

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND NINETY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 26 January 2006, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Zdzisław RAPACKI (Poland)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 999th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the Presidential consultations held yesterday, I outlined my plans for the next few plenary meetings of the Conference, and I asked the Coordinators to convey them to their respective groups. As per these plans, I expressed my intentions to devote today's meeting to general statements on any subject related to the Conference on Disarmament. Accordingly, I would now like to invite you to take part in the discussions and make statements on these subjects.

I have the following speakers for today's plenary meeting: Mr. Hamza Khelif of Algeria, Ambassador Johannes Landman of the Netherlands and Ambassador Yoshiki Mine of Japan.

I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria, Mr. Hamza Khelif.

Mr. KHELIF (Algeria) (translated from French): Ambassador Jazairy, who is temporarily hospitalized, asked me to congratulate you most warmly, Mr. President, on behalf of the Algerian delegation on taking the Chair of our Conference. I would like to assure you of the good will and cooperation of the Algerian delegation in helping you in your objective of getting our work going again. I would also like to pay tribute to your tireless efforts during the intersessional period to ensure progress in our work. The Algerian delegation would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, and Mr. Jerzy Zaleski, the Secretary of the Conference, as well as all the staff in the secretariat for their valuable contribution to our work. We are pleased at the rapid adoption of our agenda this year and we hope that this time we will be able to reach the necessary consensus on our work programme.

Our 2006 session follows a year of which the very least we can say is that it was sterile in terms of disarmament and non-proliferation, particularly in the nuclear field. The Seventh NPT Review Conference, which took place last May, was a failure, as you all know. Even worse, the actual diagnosis of the failure was interpreted in a tendentious manner, attributing it not to the refusal of certain nuclear States to agree to nuclear disarmament but to the inherent logic of an interactive tripartite approach - nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy - which underpins the Treaty itself. The last-ditch United Nations summit in 2005 was also unable to avoid this fate, so to speak, since the chapter on disarmament and non-proliferation was removed from the final document.

It is highly regrettable that multilateral machinery, whether treaty-based or institutional - such as our Conference - should be compelled to remain immobile while the security context is increasingly difficult and uncertain. Evidence of this is to be found in the risk of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, the very high quantities of nuclear weapons and fissile material which far exceed what is needed for deterrence, the development of new types of nuclear weapons, the inclusion of outer space in defence policies and strategies, the allocation of huge sums to the defence sector, the terrorist phenomenon and the risk that such groups might be able to gain access to weapons of mass destruction.

(Mr. Khelif, Algeria)

Moreover, the recent announcement by one nuclear State that it reserves the right to make use of nuclear weapons, even against non-nuclear States, further weakens international peace and security.

Multilateralism, based on the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law, in particular the primacy of preserving peace over simple security concerns, the principles of State sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference, is more necessary than ever in a troubled international context. It is only in this manner that we can find effective and lasting solutions based on a shared conception of collective security which can really lead to peace. This is a conception remote from any form of warmongering in the management of international affairs, and is based on the rule of law, highlighting cooperation, mutual respect, shared interests, trust and solidarity.

The strengthening and consolidation of international peace and security require of us firm commitments and irreversible actions for arms control and disarmament in the light of the objective which the international community has set itself, namely general and complete disarmament. The Final Document of the first special General Assembly of the United Nations in 1978 devoted to disarmament, known as the Decalogue, identifies priorities and shows us the path to follow in order to build a peaceful world.

The first threat we have to confront is of course that of nuclear weapons. The destructive capacity and long-term effects of these weapons pose a threat to international peace and security. As the Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement stressed at their special meeting on 13 June 2005 in Doha, what is at stake is the very future of humanity and civilizations. As long as these weapons exist, the risk of nuclear confrontation or their accidental use cannot be dismissed. Moreover, the use or threat of use of such weapons against States which have voluntarily given up the lethal nuclear option is in our view unjustified. Mr. Robert McNamara summed up this point very well in his article entitled "Apocalypse soon" in the Foreign Policy issue of May-June 2005: "To launch weapons against a nuclear-equipped opponent would be suicidal. To do so against a non-nuclear enemy would be militarily unnecessary, morally repugnant, and politically indefensible."

We call on the nuclear States to shoulder their responsibilities and fulfil the obligations and commitments they have entered into, in particular the 13 practical steps adopted by consensus - I emphasize, by consensus - at the Sixth NPT Review Conference in 2000, in order to create a climate of détente which is conducive to the promotion of international peace and security. Taking nuclear weapons off alert, the destruction of nuclear weapons in a gradual, irreversible and verifiable manner with a view to their total and complete elimination, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in defence doctrines, negotiation of an international instrument banning the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, in keeping with the Shannon Report - these are a number of measures that could promote the attainment of our objective of a world of peace and security.

This is not an optional course, but an obligation that flows from the NPT itself. Did the International Court of Justice not state in its advisory opinion of July 1996 that the nuclear States

(Mr. Khelif, Algeria)

have an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control? The nuclear States were granted their status as such under the NPT only in the context of progress towards nuclear disarmament, as stipulated by article VI of the Treaty. This in no way means that these countries arrogate the right to preserve this status permanently. Do we need to recall that the chronology of the decisions taken at the Fifth NPT Review Conference in 1995 clearly shows that decision 3 on the indefinite extension of the NPT follows decision 2, by which the States parties defined a set of principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, whereby they committed themselves to systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, and then eliminate them? This was further reaffirmed and clarified at the Sixth NPT Review Conference by actions defined in the framework of the 13 practical steps, in particular the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament, in conformity with the commitment contracted under article VI.

We are forced to recognize that the NPT, the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime, is going through difficult times as a result of risks of proliferation, setbacks in the field of disarmament and the crucial issue of exercise of the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under article IV. We would like to emphasize that the NPT can be effective only if it functions within the logic of equilibrium which made its adoption possible: equilibrium between non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. There is an interaction between the two dimensions of the Treaty: non-proliferation creates the necessary conditions for disarmament, disarmament strengthens and reinforces non-proliferation. Conversely, the current stalemate in our Conference and the other forums has pernicious effects by eroding non-proliferation norms. Incidentally, we should not aim at the wrong target in the latter field. The true source of concern is not the exercise of the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, which is enshrined in article IV of the Treaty, but the risk that such activities will be misused for purposes prohibited under the Treaty. We face full-on the dilemma involved in the free and independent exercise of the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and the requirements of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Algeria's position in this respect is well known. Our country supports and associates itself with measures capable of strengthening and consolidating the non-proliferation regimes. As a party to the NPT, it is linked to IAEA within the framework of the NPT by comprehensive safeguards agreements. It subscribes to Security Council resolution 1540 and is preparing to sign IAEA's Additional Protocol. However, we wish to emphasize that the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes should be modified only in the event of serious violations of the obligation relating to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and not on the grounds of mere suspicions. We consider that the resolution of this problem lies in the establishment of multilateral mechanisms and tools and international norms which can ensure in a continuing and permanent manner the requisite transparency in the field of nuclear activities. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), by virtue of its terms of reference, is the appropriate framework for carrying out this task. It has the expertise, the experience and the tools to do so.

Besides the comprehensive safeguards agreements and the Additional Protocol, we urgently require a multilateral legally binding and verifiable treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices. A treaty along the lines set

(Mr. Khelif, Algeria)

out in the report by the Special Rapporteur and the mandate proposed in document CD/1299 will, we are convinced, make it possible to lay down rules necessary for deterring any attempts at diversion.

The non-nuclear States have renounced the nuclear option for military purposes. It is only normal that in return they should require negative security assurances shielding them from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons within the framework of an international non-discriminatory legally binding instrument.

Regional denuclearization is an important step towards nuclear disarmament. We welcome the fact that regions have adopted treaties setting up nuclear-weapon-free zones. The Middle East for its part, notwithstanding the resolutions and results of the fifth and sixth NPT Review Conferences as well as Security Council resolution 687 of 1991, in particular paragraph 14, still has no instrument which will rid it of nuclear weapons. This objective depends on the good will of the State of Israel, the only country in the region which remains outside the NPT and refuses to submit its nuclear facilities to the IAEA verification regime. We urge the international community to take all necessary steps where that country is concerned so that the Middle East can at last become a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Outer space is part of the common heritage of mankind, and it should be preserved for exclusively peaceful purposes. Its militarization is a source of instability threatening international peace and security.

The Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament, is the appropriate framework for addressing the issues to which I have referred. Unfortunately, for almost 10 years now it has been deadlocked. In short, we still consider that the five Ambassadors' initiative continues to constitute an objective and realistic basis for a complete and balanced programme of work. We invite the Presidents of the Conference to create the necessary momentum in discussions on this proposal and on subsequent ideas and proposals so as to establish appropriate balances for a programme of work which corresponds to the priorities of all.

We consider that the Conference should open its doors to civil society, which could be a great help and make a significant contribution to discussions which we hold here on various matters. The Conference, we feel, should not remain on the sidelines when developments occur elsewhere, whether within the framework of disarmament, as in the Ottawa Convention on small arms or the Convention on Biological Weapons, or other fields such as human rights, the environment and so on.

Your proposal, Sir, concerning participation and coordination between all the Presidents for 2006 would make it possible to ensure continuity and follow-up in our work, just as your initiative for the establishment of a group of Friends of the Presidents can inject momentum within our Conference to move work forward.

(Mr. Khelif, Algeria)

From our standpoint, the ultimate objective of disarmament is the establishment of peace and the conditions necessary for the well-being of mankind. What is at issue is the relationship between disarmament and social and economic development. We regret to note that, at a time when, according to the 2005 report published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, military expenditure in 2004 around the world amounted to US\$ 975 billion, hundreds of millions of human beings are living below the poverty line, in addition to the other scourges such as pandemics which flout the most basic human rights.

Mr. President, I would like to inform you of some activities conducted by my country as a part of the fulfilment of the obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines. In November last year, at a public ceremony led by the President of the Republic, and even before the deadlines set in the Convention, Algeria completed the destruction of its stocks of anti-personnel mines in keeping with the provisions of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Algeria, and I would like to ask you, Mr. Khelif, to please convey my best wishes for good health to Ambassador Jazairy and my hope to have him soon participating in our debates. I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Johannes Landman.

Mr. LANDMAN (Netherlands): Mr. President, I read with interest the message that you circulated among delegates at our opening session by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, the message in which in particular he urges us to encourage our Foreign Ministers to address the Conference this year. In connection with this message I have three questions. My first question is, when was the last time that the Secretary-General of the United Nations addressed this body? My second question is: this text was circulated because our Secretary-General, that is, the Secretary-General of the CD, was absent, and there was no explanation given. Absent at what I consider a very important meeting, the opening session of this body. Now, this is not a bridge club. This is not a tea party. This was once one of the central bodies for peace in the world, and we want it to become that again. So when there are serious reasons for absences, private or otherwise, we need to know them. We have a right to know them. My third question is that we had a Deputy Secretary-General, the Director of DDA here. We all know he has left. Now there are already quite some unfulfilled vacancies in the realm of DDA in our secretariat, so I am quite worried and quite interested in what the state of play is. When can we expect a new Deputy Secretary-General/Director here in Geneva?

The point addressed here, the starting point, encouraged our Ministers to come. I am afraid I am absolutely and utterly unable to do so under the present circumstances. We really have to show first that we are worth it, that we have something to show for it, and I must confess in this connection that sometimes, in this beautiful room, I raise my eyes to heaven and I see the beautiful work of José María Sert crumbling. I hope it is not symbolic.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Ambassador Landman. I take note of your questions. We shall do our best to answer your questions. Soon, I hope. I now give the floor to the representative of Japan, Ambassador Yoshiki Mine.

Mr. MINE (Japan): I have a somewhat different request, but as this is my first time to speak in a formal meeting of this session, Mr. President, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency, and I would like to assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in our common efforts.

I commend you for your initiative to bring together the six Presidents so that this year's session will be smoothly carried out. I need not repeat the assessment of the current state of the CD. Everybody here knows the situation very well. However, I would like to emphasize that the view of the CD by outsiders has reached the point of no tolerance.

We all know each other's positions on the core issues and a programme of work. Consequently, achieving consensus on a programme of work has proven to be difficult. We may try once more to see if it is possible to reach agreement. But if it turns out to be impossible, we should not waste much time discussing it. Rather, we must focus on working on the substance of the issues.

I appreciate the rolling discussions to identify issues for the CD to deal with. It may be a fresh idea to take stock of the present situation and establish a good starting point.

Since the CD session is yearly, setting a timetable for the whole year well in advance is a minimum requirement. In any conference there are timetables. In order to hold substantial discussions on certain issues, members need time for preparation, including consulting with their capitals, drafting working papers or proposals, as well as sending experts. We need to know when certain issues will be discussed and in what manner. Some may consider that setting specific timetables could hinder the free flow of discussion, but I believe that flexibility is already provided for in the rules of procedure (para. 30). Any member can raise any issue related to the CD at any plenary meeting.

A timetable specifying these points is essential. Therefore, we appreciate the intention of the President to announce this year's timetable within the period of his presidency, but we would appreciate it even more if it could be done at the earliest possible date.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Mine very much for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Norway, Mr. Paulsen.

Mr. PAULSEN (Norway): Congratulations, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. I, too, would like to comment briefly on the Secretary-General's absence on Tuesday, but perhaps from a slightly different perspective than the Netherlands. I do not think his absence was an indication of any particular characteristic of the Secretary-General, but perhaps an indication of some characteristics of this Conference.

The Conference on Disarmament is not a subsidiary body of the General Assembly of the United Nations. It is not a part of the United Nations system whatsoever. The Conference is, however, financed by the United Nations, and these financial resources have been wasted for a number of years. This is the fault of Governments, not the fault of the United Nations or the

(Mr. Paulsen, Norway)

Secretary-General. So, instead of regretting the Secretary-General's absence on Tuesday, I welcome him to this Conference if and when we start delivering meaningful arms control negotiations and thereby justifying our share of the United Nations regular budget.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Norway for his statement and kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of France, Ambassador François Rivasseau.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on the launching of our Conference's work this year. You have a burden on your shoulders which is particularly heavy, and for some months expectations have been expressed concerning the enhanced activities which are necessary here in 2006. I commend you for taking on this difficult task and I would ask you also to convey my congratulations to the five Presidents who will be assisting you and succeeding you in the course of the year, as well as the Friends of the Presidents that you will appoint.

We consider that a coordinated approach by the six Presidents of this forum on a timetable of activities for the year ahead which would make it possible to discuss in a continuous and iterative manner in plenary sessions all the issues submitted to the Conference is a positive and new element. You have announced it and, in the unsatisfactory state of affairs in which our Conference finds itself today, my delegation believes that the activities of successive Presidents, if structured in a coordinated manner around effective use of all the powers under the rules of procedure, can offer a prospect of progress for our forum.

During the opening meeting of the 2006 session two days ago, you called on us to provide this forum with new avenues for our work and reflection, and in that spirit we have endeavoured not only to listen to you but to respond to that appeal. As you know, for a number of years France has been engaged in a review of critical civil infrastructure jointly with Switzerland. Our two countries hope to be able to consult all the delegations present here on this matter in a completely informal way, before officially introducing our thinking on this question. To this end our two delegations will be organizing a meeting next Wednesday at 3.30 p.m. within the Palais. I understand the room number has not yet been determined. I would like to thank the Conference secretariat for its cooperation, and we will keep you informed as soon as possible of the number of the room in which this meeting is to be held. The delegation of Switzerland and myself have the honour to invite you to that event.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of France for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Germany, Mr. Bernhard Brasack.

Mr. BRASACK (Germany): Congratulations from the German delegation, Mr. President, on the assumption of your high office, and I must say that I have already been witness of a very impressive effort of yours, and also of your future colleagues, to get to work early on and to try to do what is possible. Certainly this delegation is very supportive of this and continues to be as supportive as possible.

(Mr. Brasack, Germany)

I just wanted to take this opportunity, as you asked us to recap briefly where we are with what we are supposed to do. Germany considers that the CD agenda again adopted yesterday, which is basically based on the Decalogue, is still appropriate for dealing with the current disarmament and security issues. Germany considers the so-called “core issues” - nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances, a fissile material cut-off treaty and the prevention of an arms race in outer space - still topical, since they are essential on the international agenda, also in the light of the changed international environment we face today. The fact that these issues have been so long on the international agenda proves how complex and demanding they are, and at the same time how important and relevant.

A comprehensive approach, taking into account the differing priorities and security concerns, constitutes the most realistic and feasible way out of the stalemate in the CD. The revised A-5 proposal for a programme of work, as contained in document CD/1693/Rev.1, in our view still enjoys the widest cross-group support, since it accommodates the various positions, concerns and priorities of the CD members, as stated on various occasions. In particular, the “cut-off” issue is ripe for the immediate commencement and early conclusion of a non-discriminatory universally applicable FMCT, without preconditions and bearing in mind the Special Coordinator’s report and the mandate included therein. I would also refer to the EU common position that was distributed last summer as an official document in this very Conference, since there is already an agreed mandate in place. Nevertheless, Germany remains open to any compromise solution, provided that it enjoys the necessary consensus.

Germany supports your intention, Mr. President, together with the other incoming Presidents, to coordinate their work to provide the maximum degree of coherence and continuity. Structured, focused and more interactive debates, with a balanced division of time allocation to the different issues, are the best approach.

It is the task of every CD President to explore the feasibility of possible alternatives to bring the CD back to substantive work. However, this should be done as a possible addition, not as a substitute for the current issues on our agenda, and only if it increases the basis for consensus.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and kind words addressed to the Chair, and I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria, Mr. Hamza Khelif.

Mr. KHELIF (Algeria) (translated from Arabic): I have asked for the floor to seek clarification from the distinguished Ambassador of France concerning the meeting to be held by the Governments of France and Switzerland on the subject of critical civil infrastructure. He suggested Wednesday. Firstly, in what framework will the meeting be held? Secondly, just to make sure that we are not prevented from attending the meeting and participating in the discussions, I would like to inform the two delegations that the Group of 21 normally holds its meeting at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement and I now give the floor to the representative of China, Ms. Deng.

Ms. DENG (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, the Chinese delegation would like to extend congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of the CD and express appreciation of your efforts in promoting progress in the work of the Conference. It is my belief that, with your rich diplomatic experience and outstanding capabilities, you will surely move the Conference forward. My delegation would like to assure you of its full cooperation.

On this occasion I would also like to convey congratulations to you from Mr. Cheng Jingye, China's newly appointed Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs.

The programme of work of the CD has been under discussion for years. We are here at the start of the 2006 session to make renewed efforts to achieve consensus. I would like to set out some aspects of my delegation's position on the programme of work.

First, the programme of work should not reflect the wishes of a minority of States, but the common desire of all member States and the international community at large. Four traditional issues - namely PAROS, NSA, nuclear disarmament, FMCT - have been with us for a long time: there is a legal basis for starting negotiation on them, and also a foundation of willingness to do so. Experience shows that starting to negotiate only on issues of interest to oneself while neglecting or ignoring issues of concern to others does not lead anywhere. The only way out of the current difficult situation for the CD is to take fully into consideration the concerns of all parties and adopt a comprehensive, balanced programme of work.

Two: in relative terms, the five Ambassadors' proposal is a balanced one. For the time being it enjoys wide support and is the likeliest to win consensus. The Chinese side accepted the proposal, showing flexibility and making significant concessions, so as to break the stalemate in the CD. It will continue to support the establishment of a programme of work based on the A-5 proposal.

Three: the risk of weaponization of outer space is increasing with each passing day. The international community has made enormous efforts to prevent the weaponization of outer space and an arms race in outer space. China favours the negotiation of a legal instrument to prevent the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space. As the body mandated by the United Nations to negotiate disarmament and arms control affairs, the CD is the most suitable forum for such negotiation. It should start substantive work as soon as possible.

This being so, China cannot go along with the proposal by the Peruvian Ambassador and former CD President to weaken the mandate of the ad hoc committee on the subject.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for her statement and kind words addressed to the Chair, and before I give the floor to the Ambassador of France, Mr. François Rivasseau, I would like to inform you that as far as Wednesday is concerned, we have presidential consultations at 3.30 p.m., which now engage at least 12 Ambassadors. You have the floor, Ambassador Rivasseau.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): We are ready to adjust the timetable slightly, I think, in agreement with the Swiss delegation, and possibly to put it back later in the afternoon, to find a time that would allow for the broadest possible attendance, which is what we want, and for which we would be grateful to delegations. As to the nature of the meeting, as I have said, this would be an informal consultation and information meeting, as there have been within this Palais for some years on other topics. Obviously this would in no way be an official activity of the Conference, but simply an informal meeting, just as we have had seminars here which allow us to bring together as many views as possible in the most frank and informal manner, with the benefit that they indicate the most promising way forward.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of France for his explanations, and I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze.

Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): Thank you very much. I would like to answer the questions posed by the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands. I think he asked questions that are pertinent to be asked. First, he asked when the Secretary-General had addressed the Conference on Disarmament, and he asked why the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament - that is, me - was not present, and then he asked when we expected the new Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference.

As to his first question, when the Secretary-General of the United Nations had addressed the Conference, I would tell you that I do not exactly remember the year, but it was in the last century, and the problem is not that the Secretary-General does not respect the Conference on Disarmament. The Secretary-General firmly believes, like myself, that the Conference on Disarmament, being the effective instrument on strategic arms control and disarmament, can save the world billions of dollars that it needs for the development of the environment, for health, education and so on and so forth.

We all at the United Nations - and I am talking now not only as the Secretary-General of your Conference, but I am talking as the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations - since the last century, we all have been expecting this august body to produce. Unfortunately, because of the positions - and you know better than I - of the member States, there are no such results, so obviously, you can hardly ask the Secretary-General of the United Nations to go to address a body that is not producing anything but procedural debate.

You are not a very political body any more, and you have to be aware of that because you are not adopting political decisions, and because of that the Secretary-General is not coming to address your body. If you had made progress, there would be no question about the Secretary-General attending this Conference and encouraging you to make more progress, more ingenuity, more substantive results.

As to my personal problem, I would not like to publicly explain my personal health issues, but I will tell you that very unfortunately, my doctors did not allow me to go anywhere except for an urgent medical check-up that day. But even if I had read the message of the

(Mr. Ordzhonikidze, Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

Secretary-General, which I have done for four years, what happened during my four years here? Do you think the problem is because I did not read the message of the Secretary-General or because you have a position as a member State? What is the problem?

Once, 30 years ago, when I was a younger diplomat, I used to work at the Committee dealing with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, and I remember we tried very hard for one year. We moved the rules of procedure and we moved this and we changed that and we amended another rule. Eventually, the result was nothing. But we are supposed to deal with the procedure according to our mandate. You are supposed to deal with the procedure. You are supposed to deal with the substance. I am sorry to say that substance is lacking in this august body.

You were talking about this nice room, which is probably having some negative effect on the negative debates. As the Director-General of this Office of the United Nations, I gave you the best room we have. It's the number one room in the whole Palais, because there were attempts to get this room for another body, but I still had hope, and I still hope, that this room might help you, because I see no other possibility that can help you. I see from your debate that only the miracle of this room might help you. I hope it will one day. And thank you very much for asking this question.

As to the problem of the Deputy Secretary-General, it is an unfortunate problem of United Nations bureaucracy. The person who was selected refused, and now they are in the process of selecting another person. I will tell you that it is not my prerogative. That is again an absurdity of the United Nations bureaucracy. We are working in Geneva, but they are taking decisions in New York in the Department of Disarmament Affairs. So the Department of Disarmament Affairs has not yet presented the candidatures to the Secretary-General and then eventually to you the candidate to replace Mr. Román-Morey. But as far as I understand, being in contact with the people from the Department for Disarmament Affairs, that will happen quite soon.

Once again, thank you very much for raising these questions.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General for his information and I convey to you best wishes for good health. I recognize the Netherlands. Mr. Landman.

Mr. LANDMAN (Netherlands): Of course, all the best and best wishes with respect to those serious health problems, which I am sure will be of a timely character. Thank you very much also, Mr. Secretary-General, for being so open in your reply. The difference in perception is not that great because the only thing which I noted was I found it a little bit incongruous on one hand to urge us to have our Ministers here and then be absent oneself. For exactly the same reasons I explained, I am unable to recommend my Minister to come to Geneva at this stage.

There is one point I would like to address in your remarks, and that is with respect to the efforts you are making in revitalizing this body, and I am surely, as an art lover, very

(Mr. Landman, Netherlands)

appreciative of that. Also for that reason, I hope you will do something about the work of José María Sert, because it is a pity, and it will increase if you do not do something about it, and that is in your power as Director-General of the United Nations Office here.

But my point is that the performance of this body is also linked to the performance of an efficient and very competent secretariat, and that is your responsibility, Mr. Secretary-General, and I trust that you will convey also, with respect to this particular problem, the urgency of having a good and competent Director here as soon as possible.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Netherlands and I see the representative of France who would like to take the floor. Ambassador Rivasseau.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): I am not sure that the discussion we have just had was very conclusive. I would like to inform my Dutch colleague that in France we have a great deal of respect for the motto of the House of Orange in the Netherlands: "One need not hope in order to undertake, nor succeed in order to persevere." It is in this spirit that my delegation would not rule out asking for a ministerial intervention this year, depending on developments that may occur, and already intends to participate actively with experts from capitals in the discussions in an appropriate fashion, as you have suggested to us, Sir. I think that we all need to work with this in mind.

I would also like to extend my best wishes to the Secretary-General of the Conference. He took off his hat as Secretary-General of the Conference in order to speak as Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations. He spoke from the heart, and nobody can reproach him for doing so, but he knows as well as anyone that he is here only as the Secretary-General of the Conference, because we are a sovereign body, and in this context, it would appear to me to be useful to echo the wishes expressed by my Dutch colleague concerning the representation of DDA here. We have a universally appreciated representative of DDA here and we are therefore in a position to work normally. I must point out that, as a sovereign body, it is customary for the name of the Deputy Secretary-General to be put to the groups in this Conference to allow us to verify that his or her professional skills are in line with our high expectations, and hence I am convinced that the procedures will be respected here again this time.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of France, and I understand the Secretary-General would like to have the floor.

Mr. ORDZONIKIDZE (Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): I would like to thank the representative of France for raising this issue, which I have been raising for a number of months: to find as soon as possible a replacement for the Deputy Secretary-General, who will be dealing with this problem.

To my colleague from the Netherlands, I would like to say that the present secretariat and the present Secretary, Mr. Zaleski, are working quite well. All of you have known him for many years, and if it had been a problem of the secretariat not performing well for the Conference, then

(Mr. Ordzhonikidze, Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

we would have amended the things as quickly as possible in a couple of days. The problem is different. The problem is that the Conference is not performing well, and I can tell you very frankly, as my colleagues and friends, that that is why we have these issues and questions of a procedural nature that are mounting every day, every month, every year. Do not forget that we are the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you, Director-General. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? That does not seem to be the case. I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Conference, Mr. Jerzy Zaleski, to inform the members of the Conference about the organizational aspects of the 2006 session, as well as the resources allocated to the Conference.

Mr. ZALESKI (Secretary of the Conference): Mr. President, as you mentioned, I would like to share with the delegations some information on the organizational aspects of this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament.

As in previous years, the Conference will be provided with two meetings a day with simultaneous interpretation in all official languages of the United Nations (one in the morning and one in the afternoon). The duration of the meetings should be kept within the established limits of three hours.

Meetings of the Conference will be held in the Council Chamber. If required by delegations, additional conference rooms may be provided upon request. In such cases, reservations should be made in advance through the secretariat.

I would like to inform you that the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament has been notified by the Chief of the Central Planning and Coordination Service of the United Nations Office at Geneva that "the recently adopted budget of the United Nations will place a number of new constraints and restrictions on the capacity of Conference Services to deliver services as it did in the past. In particular, unscheduled meetings, ad hoc information consultations, meetings beyond regular hours, meetings on non-working days and extended meetings or sessions will most likely not be serviced. Also, documents submitted late will not, as a matter of course, be processed ahead of the ones submitted in accordance with the 10-week rule."

Accordingly, delegations are requested to strictly observe measures on the rational and economical issue and use of documentation. In particular, all documents that are to be issued as official documents of the Conference should be submitted to the secretariat, together with their electronic versions, well in advance, to facilitate the work of the secretariat. Any duplication of documentation should be avoided. Furthermore, in order to avoid the translation of the same document twice, delegations are kindly requested to inform the secretariat if any document to be issued in the Conference on Disarmament has already been submitted for issuance in any other

(Mr. Zaleski, Secretary of the Conference)

United Nations body, particularly at Headquarters in New York. I would also like to emphasize that United Nations regulations do not permit the publication of statements delivered by delegations at plenary meetings as separate documents. Such statements are always reproduced in the verbatim records and are, ipso facto, part of the official documentation of the Conference on Disarmament.

As in previous years, in order to reduce the operating costs, only documents containing draft proposals which require action at the meetings will be circulated in meeting rooms. A limited number of pre-session and reference documents will continue to be supplied to member States and States not members of the Conference invited to participate in its work. Therefore, delegations are requested to keep the copies they receive throughout the annual session and use them during the meetings.

I would also like at this stage to appeal to delegations to clear their pigeonholes to allow for the distribution of new documents.

Delegations are also encouraged to use more frequently electronic versions of the documents of the CD, which can be downloaded from the Official Documents System (ODS) and are also available on the website of the Conference on Disarmament.

Finally, I would like to appeal to all delegations to send the secretariat of the Conference their letters of accreditation as soon as possible, so as to expedite the publication of the list of participants. Last but not least, delegations are kindly requested, for security reasons, to carry with them their identification badges provided by the United Nations Office at Geneva.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Mr. Zaleski for his statement. Allow me to say a few words to you, dear Jerzy. It is a real pleasure for me to have you here at my side. My work would be more complicated and nasty without you.

I should now like to draw your attention to the requests from Azerbaijan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Moldova to participate in the work of the Conference during this session, which are contained in document CD/WP.541/Add.1, which is before you.

In accordance with established practice, I invite you to take a decision on these requests without having first considered them in an informal plenary. May I take it that the Conference decides to invite Azerbaijan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Moldova to participate in our work in accordance with the rules of procedure?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to recall that the next plenary meeting, on 31 January 2006, will be the 1,000th meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. On this occasion I will make a short statement. Then I will invite you to continue general statements on any issue related to the Conference.

This concludes our business for today.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 31 January 2006 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.