

# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

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## FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 5 March 2009, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Chitsaka CHIPAZIWA (Zimbabwe)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 1129th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to extend a warm welcome this morning to Mr. Zéphyrin Mungongo, Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He is here to address us, and I now give him the floor.

Mr. MUNGONGO (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (spoke in French): Mr. President, the delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo that I have the honour to head in this forum extends its most sincere congratulations to you on your brilliant election to the presidency of this Conference on Disarmament and to all of the members of your office.

We take this opportunity to thank the general secretariat of the Conference and to commend the authorities of the host country for their hospitality.

Mr. President, strengthening international security through comprehensive disarmament continues to be the main concern of the international community.

Since the establishment of the United Nations in 1945, the goals of multilateral disarmament and arms limitation have been at the core of the Organization's efforts to bring about the reduction, elimination and destruction of all these weapons which pose such a threat to humanity.

Towards the end of the past century and at the beginning of the new millennium, humanity went through a difficult period in its history. Armed conflicts reduced the role of negotiation and cooperation.

Even at that time, the non-aligned States called for an international conference to be held to consider the issue. That proposal had the support of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which expressed the view that an international conference on disarmament would make it possible to develop effective means of halting the arms race and bringing about effective disarmament. It made the same proposal in 1971, which led to the establishment by the United Nations General Assembly of the special commission on this matter.

In that same year, the first phase of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I) concluded with the signing of the following agreements in Moscow on 26 May 1972:

Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty);

Interim Agreement on Certain Measures with Respect to the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Weapons.

The Conference on Disarmament is the international community's only multilateral body for the negotiation of disarmament agreements. It successfully conducted negotiations on the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

(Mr. Mungongo, Democratic Republic of the Congo)

In addition to the role that it plays in the physical elimination of weaponry and in monitoring observance of commitments, the United Nations also plays a key role in multilateral disarmament by helping Member States to draw up new standards and to strengthen and consolidate existing agreements. One of the most effective means of discouraging the use or threat of use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists is by strengthening established multilateral systems that ban such weapons and prevent their proliferation.

Mr. President, I have the honour of heading the delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a Member State which has taken the floor in this forum, in my capacity as Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs and Security. We have focused our statement on the significant progress made with regard to weapons of mass destruction, small arms and light weapons, anti-personnel mines and cluster bombs.

With regard to weapons of mass destruction, after sustained efforts the Democratic Republic of the Congo has acceded to, signed and ratified a number of agreements, conventions and treaties aimed at reducing nuclear stockpiles, prohibiting the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in certain regions and environments such as outer space or the seabed, limiting and monitoring the proliferation of these nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, their delivery systems and related elements. Action in this respect is taking place at three levels.

At the international level:

Biological Weapons Convention (BWC);

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC);

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT);

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA);

Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM);

Hague Code of Conduct and so on.

At the regional level:

Ratification on 2 September 2005 of the Treaty of Pelinda (Equatorial Guinea), making the African continent a nuclear-weapon-free zone;

Participation in the Gaborone workshop (Republic of Botswana) from 25 to 29 September 2007, on United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) with the aim of preventing the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their delivery systems in order to deter non-State actors from obtaining such weapons or related elements and from using or trafficking them. This resolution is different from and complementary to the Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism, namely, resolution 1373 (2001), adopted following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the United States and resolution 1267 (1999) on sanctions against Al-Qaida and the Taliban.

(Mr. Mungongo, Democratic Republic of the Congo)

At the national level:

Following the Gaborone workshop held in the Republic of Botswana in 2007, the Democratic Republic of the Congo established a point of contact on Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Security, who submitted his first report to New York in 2007.

The measures undertaken included the limitation of nuclear activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to purely peaceful uses of atomic energy by Ordinance No. 078/195 of 5 May 1978 establishing the Atomic Energy Commission.

With regard to strengthening the regulation of activities in this area in the Democratic Republic of the Congo:

Act No. 017/2002 of 16 October 2002 was promulgated, on protection against the dangers of ionizing radiation and the physical protection of nuclear materials and facilities;

Decree No. 05/019 of 5 March 2005 was passed on the organization and functioning of the National Committee for Protection against Ionizing Radiation, the regulatory authority established under Act No. 017 of 2000;

Decree No. 05/020 of 5 March 2005 was passed, establishing the National Council for Nuclear Security, one of the purposes of which was to seize and confiscate trafficked nuclear substances and materials;

Decree No. 05/021 of 29 March 2005 was passed, establishing the National Radiation Hygiene Institute;

Decree No. 05/022 of 29 March 2005 was passed, on protective measures against the dangers of ionizing radiation.

Mr. President, as regards small arms and light weapons and the reduction of armed violence, my country has made significant headway in implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In this context, the Democratic Republic of the Congo brought together all of the national focal points to establish the Congolese National Commission to Combat the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Reduce Armed Violence (CNC-ALPC) on 30 May 2008. This initiative was spearheaded by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Security with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Ministry of Defence and Veterans' Affairs.

In August 2008 the National Commission appointed a Permanent Secretary, who is also the Commission's focal point, and three directors, who support him. In its efforts to limit and combat the illicit movement of small arms and light weapons, the Congolese Government has allocated a budget to the National Commission and provided it with a building for its offices.

(Mr. Mungongo, Democratic Republic of the Congo)

Technical support to ensure the proper functioning of the Commission and to build the capacities of its members is provided through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. At present, the Congolese National Commission is carrying out activities, taking into account the United Nations Programme of Action and the Nairobi Protocol, with a view to implementing the National Programme of Action, which we hope to achieve by 2010. The Small Arms and Light Weapons Bill is currently before Parliament for adoption and enactment by the Head of State.

Mr. President, anti-personnel mines have also been the focus of considerable attention in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is an area that basically has to do with implementation of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Protection and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, and we have spared no effort in seeking to protect our people from these deadly devices. Thus, a commission to combat anti-personnel mines was established with a focal point within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Security.

The national institutions to deal with anti-mine activities include 11 ministries and related services.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has also participated actively in the various meetings held in Oslo, Lima, Belgrade, Vienna, Wellington, Dublin and, again, in Oslo for the signing of the Convention banning the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of cluster bombs or cluster munitions.

It adopted the Convention in Dublin and will soon be signing it in New York. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Security will be doing its utmost to ensure that the Convention is ratified swiftly at the next session of Parliament.

In conclusion, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a post-conflict country, is once again making a strong appeal to the international community to provide it with significant support to combat this scourge, which is ravaging all mankind.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo endorses the concerns of the Group of 21, of which it is a member. It would in particular underscore nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances. The same applies to the arms race in outer space. It is for this reason that the Democratic Republic of the Congo would like this Conference to be in a position to enable member countries to reach agreement on its agenda, so that the debate on nuclear disarmament can begin. Thank you for your kind attention.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for his important address, and on behalf of the Conference I would like to thank him most sincerely for his presence here today, which demonstrates the support of his Government for the work which takes place here.

I will now suspend our meeting for a couple of minutes while I escort the Vice-Minister from the Council Chamber.

The meeting was suspended at 10.30 a.m. and resumed at 10.35 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: Our plenary meeting is resumed.

I have no other speakers on my list. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? That does not seem to be the case.

At this point, I would like to read a message sent to the presidency by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom on behalf of the participants at a 2009 international women's seminar, which was organized on 4 March here in the Palais to mark International Women's Day.

I will now read that message:

“We, women from many parts of the world, take this opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament through a proxy, as we have done since 1984, and report on our seminar entitled ‘Getting to Peace in the Middle East - Changing Threat Perceptions’, held here in the Palais on 4 March 2009, a seminar held to stimulate discussion and bring in new ideas about this important disarmament and security issue. We are fully aware that the Conference on Disarmament cannot function in a vacuum and that successful negotiations depend not only on the good will and concerted efforts of its members, but to a large extent on the state of relations among nations and their Governments.

“This year the seminar was held in two parts - the first, a panel discussion focused on increasing understanding about the culture of fear that is pervasive in the Middle East. Panellists noted that weapons are used to kill people and destroy infrastructure, creating this culture of fear, violence, and instability. No State can hope to attain security for itself if it entails lowering or undermining the security - real or perceived - of other States. Disarmament is a tool to enhance security for everyone.

“Also highlighted was the need to recognize and address threat perceptions. The understanding is that current approaches to resolving security challenges may address a certain perception of threat, but when taken in a globalized context and a comprehensive understanding of everyone's threat perceptions, they are often not particularly credible. Weapons of mass destruction are not a credible way to deal with threats to human rights, human dignity, or to promote shared security. On the contrary, they increase vulnerabilities on many fronts - environmental, economic and as regards adherence to the international rule of law.

“The goal of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction has been repeatedly affirmed by all States in the region, as well as the international community at the highest political levels. In preparation for 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, many States have raised the issue of the status of implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. It has also been said that this resolution cannot be implemented without at least concurrent discussions on the Middle East peace process. Threat perceptions have a particular importance in connection with nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and in furthering these processes.

(The President)

“The consolidation of peace in the area requires concurrent progress along three parallel tracks. Two of these are self-evident: the political track, including the Arab Peace Initiative, deals with intentions, and the disarmament track, including the 1995 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference resolution, deals with capabilities and with confidence-building measures all the way through. However, neither of these two tracks are enough in themselves. Peace agreements are essential, but taken in isolation they permit the persistence of fears that unduly large military establishments could again become grave threats. Disarmament agreements are essential, but in isolation they could coexist with rhetorical antagonism and could even be mere covers for the renewal of hostilities. Only when taken together do these two tracks reinforce and validate each other.

“Even that, however, is not enough. There must be a third track along which the governments of the region demonstrate their ability to cope with their internal problems and satisfy the needs and hopes of their peoples. Without this third track, other States will not be confident that a particular country will remain true to its commitments. In an area that has known so many decades of wars and bitter enmities, confidence that a new situation has come to stay can build only slowly, through the passage of time and the demonstrated ability to solve the problems that history has bequeathed. It will be impossible to maintain and implement this third track - towards shared human security - without the full and active engagement of civil society, and particularly women.

“The second part of the seminar was an NGO strategy session, where women and men from more than 30 countries came together to discuss ways to address and change this culture of fear to create a sustainable culture of peace, not to create another road map for peace, but how to begin walking down that road. There was a lengthy discussion about the Arab Peace Initiative, with the recognition that civil society in the region and outside the region needs to educate and inform others about the Initiative. It was also reported that a regional civil society network has recently started with the goal of educating about and promoting this Initiative.

“Lastly, we support the recent discussions and efforts to increase access - in both formal and informal settings. Not only can NGOs contribute valuable perspectives and information to decision-making bodies, but Governments must account to the people for their actions and decisions. The issue of NGO participation must be constantly raised so that actions, such as the acknowledgement of the annual message, do not sink to the level of symbolism. Additionally, the broader issue of women’s participation in decision-making bodies must be continually raised. To celebrate International Women’s Day without attempting to increase the representation and participation of women in decision-making forums in line with United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 undermines larger efforts to promote gender equality and shared human security. Furthermore, increased dialogue with and participation of NGOs in these efforts will facilitate a much broader, more comprehensive understanding of security, one that can form the basis of a windfall of new security agreements and treaties. The stalemate in moving disarmament forward must be broken now. We value all those of you who are helping in this endeavour and salute your efforts.”

(The President)

That was the statement from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

I would now like to ask the Conference to consider an additional request received from a State not a member of the Conference to participate in our work as an observer during this session. The request is contained in CD/WP.551/Add.3 and was received from the Republic of Angola. May I take it that the Conference decides to invite Angola to participate in the work of the Conference according to its rules of procedure?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I give the floor to Norway.

Ms. SKORPEN (Norway): Mr. President, let me first reiterate the assurance by Norway's Deputy Minister of Defence, who addressed the CD on 17 February, of this delegation's full support and readiness to cooperate in your efforts, and those of the other CD Presidents this year, to arrive at a formula to start negotiations. This must be the focus of the CD, and on an urgent basis.

I would like to congratulate the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom on their annual seminar yesterday, which focused on inter alia the role of women in the shaping of threat perceptions in the Middle East. We heard a very strong testimony of how living in perpetual fear of one's life influences security policies and how this state of fear has an impact on the possibilities for entering into open and earnest dialogue between parties of opposing sides.

I hope we will see more seminars of this kind, and that we - the members of the CD - will fully appreciate the role of civil society and NGOs active in this area, in moving our work forward. My delegation commends WILPF for their tireless efforts at promoting peace and disarmament. We also commend WILPF for being present here at our plenary meetings. We sincerely hope that a representative from WILPF will get the opportunity to deliver their statement themselves next year.

Let me also use this opportunity to welcome the announcement by the Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs and Security of the Democratic Republic of the Congo that the country soon will sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions and work for its speedy ratification.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Norway for her statement. I now give the floor to Mexico.

Ms. GOMEZ OLIVER (Mexico) (spoke in Spanish): Thank you, Mr. President. As my delegation is taking the floor for the first time, allow me to congratulate you on taking the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you that my delegation will extend all possible cooperation to you and the platform of the six Presidents for 2009 in the discharge of your tasks.

I should like to place on record the pleasure with which my delegation notes the Democratic Republic of the Congo's efforts and actions in favour of disarmament and

(Ms. Gomez Oliver, Mexico)

non-proliferation, and we wish to acknowledge in particular the announcement made this morning by that country's Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs and Security concerning the imminent signature of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

My delegation also welcomes the message you read, which is undoubtedly of great interest for Mexico and of clear importance for this Conference. However, we consider that rather than the message from the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom being read out in this hall, it would have been more appropriate if a representative of the organization had addressed the Conference on Disarmament directly.

In fact, we regret that in the context of the constructive and positive spirit with which we began our work this year, we have not been able to find a formula which would enable the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom to address this forum directly and formally. It is incomprehensible for the Mexican delegation that an even more exclusive body such as the Security Council has demonstrated greater flexibility and is engaged in regular interaction with representatives of civil society, while this Conference maintains its refusal - not to hold a dialogue with civil society, but just to listen to it speak with its own voice.

As far as Mexico is concerned, including civil society as a stakeholder and major interlocutor in dialogue on the issues of disarmament and security should form part of the process of modernization and reform which the machinery of the United Nations system needs in order to ensure that it is operational, transparent, representative and more democratic. Not only are we convinced of the added value which greater participation by civil society in the proceedings of this forum could bring, but we consider that civil society has the legitimate right to express its viewpoints, its proposals, its concerns and even the disagreements it may have with governments on the issues which concern us here.

The possibility of interacting, exchanging views, instituting a genuine dialogue with civil society constitutes a key element in strengthening the democratization of this body, and moreover offers the governments which are represented in this room an additional avenue for obtaining inputs which make it possible to respond to the concerns and needs of their societies.

The work accomplished by many non-governmental organizations in the field of disarmament has proved to be of very high quality, and their proposals are usually well documented, containing information and concepts which are well founded and very useful, which would contribute to our discussions on the challenges we face. The potential of receiving fresh and novel ideas would undoubtedly provide oxygen and sustenance of great value to this body, in which stagnation is on the point of turning into inanition.

Allow me to conclude, Mr. President, by referring again to International Women's Day, which we will all mark on 8 March. In the view of my delegation it would have been a major and certainly encouraging step if this Conference, in tribute to women, and in particular their role in peacebuilding and the resolution of conflicts, acknowledged by the Security Council in its resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, had opened its doors to the International

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Women's League for Peace and Freedom. We retain the hope that its representatives and other members of civil society will soon be able to share their opinions, their experience, their concerns and their proposals in a direct dialogue with the Conference on Disarmament.

Such a step would be an invaluable demonstration of the constructive spirit, the flexibility, the transparency that are required in order to make progress in addressing and solving issues which, because of their importance, affect and constitute the responsibility not only of this forum but all of mankind; and, as the Women's International League points out at the end of its message, "the stalemate in moving disarmament forward must be broken now".

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Mexico for her statement. I now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Egypt, Mr. Badr.

Mr. BADR (Egypt): Mr. President, I would like, with your permission, to make two statements today, one on agenda item 3, which is "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" and a statement on agenda item 4, "Negative security assurances".

On item 3, we would like to associate Egypt with the comprehensive statement by the Ambassador of Bangladesh on behalf of the G-21 on this matter. It is an undeniable fact that two of the member States of the CD have at present the ability to pursue an arms race in outer space. Such a fact only highlights the importance of working together now in order to preserve the peaceful nature of what is essentially the common heritage of mankind, and ensure that it is used only for peaceful endeavours. We need to act soon rather than later, before the risks associated with such matters become more acute.

Egypt reiterates that, with the technological developments over the past 40 years, the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, while an important step forward at the time, can no longer be seen as sufficient, and that new legally binding and integrated mechanisms are needed to fill in the gaps. My delegation recognizes that transparency and confidence-building measures are important complementary elements, and in that regard reaffirms its support for United Nations General Assembly resolution 63/68 on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities. Yet Egypt underscores that priority must be given to concluding legally binding instruments to reinforce, consolidate and enhance the effectiveness of the presently existing international legal regime on outer space, and that such transparency and confidence-building measures do not constitute a substitute for the needed legally binding instruments.

With that in mind, Egypt and Sri Lanka alternately present every year at the General Assembly a resolution that focuses on the prevention of an arms race in outer space as a firm indication of our commitment to that matter. United Nations General Assembly resolution 63/40 reiterates the primary role of the CD in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements on PAROS. According to that resolution, the CD should complete the examination and updating of its 1992 mandate and establish an ad hoc committee on the subject during its 2009 session. We hope that the current session will succeed in achieving that goal.

The latest and most prominent endeavour to address PAROS within the Conference is the joint initiative of China and Russia, as contained in CD/1839 of 29 February 2008 on

(Mr. Badr, Egypt)

“Prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat of use or force against outer space objects”. Egypt welcomes the PPWT and views it as an important and constructive step forward and one that constitutes a sound basis for moving ahead. We will receive with interest the recently announced elaborations to be made by both China and Russia on that matter, and encourage all contributions that aim to further advance the goal towards negotiating within the CD international and legally binding instruments in that regard.

That is the first statement. The second statement is on agenda item 4, which is “Negative security assurances”, and in this regard, Egypt also associates itself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Bangladesh on behalf of the G-21 on this matter.

It is notable that, in recognizing the abhorrent nature of nuclear weapons, States saw fit to conclude a legally binding treaty through which to eliminate such weapons as early as 1968. But to this day, over 40 years later, they have not managed to conclude a similar treaty renouncing the very use of such weapons, which should have sequentially preceded their elimination as an interim, but much-needed measure, recognizing the right of non-nuclear-weapon States not to be attacked or threatened by the use of nuclear weapons. Positive steps towards providing assurances against the use of nuclear weapons have been pursued over the past years, including through the creation of several regional nuclear-weapon-free zones, the adoption of Security Council resolutions 255 of 1968 and 984 of 1995, and declarations issued by the nuclear-weapon States. Egypt welcomes such measures and recognizes their benefits. However, they remain incomplete and therefore cannot constitute a substitute for concluding a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In that regard, Egypt strongly reiterates its call for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 of 1981 and paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 of 1991.

Egypt further highlights the pivotal importance of the full implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East agreed to at the NPT Review and Extension Conference. Egypt also recalls Decision 2 on Principles and Objectives, paragraph 8, which clearly indicates that further steps should be considered to assure non-nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and that such steps could take the form of an internationally legally binding instrument. We are a non-nuclear-weapon State and we are a member of the NPT, and we are still waiting for such assurances to be provided in the manner prescribed.

With that in mind, Egypt reiterates its strong support for the ICJ 1996 Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, which concluded that “There exists 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.” Pending the attainment of that goal, and the fulfilment of article VI of the NPT, Egypt highlights the necessity of providing States that have renounced nuclear weapons, and by doing so have constructively and effectively contributed to enhancing our overall collective peace and security, with much-needed security guarantees as an interim measure until general and complete nuclear

(Mr. Badr, Egypt)

disarmament obligations have been fulfilled. It is worth noting that CD/1693 of 2003 included reference to a negotiating mandate on NSAs, and Egypt supported it as a basis for a programme of work for the Conference.

Egypt stands firm in its position that there is an urgent and pressing need to conclude a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and we have previously demonstrated our readiness to negotiate such an instrument within the CD.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Egypt for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I give the floor to South Africa.

Mr. KELLERMAN (South Africa): Mr. President, my delegation did not intend to take the floor this morning, but after listening to the statement that you delivered on behalf of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom I just wanted to express the thanks of my delegation to this particular NGO for the work they have been doing over the years, and in particular for this statement. However, I add the voice of my delegation to those of Mexico and Norway who have both spoken before me to say that really, in the view of my delegation, it is most regrettable and unfortunate that yet once again this Conference has not been able to reach consensus on allowing this particular NGO to address the Conference themselves. I at least have been here for the past five years, and unfortunately this same situation has been occurring every single year for the past five years.

My delegation certainly hopes that it will be possible in the very near future to resolve this most unfortunate situation, which in fact brings me to another point, and that is not the issue directly related to the question of this particular NGO addressing the Conference, but the broader question of participation in the work of the CD by civil society, which my delegation believes is a question that really should be addressed by the Conference. There is no reason, in the view of my delegation, why the members of this body should not set time aside to actually debate and discuss this matter with a view to resolving it sooner rather than later.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished delegate of South Africa for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I recognize the distinguished delegate of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. AL NUQARI (Syrian Arab Republic) (spoke in Arabic): Thank you, Mr. President. My delegation is taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, so allow me to express our profound appreciation for the way in which you are presiding over the work of the Conference on Disarmament and to wish you every success.

My statement is brief and not prepared in advance. With regard to the statement of the global consortium of NGOs represented by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom that you read out, Mr. President, I would like to say that we have previously spoken of the need for this organization to have the opportunity to present its own statement directly to the

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Conference on Disarmament. I would endorse the opinion expressed by the previous speakers who have said that it is regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament has not yet been able to settle this matter.

We also note the openness of this NGO, its frank manner in dealing with the questions raised, and its desire to achieve global security through a philosophy of disarmament. We encourage this NGO in its work.

We very much hope that next year we will be able to listen to these organizations presenting their own statement directly, rather than through an intermediary.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Syrian Arab Republic for that statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

This concludes our business for today. As previously announced, this formal plenary meeting will be followed in five minutes by an informal meeting on agenda item 7. The next formal plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Saturday, 7 March, at 10.30 a.m. in this Chamber. At that time Mr. Sergei Lavrov, Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, will address the Conference.

This meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.