

CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

CCD/PV.726
2 September 1976
ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SIXTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 2 September 1976, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. H. Ameri

(Iran)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

<u>Argentina:</u>	Mr. V.E. BERASATEGUI
<u>Brazil:</u>	Mr. G.A. MACIEL Mr. L.H. PEREIRA DA FONSECA
<u>Bulgaria:</u>	Mr. B. GRINBERG Mr. M. SREBREV Mr. I. PETROV
<u>Burma:</u>	U THEP TUN
<u>Canada:</u>	Mr. R. HARRY JAY Mr. J.T. SIMARD
<u>Czechoslovakia:</u>	Mr. V. SOJÁK
<u>Egypt:</u>	Mr. F. EL IBRASHI Mr. A. MANSOUR Miss L. EMARA
<u>Ethiopia:</u>	Mr. W. BERHANU Mr. G. DEMISSE
<u>German Democratic Republic:</u>	Mr. G. HERDER Mr. M. GRACZYNSKI
<u>Germany, Federal Republic of:</u>	Mr. G.J. SCHLAICH Mr. J. BAUCH
<u>Hungary:</u>	Mr. M. DOMOKOS Mr. R. TOTH Mr. I. KORMENDY
<u>India:</u>	Mr. B.C. MISHRA Mr. P.K. GUPTA
<u>Iran:</u>	Mr. H. AMERI Mr. D. CHILATY

<u>Italy:</u>	Mr. N. DI BERNARDO
	Mr. V. VALDEVIT
	Mr. A. BIZZARINI
<u>Japan:</u>	Mr. M. OGISO
	Mr. T. SAWAI
<u>Mexico:</u>	Mr. M. MARIN
	Mr. S. CAMPOS-ICARDO
<u>Mongolia:</u>	Mr. B. JARGALSAIKHAN
	Mr. P. KHALIOUNE
<u>Morocco:</u>	Mr. S.M. RAHHALI
<u>Netherlands:</u>	Mr. A.J. MEERBURG
<u>Nigeria:</u>	Mr. B. AKPORODE CLARK
	Mr. S.T. ADAMU
<u>Pakistan:</u>	Mr. K. SALEEM
<u>Peru:</u>	Mr. G. CHAUNY
<u>Poland:</u>	Mr. E. WYZNER
	Mr. H. PAC
	Mr. A. CZERKAWSKI
<u>Romania:</u>	Mr. C. ENE
	Mr. G. TINCA
<u>Sweden:</u>	Mr. L. JONSSON
	Mr. U. REINIUS
<u>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:</u>	Mr. V.I. LIKHATCHEV
	Mr. Y.K. NAZARKIN
	Mr. A.N. KASHIRIN
<u>United Kingdom:</u>	Mr. M.E. ALLEN
	Mr. J.G. TAYLOR

United States of America:

Mr. J. MARTIN, Jr.

Mr. D.P. BLACK

Yugoslavia:

Mr. M. MIHAJLOVIĆ

Zaire:

Mr. BINTU'A-TSHIABOLA

Mr. LUKABU-K'HABOUJI

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. RISTO HYVARINEN

Alternate Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. A. CORRADINI

Communiqué of the meeting

The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament today held its 726th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the Chairmanship of Mr. H. Ameri, representative of Iran.

The representative of Sweden (Mr. L. Jonsson) proposed a formal decision to be taken by the CCD with respect to the first progress report from the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and to Identify Seismic Events.

The representative of the United Kingdom (H.E. Ambassador Mark Allen) said that, although his delegation supported the consensus, it regretted that it had not been found possible to proceed at an earlier meeting with this important work either in Geneva or elsewhere.

The representative of Nigeria (H.E. Ambassador B. Akporode Clark) proposed a formal decision to be taken by the CCD to consider, during its 1977 session, the question of a comprehensive programme dealing with all aspects of the problem of the cessation of the arms race and general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (H.E. Ambassador V.I. Likhatchev) made a statement on the draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques.

The representative of the Netherlands (Mr. A.J. Meerburg) commented on the statement made by the representative of the Soviet Union on the draft convention.

The representative of Canada (H.E. Ambassador R. Harry Jay) made a statement on the inclusion of the draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques in the report of the CCD.

The Committee adopted the proposals submitted by Sweden and Nigeria as mentioned above.

The delegation of Mexico submitted a Working Paper on the scope of a prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques (CCD/516).

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Friday, 3 September 1976, at 10.30 a.m.

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Mr. JONSSON (Sweden): My delegation has on a previous occasion made a statement with respect to the first progress report from the Ad Hoc Group of seismological experts, and you may recall that it thought the report gave cause for satisfaction. Today I have asked for the floor to suggest that formal action be taken by the Committee on the report from the Ad Hoc Group. With respect to one particular item contained in the report, i.e. the provisions for the timing of the further work of the Ad Hoc Group, my delegation considers these to be of a recommendatory character which are ultimately for the CCD to decide upon. In the view of the Swedish delegation, the time schedule proposed by the Group is reasonable and takes account of the complexity of the task and the wide range of different data to be collected and synthesized.

In consultations with delegations interested in the matter, somewhat divergent views have, however, appeared to be existent regarding the most appropriate time and place for the second meeting of the Group. As a result of these consultations as well as consultations with the Chairman of the Group, I would like to suggest that the following decision be taken by the CCD with respect to document CCD/513:

"The CCD, having received the first progress report of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and to Identify Seismic Events, takes note thereof and approves, in principle, the proposed time schedule for the work of the Ad Hoc Group, subject to review in the light of its further work. The next session of the Ad Hoc Group shall, however, take place in Geneva in February 1977 in conjunction with the beginning of the next session of the CCD."

It was so decided.

Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom): My delegation concurs in the decision which has just been taken, whereby the Ad Hoc Group of seismic experts will hold its next meeting in February, here in Geneva, but it regrets that it has not been possible to arrange an earlier meeting. We would have accepted a meeting here in, say, October, or one elsewhere. This subject seems to us to be important, and we are sorry that progress on it has been held up by what appears to have been mainly procedural considerations. However, we trust that any time which may be lost as a result of the postponement of the meeting until February will be made up by co-operation on the part of all member countries of the CCD.

Mr. CLARK (Nigeria): Yesterday, at our informal meeting, I referred to an earlier proposal which my delegation had made in its working paper (CCD/510) regarding the need to record some conclusion on the mid-term review of the Disarmament Decade. If there are no objections, I shall proceed to read the following text which, as I indicated yesterday, seems to enjoy the support of our two distinguished Co-Chairmen and a number of delegations:

"Draft decision

Taking into account the recommendation made by the delegation of Nigeria in its 'Working paper on conclusions of the mid-term review of the Disarmament Decade' (CCD/510), the Committee decides to consider, during its 1977 session, the question of 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, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2602 E (XXIV) proclaiming the Disarmament Decade."

I shall not try your patience by arguing all over again the case for adopting and recording such a conclusion. The central purpose is to enable us to work out, during our 1977 session, 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, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2602 E (XXIV) which proclaimed the decade of the 1970s as the Disarmament Decade.

It was so decided.

Mr. LIKHACHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): The Soviet delegation would like to make some remarks in connexion with the achievement of agreement on the draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques.

The Soviet Union, in submitting its proposal for the conclusion of a convention on this question to the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly, was guided above all by the anxiety of many States in the world over the possible use

(Mr. Likhatchev, USSR)

of environmental modification techniques as a weapon of war. The Soviet proposal was supported by the overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations. The draft convention submitted by the USSR for final approval in accordance with the decision of the General Assembly was transmitted to the Committee on Disarmament.

During 1974 and 1975, Soviet and United States specialists worked out identical texts of a draft convention, which were then submitted to the Committee on Disarmament for consideration in August 1975. This considerably facilitated the Committee's task.

The Soviet delegation notes with satisfaction that we have been able, at this session, as a result of intensive discussions in the Working Group as well as in informal consultations, to arrive at the text of a draft convention in the Committee. This is a major success in the work of the Committee on Disarmament. Members of the Committee have accomplished a great task, leading to the preparation of a new important international measure for limiting the arms race and for disarmament.

The Soviet delegation considers that the conclusion of such a convention would undoubtedly be in the interests of strengthening peace, would make a significant contribution to saving mankind from the danger of the use of new methods of waging war, and would correspond to the task of limiting and halting the arms race and of disarmament. It considers that the draft convention that has been worked out fully satisfies these aims. At the same time, such an international agreement will help solve the problem of protecting the environment for the benefit of mankind. As a result of the discussions, many comments and wishes expressed by various delegations were considered, and corrections were made to, and some new provisions inserted in, the original draft.

I should like to emphasize the constructive approach adopted by many representatives to the accomplishment of the task before the Committee, and their flexibility and spirit of compromise in connexion with the solution of specific and sometimes extremely complex political, legal and technical problems associated with the drafting of the Convention.

The Soviet delegation would now like to make some comments on certain articles of the draft, and in particular on article V (concerning control), since this article provoked considerable discussion at an earlier stage. But a spirit of compromise and consideration for mutual interests prevailed, and mutually acceptable formulations were found.

(Mr. Likhatchev, USSR)

This article contains important provisions for the settlement of possible situations of conflict connected with questions of the implementation of the convention by States parties to it. According to these provisions, consultation and co-operation through international procedures include the possibility, should problems arise in relation to compliance with the convention, of fact-finding by existing international organizations such as, for example, the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme. In our view, the nature of the activities of these two organizations are closest to the matters covered by the convention.

The article also provides for the establishment of a consultative committee of experts, open to all States parties to the convention, whose task is to assist States parties in the solution of any problems which may arise in connexion with the objectives or implementation of the convention. This solution is in accordance with the principle of the equality of all States parties to the convention.

The committee of experts has, if necessary, to make findings of fact and provide expert views relevant to any problem raised by any State party in connexion with the application of the provisions of the convention. In practice, all this will ensure a better understanding of what has happened and will lead, in particular cases, to the elimination of possible misunderstandings or disagreements. The adoption of decisions on controversial matters concerning the implementation of the convention must be the prerogative of the Security Council. A State which has any doubts on the basis of the findings of fact of the committee of experts will itself decide whether to lodge a complaint with the Security Council, requesting it to carry out an investigation and adopt a political decision, or to drop its claims altogether if it becomes clear that they arose through a misunderstanding. The article clearly lays down the procedure for lodging a complaint with the Security Council.

Thus, the State concerned has, in case of need, a sufficiently wide range of courses of action, including bilateral consultation and co-operation, application to existing international bodies within the framework of the United Nations for consultation, the convening of the consultative committee of experts and, lastly, application to the Security Council. The State itself decides which of these possibilities it wishes to make use of.

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A corresponding annex to the convention, relating to article V, on the functions and rules of procedure of the committee of experts, has also been drawn up. It clearly outlines the committee's sphere of competence with regard to fact-finding, without the adoption of any decisions on the substance of the problem which has arisen. This annex also provides for certain machinery to facilitate the committee's work, including the possibility of requesting from States, and from international organizations, information and assistance which would be desirable for the accomplishment of the committee's work.

Some delegations were interested in what was meant by assistance to a State which has been harmed. The Soviet delegation in the Working Group explained its understanding of this matter, and we should now like to confirm it. Assistance to those harmed as a result of violation of the convention, as provided for in article V, paragraph 5, means medical, rescue or other humanitarian measures. Measures designed to ensure the security of a country which has been attacked may be taken, as stipulated in Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. The convention does not exclude assistance on the basis of other agreements and circumstances corresponding to the Charter.

Another of the most important articles of the draft is article I, in which the object and scope of the prohibition are defined. It should be said frankly that it was not easy to reach agreement on this article. And here again we should like to stress that many delegations showed a spirit of compromise and mutual understanding.

The term "military or any other hostile use" contained in this article and in the title of the draft convention is justified and logical, and should not be considered in isolation but in the context of the whole article, which also contains the expression "as the means of destruction, damage or injury to another State Party". This combination makes it possible, on the one hand, to prohibit the use of environmental modification techniques for purely military purposes as a weapon and, on the other, to prohibit their use for any other hostile purposes, even if they are not used by armed forces and in the absence of any armed conflicts. At the same time, this formulation excludes from the prohibition the use of such techniques in cases where they do not have a hostile character and are not designed to cause destruction, damage or injury, including situations where such techniques are used even by armed forces, for example, during manoeuvres, or for providing assistance to the national economy, for scientific purposes, etc.

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Certain differences of opinion on paragraph 1 related mainly to the scope of the prohibition, and specifically to the formulation "widespread, long-lasting or severe effects". These terms indicate the main characteristics of the scope of the prohibition. The formulation provides for the prohibition of those modification techniques which have widespread, long-lasting or severe effects. The choice of this definition is due above all to the fact that it is precisely effects of this kind which present the main danger and precisely such effects which are the subject of the problem under discussion. It should be noted here that the formulations of article I, together with the agreed understanding relating to this article by the Committee on Disarmament, practically exclude the possibilities of hostile modification of the environment.

As a result of the discussion of this problem, it was deemed desirable for the Committee on Disarmament to give an agreed interpretation of the terms "widespread, long-lasting or severe effects". A draft of such an interpretation was prepared by the Working Group. We consider that this approach is reasonable and meets the interests of the majority of the members of the Committee.

Article II of the draft is a logical complement to article I, explaining the meaning of the term "environmental modification techniques". In this text, attention is drawn to the principle of modification, based on the deliberate manipulation of natural processes.

The Committee's agreed understanding gives an illustrative list of specific and very carefully chosen phenomena. This list is the result of prolonged and very careful examination and study by scientific specialists of the whole body of important natural phenomena which human actions could cause or actively influence. In conjunction with the objective natural processes enumerated in this same article, it provides a comprehensive basis for the expression "environmental modification techniques". The purpose of the enumeration is to give a specific idea of what is really referred to in the convention. This is useful for the correct understanding, not only by experts, but by a wide circle of other people, of the significance of taking effective measures with regard to the problem under discussion.

During the consideration of the question of examples, as it is known, some delegations made proposals to include this list of examples in an annex to the convention. We did not object to this, but certain new difficulties arose in

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connexion with the status of such an annex. In this case also delegations, showing a spirit of co-operation and a constructive approach, reached the conclusion that it would be desirable to remove the list from article II and to give an agreed understanding of the enumeration of examples separately.

As it is known, some additional provisions were also included in the preamble, which take into account the points of view of all the members of the Committee and have been helpful in reaching mutually acceptable decisions on articles I, II and III of the draft.

With regard to article III of the draft, we should like to point out that we accepted the proposal of delegations which spoke in favour of the inclusion in this article, as a separate paragraph, of a provision, similar to paragraph 1 of article X of the Bacteriological Weapons Convention, on co-operation between States in the field of the peaceful use of environmental modification techniques.

During the discussion of this article, certain delegations spoke in favour of including in it definite provisions governing international co-operation in this sphere and laying down what would amount to specific obligations on States in connexion with such co-operation. However, it was found that the inclusion of such provisions in this convention was unjustified, since the subject of the convention and its entire conception consist in the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques, and not in the regulation of problems of the peaceful use of such techniques. These problems constitute quite a different subject.

With regard to article IV, it should be noted that it is now so formulated as to leave no doubt that each State is free to determine, in accordance with its own legislation, the procedure for carrying out the provisions of the convention. In this connexion, it was taken into account that different States have different constitutional régimes governing such cases. This article in no way places States parties to the convention under the obligation to adapt their internal constitutional procedures or to change them in any other way.

The other articles and provisions of the convention, including those on conferences to review its operation (article VIII) were also elaborated as a result of constructive efforts to reach mutually acceptable decisions in which participants in the negotiations took into account the interests and views of various States.

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The Soviet delegation declares that the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics gives its agreement to the approval of the convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques, prepared by the Committee on Disarmament, together with the annex thereto, and also of the text of the agreed understanding of the Committee on Disarmament relating to articles I, II, III and VIII of that convention.

In the light of the foregoing, the Soviet delegation recommends to the Committee on Disarmament, as is reflected in the joint statement by the co-sponsors of the draft convention at the meeting of Working Group I in September this year, the adoption of the draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques.

Mr. HARRY JAY (Canada): As this is my first formal intervention in the work of the Committee, I would like to express my admiration to all my colleagues here who have worked so hard during the session to bring the joint efforts of the Committee to this stage of the proceedings and with such success. I really am filled with admiration for the patient goodwill and seriousness with which all delegations approached what the Canadian Government regards as a very important work. This is particularly true in my view with the draft text of the ENMOD convention, and it is in that connexion that I would like to place on the record that, while the delegation of Canada supports the inclusion of the present text of the draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques in the report of the CCD, Canada's final position on the draft convention is still subject to Government approval which, in the light of the timing involved, we have not yet had the opportunity to obtain.

The CHAIRMAN (Iran): We have now exhausted our original list of speakers and, therefore, I would call on any distinguished representative who would like to take the floor.

Mr. MARIN (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): I asked for the floor to inform the Committee that the delegation of Mexico has submitted a "Working paper on the scope of a prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques", which is reproduced in document CCD/516 dated 1 September 1976, and whose contents are self-explanatory.

Mr. MEERBURG (Netherlands): The Netherlands delegation does not disagree with the statement just made by the distinguished delegate of the Soviet Union with respect to article V of the draft environmental modification convention. I only would like to point out that other international organizations outside the United Nations family could play a role in the implementation of the convention. I am thinking particularly of the highly competent international scientific unions in this field. Their assistance is not excluded by the text of ~~Article V~~ or the annex.

The CHAIRMAN (Iran): I have an announcement on the part of the Co-Chairmen to make. It reads as follows:

"The delegation of the USSR has proposed that further informal meetings with the participation of experts on the subject of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons be held during the Committee's spring 1977 session. The Co-Chairmen, after consultation with other members of the Committee, propose that such meetings be scheduled to commence at 10.30 a.m. on 14 March 1977."

Are there any comments on this subject?

Mr. MARIN (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): I do not know, Mr. Chairman, whether you are simply informing us of the proposal by the Co-Chairmen or whether it is intended that the Committee should take a decision on it.

The CHAIRMAN (Iran): It is a proposal that the CCD has to adopt.

Mr. MARIN (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Traditionally, the delegation of Mexico has not been opposed to the holding of informal meetings with the participation of experts, since we consider that, in some cases, they can be useful

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to our work. Consequently, my delegation has no objection to the adoption of the proposal of the Co-Chairmen. However, it will be necessary in the proposed text to speak of "consultation with some members", in other words, to add the word "some" before "members".

The CHAIRMAN (Iran): As the members of the Committee have heard, the representative of Mexico suggests that, instead of saying that "consultation with other members of the Committee" were undertaken, we would say "with some members of the Committee".

Mr. ENE (Romania): I fully support this proposal.

Mr. BERHANU (Ethiopia): I would just like to ask for a clarification. Why should we just take this particular decision when we have not settled what we are going to do in 1977 as a whole? Why should we decide now to hold this meeting? Is there any special reason for this?

Mr. MEERBURG (Netherlands): I thought we had a system, established last year, that at the beginning of the spring session we establish a programme of work. So, I think this is a little bit "coming out of the air" and I am not prepared for it, I must say.

Mr. WYZNER (Poland): With all due respect to my distinguished colleagues who seem to entertain some doubts about the matter, I think that it would be of great importance-- of great practical importance-- to all of us to know precisely the date of the meeting of experts on new weapons for next year. First, we already know the date of the opening of the session-- it is 15 February. So, this leaves only a couple of weeks before the projected meeting of experts. As we all know, experts are very busy men with numerous engagements and we cannot really promise that our expert, for example, will be free on a day's or just a week's notice to attend this important meeting. This is why we consider it of special importance to know in advance the date of the meeting, i.e. to know in advance what is our schedule of work. This is the real purpose of all decisions which we have taken about the organization of our work. That is why I would strongly urge that the decision be taken now.

Mr. LIKHATCHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian):

I would merely like to provide some information and make matters clear, particularly in connexion with the questions which have been raised here and with certain remarks -- I have in mind the remarks by the representatives of Ethiopia and the Netherlands. If they look at the records of our meetings at the spring session, and also at the draft report we are now considering, they will see quite clearly that at the spring session this year the Committee took two decisions on the holding of meetings at the summer session. There was the decision to hold informal meetings on the question of chemical weapons, which was proposed by the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany; and the meetings were held commencing on 5 July. It was precisely in the spring that the Committee decided to hold such meetings in the summer. Secondly, a decision was taken in the spring to hold meetings in the summer on Ambassador Clark's proposal regarding the mid-term review of the Disarmament Decade. A whole series of other examples could be given as well. Accordingly, the statement by the representative of the Netherlands, to the effect that this has not occurred in the practice of the Committee, seems rather strange to me. The second thing I wanted to say was that the question which is being proposed for discussion is important and urgent. The course of the discussions at the present session has shown that this question must be developed further. The Soviet delegation therefore proposes that a decision be taken now, so that delegations and experts can prepare themselves for this in advance; and I fully agree in this regard with the arguments put forward by Ambassador Wyzner. This is the clarification I wanted to give in connexion with the decision now being discussed.

Mr. GRINBERG (Bulgaria): I also would like to support the draft decision before the CCD, and also to support the arguments by the distinguished representatives of Poland and of the Soviet Union. It is true that we have a decision, at the beginning of each session, to arrange the schedule of our work, but it is also true that we very often take decisions in the middle of the year, if the need arises. For instance, we have in front of us today another draft decision on the Ad Hoc Group of seismological experts which would state that the meeting of the Ad Hoc Group will take place in February 1977. That is why I do not see any difficulty in adopting the decision which has been proposed about prohibition of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. SCHLAICH (Federal Republic of Germany): We are a little bit surprised that this draft decision comes so suddenly upon us. We will certainly communicate the proposal to our Government. But we have not been consulted before and so I do not know whether we can take a decision already now. I wonder why we cannot wait for a final decision, or a confirmation of the decision, until the beginning of the spring session. I wish to remind the Committee that in other cases consultations on informal experts' meetings of the CCD have taken longer.

Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom): I am in exactly the same position as the distinguished representative of the Federal Republic of Germany. This is the first that my delegation has heard of the proposal to have these meetings. I have no idea whether the expert from my country is available in the middle of March or not. Therefore, I hope that it will be possible to defer a decision on this question until I have been able to consult my Government. I have no objection in principle to the proposal-- which has much to recommend it --but I am simply not in a position to say whether I am able to accept it here and now.

Mr. BERHANU (Ethiopia): Although I asked my question innocently, I think that after hearing the arguments put forward in the support of the decision, I would like to recall General Assembly resolution 3479 (XXX), especially paragraph 3, which requests us to hold meetings with experts and report back to the thirty-first session, but does not authorize us to go beyond that and plan meetings before we hear what the General Assembly has to say on this issue.

Mr. DI BERNARDO (Italy): My delegation is in favour of holding experts' meetings on the question of the weapons of mass destruction, but we would have preferred to have been informed beforehand by the Co-Chairmen in order not to find ourselves completely disarmed. We do not know whether or not at the date suggested by the two Co-Chairmen we will be able to send experts. I think that it would be desirable to have a second consultation, as the question of fixing dates is involved.

Mr. MISHRA (India): I think we are now discussing three questions instead of one. The first question is whether the Committee is competent to take this decision now in respect of informal meetings with the participation of experts to be held next year. That the Committee is competent to take decisions in regard to its work next year is quite clear. We have already taken two decisions this morning, based on proposals from Sweden and Nigeria. Secondly, we are discussing the timing of this series of informal meetings. Obviously the convenience of members and of experts which they might bring to the informal meetings has to be taken into account and I would support the idea that a decision with regard to the timing be left over for tomorrow. By then, perhaps, the delegations which have expressed reservations in regard to the date might have instructions. The third point, which was raised in his second intervention by the Ambassador of Ethiopia, concerns what the Assembly might indicate -- or not indicate -- to us on this subject. On this question I must beg to differ with him, because the CCD is quite competent to take decisions on its own in regard to its work. The General Assembly, of course, makes various recommendations every year and these are taken into account by the CCD while debating various questions. But the CCD has a status, a unique status, and it is quite competent -- indeed it has done so in the past -- to decide what subject it will discuss during the course of any particular year. So I would suggest that, while we should not disagree in principle in regard to the matter of a decision, the exact timing may be left open until tomorrow, so that some delegations have the time to consult their Governments in regard to the date which has been proposed for this meeting.

Mr. SALEEM (Pakistan): I want to suggest here that it would perhaps be better, in view of the comments that have been expressed by various delegations, to note the proposal of the Co-Chairmen and to accept the principle of holding these meetings sometime in the spring session of 1977, but to defer the fixing of actual dates until the CCD reconvenes in 1977.

Mr. DOMOKOS (Hungary) (translated from French): The delegation of Hungary would like to propose the adoption, provisionally, of the proposal by the two Co-Chairmen. The final decision could be taken early in the next session of the CCD. In that way, delegations would be able to prepare for the informal discussions with the participation of experts, to prepare working papers and, in the meanwhile, to receive further instructions from their Governments.

Mr. HERDER (German Democratic Republic): I also have a proposal to make along the same lines -- that is, that a decision be taken in principle with a reservation as regards the date of the meetings, to meet the objections which have been raised by some delegations which say that they cannot make a decision now. In this connexion I would like to express the opinion that I find very strange the fact that we have before us some draft proposals along the same lines; for some of these proposals some delegations do not need any approval from their Governments, while for the other proposals such approval is needed by the same delegations.

Mr. MARIN (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): We share the view expressed by the distinguished representatives of Poland, the Soviet Union and Bulgaria to the effect that in some cases -- I repeat, in some cases -- it might be useful to take a decision on holding informal meetings sufficiently long in advance to allow for suitable preparation. However, with the proposals just made by the distinguished representatives of Hungary and the German Democratic Republic, whereby the CCD would adopt a decision "in principle" or "provisionally", it would seem that an attempt is being made to introduce innovations in the Committee's procedure. We have never been opposed to innovations; on the contrary, my delegation has been one of those which, for some years, has been calling for changes in the structure and the procedure of the CCD. But I believe on this occasion we could wait a little before deciding on these innovatory proposals. We could perhaps also wait until tomorrow before taking a decision on the proposal by the Co-Chairmen. In the light of the comments by many delegations on this proposal, it might be useful to have 24 hours for further reflection. We propose, in addition, further reflection on another possible decision on a matter that we have left pending. The text in English would be:

[speaking in English]

"The Committee also decided to hold at the very outset of its 1977 session further meetings on the question of the comprehensive review of its procedure".

Mr. MISHRA (India): First, I think it would be better to postpone a decision on this question until tomorrow morning's meeting. My second point is that, I think, the Mexican proposal is already taken care of by the decision taken last year that at the beginning of each session -- the first session of each year -- the Committee will consider the organization of its work. In considering its

(Mr. Mishra, India)

organization of work, the Committee can, of course, have a comprehensive review of its procedures, or it can have a partial review, because it is open to the Committee to take any such decisions. I would of course have no objection to adding the words "comprehensive review". I have no objection to that. My feeling is that it is already there. We are not prevented from debating this question at the beginning of the 1977 session.

Mr. MEERBURG (Netherlands): I think the main problem about the Co-Chairmen's proposal, in contrast to Ambassador Herder's view, is the total lack of consultation, while for most of the other decisions -- as far as I know -- there have been wide consultations, about the timing and programme and so on. This is the main problem. I could imagine, for example, that at the spring session we might have expert meetings on chemical weapons, but it is certainly a point on which I would like to consult with other people, before any decision is made. The same holds, I think, for the proposal of Mexico. I think it is a little bit different than the decision taken last year. A comprehensive review of the Committee's procedures is a little more than its programme of work.

Mr. LIKHATCHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): We have listened with interest to the substantial points made by the representatives of India, Poland, Hungary and the German Democratic Republic. I would like to say that we agree with the proposal of Ambassador Mishra to defer the decision on this question until tomorrow, so as to give those delegations who need time the possibility of thinking the question over.

Mr. DI BERNARDO (Italy) (translated from French): My delegation agrees that the matter should be considered tomorrow, but as regards the date of the meetings with experts, obviously we will not, in our opinion, be able to take any definite decision tomorrow, because we do not have time to consult our Governments and our Governments have to contact experts. It seems we are all agreed on the desirability of holding meetings of this kind, but it would seem to me difficult, by tomorrow, to be able to agree on a date.

Mr. BERHANU (Ethiopia): I would like to make clear that the main point is not really about the date of a meeting or the question of not consulting each other. The real point is that many delegations, as reflected in our report, have

(Mr. Berhanu, Ethiopia)

decried the fact that we are deflecting our effort from the main issues of CCD. In fact, when in 1975 the draft convention on environmental modification techniques was presented, many delegations objected on the ground that this would take us away from the real work which the CCD should do. Now, the taking of decisions at this session that will deflect us from the main issues of CCD is a matter of concern to my delegation.

The CHAIRMAN (Iran): If there are no other speakers, I would suggest that to my mind there are two problems facing us, which would probably be better solved in informal consultations. The first one is the question of further informal meetings on the subject of new types of weapons of mass destruction, and the other problem is to devise a formula for the transmittal of the report of the working group on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques to the plenary of the CCD. This needs also a formula or sentence, whatever it turns out to be. Both of these can better be discussed in informal consultations. Therefore, the Chair would like to propose that we would suspend this meeting and resume, probably this afternoon if the Committee agrees, and then take up the questions again. Are there any comments on this?

Mr. MISHRA (India): Mr. Chairman, I did not hear any opposition to the proposal that the proposal made by the Co-Chairmen be discussed tomorrow at the formal meeting of the CCD. If there is any objection to that proposal, of course, we can go into informal meeting to discuss it -- I have no objection to that. And secondly, I thought we had an agreement that after the plenary meeting this morning we will convene an informal meeting to consider the draft report of the CCD to the General Assembly. So, I would like to suggest that we postpone consideration of the proposal of the Co-Chairmen till tomorrow morning and that after you have read out the communiqué and adjourned the meeting, we convene informally to consider the draft report. I make this proposal because we do not have enough time to postpone the whole thing until this afternoon. The Secretariat needs time to prepare the draft report for formal approval tomorrow morning.

The CHAIRMAN (Iran): My understanding was that some delegations thought that tomorrow morning was too late to decide anything and they would like probably to have informal consultations. About the other point, it would be good if the Secretariat could have a formula for the transmittal of the report of the working group if possible this morning, so that they would have enough time.

Mr. MARTIN (United States of America): I am just taking the floor to support Ambassador Mishra's last proposition. I do not think that we can afford to waste any time at this point. The decision on the new weapons of mass destruction should go over till tomorrow, while we reconvene immediately in an informal meeting to discuss the report.

The CHAIRMAN (Iran): I thank the distinguished representative of the United States for this statement. Are there any other comments? If there are none, I shall proceed to read out the communiqué. 1/

Mr. MARIN (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): For my information, Mr. Chairman, will the record of this meeting cover everything that we have discussed, although the communiqué does not necessarily have to include a reference to the discussion we have had on some proposals for decisions? Is my impression correct?

Mr. CORRADINI (Alternate Representative of the Secretary General): The Secretariat will do whatever the Committee requests of it, but at the same time the Secretariat cannot fail to point out that at this Conference there is no provision for verbatim reporters and that it is very difficult for the Secretariat to produce a PV without verbatim reporters. The understanding arrived at several years ago was that we would produce a PV which contained prepared statements of delegations. If, on the other hand, the Secretariat has to prepare a PV reproducing faithfully the debate, the co-operation of delegations is absolutely needed.

Mr. MARTIN (United States of America): I think it is quite important to preserve the fact that this is a formal meeting and we are on the record. I recognize the dilemma of the Secretariat and I would urge all delegations to assist and I am sure we will, by writing out our remarks and transmitting them so that they can be included in the record. I do not think we ought to let our formal meetings degenerate into informal meetings because of a problem of no transcribers.

The communiqué was adopted.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

1/ The text of the communiqué is to be found on p. 5 above.