
Conference on Disarmament

16 March 2010

English

Final record of the one thousand one hundred and seventy-ninth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 16 March 2010, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Alex Van Meeuwen.....(Belgium)

The President (*spoke in French*): I declare open the 1179th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. As this marks the beginning of the Belgian presidency, allow me to take this opportunity to make some preliminary remarks.

Last week my predecessor in this seat, Ambassador Khvostov, whom I would like to thank once again for his efforts throughout his presidency, submitted in his own name a “draft decision for the establishment of a programme of work for the 2010 session”, issued as document CD/WP.559.

To judge from the numerous interventions made on this subject, at this stage there does not seem to be unanimous agreement on this document among the members of this Conference.

Additional consultations will therefore be necessary. The first phase of consultations will be conducted by the 2010 P6 with each of you. In fact, we have a long break between the first two parts of the 2010 session, during which we can hold these consultations. We will then restart them at the plurilateral and multilateral level.

As each delegation who has spoken in this room has reminded us repeatedly and insistently, the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum available to us, and each of us has a responsibility towards it.

Belgium, like all of you, has faith in the action taken within this chamber for the consolidation of international peace and security, an essential component of our collective survival.

But as the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, reminded us in his statement to the Conference on Disarmament on 19 May 2009, we live in an age of interdependence. The answers to the crises that we are experiencing, whether economic, financial, environmental or otherwise, lie in a new multilateralism, where cooperation replaces confrontation and creativity replaces stalemate. Business as usual should not prevail, he warned!

We must therefore show creativity to overcome the difficulties we are currently facing, and that is the task we intend to embark upon.

The year 2009 began with a message of hope, a vision of a better and more united future. A number of initiatives still need to be worked on, and we hope the NPT Review Conference will be a new milestone in the pursuit of those objectives.

Let's give this dream a chance. We cannot allow ourselves to erect obstacles that are useless and harmful to everyone in the pursuit of the noble goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

I do not have any speakers on the list for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor? It appears not. This concludes our business for today. The next official plenary meeting of the Conference will be held next Tuesday, 23 March 2010, at 10 a.m. in this meeting room.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.