

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.1020

18 May 2006

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND AND TWENTIETH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 18 May 2006, at 3.15 p.m.

President: Mr. Doru-Romulus COSTEA (Romania)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 1020th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Conference will continue its focused structured debate on the FMCT. In accordance with the schedule of meetings, this afternoon will be devoted mainly to the consideration of any relevant topics related to the FMCT. As usual, delegations are also invited to make general statements on the FMCT, if they so wish.

So far, we have the delegation of Egypt on our official list of speakers. I give the floor to Mr. Sameh Aboul-Enein.

Mr. ABOUL-ENEIN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on your assuming the presidency of the CD in this sensitive and important phase of our work. I also wish to thank you for the efforts you are making with the other Presidents of the CD this year in order to give fresh impetus to the CD within the framework of its agreed agenda.

The issue with which we are concerned during these meetings is a key component of the world's effort to eliminate the danger of nuclear weapons by getting rid of them, and in order to supplement and complete the nuclear non-proliferation regime. This issue is also one of the most pressing problems in the framework of the work of the CD, being part and parcel of the Conference's mandate, as all members agree. The ability of the CD to tackle this important matter will also be proof of its ability to break the recent deadlock. There can be no doubt that breaking the deadlock will be achieved only given strong political will on the part of all the members of the CD.

In this context, we should like to express our appreciation for the initiative taken by the United States delegation in this morning's session, which we shall examine in detail in Cairo. This draft text which was distributed today can be a starting point for negotiations in the CD provided all delegations present their proposals on this matter, taking into account the interests of all parties.

For our part, we feel that there are basic elements that have to be taken into account when drawing up a treaty to ban the production of fissile material. These basic elements are the following:

Firstly, nuclear disarmament must continue to be one of the first priorities of the CD, in accordance with the high priority given to it in the Final Document of SSOD-1. Member States of the CD must assume their responsibility, as determined by the international community, to continue their efforts to achieve general and complete nuclear disarmament.

Second, Egypt has always supported the start of negotiations on a treaty to ban the production of fissile material as a first step in a phased programme towards nuclear disarmament, and this stems from Egypt's firm and continued commitment to worldwide nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. In pursuit of this aim, Egypt took part in a number of initiatives presented by the Group of 21 with a view to setting up an ad hoc committee on nuclear

(Mr. Aboul-Enein, Egypt)

disarmament. One of these initiatives featured a proposed programme of action to eliminate nuclear weapons. This proposal was contained in document CD/1419, which was presented to the CD on 8 August 1996 on behalf of 28 member States of the Group of 21.

Third, the Egyptian delegation also presented a draft mandate for the committee on nuclear disarmament in document CD/1453 dated 1 April 1997. This draft mandate takes into account the concerns of all countries. It calls for the initiation of negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons to achieve a nuclear-free world, and as a step toward this objective the draft mandate calls for negotiation on a comprehensive treaty to ban the production of fissile material in accordance with paragraph 4 of the chapter concerned with nuclear disarmament in the decision on principles and objectives adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

Fourth, despite these initiatives, in a spirit of compromise and good faith, the delegation of Egypt joined the consensus which made it feasible to adopt the resolution to set up an ad hoc committee in 1998 under item 1 of the CD agenda, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". We joined the consensus to start negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral, verifiable treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and we did so in accordance with the content of the report of His Excellency Ambassador Gerald Shannon and the related mandate contained in document CD/1299.

Fifth, of course we support action to achieve the double objective of banning the production of fissile material, i.e. nuclear disarmament in the strict sense, and nuclear non-proliferation. However, I would like to stress here that such a ban will not be effective if it applies only to future production. It is also essential for the scope of the treaty to cover fissile material which has already been produced and is currently stockpiled. Restricting the ban to future production of fissile material is a measure limited to non-proliferation and will not contribute to effective nuclear disarmament.

Sixth, Egypt's position on this matter is reflected in the report submitted by Gerald Shannon, the Special Coordinator of the CD, in 1955 regarding the ban on fissile material, in which he stated that "[some] delegations were of the view that the mandate [should] permit consideration not only of future [production] but also of past production". This is why the fact that certain countries insist on excluding stockpiles from the scope of the treaty is not in conformity with the letter and spirit of the NPT. Neither does it reflect the fact that a majority of States desire to achieve complete nuclear disarmament as soon as possible.

Seventh, the matter of verifiability of compliance by all parties is an essential aspect of the effectiveness and credibility of this treaty. It is extremely important to take into account that any verification measures must be strict and adequate to guarantee full respect for the treaty. This in turn would require drawing up complete inventory lists of fissile material stockpiles in the possession of all States without exception, including nuclear-weapon States as well as States that are not parties to the NPT, in order to bring the stockpiles under effective international monitoring and control and detect any new production of fissile material. It is essential for the ban to be global, comprehensive and fully verifiable if it is to be successful and effective.

(Mr. Aboul-Enein, Egypt)

In conclusion, we would request the CD to agree that a beginning should be made on negotiations aimed at a global, non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. At the same time, it is essential to take into account the objectives of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in accordance with the report submitted by the Special Coordinator, Mr. Shannon, in 1995 and the related mandate which was agreed upon during the 1995 NPT Review Conference and endorsed once again at the 2000 Review Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement. Our list of speakers for today is concluded. Is there any other delegation that would like to take the floor at this stage? That does not seem to be the case.

I wish to make some announcements. Tomorrow the Conference will hold plenary meetings in the morning at 10 a.m. and in the afternoon at 3 p.m., as announced. In accordance with the schedule of meetings, the morning meeting will be devoted to the issue of compliance, and the afternoon meeting to the issue of verification. Both meetings will be followed by informal plenary meetings.

So far I have not received any signal from the Coordinators of the regional groups that Presidential consultations might be needed, so I am not going to convene one unless otherwise instructed or requested.

For the plenary meeting of today there are no more speakers, so I will adjourn the meeting and convene an informal plenary meeting on any relevant topic related to the FMCT in about 10 minutes. As usual, the informal meeting will be open to the members of the Conference, observer States, as well as to experts who are part of their delegations.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.