope, decide this at one of our future meetings.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: Having adopted the agenda of the Disarmament Commission, I think we should now come to the question of the organization of work for the session so as to be able to deal with the various substantive items inscribed in the agenda. In this connexion I wish to recall that an informal consultation with the participation of a number of interested delegations was held recently and some general understandings relating to the organization of work for the session emerged. Accordingly, I wish to put certain ideas before the Commission for consideration.

The first concerns the general exchange of views. Since it is envisaged that a general debate on disarmament issues will be conducted at the second special session of the General Assembly, and in view of the limited time available to the Commission, members wishing to express their views at this stage should, it is suggested, do so during the first couple of meetings of the Commission.

From my informal soundings I gather that really only a very few delegations wish to address the Commission in the general exchange of views, but as some delegations have indicated such a wish, I think it is appropriate to give them the opportunity to do so at the first meetings of the Commission.

It was so decided.
The CHAIRMAN: Until now members have been very co-operative, but I think we are now going to proceed to more difficult issues.

Members will of course recall that at our last organizational session in December 1981, a decision was taken, or at least a preliminary decision, that the duration of the session should be two weeks and a few days if necessary. I am sure members also recall that General Assembly resolution 36/92 B specifically requested the Commission to submit a substantive report to the second special session, and resolution 36/97 A requested the Commission to complete the elaboration of a mandate for the study group on conventional disarmament. In addition, there are other important items such as nuclear disarmament, reduction of military budgets and the question of the nuclear plans and capability of South Africa, which are also before the Commission for consideration in accordance with our agenda.
In the informal consultations which I mentioned, the view was expressed that the principle of equal treatment of all substantive items should be observed and that not more than two meetings should be held simultaneously. It was felt that working groups or subsidiary bodies of the Commission should be established to deal with various substantive agenda items, with the flexibility of allocating time to those groups during the course of their deliberations. It seems to me that some preliminary preference was emerging along those lines.

Accordingly, it was suggested that four working groups might be established at the beginning of the session to consider the following subjects: 1. nuclear disarmament; 2. reduction of military budgets; 3. elaboration of a mandate for the study group on conventional disarmament; 4. question of South Africa's nuclear plans and capability. All those questions are included in our agenda.

It was also suggested that the item concerning the substantive report of the Commission to the second special session, particularly Part IV, Conclusions and Recommendations, should be considered by the Commission at its informal meetings in the Committee of the Whole, with the possibility of setting up a drafting group in this regard if necessary.

Those are the items which emerged during the course of informal consultations.

At the same time, I must report that some delegations would have preferred a smaller number of working organs and I feel that some of those delegations are still not fully convinced of the need to create four working groups. I should therefore like to invite comments on those organizational arrangements as they have emerged from both the decisions and recommendations of the Commission at its last organizational meeting in December last and also from the informal consultations I have mentioned.
Mr. SUMMERHAYES (United Kingdom). Mr. Chairman, may I first offer you my congratulations on the role which you have just assumed as Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We are very glad to see you in that position and we have the greatest confidence in your abilities and your impartiality which will rule this, we hope, reasonably short session of the Commission.

We are among those delegations the Chairman referred to which have some views on the question of the number of working groups into which we should divide ourselves for the main substantive work of the Commission. We have noted the views as the Chairman has collected them in his consultations. We have also noted that he believes that we cannot operate in more than two working groups at the same time. We think that, given the short time we have available to complete our work, we must make the best use of that time and concentrate our efforts on those areas where we need to produce results with special urgency.

I think the first of those areas obviously is the preparation of our report to the special session, which has to be completed, and that will require drafting; therefore we would have to have a drafting group to deal with that question, so that gives us one absolute priority. I think it is also very important for us to complete consideration of our general approach to the study on conventional weapons, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 36/97, and my delegation would like particular attention to be given to that question, as we have always regarded it as one of the most important aspects of the work of the Commission.

There is also the possibility of continuing the study on military budgets, there is the question of nuclear disarmament and that of the South African nuclear capability, to which the Chairman has referred. We think that it would be possible to work effectively in two working groups, one of which would devote itself primarily to the drafting of our report while the other could perhaps take the other questions.

It can be argued that certain subjects need to be broken down and that we have to give a certain special attention to one subject at a time, but I think that
all we need is two groups. After all, we shall all be taking part in those groups together and the splitting into four separate working groups would seem merely to add a certain complication to our work. It would involve the finding of chairmen for those working groups and I think would, over all, probably complicate our discussion. So, we think one could really concentrate on two working groups and thereby fill the time most effectively.

Mr. MARINESCU (Romania) (interpretation from French): First of all, Mr. Chairman, allow me to express to you the thanks of the Romanian delegation. We are indeed very happy to see you presiding over this most important session of the Disarmament Commission, and we for our part are doubly satisfied, first of all, because of your personal qualities, which are extremely well known to all of us here, and also because you represent Poland, a friendly country.
As regards the question on which the Chairman asked for our views, the Romanian delegation would like to repeat the preferences which it expressed during the consultations which the Chairman was wise enough to organize last week: namely, we think, for reasons which derive both from the principle of equal treatment of items on our agenda and for practical reasons of methodology, that it would be preferable to have working groups which, if necessary, could be called something else, and to entrust to the Committee the pressing and highly sensitive task of drafting the report of the Commission.

There are of course difficulties of a practical nature in organizing four working groups, but we are indeed convinced that those difficulties would be no less were we to try to entrust to a single group four questions, the scope of which is perfectly clear and each of which has its own specific importance - an importance which, moreover, justifies their inclusion on the agenda through the express mandate given to the Committee at previous sessions of the General Assembly.

We are convinced that it would be easier to organize our work in such conditions with the clarification the Chairman was kind enough to provide - that is, alternating work, with not more than two groups working simultaneously - rather than trying to put into one basket - if I may so express myself - questions which are so important and of such a diverse nature dealing with nuclear armament, conventional weapons, military budgets and the nuclear armament of South Africa.

The Romanian delegation therefore maintains its preference for the method which had been advocated earlier and which, we felt, had been acceptable to everyone.

Mr. DON NANJIJA (Kenya): Mr. Chairman, my delegation, too, would like to congratulate you and the other officers of the Commission on your election by consensus. This is an affirmation of your credibility and of the confidence which we place in you, especially as we start this very important session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission just before the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.
The outline the Chairman gave us is acceptable to my delegation, and of course we are happy that at least we are not talking about four more working groups, but rather two working groups, which are going to take up the items on the agenda. I see that it is a long agenda and the time available to us is not really all that long. Thus, if item 7, which deals with the special report of the Disarmament Commission to the second special session devoted to disarmament, is going to be considered by one working group - and my delegation fully supports this - then all the other items - about seven of them - will be considered by the other working group that we may establish.

All those items are very important, and we have decided that they should all be treated equally. It would therefore appear that the sooner the working groups are established, so that they may start working immediately on the items before them, the better.

One thing, however, that does not appear in the list of the agenda items and which we would have thought would have been an important item to be included is the question of at least discussing the effectiveness of the Disarmament Commission. I think it would have been much better - and I hope this could be done - if the other working group, which will be dealing with the agenda items other than item 7, perhaps under the heading of 'Other Business', could have some time to discuss and submit at least a report or recommendations on the way they would like to see the Disarmament Commission function in the future.

The decision that we should not have a general debate was a very good one. We think that it would have been unfortunate for us to have agreed to have a long exchange of views or a general debate. And while I realize that while you, Sir, were summing up you said that this exchange of views would take place. I hope that that exchange of views, which can be termed a general debate, will not be a long one, because we think that there is no time for a general exchange of views. Rather, we should look at the items and try to negotiate them and find language that will be acceptable to all delegations.
I hope that at least some time will be allotted to an exchange of views on the effectiveness and, perhaps, on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to deal with its work in the future. We are meeting just before the second special session devoted to disarmament, and that session will, among other things, view and appraise whatever has been done by United Nations bodies that were established to discuss or handle this question of disarmament. I think the United Nations Disarmament Commission should not be an exception. I think its work, its effectiveness and its functioning should also be the subject of consideration, so that some recommendations can be put forth as to how governments or the international community would like to see the Commission function in the future. I see that this is not on the agenda, and I hope that it is an issue that will also be addressed during this session of the Commission.

The CHAIRMAN: I fully share the preoccupation of the representative of Kenya about the need to discuss during this session the functioning and effectiveness of the Commission. I think, however, that we can easily do this under the item dealing with our report to the second special session of the General Assembly. In particular, Part II prepared by the Secretariat, contains a chapter on the organization of the Commission's work. I also think our views on this question could be and, actually, should be included in Part IV of the report - Conclusions and Recommendations.

Mr. MENZIES (Canada): Mr. Chairman, I should like to join others who have spoken before me in expressing great satisfaction on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and to assure you of the full co-operation of the Canadian delegation, which has great confidence in your experience, your wisdom, and your balance and fairness. I should also like to offer congratulations to the various Vice-Chairmen who have been elected officers of the Commission.
I should like to associate myself with the views expressed by the representative of the United Kingdom to the effect that it is of great importance that this Commission should give attention to the report that we shall be submitting to the second special session on disarmament and that we should complete the work on the study on conventional weapons. It appears to me that a good deal of time would be taken up with organizing working groups and finding chairmen for them if we were to have four on the various items on our agenda. Since we can hold only two meetings at a time, I would support the view that the Committee of the Whole might most appropriately deal with the remaining items on the agenda other than the preparation of the report.

Mr. Kamanda wa Kamanda (Zaire) (interpretation from French):

Mr. Chairman, I should like to associate myself with the previous speakers in saying that we are very happy indeed to see you presiding over the Commission. We are aware of your experience with the subjects before us and we have no doubt that you will conduct our proceedings successfully, taking into account the critical state of current international affairs and the great importance of disarmament problems.

The delegation of Zaire supports the idea of establishing four working groups to consider the problems before us. We also support the idea of equal treatment for all the agenda items. As a previous speaker has said, the fact that these items have been placed on the agenda shows that we attribute much importance to them. I believe we can trust the officers of the Commission to ensure that we work rather than make speeches. The working groups should thus begin their work very soon, stick to the essentials and not engage in useless debates. I am convinced that in the time at our disposal we shall be able to produce results on at least the four points the Chairman mentioned. We fear that, if special priority is justifiably given to the preparation of the report, and if a single working group is to deal with all the other items, we might leave without having dealt with some items to which we attribute much importance.
To sum up, we support the principle of equal treatment for all agenda items and we are in favour of establishing four working groups, provided the working groups begin their work immediately and do not engage in long debates and provided they devote their attention to essential points.

**Mr. MOUSSA (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic):** Mr. Chairman, at the outset I wish to congratulate you on behalf of the Egyptian delegation and to express our confidence that the Commission will carry out its work with success under your guidance, in view of your well-known experience and wisdom.

My delegation has listened to the different views expressed during this meeting and also during the informal consultations which the Chairman was kind enough to hold earlier. I wish to state that in fact there is no drastic disagreement between those who want four working groups and those who want only two. The issue concerns two points: first, we have four important items; secondly, there is complete consensus with regard to equal treatment for all items. If that is so, in view of what we have heard regarding the complaints by certain delegations to the effect that they would not be able to cover five meetings – that is, the Committee of the Whole and the four working groups – in this regard I have the impression that the disagreement is not a drastic one but rather one of form. There would be two working groups concerning the four items. The first working group would consider an item, complete it and then go on to consideration of the next item. The second working group would do the same. In the meantime the Committee of the Whole would hold informal meetings to discuss the Commission's report. Actually what I am suggesting here is nothing more than a way to enable the Commission to establish four working groups in the form of two. In the meantime the Egyptian delegation would be open to whatever conclusions may be reached in the Chairman's consultations with the other officers of the Commission and also with its members.
Mr. AKINSANYA (Nigeria): Mr. Chairman, my delegation would like to associate itself with previous speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Commission. You have eloquently highlighted the difficulties confronting this session, which comes on the eve of the special session of the General Assembly and immediately after the meetings of the Preparatory Committee for that session. There is no doubt that you have an important task, and we are sure that you will bring your wide experience to bear on our work.

My delegation has heard the statement made that there should be equal treatment for all the agenda items. Of course we know the importance of all the issues that are on the agenda, and of course the international community has great expectations and has placed great importance on what the United Nations Disarmament Commission will be able to present at this session. Also we have a special report to present to the special session. At the same time we recognize the time constraints on us. We believe that all the issues - particularly the four items on the agenda - are equally important and should be duly reflected in the work of the working groups and in the report. We know, of course, about the question of nuclear disarmament, the question of the reduction of military budgets, the study on conventional weapons and South Africa's nuclear capability. We all know the realities of the events happening around us, and we believe that equal treatment should be given to these items.

The representative of the United Kingdom has presented the idea that effective utilization of our time could take the form of having two working groups. We note his concern but at the same time we believe that four working groups would be able to consider these items without wasting time. We have listened to the views of the representative of Egypt on this matter. I think the working groups - whether they are called contact groups or working groups - could be allowed to proceed with their work now without wasting time, and the Committee of the Whole could be allowed to meet informally to discuss the special report. I think much time could be saved by allowing the working groups to go into the substantive items.
Mr. WAHAB (Sudan) (interpretation from Arabic): May I at the outset, Mr. Chairman, congratulate you on your election to preside over the Commission's proceedings. I also congratulate the other representatives who have been elected as officers of the Commission.

Having listened to the proposals on the organization of work, my delegation considers that many of them are valid. We agree that all the items on the agenda should be treated equally, in view of their importance, but we also agree with those delegations that have said that there are not enough representatives in the various delegations to make up four working groups. We share the view of the Egyptian representative about the possibility of forming two working groups to cover the four items. However, if it is agreed to form four working groups, we suggest that only two of them should meet on the same day, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon.

The CHAIRMAN: We have had a brief exchange of views about the organization of our work, and I am grateful to all those who took part in it. It seems to me that a consensus is emerging on at least one question - that there should be no more than two meetings of the various organs of the Commission simultaneously. I think that we all agree about that.

I also believe that, to judge from what has been said, it would probably be difficult to reach immediate agreement on the concept of only one working group. We have heard some reservations expressed about the concept of four working groups. That is why I invite your comments on, and reaction to, the proposal made by the representative of Egypt, who suggested a new formula which would mean two working groups dealing with four agenda items concerned, on the understanding that the question of a report to the second special session goes to the informal Committee of the Whole. I share his view that our differences are not irreconcilable.
If we agree with that proposal, which I am but simply putting before you, perhaps we could use the device of having separate chairmen for each item on the agenda. That would mean that within one working group we should have one chairman chairing the first item and then when we turned to another item the second chairman would take over. What are your views about this suggestion of two working groups within the Commission examining those four substantive items on our agenda?

Mr. HEPBURN (Bahamas): First, Mr. Chairman, I wish to extend to you my delegation's congratulations and my personal congratulations on your assumption of the office of Chairman of our Disarmament Commission for 1982. Rest assured, Sir, that you will have the full support of my delegation in trying to carry out your difficult task.

My delegation supports the view expressed by the representative of Egypt. It seems to me that our problem is that all the delegations agree that each item in the main part of the agenda should have equal consideration. Whether they receive that consideration in four working groups or two does not matter very much.

If we had two working groups, the report, which is very necessary and which should be ready for presentation to the second special session on disarmament, should be given early consideration. The other matters - conventional weapons, military budgets, nuclear arms and the nuclear capability of South Africa - could be dealt with under the aegis of a sub-chairman under your guidance, Sir, as the Commission's Chairman - I am thinking alcu, because I have not worked this out in my mind. If we had four working groups, I doubt whether each meeting would be given equal opportunity to develop the ideas and thoughts that might be presented, because if only two groups met simultaneously there would not be enough time to have alternate meetings in the 10 days that we have to deal with this question. Under the aegis of a sub-chairman there could be meetings to deal with conventional weapons, military budgets, nuclear arms and the nuclear capability of South Africa, and the ideas of these small groups could be presented to you, as Chairman, under the main heading that we call the Second Working Group. That would give more time, and each committee would have a chance to give equal consideration to the work.
I believe that if the idea of the representative of Egypt could be expanded that would work more effectively than four working groups.

Mr. Marinescu (Romania) (interpretation from French): I should like simply to suggest that we suspend the meeting, Mr. Chairman, to let you give us additional time for reflection and consultation. I personally think that with a little imagination it should not be too difficult to bring together the suggestions made during this meeting, always provided that we observe the principle of equal treatment for each question and that we find effective means of giving separate consideration to each question on our agenda.
The CHAIRMAN: The representative of Romania has suggested that we should suspend the meeting and try to reach agreement through informal consultations. I share his views. At the same time, if he agrees, perhaps I should first call on the three remaining speakers I have on my list — unless, of course, they give up their right to speak. I also have one delegation which wishes to open the general exchange of views at this particular meeting. I think, out of courtesy to those delegations, we should listen to them and then adjourn our meeting and meet for consultations, in the hope that when we meet again in the afternoon, we shall be able to see some kind of consensus emerging.

Mr. KLINGLER (Federal Republic of Germany) (interpretation from French): In view of the proposal made by the Romanian delegation, I shall not insist on speaking now, and I shall make my statement at a later date.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank you for your co-operation. I understand that the second speaker also does not insist on speaking now.

Mr. RAHM (Bangladesh): As a matter of fact, I was just going to suggest myself the suspension of the meeting in order to have informal consultations, particularly in view of the possibility of the emergence of a consensus. As I say, in the view of my delegation, there is a possibility and, as you have very rightly surmised, Mr. Chairman, although there have been two views expressed regarding the number of working groups, I am persuaded that we can arrive at an agreement within the framework of the suggestions which have been advanced by several colleagues, particularly the idea expressed by my colleague from Egypt.

My delegation is prepared to be flexible. Although my delegation was not involved in the informal consultations that took place earlier, I believe, having listened to the discussions this morning, that we can work out a possible compromise.

I would be failing in my duty if I concluded without expressing my full confidence in you, Mr. Chairman. I have had the pleasure of knowing you both in New York and in Geneva, and I know we are in good hands at this very important meeting of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.
The CHAIRMAN: I should also like to suggest that we take a decision on one other matter of an organizational character. In previous sessions the Commission granted the non-governmental organizations certain facilities during its meetings, such as the right to be present at the formal meetings and also that of receiving the official documents of successive sessions. I am certain that the Commission would wish to continue this practice and to grant the same facilities to the non-governmental organizations.

It was so decided.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Mr. VENKATESWARAN (India): Mr. Chairman, it gives me great pleasure on behalf of the Indian delegation to welcome you as Chairman of this important and crucial session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. I wish you all success in your difficult assignment and I have no doubt that, under your wise and experienced leadership, this session of the Commission will make a signal contribution to the success of the forthcoming second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

As you are aware, there are several substantive issues which were left unresolved when this Commission met at its 1981 session. Those issues continue to figure on our agenda. In addition, the current session of the Commission is charged with the preparation of a special report to the second special session on disarmament, covering the activities of this important deliberative body since its inception in 1978. It is to these issues that I should like to address myself in this brief general statement.

My delegation has agreed in principle that a study should be carried out on all aspects of the question of conventional disarmament under the aegis of the United Nations. It is a matter of satisfaction that resolution 36/97 A on this subject was adopted by consensus at the last session of the General Assembly. The adoption of that resolution by consensus offers an excellent basis to achieve agreement within the Commission on the scope, approach and guidelines with regard to such a study. At the last session of the Commission our delegation submitted a working paper entitled "Essential elements for deciding on the scope and structure of the proposal for a study on disarmament relating to conventional weapons"
(A/CM.10/77). Our views on this subject remain unchanged. Any study related to conventional weapons must, if it is to be worthwhile, be based on the following fundamental considerations:

First, it must be clearly borne in mind that, even though the study on conventional weapons is being undertaken, measures of nuclear disarmament and prevention of nuclear war should have the highest priority.

Secondly, progress in conventional disarmament must be made within the framework of progress towards general and complete disarmament.

Thirdly, the study must begin with the current situation, which is characterized by the maximum concentration of conventional weapons and armed forces in the possession of a handful of States with the largest military arsenals. The study must also take into account the fact that it is Europe which continues to be the region with the most dense deployment of both nuclear and conventional armaments. The process of conventional disarmament must logically, therefore, start with the States with the largest military arsenals and with the regions where there are the heaviest concentrations of those weapons.

Fourthly, any consideration of the question of international conventional arms transfers should perforce cover the sales of armaments, intra-alliance transfers, in the shape of grants, gifts, or concessional sales, prepositioning of weapons and equipment, and co-production agreements.

Fifthly, the study on conventional disarmament must take into account the need of States to protect their security and the principle that the process of conventional disarmament must be carried out in such a manner that undiminished security of all States is ensured at lower levels of armaments.

It is our hope that on the basis of a common understanding incorporating the above-mentioned elements, the study can get under way without delay. I am glad to announce in this context that the Government of India has decided that it will co-operate fully in this regard and will nominate an expert to contribute to the study.

One substantive item that the Commission will be deliberating over in this session relates to the reduction of military budgets. The views of my delegation
on this issue are well known. We are not in favour of formulating a document containing principles on which a reduction of military budgets may be undertaken by all States. The security situation facing various States in different parts of the world is not similar and in addition may vary over time, in response to several important causal factors. How can we reduce the wide spectrum of differences to a set of common principles applicable to all?
In our opinion, the question of the reduction of military budgets must, as its starting point, deal with the fact that it is the five or six militarily significant States which account for over 80 per cent of global military expenditures. Other States cannot be treated on a par with them. The most important substantive question to be dealt with by this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission concerns the question of the nuclear arms race and the elaboration of a general approach to negotiations on nuclear and conventional disarmament. At its last session the Commission recognized that "...Among the greatest perils facing the world today is the threat of destruction as a result of nuclear war." (A/36/42, p. 9, para. 9)

It went on to add that "The increase in weapons, especially nuclear weapons, far from helping to strengthen international security, on the contrary, weakens it." (Ibid.)

In view of the fact that three weeks from now the second special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament will be convened, the Commission must urgently try to identify ways and means of dealing with the most critical issues facing the international community. The Commission should not only recommend specific courses of action for dealing with the threat of nuclear war, it should also give an impetus to negotiations on nuclear disarmament. It will be recalled that at its 1981 session the Commission had

"...strongly urged all States, and particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to continue and intensify the search for a common approach that will lead to progress in the field of disarmament." (Ibid., p. 11)
(Mr. Venkateswaran, India)

It is our earnest hope that at this session we will be able to explore further this common approach and thereby ensure that the second special session on disarmament will be able to initiate and intensify meaningful negotiations on nuclear weapons.

During the 1981 session of the Commission, it was not possible to discuss in any detail the question of South Africa's nuclear-weapon capability. We trust that an in-depth exchange of views on this important issue can take place during this current session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission with a view to recommending specific courses of action in this regard to the second special session devoted to disarmament.

Finally, it is the hope of my delegation that in its special report to the second special session, the Commission will also identify specific measures in order to improve its own effective functioning and thereby to live up to its role as an important deliberative organ for disarmament affairs. It is our view that the Commission ought to play a more active role in preparing the ground for negotiations on concrete issues of disarmament. One way in which it could do this is by a thorough and critical consideration of the various reports and studies carried out by the United Nations so that a mutually acceptable basis for negotiations can be identified. The United Nations Disarmament Commission could also be given an important role in the review of the implementation of the comprehensive programme of disarmament, including the possible elaboration of measures of disarmament covered in the later stages of the programme.
These are some of the preliminary views of my delegation concerning the work of our Commission during the next several days. As in the past, we shall be guided by the Chairman's advice and counsel, in organizing our deliberations, especially since the time at our disposal is rather short. It should be our endeavour to accomplish as much substantive work as possible in the limited time available to us. The Chairman can rest assured that the Indian delegation will co-operate fully with him in ensuring that the current session of the Commission makes a substantial and valuable contribution to the success of the second special session devoted to disarmament.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.