

CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

CCD/PV.459
19 March 1970
ENGLISH

FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY-NINTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 19 March 1970, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

U MAUNG MAUNG GYI

(Burma)

(Previous verbatim records in this series appeared under the symbols
ENDC/PV.1-ENDC/PV.430).

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Argentina: Mr. C. ORTIZ de ROZAS
Mr. A.F. DUMONT
Mr. V.E. BERASATEGUI

Brazil: Mr. L.F. PALMEIRA LAMPREIA

Bulgaria: Mr. K. CHRISTOV
Mr. I. PEINIRDJIEV

Burma: U MAUNG MAUNG GYI

Canada: Mr. G. IGNATIEFF
Mr. J.R. MORDEN

Czechoslovakia: Mr. T. LAHODA
Mr. J. STRUCKA
Mr. J. CINGROS

Ethiopia: Mr. A. ZELLEKE

Hungary: Mr. I. KOMIVES
Mr. I. SARKADI

India: Mr. M.A. HUSAIN
Mr. N. KRISHNAN
Mr. K.P. JAIN

Italy: Mr. R. CARACCILO
Mr. F.L. OTTIERI
Mr. R. BORSARELLI
Mr. U. PESTALOZZA

Japan:

Mr. I. ABE
 Mr. S. YAMADA
 Mr. H. OTSUKA
 Mr. J. SAKAMOTO

Mexico:

Mr. M. TELLO

Mongolia:

Mr. M. DUGERSUREN
 Mr. D. ERDEMBILEG

Morocco:

Mr. M.A.A. KHATTABI

Netherlands:

Mr. H.F. ESCHAUZIER
 Mr. E. BOS

Nigeria:

Alhaji SULE KOLO
 Mr. C.O. HOLLIST

Pakistan:

Mr. K. AHMED
 Mr. S.A.D. BUKHARI
 Mr. T.O. HYDER

Poland:

Mr. K. ZYBYLSKI
 Mr. H. STEPOSZ
 Mr. R. WLAZLO

Romania:

Mr. I. DATCU
 Mr. O. IONESCO
 Mr. V. PARASCHIV
 Mr. C. GEORGESCO

Sweden:

Mr. A. EDELSTAM
 Mr. I. VIRGIN
 Mr. R. BCMAN

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. A.A. ROSHCIN
Mr. V.V. SHOUSTOV
Mr. L.A. MASTERKOV
Mr. V.B. TOULINOV

United Arab Republic:

Mr. O. SIRRY
Mr. M. ISMAIL

United Kingdom:

Mr. I.F. PORTER
Mr. W.N. HILLIER-FRY
Mr. J.T. MASEFIELD

United States of America:

Mr. J.F. LEONARD
Mr. W. GIVAN
Mr. R.L. McCORMACK
Mr. W.A. SEARLE

Yugoslavia:

Mr. M. VUKOVIC

Deputy Special Representative
of the Secretary-General:

Mr. W. EPSTEIN

1. The CHAIRMAN (Burma): I declare open the 459th plenary meeting of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.
2. Mr. ZELLEKE (Ethiopia): As I am taking the floor today for the first time in this session, I should like first of all to take the opportunity to add the voice of the Ethiopian delegation to the many which have addressed good wishes of welcome to the distinguished leaders of delegations who have joined the Committee for the first time.
3. Like all those of the opening sessions of this Committee the past weeks have been very enlightening. The Secretary-General of the United Nations found it necessary to appear before this Committee in person to highlight some of the major issues of disarmament and to carry the messages of the numerous General Assembly resolutions, which he himself described as charging the Committee with "urgent and vital tasks" in the statement he made to the Committee on 18 February (CCD/PV.450, para.14).
4. The Committee itself has reviewed in some detail what it has been possible to achieve in the field of arms control and disarmament in the past decade. Compared with the increasing spiral of the armaments race and arms build-up, accompanied by an ever-increasing wastage of human and financial resources, the achievements of the past are limited. Among the few noteworthy achievements of the past which the Committee can count, the non-proliferation Treaty (ENDC/226*) has been cited as the principal example. The coming into force of the non-proliferation Treaty at the beginning of this month provided an opportunity to reiterate the need to pursue further negotiations on arms control and disarmament in order to fulfil the purpose of the Treaty in accordance with the obligations laid down in its article VI.
5. Indeed, disarmament measures achieved in the past generally fall into the category of preliminary agreements awaiting further measures to complete them. Such is the case for example, of the Moscow partial test-ban Treaty (ENDC/100/Rev.1), which seven years after its adoption still needs to be completed by an agreement prohibiting underground nuclear and thermonuclear testing if its full objectives are to be realized.
6. It is in the light of those facts that this Committee should now proceed to give effect to the General Assembly resolution which declared the decade of the 1970s the Disarmament Decade and which, inter alia, requested this Committee --

(Mr. Zelleke, Ethiopia)

"... to work out ... a comprehensive programme, dealing with all aspects of the problem of the cessation of the arms race and general and complete disarmament under effective international control ..."

(resolution 2602 E (XXIV); CCD/275).

In this connexion I should like to state from the outset that the Ethiopian delegation is fully aware of the many pertinent warnings sounded in this Committee by several representatives of the danger of losing sight of our real purpose in disarmament negotiations by plunging into an abstract extrapolation of a comprehensive programme for the Disarmament Decade. Nevertheless, the methods of work so far followed and the less than satisfactory results that it has been possible to record would seem to justify efforts to devise a new procedural approach based on the principle of the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

7. In framing the future course of action to be followed by this Committee, a point to bear in mind is that the programming of disarmament, unlike that of the Development Decade, starts from the unpredictable variables of international peace and security, whose organic relationship to disarmament negotiations has been proved by the experience of the past decade. The cause-and-effect relationship between progress in disarmament negotiations on the one hand and the international political climate on the other hand was clearly stated by Mr. Christov, the leader of the Bulgarian delegation, in his statement at our meeting on 3 March (CCD/PV.454, paras. 25-27). The same conviction has also been expressed by several other delegations.

8. It is important, therefore, not to lose sight of that aspect of disarmament when talking about the programme for the Disarmament Decade. The Committee should seek ways and means of taking stock of changing international political movements with a view to establishing their relationship to disarmament negotiations. In this connexion the present vigorous efforts being made by some European countries, notably the Federal Republic of Germany, to normalize relations with other neighbouring States, and the proposal of the socialist countries to hold an all-European security conference, are initiatives that will no doubt favourably affect disarmament negotiations. It is desirable that those commendable efforts should be spread to other regions. In the context of the Disarmament Decade and in accordance with the United Nations Charter, this Committee might now envisage a recommendation to the General Assembly that there should be a peaceful settlement of political conflicts, including the elimination of all remnants of colonial domination.

(Mr. Zelleke, Ethiopia)

9. Apart from this, the Committee should also foresee as an early measure in 1970 the participation in all disarmament negotiations of all nuclear Powers, including France and the People's Republic of China. As the Secretary-General pointed out, their participation is "essential for a full measure of success" (CCD/PV.450, para.24).

10. Those are some of the side but nevertheless important issues that should be linked to other measures of disarmament proper in efforts by this Committee to draft a disarmament programme. It has already been pointed out that the basis for such a programme exists in various earlier documents. Among them are the draft treaties for general and complete disarmament submitted to this Committee by the Soviet Union (ENDC/2/Rev.1) and the United States (ENDC/30 and Add.1-3) as far back as 1962.

11. Despite the repeated demands of General Assembly resolutions -- the latest of which figures in resolution 2602 E (XXIV) -- and the ceaseless efforts of several delegations, the question of general and complete disarmament has so far continued to receive less than the full attention it deserves. The time has now come, as we move into the new era of the Disarmament Decade, for the Committee to take a fresh look at general and complete disarmament as a matter of priority and to reactivate the momentum that had already been achieved at the beginning of the 1960s. As a first step, the co-Chairmen should revise their original drafts in order to accommodate the changed circumstances, as suggested in the working paper submitted by Mexico (CCD/277).

12. A new and perhaps most important aspect of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, in the 1970s lies in the outcome of the bilateral negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States on the limitation of offensive and defensive strategic nuclear weapon systems. The importance of those talks and their direct relationship to the work of this Committee have already been clearly established, and therefore no further elaboration is necessary. The Ethiopian delegation appreciates the attempts made to report to this Committee on the results of the preliminary meetings at Helsinki and the sense of determination expressed in this Committee by the co-Chairmen to continue the negotiations. It is too early for us to contemplate the outcome of those talks. As we look forward to the second round of meetings next month we would like to wish them success and at the same time appeal to them, in accordance with the spirit of General Assembly resolutions, to restrict further testing and deployment of new offensive and defensive strategic nuclear weapon systems which might jeopardize the outcome of their talks in Vienna.

(Mr. Zelleke, Ethiopia)

13. Meanwhile this Committee should continue to negotiate on the numerous items before it with a view to arriving at an agreement on some of the issues to be considered at the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Of these, the question of the prohibition of the emplacement of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction on the sea-bed and ocean floor and the question of chemical and biological weapons have been generally recognized by this Committee as two important items of possible agreement.

14. With regard to the prohibition of the emplacement of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction on the sea-bed and ocean floor, several delegations have already stated that this Committee exhausted discussion of that item last year and that therefore no repetition of views is necessary until the co-Chairmen submit a revised version of the draft treaty (CCD/269/Rev.1) taking into account the various suggestions put forward in this Committee last year and at the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

15. Similarly, this Committee spent considerable time last year discussing the question of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons. One is heartened to observe that from those discussions there seems to emerge a general consensus on the importance of the 1925 Geneva Protocol (A/7575/Rev.1, annex VI) and the need for all States which have not so far done so to adhere to it as soon as possible and to comply with its principles and objectives. It is encouraging to note in this respect the latest steps taken by some States, namely Japan and the United States, to ratify the Protocol. Connected with this is the commendable gesture of the United States in taking a unilateral decision not to produce or possess biological weapons.

16. When it comes to the matter of the prohibition of production and accumulation of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons, this Committee seems to follow two distinct but parallel paths. On the one hand there are those delegations which believe that both chemical and biological weapons should be dealt with together, or at least dealt with simultaneously, thereby maintaining the spirit and the objectives of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. On the other hand there are those who follow the course of action suggested in the United Kingdom draft convention (ENDC/255/Rev.1), that of dealing with biological weapons first and separately. Despite all efforts to bring together those divergent views, the positions taken remain fixed and threaten to stifle any further discussions in this field.

(Mr. Zelleke, Ethiopia)

17. So long as this Committee follows the procedure of drafting conventions independent of the existing Geneva Protocol; to which there are large numbers of signatories, the Committee will be led unavoidably to examine and keep a strict balance between the new draft and the original Protocol; and so long as we insist on this procedure chemical and biological weapons will remain inseparable. It is, on the other hand, a different matter to consider the possibility of one or two additional protocols within the existing and internationally-accepted norms enunciated in the Geneva Protocol of 1925.

18. For these reasons efforts should be made not only to persuade as many States as possible to adhere to the Protocol but also to withdraw all and any reservations made by States signatories to the Treaty. In other words, we would wish this Committee to start from the basic Protocol of 1925 and wherever possible attach or add an additional protocol or protocols to further prohibit the production and possession of those lethal weapons.

19. These are preliminary comments on some of the important questions before us. My delegation intends to deal in some detail with chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and other items on our agenda in the course of our session later this year.

20. Mr. CARACCIOLO (Italy): I wish to make only a very brief statement. We listened with great interest to the statements made by various representatives during our meeting on Tuesday, 17 March on the different problems and technical aspects of this question of chemical and biological weapons. My Government has taken note with particular interest of the statement made by the United States representative that the United States had totally renounced biological warfare and hoped that more States would take similar action. In his statement Mr. Leonard said:

"... we strongly urge that such unilateral decisions be converted into a binding international commitment by the negotiation of a convention along the lines of the draft submitted by the United Kingdom." (CCD/PV.458, para.55)

May I just say that in our statement on 26 February (CCD/PV.453, para.27) we expressed views on similar lines, and that we wish to renew our support for the United Kingdom draft?

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament today held its 459th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nation, Geneva, under the chairmanship of U Maung Maung Gyi, representative of Burma.

"Statements were made by the representatives of Ethiopia and Italy.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 24 March 1970, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.