AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

Tenth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 44th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 11 September 1978, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. HOVEYDA (Iran)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The CHAIRMAN declared open the tenth session of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (A/AC.167/L.14)

2. The agenda was adopted.

3. The CHAIRMAN announced that he had received a communication from the delegation of the German Democratic Republic in which it asked to be allowed to attend the meetings of the Committee as an observer. Since the same request had been made and granted at the previous session, he suggested that the Committee should accede to it.

4. It was so decided.

ELECTION OF THE RAPPORTEUR

5. The CHAIRMAN paid tribute to the work of Mr. Lopez-Chicheri and said he regretted that he was leaving the post of Rapporteur. The delegation of Spain had proposed that he should be replaced in that post by Mr. Zelada. If he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee unanimously approved the appointment of Mr. Zelada as Rapporteur.

6. It was so decided.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

7. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, following a general debate, plenary meetings should be postponed to allow the Working Group to prepare the documents to be considered at plenary meetings. The Ad Hoc Committee would maintain its contacts with the nuclear Powers which were not participating in its work.

8. It was so decided.

GENERAL DEBATE

9. Mr. FOKINE (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that at the special session devoted to disarmament the USSR had taken a number of constructive initiatives and formulated a number of specific new proposals for disarmament. Furthermore, that the Soviet Union, understanding the desire of non-nuclear countries to receive from the nuclear Powers guarantees under international law that they would not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries, had proposed including in the agenda of the thirty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly an item entitled "Conclusion of an international convention on the strengthening of guarantees of the security of non-nuclear States" and had submitted a draft convention on the subject.
10. In an effort to ensure that disarmament questions were considered with the participation of all States without exception, the Soviet Union had advanced and consistently championed the idea of convening a world disarmament conference. The General Assembly had supported the holding of such a conference at every session since 1971. The idea of convening such a conference had received broad support throughout the world. Together with the socialist countries, the non-aligned countries were actively advocating the convening of such a conference. At the recent Belgrade meeting of ministers of foreign affairs of non-aligned countries the idea of holding a world disarmament conference had again been mentioned with approval. His delegation noted with satisfaction that an appeal for the convening of such a conference was contained in the Final Document of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which stated that a world disarmament conference should be convened at the earliest appropriate time with universal participation and with adequate preparation.

11. Accordingly, his delegation believed that the time had come for taking new steps to accelerate the solution of the question of convening the conference. During its more than four years of activity the Ad Hoc Committee had done a great deal of useful work and had laid the foundations for proceeding directly to the preparations for convening the conference. His delegation therefore felt that the Ad Hoc Committee could at present include in its report a recommendation to the General Assembly to consider at its thirty-third session the question of determining the date for convening a world disarmament conference and of establishing a preparatory body for it.

12. The Soviet Union was convinced that the task of implementing the programme of action in the field of disarmament which had been adopted by the special session devoted to disarmament could best be handled by a world disarmament conference. It held that precisely such a conference could provide the forum that, as the USSR Minister for Foreign Affairs had said, "could immediately take effective decisions that would be truly binding on all States".

13. Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland) said that the past year had witnessed an active search on all planes for progress in disarmament. Multilaterally it had been crowned by the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, regionally it had continued at the Vienna talks, bilaterally it had concentrated on the decisive SALT negotiations. Yet the results of the past year's endeavours had been inversely proportional to the latter's intensity. The current standstill in disarmament was the effect of the struggle between those who genuinely supported disarmament and those who were opposed to it. In that way, the approach of Governments to the idea of a world disarmament conference had also become an acid test of their real attitudes towards disarmament.

14. After referring to the latest Soviet proposal to include in the agenda of the thirty-third session of the General Assembly an item entitled "Conclusion of an international convention on the strengthening of guarantees of the security of non-nuclear States", he said that paragraph 122 of the Final Document of the tenth special session (A/RES/S-10/2) should constitute the point of departure for the
report which the Ad Hoc Committee must submit to the General Assembly. The tenth special session had opened up a qualitatively new phase of the struggle for a world disarmament conference. In fact, paragraph 122 of its Final Document created all the conditions for proceeding from a stage of discussion of the idea of a world disarmament conference to concrete preparations for it.

15. The report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its tenth special session (A/AC.167/L.13) and the statements made during the current session of the Committee should also be taken into account. The Ad Hoc Committee could thus recommend to the General Assembly that, in the light of the decisions adopted during the tenth special session, it should be transformed into a preparatory committee for the world disarmament conference, with a mandate which adequately combined the elements of the recommendations of paragraph 122 of the Final Document, namely those of convening a world disarmament conference at the earliest possible time and its universal participation and adequate preparation.

16. Mr. ENDREFFY (Hungary) said that it had been amply demonstrated at the tenth special session of the General Assembly that there was general interest in the convening of a world disarmament conference, as was reflected in paragraph 122 of the Final Document (A/RES/S-10/2).

17. The present difficulties should not deter the Committee from continuing its work. It should be remembered that, despite the earlier scepticism of some, the tenth special session devoted to disarmament had yielded positive results: more attention was being devoted to disarmament issues, there was a growing sense of urgency, and new ideas had emerged, including the Soviet proposal on the strengthening of guarantees of the security of non-nuclear States.

18. The Committee must do all in its power to remove the remaining obstacles and continue to work on the convening of a world disarmament conference. That conclusion should be appropriately reflected in the report which the Committee submitted to the General Assembly.

19. Mr. JEZIL (Czechoslovakia) said that Czechoslovakia had always supported the idea of convening a world disarmament conference. The conference should be a universal forum that could adopt concrete disarmament measures and further elaborate and extend the political principles of disarmament. Accordingly, the conference should follow up and, in some areas, finalize the work begun in the multilateral disarmament negotiations.

20. Although the final goal of permanent peace and general and complete disarmament was still a distant one, and although the threat of war had not yet been warded off, Czechoslovakia, together with other socialist countries, was determined not to relax in the struggle for effective and equitable safeguards that would ensure a lasting peace. The convening of the world conference would provide an opportunity of making progress towards that goal.
21. An encouraging development was the growing number of countries that supported the early convening of a World Disarmament Conference, as was reflected in paragraph 122 of the Final Document (A/RES/S-10/2) and the similar conclusion reached by the Conference of Heads of State or Government of the non-aligned countries in Belgrade.

22. Despite the undeniable progress made, the special session had in no way obscured the complexity and political sensitivity of the disarmament negotiations. The convening of the World Disarmament Conference would provide an opportunity for responding to many of the questions raised at the special session. His delegation was in favour of a decision by the Committee to recommend to the General Assembly the early convening of the Conference.

23. Mr. KOSTOV (Bulgaria) congratulated the delegation of the Soviet Union on its proposal that the agenda of the General Assembly at its thirty-third session should include a new item relating to the conclusion of an international convention on the strengthening of guarantees of the security of non-nuclear States.

24. He welcomed the fact that the Committee had prepared a special report for the tenth special session of the General Assembly (A/AC.167/L.13). The report, together with the discussions and documents of the special session, reflected the great importance and urgency of convening the World Disarmament Conference. The idea had the support of the great majority of the delegations during the session and of the vast number of States represented at the Conference of non-aligned countries, held recently at Belgrade.

25. The Bulgarian Minister for Foreign Affairs had stated at the special session that mankind needed a universal forum authorized to adopt effective and binding decisions on specific disarmament problems, and that the World Disarmament Conference could be such a forum (A/S-10/PV.7, p. 52).

26. When drafting its report to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session, the Committee must take into account the discussions held during the special session, as well as the documents submitted for consideration and those adopted at that session. The Final Document of the special session (A/RES/S-10/2) clearly laid down, among the measures which must be taken, the early convening of the World Disarmament Conference. His delegation therefore considered that the Committee's next report to the General Assembly should state that the Committee overwhelmingly supported the idea of the World Disarmament Conference and should emphasize the necessity of embarking on practical steps for convening the Conference at an early date.

27. The new organizational measures to be adopted by the General Assembly with regard to the preparation of the Conference should be based on the decisions adopted at the special session and on the Committee's report. His delegation stood ready to co-operate actively, in accordance with its unreserved support for the idea of the prompt convening of the World Disarmament Conference.

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28. Mr. DASHTSEREN (Mongolia) commented on the efficient work done by the Committee in submitting a special report to the Assembly at its special session devoted to disarmament (A/AC.167/L.13). The results of that session constituted an important step forward in the efforts to terminate the arms race and to secure disarmament.

29. All the Committee's efforts should be directed henceforth to the implementation of the provisions of the Final Document of the special session (A/RES/S-10/2), including the convening of the World Disarmament Conference, with universal participation. The Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it examine issues related to the Conference, including the relevant dates and the establishment of the body which would carry out the preparatory work.

30. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Working Group, having heard the statements made at the current meeting and bearing in mind the discussions and the decisions of the tenth special session, should now undertake the preparation of the draft report. He requested the Working Group to keep him informed about the progress of its work so as to be able to establish the necessary contacts with delegations during the preparation of the draft report, which the Committee would consider at the next meeting.

31. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.