
Conference on Disarmament

3 March 2010

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 3 March 2010, at 3.10 p.m.

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

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I declare open the 1174th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like to give the floor today to our distinguished guest, His Excellency Mr. Bogdan Aurescu, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania. Before doing so, I should like to remind you that Romania was one of the pioneers of the forum that we today proudly call the Conference on Disarmament. In 1959, when the Governments of Great Britain, the Soviet Union, the United States and France jointly decided to set up the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament, Romania joined as a full member. Since then it has remained an active participant in the multilateral discussions on the whole range of disarmament issues. And now I should like to give you the floor, Your Excellency.

Mr. Aurescu (Romania): Mr. President, since this is the first time I have attended the Conference on Disarmament, allow me to express both my honour and satisfaction at the opportunity to address this august body.

First of all, I would like to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference and its previous President for their kind invitation to address such a distinguished audience and to add Romania's voice to those calling for the revitalization of this unique forum in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation negotiations.

Let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption of the current presidency and pledge Romania's full support for your work to the benefit of the Conference. I wish all P-6 presidents every success in their endeavour to advance the work of the Conference on Disarmament this year.

This year we are witnessing quite good premises for disarmament and non-proliferation multilateral efforts. The Conference on Disarmament should take advantage of the current international environment, which seems to be much better suited to further efforts in nuclear disarmament than in previous years. Certainly, disarmament negotiations cannot provide answers and miraculous solutions to all problems. But the Conference can and has the ability to exercise a significantly greater impact in its field of competence. It is a challenge for the Conference, for the Member States and, undoubtedly, for their representatives gathered here.

Unfortunately, the Conference on Disarmament did not manage to engage in substantive work in 2009 despite the positive developments of last year. I believe that it is a view shared by all Member States that the Conference must avoid a lack of progress in 2010.

The current international environment in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation should give an impetus to the Conference on Disarmament to resume its role as a negotiating forum. Otherwise, there is a danger that the Conference on Disarmament might lose its relevance, and that States might turn to other ways and means of negotiating international disarmament agreements outside this Conference. That, I believe, is in nobody's interest.

Romania fully shares the views expressed in the Conference on Disarmament by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union; I would now like to make some brief remarks in my national capacity.

Romania is firmly attached to the multilateral framework of international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments at both the global and regional levels and will continue to implement in good faith the obligations assumed under the existing legal regimes to which it is a State party. My country's national policy with respect to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament represents an important pillar of our security and defence policy.

In this context, Romania strongly supports the Conference as the major framework for addressing nuclear issues and continues to recognize its value for international peace and security. We are approaching the current annual session with many expectations for positive developments aimed at moving this body on to substantive work.

My delegation supports the adoption of a programme of work as soon as possible, leading to the resumption of the Conference's mandate as a negotiating body. The Conference must take advantage of the progress achieved last year and build upon the programme of work adopted by consensus in May 2009. We are all aware that such a programme is not an end in itself, but just a tool that should enable the Conference to fulfil its functions as the sole multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament.

One of the key issues before the Conference is the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, which would make nuclear disarmament irreversible. The Conference must engage in negotiations on such a treaty, for which it is by far the most natural forum thanks to its composition and expertise. The Romanian Government considers the commencement of these negotiations as the next logical step in advancing nuclear disarmament and preventing proliferation. Showing political will for these negotiations by the whole membership of the Conference is crucial for the disarmament agenda.

In addition to the immediate launch of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a vital component of the common international effort to prevent nuclear weapons proliferation and to bring about nuclear disarmament. It is a matter of deep concern for my Government that this Treaty, more than 10 years after it was opened for signature, has not yet entered into force.

Another key topical issue before the Conference is outer space. In this age of globalization, the use of outer space should be exclusively for peaceful purposes. This involves the need for enhanced discussions on space security and preventing an arms race in space. My delegation hopes that the membership of the Conference will engage in 2010 in an open and fruitful debate on these issues.

Progress towards the vision of a world free of weapons of mass destruction, as laid out by President Obama, needs to be a common endeavour. We all share the responsibility for turning this vision into reality. Therefore, we cannot allow the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to fail. In order to be successful, the Review Conference must deal with all three pillars of the Treaty in a structured and balanced way. Each of them includes topics crucial to the national interest of States parties.

My country will continue to work constructively towards a substantive outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. In view of recent challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation regime, Romania has taken every opportunity, at the bilateral and multilateral levels, to emphasize the importance of the observance of the nuclear non-proliferation commitments undertaken by all States parties to the NPT. From this perspective, Romania continues to underline the necessity of strengthening the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The long-term success of our efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation regime will also depend on the willingness of the nuclear-weapon States to reduce their own stockpiles of nuclear weapons and their reliance on them in their military doctrines.

Let me join others in welcoming the discussions between the United States and the Russian Federation to finalize a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. Success in extending and deepening cuts in nuclear arsenals in an irreversible way would be another important signal for the vision of a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation will continue to demand the attention of the international community and the Conference on Disarmament itself, but we must not forget conventional weapons. With regard to the ongoing process on cluster munitions within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Romania would like to reiterate its support for the efforts made to prohibit cluster munitions that have unacceptable humanitarian consequences. We look forward to a continued constructive dialogue and negotiations in Geneva leading to broad agreement on an effective regulation of cluster munitions.

To sum up, it is high time for the Conference on Disarmament to make a contribution towards this end. The Conference needs to seize the opportunity to embark without delay on its substantive work.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to thank Mr. Aurescu for his statement and for his participation in the work of the Conference as well as for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I shall now suspend the meeting for a few minutes in order to escort Mr. Aurescu from the conference room.

The meeting was suspended at 3.15 p.m. and resumed at 3.20 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now resume the work of the Conference and ask whether there are any delegations that would like to take the floor today.

I see none, and so, we have completed our work for today and the meeting stands adjourned.

Oh yes, I have been asked to inform you that tomorrow's plenary meeting will begin at 10 a.m., as previously announced, and that Her Excellency Ms. Chinami Nishimura, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, will address the Conference.

The meeting rose at 3.25 p.m.