AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

Twelfth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 49th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 11 September 1979, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. FERNANDO (Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic) said that developments in the past few months underlined still further the need to prepare and convene the World Disarmament Conference. The participants in the Summit Conference of Non-aligned States, which had just completed its work in Havana, had expressed concern over the continuation of the arms race. In that regard, the signature at Vienna of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty and other agreements by representatives at the highest level of the Soviet Union and the United States was of primary importance. The ratification and entry into force of SALT II would have a positive influence on the continuation of negotiations on arms limitation and disarmament.

2. In the joint communiqué signed in Vienna by the Secretary-General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Supreme Soviet, Mr. Brezhnev, and the President of the United States of America, Mr. Carter, mention was made of the convening of the World Disarmament Conference. His delegation believed that it was altogether essential that all States, especially the nuclear-weapon States and the great military Powers, should participate in that Conference. No one who had the political will to bring about disarmament could deny that.

3. The preparation in May and June 1979 by the United Nations Disarmament Commission of the comprehensive programme for disarmament was another major development. The recommendations in the report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which dealt also with the question of convening as soon as possible the World Disarmament Conference, had been adopted by consensus and would be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session.

4. After outlining various attempts being made to revive the arms race and, in particular, the plans of certain military circles to introduce new types of dangerous weapons, he said that no one should be allowed to delay further the convening of the World Disarmament Conference, and he supported the proposal to request the General Assembly to set a date at its next session for the convening of the Conference and to entrust the preparations to the Ad Hoc Committee or some other body.

5. Mrs. NAVCHA (Mongolia) recalled that the Second World War had broken out 40 years earlier and that there was currently no more urgent task than to prevent another world war, to halt the arms race and to achieve disarmament. That was why the Mongolian People's Republic, like the other countries of the socialist community, was systematically advocating genuine disarmament, namely, the elimination of the material bases for conducting wars. The conclusion of SALT II between the Soviet Union and the United States was an extremely important event and early ratification of the Treaty would give new impetus to ongoing negotiations in the field of disarmament.

6. Her delegation urged that the World Disarmament Conference should be held as soon as possible, because the Conference, as a universal forum, would be able to
take effective disarmament measures. It believed that the time had come to set a date for that Conference. Moreover, both the decisions of the special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament and the components of the comprehensive programme for disarmament prepared during the session of the Disarmament Commission reflected the idea of the urgent convening of a properly prepared world disarmament conference. In that regard, she welcomed the fact that the Soviet Union and the United States, during the Vienna meeting in June 1979, had given favourable consideration to the idea that the Conference should follow the second special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It was also encouraging to note that the proposal had been favourably received at the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Governments of Non-aligned States, which had just completed its work in Havana. Her delegation shared the view that the General Assembly, at its forthcoming session, should set a date for the convening of the Conference and should entrust the preparations to the Committee.

7. Mr. ENDREFFY (Hungary) said that there was a consensus among the States Members of the United Nations that it was time to ensure security through disarmament and that the halting of the arms race and genuine disarmament were tasks of the greatest importance and the utmost urgency. In that respect, the tenth special session of the General Assembly had done a great deal to revive the interest of peoples and Governments in those issues.

8. Hungary, together with other socialist countries, had taken some important new steps in a number of international forums: in the Committee on Disarmament, at Vienna, in the Warsaw Pact Organization at the meeting of the Consultative Political Committee which had been held at Moscow in November 1978, and at the meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of member States of that Organization at Budapest in May 1979.

9. It had to be acknowledged that the progress achieved in the field of disarmament was very slow, despite the efforts made and the successes won in the course of the present year, the most outstanding of which was the signature of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Accordingly, what was needed was a redoubling of efforts and patience and perseverance. That was also true with respect to the convening of a world disarmament conference. If there was not unanimity on that matter, it was nevertheless obvious that in the General Assembly, in the United Nations Disarmament Commission and in bilateral negotiations, many were of the opinion that such a conference was necessary. His delegation believed that the Conference would provide the most appropriate forum in which to take effective measures on disarmament.

10. The report to be prepared in pursuance of resolution 33/69 should contain a specific recommendation to the General Assembly requesting it to set a date for the Conference, which could be held after the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, namely after 1982. Such a decision would have a definite mobilizing effect. The report should also record the tremendous support expressed so far in favour of the convening of a world disarmament conference.

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11. Mr. KALINA (Czechoslovakia) recalled that at the spring session of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference his delegation had summed up the political reasons which had prompted it to support unreservedly the convening of a world disarmament conference. His delegation had not changed its opinion and considered that the positive, concrete and constructive progress recorded in the decisive disarmament negotiations, particularly those at the highest level between the Soviet Union and the United States, provided an opportunity to consider the question of convening the Conference in specific terms. His delegation welcomed the fact that the idea had been consistently supported at the recent Summit Conference of Non-aligned States at Havana.

12. His delegation also considered that the World Disarmament Conference should follow immediately after the second special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament and that the time had now come to make definite arrangements for the preparation of the agenda and the organization of the Conference. It therefore recommended that the Committee's report should contain a proposal requesting the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session to set the date for the convening of the World Disarmament Conference and to arrange for the preparations.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

13. The CHAIRMAN stated that the Working Group was open-ended and requested the members of the Working Group to endeavour to complete the draft report and to submit it to him by noon on 13 September so that the Committee could study it at its next meeting.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.