

United Nations  
**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**

FIFTEENTH SPECIAL SESSION

Official Records



**1st  
PLENARY MEETING**  
(Opening meeting)

Tuesday, 31 May 1988,  
at 3.20 p.m.

**NEW YORK**

*President:* Mr. Peter FLORIN  
(German Democratic Republic).

**AGENDA ITEM 1**

**Opening of the session by the Chairman of the  
delegation of the German Democratic Republic**

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): In accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure, I declare open the fifteenth special session of the General Assembly, the third special session devoted to disarmament.

**AGENDA ITEM 2**

**Minute of silent prayer or meditation**

2. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

*The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.*

3. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): The great interest shown by States Members of the United Nations in sending high-level representatives, as well as the presence of representatives of non-governmental organizations, attest to the particular importance the entire world attaches to this session. In the spirit of the target set by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, namely, to guarantee security through disarmament, the peoples hope that this forum will provide a strong impetus to disarmament negotiations. The most recent positive developments in international relations have given rise to a growing optimism. The Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles constitutes a first effective step of major scope in the field of nuclear disarmament. It is our expectation that progress will be achieved at the current meeting in Moscow between General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and President Ronald Reagan.

4. The fact that these two events coincide—the summit meeting and this special session—is of great symbolic significance: it demonstrates that dialogue on a matter of decisive importance for the survival of mankind, disarmament, is being intensified in all

areas, bilaterally and multilaterally, in the interest of all peoples. I wish all success to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

*Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the  
expenses of the United Nations*

5. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): Before turning to the next item on our agenda, I should like, in keeping with the established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/S-15/18, which contains a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General in which he informs the General Assembly that eight Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter. May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

*It was so decided.*

**AGENDA ITEM 3**

**Credentials of representatives to the fifteenth special  
session of the General Assembly:**

(a) **Appointment of the members of the Credentials  
Committee**

6. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly at the beginning of each session shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

7. In accordance with precedents, and taking into account the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee for the Third Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament as endorsed by the General Assembly at its forty-second session [*see resolution 42/40*], it is proposed that the Credentials Committee of the special session be the same as that of the forty-second session of the Assembly, namely: Argentina, Barbados, Cape Verde, China, the Federal Republic of Germany, Kenya, Singapore, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America. If there is no objection, I shall consider the Credentials Committee constituted accordingly.

*It was so decided (decision S-15/11).*

8. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): In this connection, may I invite the

attention of members of the Assembly to a note verbale from the Secretary-General, dated 16 March 1988, in which it was stated that credentials should be issued for all representatives to the fifteenth special session in accordance with rule 27 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

#### AGENDA ITEM 4

##### Election of the President of the General Assembly

9. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now invite members of the General Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the fifteenth special session. I call on the representative of Pakistan.

10. Mr. AHMED (Pakistan): It is a great privilege and honour for me to submit the candidacy of Mr. Peter Florin, Deputy Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic, for the presidency of the fifteenth special session of the General Assembly, the third special session devoted to disarmament. In putting forward the candidacy of Mr. Florin, I should note that it was unanimously approved by the Preparatory Committee for the Third Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament.

11. Mr. Florin has had a long and distinguished diplomatic career. His outstanding professional and personal qualities were more than amply demonstrated by the competence and skill with which he guided the deliberations of the General Assembly at its forty-second session. I am sure all of you are aware of his exemplary performance as President of the Assembly. Therefore, suffice it for me to say that I am convinced that on this occasion, too, his leadership will greatly assist us all in accomplishing the difficult task that lies before this special session.

12. I propose that we elect by acclamation Mr. Florin as President of the fifteenth special session of the General Assembly.

13. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): The General Assembly has heard the proposal by the representative of Pakistan that the President of the General Assembly at its forty-second session be elected by acclamation as President of the fifteenth special session. May I take it that the General Assembly adopts that proposal?

*It was so decided (decision S-15/12).*

14. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I extend my sincere congratulations to my friend Peter Florin and invite him to assume the presidency.

*Mr. Florin took the Chair.*

##### Statement by the President

15. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Russian*): Forty-three years ago, at the San Francisco Conference, the founding fathers of the United Nations set the task of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. I believe we are all aware of

the scope of this task today—in our nuclear and space age.

16. Ten years ago the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly [*resolution S-10/2*], the first special session devoted to disarmament, was elaborated, and it has become a document of historic importance. As is well known, that document begins with these words: "The attainment of the objective of security, which is an inseparable element of peace, has always been one of the most profound aspirations of humanity." Disarmament is a decisive way to strengthen security for all. "Security through disarmament": this concept could, in my view, provide the philosophical basis for our action.

17. Today the world's attention is directed to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and the world expects clear stipulations about the road leading to a secure future. Millions of people are following this special session with hope and profound sympathy. I am convinced that we are all aware of our responsibility for this vital question facing mankind.

18. It is a great honour for me to be President of the General Assembly at this third special session devoted to disarmament. I should like to thank representatives for the confidence they have placed in me by electing me to this high office.

19. My thanks go to the Secretary-General for the trustful and fruitful co-operation which we have enjoyed, especially over the past 10 months. I am looking forward to further constructive co-operation. I wish to congratulate the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services and all staff members for their successful work during the forty-second session of the General Assembly. I am convinced that we shall continue to work together for the benefit of the world Organization. Furthermore, special credit is due to the Department for Disarmament Affairs for the substantive preparations for this session, as well as to the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the session, Mr. Mansur Ahmed of Pakistan, for his untiring efforts.

20. The international situation has begun to move. With the signing of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles—the INF Treaty—and through the implementation of that agreement, nuclear disarmament has been initiated for the first time. The elimination of 4 per cent to 5 per cent of all nuclear weapons could and should be the beginning of the road to a world free from nuclear weapons.

21. The conflicts that still exist in the world, where cannons still speak, no longer appear as intractable as they seemed in the past. This has been borne out particularly by the agreements which have been reached to settle the conflict around Afghanistan through patient negotiations and bold political steps, and with the active participation of the United Nations, as well as the continuing efforts to solve the conflict in Central America.

22. Further, it is significant, in my view, that the forty-second session of the General Assembly was characterized by a serious endeavour to maintain and strengthen international peace and security, to overcome underdevelopment and poverty and to ensure the comprehensive implementation of human rights. In my opinion, that session was marked by a growing understanding of global problems that are a challenge to all Governments and peoples and by a broader recognition of the fact that this challenge can be met only through better and more intensive international co-operation. This Organization is the appropriate framework for that purpose. To a greater extent than ever before, it should be used as a place for action-oriented dialogue and negotiations so that the Organization will be able to make an even greater contribution to resolving international problems. This special session offers a unique opportunity to do so.

23. The outcome of the twelfth special session of the General Assembly, in 1982, which was the second special session devoted to disarmament, led many to adopt a rather pessimistic attitude concerning the future of arms limitation and disarmament. At the same time we experienced an enormous upswing in the world-wide movement for peace and disarmament, involving people of very different political outlooks.

24. However, the arms race has not yet stopped; nuclear tests are continuing. Efforts to amass conventional weapons continue unabated in many regions of the world. New generations of weapons devour ever-greater resources. The arms race puts an unbearable economic burden on the whole world; detailed studies corroborating this fact have been published. It has become obvious that no country or group of countries can afford to tackle the mounting economic, social and ecological problems while financing an ever-costlier arms race. Disarmament questions concern all States.

25. I consider it important to note that a certain turn-about has taken place in the thinking about the relationship between disarmament, peace, security and development. It has been recognized world-wide that in view of the state of development of weapons of mass destruction, their actual use would lead to the self-annihilation of mankind; that in view of the current state of development of productive forces and infrastructures even the use of conventional weapons could lead to the destruction of entire regions and continents; that technical and human failure in the modern world could unleash irreparable catastrophe; that superarmament constitutes an enormous waste of resources and, in the last analysis, increases the danger of war; and that, in view of the scope of non-military global challenges, before mankind is the choice: disarmament or catastrophe.

26. On balance, disarmament can provide an answer to the threat to mankind's security in two ways. First, the dangers emanating from superarmament and the accumulation of weapons would diminish. Secondly, as a result of disarmament, funds and resources would be released. So disarmament is not an end in itself. It is not a temporary crusade. It has become a matter of life and death for mankind.

27. The world-famous physicist and humanist Albert Einstein wrote in 1932, just before the beginning of the League of Nations Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments:

“Disarmament and security can only be reached in conjunction with each other. Security will only be achieved when all nations undertake the obligation to implement international decisions.”

28. There can be no doubt that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, made a substantial contribution to the necessary turn-about in thinking in our nuclear and space age. The consensus reached through hard work 10 years ago deserves to be reaffirmed today. The Final Document of that session contains a thorough analysis of the causes and consequences of the arms race, especially in the nuclear field. Its Programme of Action [*ibid.*, sect. III] still awaits implementation. The measures contained in the Final Document for strengthening the disarmament machinery of the United Nations have led to an enhancement of the role of multilateral disarmament negotiations.

29. The statement of the highest representatives of the Soviet Union and the United States that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, and that neither side must strive for military superiority, is fully in harmony with the spirit of the first special session of the Assembly devoted to disarmament.

30. The present summit meeting between the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, and the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, in Moscow offers new proof of the possibilities of reaching agreements that have a positive impact on questions which the Organization is dealing with. Although many hopes will probably remain unfulfilled, it can none the less be said that it has been a significant meeting, which will give a fresh impetus to further negotiations. As political realists, we are aware of the importance of mutual understanding between the Soviet Union and the United States for the international situation. Therefore, we welcome every joint constructive statement and action.

31. It is encouraging to note that bilateral and multilateral disarmament negotiations stimulate each other to a growing extent. The conclusion of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga) and the consolidation of the status of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America have contributed to strengthening regional and global security. In this context let me refer to the international meeting on nuclear-weapon-free zones to be held in the capital of the German Democratic Republic at the end of June.

32. Likewise, the process of implementing the steps laid down in the Document of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe and the negotiations that are envisaged on conventional disarmament in Europe are of great political and practical significance.

33. Thus, building on good and bad experiences gathered in the past and on first disarmament steps taken in the present, this special session is faced with the task of striking a balance and of pointing the way to a more secure world, ultimately free of weapons of mass destruction and the threat or use of force. On this road there can be no breathing space, no slowing down. The decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-second session in the field of arms limitation and disarmament form a good basis for this.

34. The question of ending the nuclear-arms race and of nuclear disarmament is, without doubt, of the highest priority. A treaty between the USSR and the United States on reducing their strategic offensive weapons by one half, as is now being sought, would throw wide open the gate to that end. The prevention of a nuclear war is no longer merely a moral and ethical concern, but a task that requires immediate measures. This year we mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons [*resolution 2373 (XXII), annex*] and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water,<sup>1</sup> and we should redouble our efforts to conclude a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. The prevention of an arms race in outer space, as is stated in Assembly resolution 42/33, is a *sine qua non* for security and disarmament. The advanced state of work on a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons makes further delay in the elaboration of the convention unjustified. Negotiations on the reduction of conventional weapons constitute a new challenge and are gaining importance. Questions of naval security, the elimination of foreign military presence and military bases on foreign territories are under discussion. Furthermore, according to a widely shared view, verification and confidence-building create the required environment for the process of arms limitation and disarmament.

35. An essential prerequisite for the continuing dialogue at this special session and for fruitful disarmament negotiations is the wide range of substantive proposals submitted in this field by all groups of States. The comprehensive and priority-setting proposals of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the proposals of the Six-Nation Initiative to establish an international verification body within the framework of the United Nations testify to the commitment of those States to peace, disarmament and development. The comprehensive disarmament programme of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty at the global and regional levels and their proposals to ensure the defensive character of military doctrines and to promote new thinking on security matters have already left their mark on negotiations and talks at various levels. The States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have, for their part, submitted manifold proposals concerning nuclear and conventional disarmament and confidence-building.

36. Bringing together all these ideas and concepts is certainly not an easy task, but I am sure that the special session will be equal to it. The disarmament mechanism created within the framework of the Organization, while its effectiveness can certainly be

enhanced, offers the basis for developing and giving substance to a comprehensive disarmament process at all levels. What is imperative is to make use of that mechanism.

37. We are now witnessing a powerful world disarmament campaign under the auspices of the United Nations. The activities of many non-governmental organizations before the convening of this session deserve special appreciation. We are looking forward to hearing the statements of their representatives at the special session and hope they will make substantive contributions to its work.

38. The session will give each member State of the international community the opportunity to make its contribution to the mission and to shoulder its share of the responsibility for the destiny of mankind. The dialogue on political and military aspects of a comprehensive system of international peace and security will be continued. I am confident that we will have a business-like, non-confrontational exchange of views on the entire range of disarmament problems with a view to searching jointly for ways and means to ensure general security based on a balance of interests between all groups of States Members of the Organization. Thus, we will work on the basis of general agreement, in other words, of consensus.

39. I trust that the session will become a forum for constructive and action-oriented efforts on the part of the world Organization to curb the arms race, to look for common ground in the positions of all groups of States and to adopt bold, generally acceptable decisions.

40. The Secretary-General wishes to address the General Assembly at this time. I therefore call on him.

#### *Statement by the Secretary-General*

41. The SECRETARY-GENERAL: This special session of the General Assembly is opening at a most opportune time. By a striking coincidence President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev are engaged in a dialogue in Moscow, partly in the context of the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons. That historic endeavour adds to the timeliness of this special session. It also underscores the global responsibility of national leaders and representatives gathered here to set the course of concerted, world-wide action towards disarmament.

42. The dynamics of human affairs have brought us to a stage where we need no longer view the prospects of credible measures towards disarmament as remote. For many long years the world seemed to be settled in a fatalistic stance about the arms race. In a global climate of suspicion and fears, at times exaggerated, the arms race appeared inevitable and the goals of halting and reversing it utopian. A sense of futility haunted negotiations in this field.

43. Recently, however, significant shifts have occurred in perception and attitude. A refreshing change was signified by the joint expressions by the two major military Powers of their shared recognition that a nuclear war cannot be won and must

never be fought. That led to a renewal of constructive dialogue between them. The tangible result was the signing on 8 December 1987 of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. The Treaty, of course, covers only a small percentage of the world's arsenal of nuclear weapons, yet it clearly shows that with political will agreements to reverse the nuclear-arms race are possible and compliance with them can be duly verified. Agreement on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic nuclear weapons would undoubtedly be a major achievement. It would take previously unsuccessful arms-reduction negotiations onto a new plateau of confident and practical endeavour.

44. We have thus had encouraging developments, opening new possibilities, but they must be seen as only the beginnings of disarmament in the nuclear field. They undoubtedly provide a vital impetus to the disarmament effort, but they do not, by themselves, end that condition of over-armament that has aggravated fear and insecurity throughout the world and involved a gigantic waste of human and material resources.

45. The transformation of the present arms situation can result only from a joint undertaking by all States. Progress in bilateral co-operation in this field cannot be sustained indefinitely in an environment of tension and conflicts in the world. Similarly, significant multilateral agreements cannot be evolved in conditions of mistrust and confrontation between the two great military Powers. Indeed, all major questions of security and disarmament have bilateral, regional and global dimensions. Negotiating processes at each of those levels represent different aspects of the pursuit of the common goal of achieving greater security at progressively lower levels of armaments. Advances in one area would certainly stimulate progress in another. Those efforts rightly support and complement each other.

46. There are two respects in which we can take advantage of the historic opportunity provided to us. First, the international community should strongly encourage the two major military Powers to sustain and develop the momentum in their mutual relationship, to broaden their understanding and to make progress on issues that have global implications. Secondly, their bilateral actions to halt and reverse the arms race should generate a corresponding multilateral response. Thus, the objective of the special session has been clearly defined by the challenge of events. The occasion calls for a combination of imagination and realism and for a readiness to accommodate the legitimate concerns of all Member States. We need to identify practical and innovative ways of moving ahead, recognizing that security and disarmament demand bilateral, regional and global action in harness together.

47. Let me share with you my view of the tasks ahead. The Final Document of the Tenth Special Session, held in 1978, set out the broad and comprehensive framework for priorities and programmes in arms limitation and disarmament on the basis of the concept of security through disarmament. That gives us a foundation to build upon in the light of new

developments. At this session we must agree on a common agenda that will serve us in the years ahead. There should be consensus on the main direction of our effort. It seems to me that the highest importance in the field of disarmament should be given to the reduction of nuclear weapons, of armed forces and of conventional weapons, to the conclusion of the international convention on the complete prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons, to prevention of an arms race in outer space and to the cessation of nuclear tests.

48. Survival and security are basic to human existence, and Governments have a duty to assure their citizens of both. Nuclear issues, however, go far beyond national security and impinge directly on human survival. A rational military policy is incompatible with the danger of annihilation of the human race. It is indisputable that a major nuclear exchange would have catastrophic effects on the peoples of both combatant and non-combatant countries. Nuclear issues will, therefore, rightly remain a major concern of all States and central to global security. It is imperative that the international community continue to press for the sharp reduction and ultimate elimination of such weapons.

49. We must also evince an unmistakable determination to deal effectively and expeditiously with other weapons of mass destruction, in particular with chemical weapons. The international community has been dismayed to learn that chemical weapons have recently been used. Security Council resolution 612 (1988), adopted on 9 May, left no doubt in this regard by condemning vigorously the continued use of chemical weapons, which is contrary to the obligations under the 1925 Geneva Protocol.<sup>2</sup> That a humanitarian restraint on the conduct of war that was universally observed for six decades has been cast off constitutes a strong warning to all of us that we stand on the edge of catastrophe. No ambiguity is permissible on a matter of this kind.

50. The time has also come for us to recognize the need to deal squarely with the mounting toll of death, destruction and human suffering inflicted by the use of conventional weapons in conflicts around the world. We are witnessing not only the spread of highly sophisticated weaponry but also the growing use of such weapons in conflict areas. The term "conventional" should not hide or render banal the vast destructive powers of some of those weapons, nor should the innocuous-sounding phrase "arms transfers" make us forget the devastating effect of the supply of weapons in local conflicts. To my mind, the fact that the arms component is a growing factor in the export figures of many countries, including developing countries, is a very sad commentary on the present state of affairs. With modern technology not only nuclear war but, increasingly, conventional war as well, has acquired a dimension of destructiveness that it did not have in any earlier age. It is therefore necessary to restrict the spread of the most dangerous types of conventional weapons and, ultimately, to eliminate them altogether.

51. I would appeal to arms-exporting countries to adopt a policy, based on principle, not to supply those weapons to developing countries which, on objective grounds, are not needed for their security



from likely aggression. This could act as a restraint on the proliferation of sophisticated and costly weapons which, apart from the fear and insecurity it has caused, is a heavy and unwarranted burden on the economy of those countries.

52. I should like to digress for a moment. It is estimated that by 1987 world military spending had grown to \$1,000 billion a year. While some might not consider it germane to the matters before us, I feel it may be appropriate, at this juncture in the history of the United Nations, to contrast that astronomic figure with the comparatively modest sum of \$721 million which is the total annual net budget of this Organization dedicated to peace, and indeed, the even smaller amount of \$698 million, which is the total of outstanding contributions of Member States at 30 April 1988. I would not mention it in this context were it not that, as we gather here today, we find ourselves quite simply facing insolvency, unless Member States honour their obligations deriving from the Charter.

*[The speaker continued in French.]*

53. Disarmament cannot continue with success if it is not placed within the context of the global international environment. It is part of international security and must be encouraged along with other measures aimed at strengthening international peace and confidence. There are many ways to increase confidence which might accelerate the conclusion of disarmament agreements and strengthen security. Military questions must be the subject of the greatest transparency, at both the world-wide level and the regional level. The Document of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe has set a useful precedent and makes it possible to pursue exploratory exchanges concerning stability in the area of conventional weapons in that part of the world.

54. The Second Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, held at Geneva in September 1986, also developed ways of exchanging information. Similarly, by making greater use of United Nations instruments for the preparation of reports on military expenditures in order to obtain an objective evaluation of military capacities, one might avoid reacting to a presumed threat based on erroneous perceptions. I note with satisfaction that it is being recognized more and more that we must make better use of existing machinery for conflict-prevention and resolution and the peaceful settlement of disputes so as to make it possible to adopt significant measures on arms limitation and disarmament.

55. Quite obviously we cannot expect progress in the limitation and reduction of conventional weapons if a corresponding effort is not made to settle the local and regional conflicts which continue to ravage numerous areas of the world. The need for multilateral action in this area is emphasized by the fact that bilateral efforts to resolve a number of regional conflicts have not borne fruit. We are here confronted by a problem of great scope. One of the

imperatives flowing from this is that there must be a greater awareness on the part of the international community of the incalculable dangers of the conventional arms race and of arms transfers. Once again this presupposes that an urgent appeal will be made for Member States to act.

56. In the field of armaments, the technological revolution has made it possible thus far to invent and accumulate ever-more-sophisticated weapons at an unbridled pace and at an exorbitant cost. However, with international co-operation, the same revolution can be made available for peaceful objectives. Among the areas where we might make good use of modern technology, one might mention the verification of arms limitation and disarmament agreements. One notes a renewed interest in this question, because significant changes in attitude have made this a subject of great relevance over the past two or three years. Thus it has been possible to adopt the remarkable and unprecedented measures set forth in the INF Treaty. It is clear, however, that in order to ensure the reliability of verification measures, a number of problems must be the subject of negotiations. Although certain aspects of verification will continue to be taken up in a bilateral framework, multilateral agreements on the limitation and reduction of armaments will require multilateral verification.

57. This is an area in which the United Nations might be able to make an important contribution. It might be able to help apply, by all the means accepted by the parties concerned, the verification measures provided for in multilateral treaties. The United Nations might be able to co-ordinate international debates on questions related to verification, to provide technical advice and to carry out research. Generally speaking, the participation of the Organization in the search for generally acceptable and effective verification measures for observance of the agreements and the expansion of the functions of information and advice might make it possible in the future to create, under its auspices, verification machinery. In addition, United Nations military observers and United Nations peace-keeping forces might be very useful in controlling and verifying the implementation of the agreements. It might also be useful in this task, and in other related activities, to call on the creative faculties of intellectuals and experts who are devoted to the cause of disarmament.

58. We must also give attention to the question of how to improve the functioning and to increase the effectiveness of multilateral bodies. The General Assembly quite obviously must remain the focus for debates on disarmament and the principal source of initiatives and recommendations of the international community concerning the broad range of questions relating to disarmament. In this connection, it has been proposed that the work of the First Committee and the Disarmament Commission be made more efficient so that those bodies could continue to focus their efforts on concrete ways to make progress and to reach agreement on the decisions to be taken. These proposals deserve attention.

59. The Conference on Disarmament has the broad knowledge and long experience necessary in consid-

ering the vital questions of disarmament. The world community hopes that its members will contribute to promoting multilateral action in this area. I urge them to mobilize all their resources to respond to this legitimate expectation. The early conclusion of a convention on chemical weapons would show strikingly and irrefutably that the multilateral process of disarmament is capable of eliminating an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. There is hardly any need to stress the profound impact that it would have on other aspects of the work of the Conference, which also require examination and urgent solution. The preparation of a treaty on the total prohibition of nuclear tests would indicate that Member States are prepared to protect the world from nuclear weapons. It is of the utmost importance that progress be made along these lines. Furthermore, the prevention of the arms race in outer space quite rightly is a source of universal concern, in view of its world-wide implications for international peace and security.

60. Like all other complex international questions, disarmament does not lend itself to simple solutions. Yet its difficulties do not diminish its urgency. The outcome of disarmament debates and negotiations directly concerns the survival of mankind and the economic and social development of the world community. To make progress at the multilateral level, Member States must manifest complete understanding of the security interests and legitimate priorities of all. Acceptable solutions must be found through constructive, serious-minded dialogue. The disenchantment of today must be replaced by a common awareness of the imperative need to diminish radically the present level of arms and armed forces and to evaluate realistically the possibilities before us.

61. We must aim high: that is the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. At the same time we must take account of the realities as we seek means to obtain concrete results. On the basis of the Final Document, we must—and we can—carry on the quest for disarmament by co-ordinating bilateral, regional and world-wide initiatives. For the sake of survival, of peace, of progress we have no other option.

62. I welcome the presence among us of a great many non-governmental organizations and outstanding individuals. This is a good opportunity to tell them how grateful we are for their heightened devotion to the cause of disarmament. For years they have championed initiatives to alert the public to the urgency of this cause. They have often adopted a bold and innovative approach in seeking to develop the co-operation that is indispensable to the disarmament process. But if public opinion is to have the impact it should, we must find more effective ways of reaching educators, scientists, the media, the world of the arts and other circles in order to encourage them to participate in this vital undertaking. The World Disarmament Campaign conducted by the United Nations must contribute to achieving that purpose.

63. I urge the Assembly to consider all the ideas and proposals that have been put forward and to reconcile various intellectual approaches to reach decisions that will have real impact. In that way it will be able

to fulfil its mission in this period of fruitful change, in this demanding period. I repeat: the events of today could have incalculable consequences for international peace and security. If their positive effect is magnified and strengthened by multilateral action, a promising horizon will open in the realm of international affairs. A unique combination of circumstances provides us with an opportunity that has long eluded us; let us take that opportunity.

## AGENDA ITEMS 5 AND 6

### Organization of the session

#### Report of the Preparatory Committee for the Third Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament

64. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Russian*): I call upon the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Third Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament, Mr. Mansur Ahmed of Pakistan.

65. Mr. AHMED (Pakistan), Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Third Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament: Before presenting the report of the Preparatory Committee, let me avail myself of this opportunity to extend to you, Sir, my warmest congratulations on your election as President.

66. In my capacity as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Third Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament, I have the honour to submit today for the Assembly's consideration the report of the Preparatory Committee, contained in document A/S-15/1. The report gives an account of the work carried out by the Preparatory Committee pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 41/60 G of 3 December 1986 and 42/40 of 30 November 1987. The report is self-explanatory, and I shall therefore confine myself to highlighting some points.

67. The Preparatory Committee began its work with an organizational session on 5 December 1986. After that, the Committee held two substantive sessions, one in 1987, from 26 May to 5 June, and another in 1988, from 25 January to 5 February. In accordance with its terms of reference, as set out in the above-mentioned resolutions, the Preparatory Committee in the course of its work made a number of recommendations on various organizational questions relating to the special session, which appear in paragraphs 16 to 26 and 34 to 43 of the Committee's report. A provisional agenda for the special session is contained in paragraph 34.

68. The report also includes a recommendation on procedure reflecting the practice followed at the first and second special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Thus, in paragraph 23 it is stated that the rules of procedure of the General Assembly should apply in the special session without amendments, on the understanding that, regarding the adoption of decisions by the Assembly at the special session, every effort should be made to ensure that, in so far as possible, decisions on matters of substance will be adopted by consensus. Beyond that,

the report includes recommendations on such procedural matters as the date and duration of the general debate, the establishment of a committee of the whole and the allocation of the agenda items between the plenary Assembly and the committee of the whole. The Preparatory Committee also recommended that the committee of the whole begin its work on 6 June to elect its Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur as well as to organize its work, including the establishment of subsidiary bodies as necessary.

69. In that connection, and following appropriate consultations, I should like to propose that the date for the beginning of the work of the committee of the whole be advanced from 6 June to 3 June in order to permit an earlier commencement of work by the subsidiary bodies that may be established by the committee.

70. Recognizing the important role played by non-governmental organizations and peace and disarmament research institutes, the Preparatory Committee recommended that appropriate time be allocated in the framework of the committee of the whole to hearing statements from representatives of such organizations and institutes.

71. Pursuant to its mandate, the Preparatory Committee, in addition to making recommendations on organizational and procedural questions, dealt with substantive issues related to the special session. In that connection, the Committee at its session in 1988 had a general exchange of views on substantive aspects of the work to be carried out at the special session, which was followed by a consideration of specific elements to be dealt with in the substantive items of the provisional agenda of the session. On the basis of the views expressed during these discussions, I, as Chairman of the Committee, prepared an informal paper, which was considered by the Committee at a series of informal meetings. A wide range of views were expressed and a number of proposals were made with respect to that paper. As indicated in paragraph 30 of the report, the Committee agreed to transmit the Chairman's paper to the General Assembly at its third special session devoted to disarmament, without prejudice to the position of any delegation. That paper appears in the annex to the Committee's report.

72. Having presented the report of the Preparatory Committee, albeit in summary fashion, I have only to express the hope that the work accomplished by the Committee will provide a good point of departure on the road to a successful outcome at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

73. In conclusion, I should like to place on record my appreciation of the spirit of co-operation and flexibility shown by all delegations in the Preparatory Committee, which made it possible to overcome difficulties and reach the result achieved. In particular, I want to express my gratitude to all the officers of the Committee for the assistance, support and encouragement they provided me at all times.

74. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Russian*): The General Assembly is grateful to the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee and to

those who participated in the Committee's work for their efforts to promote our work and, in particular, to ensure that this special session devoted to disarmament would get off to a successful start.

75. May I take it that the General Assembly endorses the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Third Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament [A/S-15/1] and the recommendations contained therein as a whole, as well as the proposal of the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee that the work of the committee of the whole be advanced from 6 June to 3 June?

*It was so decided (decisions S-15/21 and S-15/22).*

76. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Russian*): On the basis of the decision just taken by the General Assembly and the practice of previous special sessions, the Chairmen of the Main Committees of the forty-second session would continue in the same posts for the fifteenth special session. Accordingly, I should like to inform the Assembly that the following Chairmen are present at this special session: the Chairman of the First Committee, Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengaya of Zaire; the Chairman of the Special Political Committee, Mr. Hamad Abdelaziz Al-Kawari of Qatar; the Chairman of the Second Committee, Mr. Guennadi Oudovenko of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic; the Chairman of the Fourth Committee, Mr. Constantine Moushoutas of Cyprus; and the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Henrik Amneus of Sweden.

77. In paragraph 22 of the report of the Preparatory Committee, which has been endorsed by the Assembly, it was recommended that the Chairmen of the Main Committees might be replaced by members of their delegations or members of delegations of States belonging to the same regional group. Accordingly, the following replacements have been communicated to the Secretariat: for the Chairman of the Third Committee, Mr. Leonardo Kam of Panama; and for the Chairman of the Sixth Committee, Mr. Ali Sunni Muntasser of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

*It was so decided (decision S-15/13).*

78. The Vice-Presidents of the forty-second session, who will serve in the same capacity at the fifteenth special session, are the representatives of the following Member States: Botswana, Cameroon, China, Comoros, France, Jordan, Mauritania, Mongolia, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Portugal, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Togo, Tunisia, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

*It was so decided (decision S-15/14).*

79. In endorsing the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee, the Assembly has established an *ad hoc* committee of the whole which will be designated "Committee of the Whole of the Fifteenth Special Session". Concerning the election of the chairman of the Committee of the Whole of the Fifteenth Special Session, who will also be a member



of the General Committee, I call on the representative of Zimbabwe.

80. Mr. MUDENGE (Zimbabwe): Mr. President, on behalf of the Zimbabwe delegation I wish to congratulate you on your election as President of this special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It is a richly deserved election. The skill with which you have handled the forty-second session of the General Assembly more than amply attests to that. We are therefore confident that with your wise and able guidance the special session will be a great success.

81. My delegation has asked to speak at this time in its capacity as Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in order to perform the very pleasant and privileged duty of nominating Mr. Mansur Ahmed, the Ambassador of Pakistan at Geneva, as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole of this special session.

82. Mr. Ahmed has extensive diplomatic experience, dating back to October 1955 when he joined the Pakistan Foreign Service. He has served in Tokyo, Jakarta, London, Ankara, Moscow and Bangkok and, since 1981, has been Pakistan's Ambassador at Geneva. Mr. Ahmed has vast knowledge in the field of disarmament, which makes him well qualified to guide the work of the Committee of the Whole of this special session. As Chairman of the Conference on Disarmament in 1983 and 1985, he displayed outstanding negotiating skills, great political sensitivity, and deep understanding of the issues currently confronting the Conference.

83. Mr. Ahmed's work as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for this special session needs no introduction. Suffice it to say that his insight into the issues of the agenda before us today gives us every reason to believe that he will guide the work of the Committee of the Whole to a successful conclusion.

84. Mr. Ahmed's experience extends to many other fields besides disarmament. He made a valuable contribution in the economic sphere as President of the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD in 1984 and as Chairman of the GATT Contracting Parties in 1987.

85. In nominating Mr. Ahmed for the Chairmanship of the Committee of the Whole I believe I am voicing a very widely held sentiment when I say that with him in the chair the work of the Committee will be in the best possible hands. Therefore, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, I have the honour and indeed the privilege of proposing Mr. Ahmed as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole.

86. Mr. ADAM (Sudan): Allow me, Mr. President, at the outset to congratulate you on behalf of the Group of African States and of my own country on your election as President of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Our congratulations go also to the other officers of the session.

87. On behalf of the African Group I should like also to voice the support of the Group for the election by acclamation of Mr. Mansur Ahmed of Pakistan to

the chairmanship of the Committee of the Whole of this session. It is no extravagance in this context to acknowledge the exceptional abilities demonstrated by Mr. Ahmed, who so ably chaired the Preparatory Committee for this important session during its three consecutive sessions. A diplomat of his country and an acknowledged expert in the field of disarmament negotiations, he has shown during those preparatory sessions exceptional statesmanship and unique diplomatic faculties, which I am confident will enable him to guide the deliberations of the Committee of the Whole to guaranteed success.

88. Speaking in the name of the African Group, I am confident that this body will elect Mr. Ahmed Chairman of the Committee of the Whole by acclamation.

89. Mr. GHAREKHAN (India): May I, Sir, as the current Chairman of the Group of Asian States, express our warmest congratulations to you on your election to preside over this important third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The leaders of the delegations of Asian States, including my own, will have the opportunity to extend to you their felicitations in the coming days. I need hardly dwell on your personal qualities of diplomacy and leadership, which stood the General Assembly in such good stead during its forty-second session. We are confident that those qualities, infused with your personal skill and dedication to the vital issues before us, will provide the special session with effective guidance and leadership.

90. On behalf of the Group of Asian States it is my privilege to endorse the nomination of Mr. Mansur Ahmed of Pakistan as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole of this special session. One of the most distinguished diplomats of Pakistan, he has presided with diligence over the deliberations of the Preparatory Committee for the special session. In his long and varied career he has achieved particular eminence in the field of disarmament and has all the necessary skill and experience for this important post. The representative of Zimbabwe has already proposed his name on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. It is Asia's privilege to second that nomination.

91. Mr. ZAPOTOCKY (Czechoslovakia): In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States I wish to extend to you, Sir, most cordial congratulations on your election to the office of President of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We are convinced that under your able chairmanship this special session will accomplish its functions as a highly important world forum which must live up to the demands and aspirations of all nations for peace and disarmament. Today, as never before, the nations place their hopes and expectations in the role and mission of the United Nations. They undoubtedly expect this session, under your experienced guidance, to agree above all on measures to prevent nuclear war, to halt the arms race and for the reduction and gradual abolition of nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction.

92. I feel both greatly honoured and pleased to support the proposal submitted by the representative

of Zimbabwe on the candidacy of Mr. Ahmed of Pakistan as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole. That proposal, which has been made on behalf of the non-aligned countries, is a high tribute to Mr. Ahmed's outstanding merits in his commitment to the noble goal of halting the arms race and achieving disarmament. At the same time the proposal reflects the important role of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in the efforts to ensure peace and disarmament.

93. The candidacy has been most persuasively supported by the representatives of other regional groups who have already spoken. I should like to join them and at the same time to highlight one specific point. Under the chairmanship of Mr. Ahmed the Preparatory Committee for the special session has done constructive work and dealt with important issues. He himself has shown great diplomatic skills and a high sense of responsibility as well as an energetic approach to the seeking of compromise solutions. The third special session is being held at a time imbued with new hopes, especially in the field of disarmament. Mr. Ahmed's candidature promises the kind of chairmanship required to match this promising but still very demanding period of time. It should certainly help to crown this special session with concrete positive results.

94. Mr. PEÑALOSA (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of all the delegations of Latin America and the Caribbean, may I first congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of this special session. We are sure that under your wise and intelligent leadership this special session of the Assembly will be successful.

95. On behalf of all the delegations making up the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, it is my honour to endorse the nomination by acclamation of the candidate whose name was put forward by the representative of Zimbabwe, on behalf of the Non-Aligned States, to preside over the work of the Committee of the Whole at this third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We wish also to associate ourselves with what was said by the representatives of the other regional groups. The outstanding background of Mr. Ahmed of Pakistan should be added to the high opinion which all of us who have taken part in disarmament discussions in the Organization have formed of him. We know that he has great experience in the management of these matters, which has been amply demonstrated throughout the work of the Preparatory Committee.

96. Miss SOLESBY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Western European and Other States, I should like to join those who have spoken before me in expressing our congratulations to you, Sir, upon your election to the presidency of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The outcome of the special session will influence multilateral disarmament for some years to come. The qualities you have shown as President of the forty-second session of the General Assembly make us confident that you will guide us to a successful conclusion. May I add my satisfaction at seeing in the presidency the representative of the

German Democratic Republic, a country where I myself spent three years.

97. It is with particular pleasure that I second the nomination by the representative of Zimbabwe of Mr. Mansur Ahmed of Pakistan as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole. That Committee will play a key role in the success of this special session. It is not surprising, therefore, that we should select as its Chairman one of the most experienced diplomats working in the field of multilateral disarmament. Mr. Ahmed played a major part in the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and has become a leading figure in the United Nations in Geneva, where he has demonstrated his negotiating skills not only in disarmament but in a wide range of issues. Most recently he has played an important part in achieving the successful outcome of the negotiations on Afghanistan, which has been welcomed throughout the world. The links between Pakistan and my own country are of the most friendly and close nature. I know that my predecessors have valued their close co-operation with Mr. Ahmed, and as a newcomer I have much benefited from his wisdom. We all already owe him a debt of gratitude for his valuable work as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee in guiding us in the difficult task of preparation for this special session. We have the utmost confidence in his leadership and believe that the direction of the work of the Committee of the Whole could not be in better hands.

98. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Russian*): Members have heard the nomination of Mr. Mansur Ahmed of Pakistan as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole. In the absence of any objection, I declare Mr. Ahmed elected by acclamation Chairman of the Committee of the Whole of the Fifteenth Special Session.

*It was so decided (decision S-15/15).\**

99. I congratulate Mr. Ahmed on behalf of the General Assembly and on my own behalf, and I wish him well in the important and onerous responsibilities he has just assumed.

100. The General Committee of the fifteenth special session of the General Assembly has now been fully constituted.

101. By paragraph 42 of its report, the Preparatory Committee referred to the General Assembly for action at this special session the question of inviting executive heads of organizations to address the Assembly.

102. In light of consultations carried out prior to this session, as well as of the practice of previous special sessions, it is proposed that the Assembly invite the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency to address the General Assembly. May I take it that the Assembly adopts this proposal?

*It was so decided.*

\*For the election of the other officers of the Committee of the Whole, see also A/S-15/AC.1/PV.1.

103. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Russian*): I should also like to inform Members that I have received a letter dated 17 May 1988 from the representative of Chile, who, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States, requested that the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America [OPANAL], a regional organization, be invited to participate and intervene in plenary meeting at this special session.

104. In light of consultations carried out and of past practice, it is proposed that OPANAL be invited to participate in this special session and to make a statement in the Committee of the Whole. May I take it that the Assembly approves this proposal?

*It was so decided.*

105. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Russian*): I should like to inform Members that I have received requests from a number of Member States that the General Assembly hear in plenary meeting statements by certain observer non-member States.

106. It may be recalled that, in accordance with established practice of the General Assembly, observer non-member States may normally make statements in the Main Committees and accordingly, by implication, in the Committee of the Whole at a special session. However, following consultations and taking into account the great importance attached to issues related to disarmament, it is proposed that the General Assembly take a decision, without setting a precedent for the future, to hear observer non-member States in the course of the general debate in plenary meeting during the fifteenth special session. If I hear no objection it will be so decided.

*It was so decided.*

## AGENDA ITEM 7

### Adoption of the agenda

107. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Russian*): The provisional agenda of the fifteenth special

session of the General Assembly can be found in document A/S-15/10. In order to expedite our work, the Assembly may wish to adopt the provisional agenda without referring it to the General Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to this procedure?

*It was so decided.*

108. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Russian*): By adopting the report of the Preparatory Committee, the Assembly endorsed the provisional agenda contained therein. May I take it therefore that the Assembly adopts the provisional agenda as it appears in document A/S-15/10?

*It was so decided (decision S-15/23).*

109. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Russian*): Regarding the allocation of items, the Preparatory Committee recommends in paragraph 38 of its report that, while items 1 to 9 and 16 would be dealt with by the General Assembly in plenary meetings, the Assembly should allocate items 10 to 15 to the Committee of the Whole, which would be entrusted with the task of considering all the proposals submitted during the special session and reporting to the Assembly. May I take it that the General Assembly approves these proposals?

*It was so decided (decision S-15/23).*

*The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.*

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 480, No. 6964.

<sup>2</sup>Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925 (League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. XCIV (1929), No. 2138).