

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.1072
19 June 2007

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND AND SEVENTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 19 June 2007, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Ms. Elisabet BORSIIN BONNIER (Sweden)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 1072nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I wish today to make some remarks on where we are. I have no speakers inscribed on my list, so I will begin with myself. I ask the secretariat to distribute my notes.

Following a process throughout the first part of this session of substantive discussions chaired by the coordinators and very thorough Presidential consultations with each and every delegation, a Presidential draft decision for further work was tabled, document CD/2007/L.1. That was three months ago. Already then most delegations were ready to proceed along the lines proposed.

But some of you were asking for clarity, more clarity and again more clarity. Answers were given by my predecessors in office. On the record. But this appeared not to be enough.

When I assumed the presidency, I initiated a process of open-ended, informal Presidential consultations to establish whether a complementary Presidential statement would help bring us forward. When such a statement emerged, the relationship between L.1 and the complementary Presidential statement became an issue.

At our last plenary, as you will recall, I put before you two documents, the complementary Presidential statement, CD/2007/CRP.5, as well as a draft decision by the Conference by which the relationship between L.1 and CRP.5 is unambiguously spelled out.

My assessment is that we have now come as far as we are about to come as regards the documents before us. The basis for a decision is in place. Decision time is upon us. We all know that time is running out. There are not many working weeks left this session.

My reading of the situation as of today is that almost all delegations are eager to move ahead on this basis. A few of you have, however, indicated to me that you are still not in a position to take such a decision today. Out of respect for those of you who still need instructions from capitals, I will not bring the issue to decision today, and I will schedule another extra plenary meeting on Thursday, 21 June. And out of respect to all those of you who are eager to move forward on this basis, I will on Thursday pose the question if you are all willing to go along with the establishment of a programme of work for the Conference on the basis of the three documents before us. This meeting on Thursday will also be my last meeting as President of the CD. I have spared no efforts to give you the clarity you have asked for. I now ask you to give me, and your fellow delegations, the clarity I am asking for. Are you, or are you not, ready to join in consensus on the basis of the three documents before you?

I also ask you to seriously ponder the urgent message we received last week from the Secretary-General of the United Nations. He was utterly clear. There is a world outside the walls of this chamber. The security challenges are many. And member States of this Conference bear a heavy responsibility for the future, not only of this Conference but also of multilateral disarmament itself.

(The President)

That concludes my remarks for today. If nobody requests the floor, I will adjourn this meeting, and the next meeting will be scheduled, as I said, for Thursday, 21 June.

I recognize India.

Mr. PRASAD (India): Madam President, since you have given us a couple of days to reflect on the question that you have put before the Conference, I would like at this stage to say a few words on the propositions that are on the table in the form of the various documents that we have.

But before I do that, let me compliment you on your able leadership of our body and for the clarity and panache with which you are leading our collective endeavour of reaching an agreement on a programme of work. I should also like to thank the Ambassadors of South Africa, Spain and Sri Lanka for their sustained efforts towards exploring the best way forward to arrive at a consensus on a programme of work, which has eluded the Conference for a long time.

In your statements on 14 June and today, you have shared with us your assessment of where we stand on the draft Presidential decision contained in document L.1. My delegation would like to thank you for engaging in an open-ended consultative process on L.1 in a spirit of compromise and accommodation to which the Secretary-General referred in the remarks that were read out on 14 June. And this indeed constitutes the basis of any multilateral negotiation project. My delegation has participated constructively and will continue to do so in our efforts to reach a consensus on a programme of work, taking into account the priorities of all of us, the constituents of the Conference.

During your presidency you have made sincere efforts in accommodating the views of member States on the Presidential decision through the complementary Presidential statement on its implementation now contained in CRP.5 as a possible way forward. This, together with the additional draft decision “to establish even further clarity by an explicit expression of the relationship” between L.1 and CRP.5, addresses some of the concerns about the process raised by several delegations. We appreciate the clarifications concerning the work of the Coordinators, reporting process and applicability of the rules of procedure of the Conference. We also note the stipulation that L.1, taken together with the schedule of activities, will indeed constitute a programme of work.

The creative way of linking the two documents suggested by you, however, falls somewhat short of integrating them fully. My delegation’s preference would be for a unitary decision consisting of the three textual components which are on the table: first, the draft decision contained in L.1, of course; second, the draft complementary statement as contained in L.1; and third, the understanding of the Conference on the implementation of the decision. They can be arranged logically and sequentially in a simple, neat, coherent and integrated text, articulating a unitary and unified understanding. It has the additional merit of avoiding multiplicity of documentation and unnecessary speculation regarding the comparative import of the three elements.

(Mr. Prasad, India)

We emphasized earlier in our previous interventions the need for clear understanding on fundamentals so as to ensure the smooth conduct of discussions on negotiations once the Conference has adopted its decision. In this regard we have sought clarifications on mandates being assigned to various Coordinators. In particular with regard to FMCT, we very clearly indicated the importance we attach to a universal, non-discriminatory and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty prohibiting the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices.

My delegation would urge you even at this stage to continue with your consultations so that we are able to arrive at a sufficient common understanding on this fundamental issue. This understanding among the constituents of the Conference would only help in the conduct of negotiations and a successful outcome.

Having said that, let me conclude by assuring you that for India, establishing a programme of work remains the utmost priority, and we share with you a sense of forward movement that you recounted in your prefatory remarks today, particularly the useful discussions that we held in the first part of our annual session this year.

My delegation will continue to participate constructively in your ongoing efforts to reach a consensus on the CD's programme of work.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you, and if nobody else requests the floor, it would be my intention to close the meeting.

The next plenary meeting will be held on Thursday, 21 June, at 10 a.m. in this room.

The meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.