
Conference on Disarmament

2 March 2010

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 2 March 2010, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Mikhail Khvostov..... (Belarus)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I declare open the 1172nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the very outset, I should like to express condolences, on behalf of all delegations to the Conference, to the families of those who perished in the devastating earthquake in Chile, and I would ask the Chilean delegation to convey our condolences and sympathy to the people and Government of Chile in connection with the loss of life. I now invite the Conference to observe a minute of silence in memory of the victims.

A minute of silence was observed.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): We shall continue our meetings over the course of this week. The Conference will hear statements by very senior officials representing the member States at our forum. Their presence here and their participation in our work is testimony to the clear support for our joint efforts as we begin the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like to welcome, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, our first speaker today, the distinguished representative of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Cho Hyun, who is the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs. You have the floor, Mr. Cho Hyun.

Mr. Cho Hyun (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, it is a great honour and pleasure for me to speak today in this historic chamber, which has been the home of international arms control efforts and has given the world such milestone treaties as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

As an ardent supporter of multilateral efforts for disarmament and non-proliferation, the Republic of Korea would like to extend its congratulations to Ambassador Mikhail Khovstov of Belarus and the other five members of the P-6 on their assumption of the very challenging and yet vital chairmanship of the Conference on Disarmament.

It is indeed my earnest wish that, with the joint efforts of all member States, new life may be breathed into the Conference and that it live up to its reputation as the sole multilateral forum for negotiations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Let me assure the Conference of my Government's full support and cooperation in its noble endeavours.

There has been growing criticism that the multilateral disarmament process has been in disarray in the last decade. Some have described it as a "lost decade". The Conference on Disarmament, which is at the centre of such criticism, has often been viewed as a forum which is mired in stand-offs and arguments. It is deeply regrettable, despite the long-awaited adoption of the programme of work (CD/1864) last May, that the Conference could not resolve differences over how to implement the work programme and failed to resume substantive discussions.

However, we have witnessed numerous signs that the international disarmament machinery is gearing up for a new era, bringing to an end a decade of stalemate. The United States Government is firmly committed to being more forthcoming on disarmament and non-proliferation issues. The prospects for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty are brighter than ever. In addition, a new agreement to replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) will be produced soon, with the firm commitment to further reductions by the two largest nuclear-weapons States. Furthermore, many non-governmental initiatives are generating fresh momentum with concrete proposals on the total elimination of nuclear weapons, such as the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and the Global Zero initiative. It seems that an emerging consensus is forming that a world without nuclear weapons is indeed an achievable policy goal.

With these promising factors in mind, I believe that we should exert every effort to ensure that these endeavours bear tangible fruit. I am eager to see the Conference on Disarmament put back to work to carry out its unique mission. To that end, I call for all member States to show flexibility and political will in order to reach a consensus on a 2010 programme of work and begin substantive negotiations at the earliest possible date.

Turning to the core issues of the Conference on Disarmament, the Republic of Korea stands firm in its support of CD/1864, which embodies a balanced and realistic approach to the seven issues of the Conference, in particular the four core issues. All of the agenda items listed in CD/1864 are important. However, my Government places particular emphasis on the early commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) because such a treaty will be not only a significant building block for both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, but indeed a tool for mutual trust and transparency.

It is true that there are different positions on the issue due to differences in security environments and the perceptions of each State. However, it is also true that there is consensus that this issue should be addressed as a matter of urgency. In this regard, I believe that the time is ripe for negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. And I would like to remind all of us here in this chamber that the Conference on Disarmament has a special role to play in addressing that issue.

On nuclear disarmament, we recognize that significant progress has been made thus far in addressing the issue of nuclear arsenals, unilaterally and bilaterally. We also appreciate the ongoing efforts made by the nuclear-weapons States. At the same time, however, I believe that the nuclear-weapons States need to demonstrate their commitment to nuclear disarmament through more concrete measures. By doing so, I believe that the nuclear-weapons States would enjoy greater moral authority and political legitimacy to call upon non-nuclear-weapons States to join them in strengthening non-proliferation norms. Furthermore, it is of the utmost importance that we restore trust and nurture a spirit of cooperation between the nuclear-weapon States and the non-nuclear-weapons States.

In addition, my Government supports the concept of negative security assurances as a practical means of reducing the sense of insecurity on the part of non-nuclear-weapon States. I believe that the nuclear-weapon States should provide credible security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States that faithfully meet their NPT and safeguards obligations.

The Republic of Korea, as a country which is actively pursuing a peaceful space programme, views space security, including the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as an important issue of great relevance for the Conference on Disarmament. I believe that the discussion on this issue at the Conference will contribute to international efforts to address any possible weakness in the existing framework for the security of outer space.

I would like to take this opportunity to share with the Conference an overview of the current situation on the Korean peninsula. The peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue remains vital to securing peace and security in North-East Asia, as well as sustaining the integrity of the global non-proliferation regime. The Republic of Korea maintains the firm position that a nuclear North Korea will not be tolerated. My Government is taking a two-track approach, pursuing dialogue and sanctions in parallel. To this end, together with the international community, the Republic of Korea has faithfully implemented United Nations Security Council resolutions with a view to achieving the denuclearization of North Korea, while leaving the door to dialogue open.

We believe that the Six-Party Talks are the most viable framework to address the North Korean nuclear issue, and the North Korean nuclear issue should be resolved through the Six-Party Talks in a peaceful manner. In this connection, we urge North Korea to promptly return to the Six-Party Talks and show a sincere attitude towards denuclearization.

President Lee Myung-bak of the Republic of Korea has proposed a “Grand Bargain”, which demonstrates our willingness to achieve a fundamental resolution to the North Korean nuclear issue. Departing from the implemental and partial approach of the past, the Grand Bargain aims at capturing in a single agreement, all steps related to North Korea’s irreversible, complete and verifiable denuclearization.

The year 2010 is a truly crucial juncture in the disarmament and non-proliferation community. I believe that the 2010 NPT Review Conference should send a clear message to the world that, despite all the challenges, the NPT is the robust cornerstone of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The Republic of Korea will do its best to contribute to the success of the Review Conference.

With the Review Conference just two months away, the international community is now according the Conference on Disarmament its full attention. All of us in this room share the primary responsibility for responding to the imperative call. We need to demonstrate that the Conference on Disarmament is a valuable element in the robust machinery of the global non-proliferation regime.

To that end, it is important to exercise flexibility and a spirit of cooperation. We should not lose this opportunity. It is with such dedication that we continue to place our hopes in the Conference on Disarmament for its further contribution to international disarmament and non-proliferation. The Republic of Korea remains fully committed to the Conference’s noble endeavours.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Deputy Minister for his important statement and for the kind words addressed to the presidency.

I shall now suspend the meeting to accompany Mr. Cho Hyun from the Council Chamber.

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

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Distinguished colleagues, there is one speaker remaining on my list, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Norway, Ms. Hilde Skorpen, and I now invite her to make her statement.

Ms. Skorpen (Norway): Mr. President, as President of the Second Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (the “Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention”), Norway is pleased to address the Conference on Disarmament on the date of the entry into force of the Convention.

Eleven years ago, the entry into force of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention was a historic achievement: a comprehensive agreement to prohibit a weapon because of the effects it causes, and because of the unacceptable humanitarian consequences resulting from its use, during and after conflict.

The Second Review Conference, held in Colombia from 30 November to 4 December 2009, known as the Cartagena Summit, adopted the declaration “A shared commitment for a mine-free world”, in which States parties to the Convention reaffirm their commitment to ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines and to achieving a world free of mines. States parties state that they are convinced that we will reach this goal in our lifetime. In addition, inspired by the collective achievements, States parties undertook to strengthen efforts to overcome the remaining challenges. The States parties also adopted the five-year Cartagena Action Plan to improve and guide the implementation of the Convention.

Our achievements in the past decade have indeed been great, even though challenges remain. Let me elaborate by quoting the Cartagena Declaration:

The number of persons killed or injured by anti-personnel mines has fallen considerably since the Convention entered into force in 1999.

Survivors are receiving better care and their human rights have been enhanced. We are inspired by the survivors who participate actively in their communities and in the work of the Convention.

Countless lives and limbs have been saved through the destruction of more than 42 million stockpiled anti-personnel mines and the clearance of vast mined areas. We are proud of this humanitarian accomplishment, and of our contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Our aim is universal adherence to the Convention. One hundred-fifty-six States have already joined the Convention and will never again use anti-personnel mines and nearly all other States observe the global norm it has established. Endeavours to convince other actors not to use anti-personnel mines are bearing fruit.

We are proud that the Convention has strengthened international humanitarian law and inspired the development of other instruments for the protection of civilians.

These achievements are the result of the partnership we have built between affected and other States, international organizations and civil society.

People remain at risk

Despite great efforts and much progress, we have still not been able to fulfil all the promises we as States parties to the Convention have made to mine victims and to people living with the daily threat caused by anti-personnel mines.

Thousands of people — women, girls, boys and men — are injured or killed by anti-personnel mines every year. People living in affected areas remain at risk and the development of their communities is hindered by the presence of anti-personnel mines.

A small number of States not parties to the Convention and several armed non-state actors still use anti-personnel mines, causing new humanitarian challenges and continued suffering.

As long as people remain at risk, we are compelled to do more to achieve our goal. Compliance makes a difference.

A mine-free world is possible

We continue to be guided by the humanitarian imperative that led to the Convention.

We will ensure the full and effective participation and inclusion of mine victims in the social, cultural, economic and political life of their communities. Our victim assistance efforts will meet the highest international standards in order to fulfil the rights and fundamental freedoms of survivors and other persons with disabilities.

We will ensure that all efforts to implement the Convention will involve young and old, women and men, girls and boys, and reflect their views. The dignity and well-being of survivors, their families and communities will be at the core of our efforts.

We reaffirm our aim of zero new victims through clearing all mined areas and destroying all anti-personnel mines still in stock as soon as possible. We

condemn the use of anti-personnel mines by any actor, including armed non-state actors.

We call on all States not yet party to the Convention to join the vast majority of States in our struggle against this weapon.

We will make use of synergies with other instruments of international humanitarian and human rights law.

We will continue and enhance our cooperation with international organisations and civil society to improve implementation of the Convention.

We will commit the necessary national and international resources and work together to pursue our common goal.

We appeal to the world to join us in our shared commitment for a mine-free world.

As my delegation has stated in this room very recently, there are valuable lessons to be learned from our work in the field of humanitarian disarmament such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Powerful alliances can be created when Governments and civil society work together, and concrete results can be achieved when our work is based on facts and realities on the ground and a genuine commitment to making a difference.

In that context, allow me to comment on the request by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) to be allowed to deliver their own 8 March statement. For years this request has been discussed in the Conference on Disarmament, and not even a handful of nations have objected.

We have had some positive developments in the Conference over the past year acknowledging that civil society may have a positive role to play in the work of the Conference. I believe that this Conference would benefit from the contributions of WILPF, far more than WILPF has benefited from a presence here in the Conference.

It is high time to allow a representative of WILPF to read out the organization's own statement, marking this one day of the year. Allowing this is also a way for all of us — albeit in a small way — to show that we take Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on enhancing the role of women in security, seriously.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of Norway for her statement, of which the Conference has taken note.

Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria. Sir, you have the floor.

Mr. Jazaïry (Algeria): Mr. President, as this is the first time I have taken the floor since you took over the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, allow me to take this opportunity to express to you our warm congratulations and also to express to the outgoing President our deep appreciation for his contribution to moving forward the work of the Conference, while also expressing the full faith of my delegation in the joint effort of the P-6 this year to make sure that this will not be just a year like any other, but hopefully one during which we will be able to move forward resolutely, as indeed we were invited to do by the distinguished Secretary-General of the Conference at a previous plenary meeting of this Conference.

I would like to echo the concern expressed by the distinguished representative of Norway on the commemoration of the date of entry into force of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. I would like to emphasize the tremendous impact that civil society had in achieving the lofty objective of this Convention, and therefore to echo also her aspiration

that this Conference will give a chance to NGOs to use their energies to help the Conference on Disarmament also to move forward.

In another forum a few days ago, I heard the distinguished Ambassador of Brazil express his bewilderment at the fact that some of the countries that are the most articulate in advocating the participation of NGOs in the Human Rights Council, in particular, were the same as those that opposed the participation of NGOs in the Conference on Disarmament. If we trust in civil society, we should be able to give civil society the right to express itself in both forums, and therefore I very much hope that we can give full expression to this use of the same standards in different United Nations forums, by giving NGOs a voice to express themselves.

Where perhaps I part company with the distinguished representative of Norway is on the issue of cluster munitions. It is not exactly the same as the issue addressed by the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. The way the cluster munitions issue was considered gives the more advanced countries the possibility of substituting other equally dangerous weapons for cluster munitions, and therefore I think it would be useful at some time to have a discussion on why it is that the Convention on Cluster Munitions has not generated as much traction as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. It has been explained to me by people back at home who have a much better technical knowledge than me of the intricacies of the subject that there are some objections, and it would be useful if we had an opportunity informally to discuss those, because, to make a value statement, cluster munitions are extremely cruel, and if there was a way of banning any cluster munitions and any substitute for cluster munitions, that would be a welcome development.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Presidents. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Canada.

Mr. Gartshore (Canada): Mr. President, I would like to express Canada's appreciation and congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency. I would like to associate myself with previous speakers in looking for a way to have the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom invited to read out its own statements in this chamber, and also with my Norwegian counterpart's comments on the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of Canada, and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Jon Yong Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, as this is my first intervention since you became President, I would like, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I wish you every success in your endeavours and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. I would also like to extend my deep appreciation to the former President, the Ambassador of Bangladesh, for his dedicated efforts to move our work forward.

My delegation has asked for the floor to make a brief comment on the statement by the Deputy Foreign Minister of South Korea just before. My delegation had no intention of making a speech today but his utterance has compelled me to request the floor.

My delegation rejects the contents of his statement as a serious provocation. His reference is not a help to the work of the Conference on Disarmament and is contrary to the expectations of all delegations who are longing for the formulation of the 2010 programme of work. It is hard to tell whether his utterance was prompted by his ignorance of the reason

why the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is boosting its nuclear deterrence or whether he was making a far-fetched assertion, and merely feigning ignorance.

My delegation does not doubt that South Korea is fully aware of what the essence of, and stumbling block to, the nuclear issue is and what is to be done, and how to resolve the issue in a way that ensures peace and security on the Korean peninsula and in the region. South Korea is also well aware of why the Six-Party Talks were destroyed, and why the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has withdrawn from the NPT. Nevertheless, the delegate from South Korea has distorted reality and truth in his statement.

The nuclear issue in the Korean peninsula should be settled between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, as it is a product of the hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It was the United States that attempted to use nuclear weapons during the Korean War to eliminate the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and it is again the United States that has conducted ceaseless nuclear-war exercises targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the new century too, after listing it as the target of its pre-emptive nuclear attack. But for the United States' persistent hostility and nuclear threat to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, my country would not have been compelled to seek access to nuclear deterrence.

Such being the hard facts, South Korea is making much fuss, putting forward a "Grand Bargain", while failing to say anything to the United States. South Korea might be well aware of the fact that the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula is one to be dealt with between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America, but it took the trouble to peddle the said "offer", though others were sceptical about it, considering it as unrealistic.

The current situation goes to prove that the key to truly breaking the deadlock in the process to settle the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula lies in the United States dropping its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

To speak clearly once again, it is a serious mistake if South Korea calculates that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would accept the so-called "offer" for "the normalization of relations" with someone and for a sort of "economic aid". The nuclear deterrent of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has served as a powerful deterrent for preserving peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and in other parts of North-East Asia. This nuclear deterrent for self-defence will remain and grow more powerful to protect the sovereignty and dignity of the nation as long as the United States' nuclear threat and hostile policy persist.

It is a pipedream to expect that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will dismantle its nuclear programme without the United States dropping its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The nuclear issue can find a genuine solution only when the whole Korean peninsula and the rest of the world are denuclearized.

My delegation takes this opportunity to express the hope that these high-level statements will be conducive to the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his statement. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of Sweden. Sir, you have the floor.

Mr. Hellgren (Sweden): Mr. President, since this is the first time I have taken the floor during your presidency, allow me first to congratulate you and pledge the full support of my delegation. I take the floor in support of the interventions made by the representatives of Norway, Algeria and Canada on the issue of opening the doors of the Conference on Disarmament to civil society, and the very small gesture that is being asked by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom: to be allowed to deliver its

statement itself and not through a representative of a member of the Conference or the secretariat this year.

My delegation strongly encourages those delegations who are still hesitating to take this very small step to consider the issue again. We really hope that next week we do not have to, as has been the case for a number of years, take the floor and regret that, again, taking this small step has not been possible. We hope that on the same date next year, it will be possible for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to deliver its statement in its own voice.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Sweden, and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Austria.

Mr. Strohal (Austria): Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to offer our expressions of sympathy and support for your role as President of the Conference.

Very briefly, I would just like to add our voice to those who have spoken in support of allowing the NGO coalition to make its own statement and finally dare to remove this anachronism of some of us being allowed to speak in the room and some of us being allowed to speak only through others. On the contrary, we should welcome their continuing interest in the Conference and should engage more fully with them. This small gesture of giving them their own voice is really the minimum which this Conference can do.

As I have the floor, I would also like to join my distinguished colleague from Algeria, and of course from Norway, on the importance of the convention on landmines, but also add a word of appreciation for the Convention on Cluster Munitions. As many know, we have more than 100 signatures. We have the 30 ratifications necessary for the Convention to enter into force, which will happen on 1 August. So we are also looking forward to the first meeting of States parties towards the end of the year. We are convinced that this is a positive development that will certainly contribute, as we hope, to further ratifications and to a very productive first meeting of States parties. We certainly look forward to a dynamic, similar to that of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of Austria, and I now give the floor to the delegation of Ireland.

Mr. O'Shea (Ireland) (*spoke in Russian*): Sir, since I am taking the floor for the first time under your distinguished presidency, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament. Allow me to assure you and all the other members of the P-6 this year that my delegation will give you its full support.

I should like to join with the distinguished representatives of Norway, Algeria and other speakers in expressing the hope that the representatives of NGOs will be able to address the Conference as requested on 9 March.

With regard to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, I should also like to note that a good many States have already signed or ratified the instrument, but the distinguished Ambassador of Austria has pre-empted me. I am convinced that the increase in the number of States parties to the Convention will continue.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of Ireland for his statement, and I note with satisfaction that it was delivered in one of the official languages of my country. Now, I give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Al-Nuqari (Syrian Arab Republic): Mr. President, allow me to add my voice to those of others in congratulating you on assuming the presidency of the Conference, and I wish you and your delegation every success.

I should also like, very briefly, to add my voice to those of others who consider that the women's non-governmental organization should be allowed to deliver its statement directly to the Conference.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, and I now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Germany.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): Mr. President, I would love to deliver my statement in Russian too, and my congratulations to our Irish colleague on that. I congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and I pledge our full support.

I would also like to express our support for those who have spoken in favour of NGOs, in this case the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, delivering their statement here. I think the role of NGOs is very important and we should recognize it as such.

Finally, I will make a brief statement today on cluster munitions. We celebrate the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and we look forward to an occasion to discuss issues which have been raised by the distinguished representative of Algeria in this connection. I think it would be very good to have, at the right time, an occasion to discuss such issues.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Germany for his statement. I should like to ask the Conference whether any other delegation wishes to speak. I recognize Mexico.

Mr. Gómez Camacho (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, Mr. President, Mexico joins in the words of congratulations that our distinguished colleagues have expressed to you, and especially endorses their support for your presidency. Briefly, Mexico would like to urge those delegations that have so far opposed the participation of civil society in the Conference to reconsider their position. As the distinguished colleague of Algeria put it so aptly, it is time to remedy the incomprehensible inconsistency that pervades throughout the United Nations system with respect to the participation of civil society. It seems to me that the participation of civil society in this and other forums represents society's contribution to our work. There is absolutely nothing we do here that we have to hide; quite the contrary. We must open our doors and allow its participation. It would be constructive and more than welcome. Let us hope that we are able to do so next week.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of Mexico for his statement. I see that the Ambassador of the Netherlands wishes to speak, and it is my pleasure to give him the floor.

Mr. Van den Ijssel (Netherlands) (*spoke in Russian*): Thank you.

(*continued in English*)

Mr. President, I wish you every success in your difficult task. I will be very brief. We have heard in the past in this chamber comments and speeches on the requirements of disarmament in the twenty-first century. For the Netherlands, openness and transparency are the key words in that regard, as is of course an increased role for civil society in our work. Therefore, we strongly urge those delegations that apparently still have reservations regarding the request of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to consider their positions.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Ambassador of the Netherlands for his statement, and I now recognize the distinguished representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Akram.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. President, very briefly I just want to add my voice to all those who have supported the proposal by Norway to give an opportunity to the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to address the Conference, and we would also like to support the idea of greater NGO participation in our work.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan for his statement and comments, and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation): Unlike the distinguished representative of Ireland, I have no choice but to speak Russian.

(*continued in Russian*)

Thank you, Mr. President. I should like to associate myself with the warm words of congratulation addressed to you and wish you every success in your work.

With respect to the proposal we have heard concerning statements by representatives of non-governmental organizations — specifically the Women's International League — we can of course fully support the proposal, in particular since Russia is one of the few countries to celebrate 8 March as a national holiday. As well as observing the holiday, on this day we give our dear women flowers. I call on our distinguished gentlemen to consider bringing flowers on 8 March and to give them to their female colleagues. I am pleased, for my part, to be surrounded by such charming female colleagues.

At the same time, I should like to propose that we perhaps devote one of our informal meetings, or indeed a formal meeting, to the issue of the participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of the Conference on Disarmament, with a view to establishing common standards for NGO involvement in the work of our forum.

As to the other statements we have heard, in particular with respect to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Mine Ban Convention, again I believe that these subjects could be debated in the course of thematic discussions in the Conference or indeed in other relevant bodies.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation for his statement, which, I am told, was in very good Russian, and for the — in my view — very important proposal he made concerning discussion of the issue of participation by non-governmental organizations in the work of our Conference.

Let me ask, once again, whether any other delegation wishes to take the floor? I see none.

And are there any other views concerning the participation in the plenary meeting to be held on Tuesday, 9 March, of a representative of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, in connection with International Women's Day?

I believe that the majority of speakers today — indeed, virtually all speakers — support this idea, and it appears to me that the Conference is ready to endorse this view. If this is the case, then you have greatly facilitated the work of the President.

May I take it that the Conference ...

The representative of the United States has the floor.

Mr. Larson (United States of America): Mr. President, I think our Russian colleague has made a good point. We fully agree with and are very active in supporting the notions of transparency and engagement. The question here, I think, for us — and it does deserve a broader discussion — is whether or not we really need to take a look at the broader participation of NGOs generally, whether or not precedents are created by creating

certain exceptions, and whether or not we revert to the procedure followed last year in which we afforded NGOs the opportunity to make presentations in a specific and dedicated session. So, we would reserve our position at this point, until we have a little clearer understanding as to what the implications would be.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Ordzhonikidze, and I thank the distinguished representative of the United States for his statement.

Mr. Ordzhonikidze (Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference): Mr. President, obviously it would be logical to have some kind of document that would contain certain rights and limitations vis-à-vis NGOs. Such documents probably exist in other organs of the United Nations. At the same time I would like to remind the Conference that other organs of the United Nations are very helpful to NGOs who wish to play a role in their work. If we want disarmament to progress, if we want certain developments in disarmament in general, we need the support of civil society. That is a must. Civil society in today's world is an important factor in international relations.

I would urge the Conference to consider allowing the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to make its statement on 8 March, International Women's Day. I myself feel a little bit confused when I read out its statements, and I sometimes feel that, when the President reads them out, he is also not very comfortable. Frankly speaking, I think that, without setting a precedent, such a move might be possible, as a courtesy to women on their international day. But afterwards we will need to look seriously at what should be the rights, obligations and limits of all NGOs that would like to address the Conference on Disarmament.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference for his statement, and I now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Brazil.

Mr. Macedo Soares (Brazil): Mr. President, I was refraining from speaking on the question of the participation of NGOs, because I was under the assumption that there was no difficulty, although I had noticed that many delegations were expressing their views, so perhaps there was some difficulty after all. That is why I have decided to take the floor and express my delegation's support for the direct participation of NGOs.

In this specific case we have had a request from one organization. This question of NGOs in international life is not simple. My starting point is that I myself feel I am a representative of civil society, both legally and in every other aspect, and I also know from experience how, many years ago, when the presence and direct participation of NGOs in multilateral negotiations and discussions was increasing, especially in the field of the environment and then in human rights, it was difficult to adapt to these new intervening forces. The participation of non-governmental organizations in such debates, which have sometimes been very difficult, has sometimes been useful and sometimes less useful; but it has largely been useful, and I suppose it will be in the future.

I have also commented that I find it rather strange that there is such a presence of non-governmental organizations in the debates on broad issues, like the environment and human rights, and so little participation in perhaps the most serious problem humanity faces, that is, nuclear weapons.

So I think we cannot try to block this participation. Perhaps, Mr. President, you could, in the following days, engage in consultations with delegations that have difficulties with these questions and try to find the best way to put the Conference on Disarmament in a better light. I think perhaps that is easier than discussing it in the plenary. But I trust that we

can make a start under limitations that are natural and suitable – participation without an intermediary by the NGO that has asked to speak in this plenary.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Brazil. I see that there are other delegations wishing to speak, and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Switzerland, to be followed by the Ambassador of Algeria.

I see that the Ambassador of Algeria requested to speak on a point of order. I apologize, and I now give him the floor.

Mr. Jazaïry (Algeria): Mr. President, I apologize to the next speaker for raising a point of order, but a proposal has been put forward by the Secretary-General of the Conference that, without setting a precedent, we should just agree out of courtesy to allow a representative of this international women's organization to read a statement, without prejudice to following up on the suggestions made by the distinguished representative of the United States on the issue of NGOs.

I would suggest that we might be able to accept this on a consensus basis while following up on the proposal made by the distinguished representative of Brazil, that you carry out consultations for informal consultations on the conditions for involvement of NGOs. But as for this one-off, non-precedent-creating decision proposed by the distinguished Secretary-General, I would suggest that we now approve it on a consensus basis.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished representative of Algeria for his statement and proposal. Since we are discussing a point of order, I should like to put the following question to the Conference: do we agree that, at the meeting on 9 March, we will hear a statement by a representative of this non-governmental organization on the understanding that this will not create a precedent for our subsequent work? The President will then conduct consultations with delegations on the way in which we could consider the issue of participation by NGOs in the work of the Conference and, as was proposed by the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation, the Conference may discuss this issue further in plenary.

Does the Conference agree to the substance of the proposal by the Ambassador of Algeria?

I wish to thank delegations for their understanding. I take it that the Conference thus decides to allow a representative of this NGO to participate in our plenary meeting on 9 March.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Are there any other delegations wishing to speak? I see the representatives of Switzerland and Colombia. The distinguished Ambassador of Switzerland has the floor.

Mr. Lauber (Switzerland): Mr. President, I am a bit confused about the proceedings, but I am extremely happy with the results. So I shall limit myself just to congratulating everybody in the room on this decision. If this is an indication of what we are going to do within the next weeks, I again have great expectations for this auspicious body.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Thank you for your statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Mr. Ávila Comacho (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Quite simply, Mr. President, the delegation of Colombia is very pleased with the decision that we have just taken in favour of the participation of civil society in this forum. We would like to associate

ourselves with everything that all our colleagues have said and also with the point first raised by our colleague from Norway: we must recognize the importance of the role played by civil society, especially now as we commemorate another anniversary of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. It is a clear example of the productive and efficient role played by these actors, who are tremendously important for our work.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank you for your statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor?

That does not seem to be the case. I wish to thank the distinguished representative of Norway for raising this issue, which has been so successfully resolved, and of course I thank all delegations for the active discussion we have had and for their participation in the consideration of the possibilities for NGO involvement in the work of our Conference.

We may thus close our meeting. The next plenary meeting will take place today at 3 p.m. At that time, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland will address the Conference, as has already been announced.

This plenary meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.