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### DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

#### VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SEVENTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Monday, 7 May 1984 at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. GBEHO

(Ghana)

- Opening of the session
- Election of Officers
- Organization of work

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

#### OPENING OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: It is a matter of great pleasure and pride for me to welcome each and every member to the 1984 session of the Disarmament Commission. To those of you who have travelled hundreds or thousands of miles in order to attend this important session I extend a special welcome. I hope that they will soon overcome their fatigue so as to be able to participate fully in all our deliberations.

Towards the end of its work in December of last year the Commission was good enough to elect me Chairman of the Commission for 1984. I am deeply indebted to members for that expression of so much confidence in me personally and in my delegation and country. I shall endeavour to give of my best in order to merit the trust that has been reposed in me. In making this promise I am strengthened in my confidence by the knowledge that I will enjoy the fullest co-operation and tolerance from all members.

It is customary in the Commission for the Chairman to make one or two observations at the beginning of the Commission's work each year, and I should like to carry on this important tradition.

Since the conclusion of the 1983 substantive session of the Commission little has happened to change drastically the profile of the international political situation. The protagonists of the arms race continue to be locked in unrelenting rivalry and competition, with minimal regard for unmistakable world public opinion, especially as expressed in an ever increasing number of General Assembly resolutions. We are continuously witnessing the demands emanating from various forums or the mass demonstrations of ordinary people from all parts of our planet clamouring for nuclear disarmament and international security and peace for the whole world. During this same period, and contrary to the expectations of the overwhelming majority of the peoples of the world, we have witnessed, rather, the continued unfolding of a dangerous phenomenon. Instead of giving undisputed priority to nuclear disarmament in justifiable compliance with existing treaties, such as the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the partial test-ban Treaty, efforts continue at fever pitch towards a build-up of nuclear weapons, including new types of such weapons, in particular for use in outer space and against targets in space.

(The Chairman)

In the last six months or so we have witnessed another dangerous phenomenon, namely, the breaking off of bilateral negotiations on nuclear weapons between the super-Powers, in circumstances and in a rhetorical atmosphere that can only be regretted, despite declared intentions to work diligently and in earnest for the reduction of nuclear weapons. And so lies broken another hope of all who seek peace. Had we not all trusted that the bilateral negotiations would achieve increasing success, thus leading to a lowering of the levels of tension in international relations?

These inauspicious developments have had a negative impact on the process of disarmament negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, as was evident during the spring part of its 1984 session. The Conference on Disarmament could not help but stall frequently on matters of procedure, although its agenda contained items which were vital and essential to world peace and security. The agenda consisted of such important subjects as the prevention of nuclear war, a nuclear test ban, the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and chemical weapons. It should be quite obvious to us all that if headway is to be made in this desperate quest for peace and security the international political atmosphere will have to be improved.

What is paradoxical about the current situation is that there is no dearth of proposals or schemes to achieve progress in disarmament; nor is there any lack of machinery or mechanism for that process. Obviously what is lacking is a change of will and attitude on the part of the main actors in the nuclear arms race that would lead to a reversal of the deteriorating process. The situation therefore continues to threaten mankind with final destruction. In the circumstances there could be no better occasion than the beginning of this Commission's work to address yet another appeal to the main nuclear Powers to heed the fears and anxieties of the overwhelming majority of mankind and allow a change in their attitudes and political will.

Admittedly, proposals have recently been made in various forms and for various purposes aiming at nudging negotiations from their deadlocked positions, including the United States proposal regarding a draft convention banning chemical weapons presented to the Conference on Disarmament in mid-April. However, there is little or no evidence that those proposals have had any positive impact.

(The Chairman)

We are aware that the poisoned relations between East and West is the root cause of this lack of interestedness in each other's proposals. I am therefore sure that I echo the wish of most peoples of the world in calling upon the super-Powers to lessen the negative rhetoric between them and to work constructively towards the betterment of the international atmosphere so that nuclear disarmament may be possible.

In view of the current desperate situation there is a crying need for a breakthrough in disarmament talks and negotiations if we are to retain credibility before the rest of the world. We should look at the Disarmament Commission, once again, not as another forum for the ultimate solution of all disarmament problems but as the forum in which positions can be clarified on the current international situation and proposals advanced as remedies. Member States should, in the Commission, express their candid opinions on security situations, especially as far as these affect their vital interests. In my view this is what the mandate of the Commission allows and this is what is required in order to achieve the objectives stated at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. I hope that in so doing we can together construct the parameters within which solutions can be negotiated.

I crave the indulgence of the Commission in addressing myself to these fundamental problems at the inception of our session. My purpose in stimulating the frank expression of views and dialogue is not to pillory the super-Powers needlessly but rather to remind them that the international community as a whole needs to be assured of peace and security. They are without doubt the parties most concerned in the arms race, but all humanity is the likely victim of a nuclear confrontation. In that sense, we are all concerned parties. I therefore hope that our deliberations will activate in the super-Powers and in the international community at large the necessary will to move meaningfully along the road to international peace and security.

I shall not now attempt to review the record of achievements of the Commission from its inception, but I wish to recall briefly that, while the Commission has been able to discuss specific items and make concrete recommendations thereon to the Assembly, it has none the less continued the discussion of three questions since 1979. The first is the reduction of military budgets and the second South Africa's nuclear capability. The third item, on the various aspects of the

(The Chairman)

nuclear arms race, is, of course, of vital importance if of a slightly different character. Despite the fact that consensus texts have been approved as recommendations to the General Assembly, the item has continued to figure on the Commission's agenda owing to the need for continuous deliberation on this matter as long as agreement is lacking on an approach to the achievement of nuclear disarmament.

At its thirty-seventh session the General Assembly requested the Commission to consider specific problems and to make concrete recommendations thereon. In a separate resolution it requested the Commission to conclude consideration of the items which remained on its agenda. This approach - which was discussed at the previous session under the able leadership of Ambassador Souza e Silva - should remain a concern of the Commission until some way is found to respond to the feeling of the majority that the Commission's work should be rationalized. During my consultations with a large number of delegations I found wide support for a businesslike session in which recriminations would be avoided and the main concern of delegations would be to deal directly with the agenda items.

I hope that at this session the Commission will continue to consider what can be done to improve its work. This was well expressed by the Chairman of the 1983 session who, in his opening statement in May 1983, said:

"some of the current items could be more concretely reformulated for consideration by subsequent sessions of the Commission". (A/CN.10/PV.65, p. 8-10)

He also encouraged the Commission to use its imagination and ability so that its recommendations to the General Assembly might have a more action-oriented form.

In approaching the agenda of this session, therefore, I hope that the Commission will do its best to conclude work definitively on some of the items on its agenda, bearing in mind the efforts made to that end by the working groups of the previous session under the skilled, devoted and able leadership of their chairmen.

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The CHAIRMAN: As representatives will recall, at the organizational session in December 1983 the Commission elected the Chairman but was not able to complete its Bureau by electing eight vice-chairmen, in view of the ongoing

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consultations among certain regional groups about their nominees. However, we did elect three Vice-Chairmen at that organizational session - namely, the German Democratic Republic for the Eastern European States and the Federal Republic of Germany and Greece for the Western European and other States - and our Rapporteur, Mr. Sergey Martynov of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic.

I am happy to report that we have now been informed that as a result of consultations Argentina and the Bahamas have been nominated as Vice-Chairmen of the Commission for the Latin American Group.

In view of the fact that there appears to be general agreement within the regional group regarding those nominations, may I take it that the Disarmament Commission wishes to elect the representatives of those two countries Vice-Chairmen of the Commission? If I hear no objection, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope that the African and Asian Groups will be able, in due course, to nominate candidates for the remaining posts of vice-chairman.

#### ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The CHAIRMAN: If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission adopts the provisional agenda (A/CN.10/L.14).

The agenda was adopted.

#### ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: I turn now to the question of the organization of the work of the session in order to deal with the various substantive items inscribed on the agenda. In this connection, I wish to recall that a number of informal consultations, with wide participation by a large number of interested delegations, were held during the month of April and on 4 May 1984 and that a general understanding relating to the organization of work for the session was reached. Accordingly, I wish to put the following ideas before the Commission for its consideration.

In view of the limited time available to the Commission, it is the general feeling that there should be no general debate. However, delegations may make general statements in the plenary meetings if they so wish. In this connection, I urge delegations wishing to make general statements to inscribe their names on the list of speakers with the Secretariat. The deadline for such inscription is 5 o'clock today, Monday, 7 May 1984. If I hear no objection, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: As representatives may recall, the General Assembly, at its thirty-eighth session, requested the Disarmament Commission to deal with various subjects in resolutions 38/184 A, 38/181 B, 38/73 A and 38/71 B regarding, respectively, the reduction of military budgets, the nuclear capability of South Africa, confidence-building measures and the relationship between disarmament and development. Furthermore, it was also recommended at the last session that the Commission continue its consideration of the questions of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament - agenda item 4 (a) and (b).

During my consultations, the view was expressed that the principle of equal treatment of all substantive items should be observed and that there should be no more than two meetings simultaneously.

On that understanding, the following working groups, or subsidiary bodies, of the Commission will be established to deal with various substantive agenda items, with flexibility concerning the allocation of time to those groups during the course of the deliberations. In this connection I have asked the Secretariat to circulate a tentative programme of work, which members now have before them in document A/CN.10/1984/CRP.1. A weekly time table has also been prepared and distributed as informal working paper No. 1.

The Committee of the Whole will, at the initial stage, deal with agenda item 4 (a) and (b), on the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, and a contact group could be set up on this subject later. The Committee will also consider the report of the Disarmament Commission as well as dealing with other business as deemed necessary.

Working Group I will deal with agenda item 5, on the reduction of military budgets; Working Group II with agenda item 6, on the nuclear capability of South Africa; Working Group III with agenda item 7, on confidence-building measures; and Working Group IV with agenda item 8, on the relationship between disarmament and development.

Regarding the chairmanship of these Working Groups, according to the consultations I have held the following arrangements are suggested. Working Group I will be chaired by the representative of Romania; Working Group II by the representative of the Bahamas; Working Group III by the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany; and Working Group IV by the representative of a country from the Asian Group. In order to have an equitable geographical distribution of the chairmanship of the Working Groups, the Asian Group has been

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approached and should let me know today which country will undertake the chairmanship of Working Group IV.

With regard to the chairmanship of the Committee of the Whole, I understand that, as has been the case in previous years, the Chairman of the Commission will also act as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole.

If there are no comments on those arrangements, I shall take it that they are acceptable to the Commission.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: As regards documentation for the current session, I wish to point out that the report of the Disarmament Commission (A/38/42) to the General Assembly last year will serve as the basic document for consideration, since it contains all the major proposals on the subjects to be taken up this year. In addition, I refer members to document A/CN.10/57, which contains replies from Governments on agenda item 8, on the relationship between disarmament and development, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 38/71 B. Addenda to that document will be issued later.

As has been the case in previous years, non-governmental organizations are free to participate as observers in the work of the Disarmament Commission. I take it that is generally acceptable to the Commission.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.