
Conference on Disarmament

13 July 2010

English

Final record of the one thousand one hundred and ninety-first plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 13 July 2010, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Gancho Ganev(Bulgaria)

** Second reissue for technical reasons (25 September 2012).

The President: I declare open the 1191st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Allow me to start with some brief introductory remarks. I shall begin where the Minister of Bulgaria left off two days ago when he addressed the Conference.

Indeed, despite the current deplorable state of the Conference, Bulgaria continues to consider this Conference a unique negotiating forum which has the capacity to add to international human security by producing internationally binding disarmament and non-proliferation norms. It is in the hands of the member States to decide when this should happen.

The President of the Conference has the uneasy task of continuously making his best effort to accommodate all States' concerns in order to ensure that the work of this body goes forward.

I therefore wish to thank my predecessors for 2010: Ambassador Hannan of Bangladesh, Ambassador Khvostov of Belarus, Ambassador Van Meeuwen of Belgium and Ambassador Macedo Soares of Brazil. Their tireless efforts to seek compromise on the adoption of a programme of work have been a source of inspiration for me and an important frame of reference for me in discharging my task as President of the Conference. I am also looking forward to cooperating with the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Sergei Orzhonikidze, and his staff.

My major task as President will be to continue exploring options for a consensus on a programme of work for the Conference. It is regrettable that at the end of the second part of the annual session we are still unable to begin substantive work. It is hard to advance without having an agreement on our priorities. I will therefore seek to ensure that this Conference reaches consensus on a programme of work that sets priority on further action.

In March 2010, a draft decision for establishing a programme of work was proposed by the Belarus presidency. This draft was set out in document CD/WP.559 and was based on last year's decision by the Conference on Disarmament, which was presented in the form of document CD/1864, and recommendations contained in General Assembly resolutions 64/29 and 64/64. However, although widely accepted as the logical follow-up to last year's achievements, this document did not garner a consensus.

Additional resolute efforts to achieve a balanced and comprehensive programme of work were deployed by the presidency of Brazil, and I cannot but commend Ambassador Macedo Soares and his team for having conducted extensive bilateral consultations with all member States of the Conference.

As the incumbent President of the Conference, I feel that the recent draft decision contained in document CD/1889, presented by the presidency of Brazil, is a good and a fair compromise, offering possibilities for all the States concerned to be accommodated. I therefore plan to continue to consult with individual delegations and regional groups on the basis of this document in a spirit of transparency and inclusiveness. I will certainly use the three-week break in the Conference's work, if necessary, to continue meeting delegations and discussing the possibilities for draft decision CD/1889.

This draft decision was presented last week. Although its substance is not a surprise for us, I understand that some delegations need time to receive their Government's reaction. This was perhaps the reason why very few initial responses were expressed last week. Delegations should, however, feel free to address draft decision CD/1889 and to share their views and reactions.

Having said that, I wish to open the floor to delegations. I think we should start with two speakers who would like to make their farewell statements. These are our distinguished

colleagues, the Ambassador of Zimbabwe, Mr. Chipaziwa, and the Ambassador of Hungary, Ms. Klára Akóts.

It is surely not a very pleasant moment when we have to say goodbye to some of our colleagues, but we have to bear in mind that this is a part of life. Please allow me to thank both colleagues for their work here, for their friendship, for their cooperation, and to wish them all the best, both at the personal and at the professional levels.

First of all, I would like to give the floor to Ambassador Chipaziwa.

Mr. Chipaziwa (Zimbabwe): Mr. President, let me commence by thanking you for the kind words you have addressed to me and to our other departing colleague.

Since this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency and also my last opportunity to deliver a statement to the Conference as Zimbabwe's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other international organizations at Geneva, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of this important responsibility. Under your able leadership, the Conference can boost the existing momentum towards reaching a consensus on the programme of work. My delegation's sincere gratitude also goes to your predecessors, the Ambassadors of Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium and Brazil, who have steered the work of the Conference with sagacity during their respective tenures in their unwavering efforts to reach consensus on the programme of work.

Allow me also to express my delegation's appreciation for the statement delivered on Tuesday, 13 July, by the Foreign Minister of Bulgaria, Mr. Nicolay Mladenov, in which he reiterated his country's priorities in the Conference and reaffirmed its support for the work of the Conference. My country also welcomes the important briefing given by Mr. Frank Rose of the United States on his nation's national space policy.

Zimbabwe is, of course, as you all know, a non-nuclear-weapon State and has no ambition or appetite to acquire such weapons. However, the civil use of nuclear knowledge is welcome in our country. It is in this context that my country attaches great importance to all four of the core agenda items of the Conference. In particular, our country's top priority is general and complete nuclear disarmament in order to maintain and foster international peace and security. Conference mechanisms should be deployed in such a manner as to rid the world of these dangerous weapons.

As my tour of duty at the United Nations at Geneva draws to an end, I would like to take this opportunity to bid farewell to my many colleagues and friends in the Conference by reinforcing a few issues.

Zimbabwe observes that the Conference is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. My country cherishes its past accomplishments. The Conference has managed to bring to fruition international disarmament treaties of paramount importance, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) and other major treaties by conducting its work in a consensual manner. However, for more than 12 years now, the Conference has been in a state of stagnation owing to its failure to agree on a programme of work.

The accomplishments of the Conference in the past several years vindicate the fact that its rules of procedure are the cornerstone and the fulcrum for the work of the Conference. The rules of procedure ensure both small and big States the opportunity to assert their national security interests and priorities. The consensus principle underpins the work of the Conference and has worked very well in the past; it continues to be useful and relevant. Any attempt to demean, circumvent or amend the rules of procedure would not add any value or utility and could only be viewed as counterproductive. The challenges besetting our body do not seem to stem from its rules of procedure but from the dynamism

in the world in which we live. Failure by this body to address the dynamic international, regional and national security concerns of all countries, small and big, would only lead to protracted inertia in our forum.

A crucial milestone was achieved in May 2009 when consensus was reached on the programme of work under the apt leadership of our distinguished colleague, Ambassador Idriss Jazairi of Algeria. In that year, Zimbabwe was privileged to have served as one of the Presidents of the Conference. Following adoption by consensus of document CD/1864, the international disarmament community expressed optimism about the revitalization of the work of the Conference in the ensuing months and years. However, this has proved not to be the case, and the optimism now seems to have dissipated as a result of dynamic national security interests and priorities of States that needed to be taken into account by our body.

Allow me to welcome the recent tabling of a draft decision for the establishment of a programme of work for the 2010 session by the presidency of Brazil in document CD/1889. We view this as a good starting basis for carrying the work of the Conference forward, since its contents are mainly a reflection of what we had generally agreed to in May 2009. All efforts this year could usefully be focused towards ensuring that all the members of the Conference reach consensus on it.

As we search for consensus on the programme of work, my delegation is convinced that it is prudent for the Conference not to succumb to pressure tactics emanating from outside this body. The Conference should act objectively, independently and at its own pace in order for it to remain credible and relevant.

My delegation welcomes the United Nations Secretary-General's decision to convene a high-level meeting of the United Nations Member States on disarmament and on the Conference in New York in September 2010 during the high-level segment of the United Nations General Assembly. The meeting, whose objectives are to support multilateral disarmament efforts and assess the effectiveness of the Conference on Disarmament, can enhance the Conference's reputation if it has adopted a programme of work and moved on to the implementation phase by the time that the high-level gathering is held in September.

Lastly, may I take this opportunity, once again, to express my country's total commitment to the work of the Conference. The Zimbabwean delegation will continue to support your efforts to move the Conference's work forward.

I wish all of you the best of luck in your future work and deliberations. I wish to underline the fact that my interest in your work will not be diminished by physical distance.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

The President: I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Zimbabwe for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Once again, please accept my best wishes and good luck in your future endeavours.

I now have the pleasure and the honour to give the floor to our distinguished colleague, the Ambassador of Hungary, Ms. Klára Akóts.

Ms. Akóts (Hungary): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of this important post and thank you for your kind words.

This is the last plenary meeting of the second session of the Conference, and this is my last plenary in the Conference as well. I will relinquish my post at the end of July. When I arrived at the beginning of 2009, I felt immediately that something was happening in this body. As we used to say in those days, 2009 was a special year in this Council chamber. The long-awaited programme of work for the 2009 session was adopted by

consensus under the Algerian presidency, and 65 member States were full of expectations. My colleagues informed me that the draft set forth in document CD/1864 was the result of the hard work of the Conference President, Ambassador Idriss Jazaïry, and his predecessors. They also quoted “magic symbols”, such as “L1” and others. But life did not stop in this chamber. Last week we were introduced to a new symbol: CD/1889. We would like to thank Ambassador Soares and the other Presidents of the 2010 session for their excellent and skilful work in this regard.

These two major documents provide a certain framework for the Conference. Although there are many similarities between the two documents, at the same time, there are many significant changes. The Republic of Hungary notes and stands ready to accept these changes. I would like to underline the fact that we welcome the retention of the negotiating mandate for a long-overdue fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). A programme of work without such a mandate would be unrealistic and would not meet the expectations of our leaders.

I do hope that, during the intersessional period, concerned delegations will have enough time to consider the merits of the current draft programme of work, and that the Conference will be ready to adopt it as soon as possible. I will not be here, but I will constantly look for good news coming from this chamber.

I would like to assure you, Mr. President, and the incoming President that our delegation stands ready to actively engage in the discussion about the programme of work. I can assure you that we support document CD/1889 and we are ready to accept it and the work programme contained therein as it stands today.

Thank you, Mr. President. And good luck to all of you.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Hungary for her statement. We will certainly miss you very much. Once again, thank you very much for your cooperation and for your friendship. I wish you all the best in the future.

I now give the floor to the delegation of Belgium.

Mr. Iliopoulos (Belgium): Mr. President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

Since this is the first time that I am taking the floor, allow me first to congratulate you on your assumption of the important function of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to assure you of the full support of the European Union for your efforts to guide the work of this Conference.

The European Union would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation of the tireless efforts made by your predecessors in promoting progress in the Conference. The European Union particularly commends the efforts of the Brazilian presidency under the able guidance of Ambassador Soares in producing document CD/1889. We consider it to be another step in getting the Conference back to substantive work. For the European Union, CD/1889 constitutes a compromise document containing elements capable of finally breaking the decade-long deadlock that has regrettably characterized this body. Our hope is that the proposal contained in document CD/1889 will not prove to be another case of a proposition that is much discussed but ultimately fruitless.

The programme of work contained in document CD/1864 was an important breakthrough after more than a decade of stalemate. We all thought that the Conference was returning to serious work and to negotiations based on the promotion and protection of national security interests and that the period of procedural manoeuvres designed to prevent progress on substance was over.

But, since 29 May, the Conference has again been bogged down in endless consultations related to the implementation of the programme of work. Despite the enormous efforts by the Presidents of the 2010 session, not the least by Ambassador Soares, we have not yet reached consensus on the programme of work for this session. We find this hard to understand and even harder to explain to our political leaders.

The European Union hopes that document CD/1889 and the programme of work contained therein will prove to be a sound and practical basis for substantial progress in areas of major concern to all members of the Conference. If not, we run the risk of further regrettable stalemates. It is therefore the intention of the European Union to support your efforts in reaching a consensus on this document and so to encourage the Conference on Disarmament to once again make a substantive contribution to global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

Let me assure you that the European Union is ready. We have been ready for a long time. Today we are disappointed that our flexibility has not been answered with a more constructive attitude by some delegations. But we remain committed to the Conference and, within the context of an agreed, comprehensive and balanced programme of work, we await the immediate start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty as agreed at the last session.

We expect a similar commitment from all member States. Thank you.

The President: I thank Ambassador Iliopoulos for his statement on behalf of the European Union. I would now like to give the floor to Ambassador Maimeskul of Ukraine.

Mr. Maimeskul (Ukraine): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Ambassador Gancho Ganev, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. We have confidence in your able guidance and assure you of the full support of Ukraine during your presidency.

I have the privilege to state, on behalf of my Government, that Ukraine highly appreciates the efforts which were made under the presidency of Brazil, together with other presidencies of this session, to achieve positive results in order to start our substantive work as quickly as possible. In this regard, I would like to support document CD/1889 and the draft programme of work for 2010 that it contains.

In our opinion, this document is a well-balanced, compromise version of documents CD/WP.559 and CD/1864, adopted by consensus in 2009. As was stated by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Mr. Kostyantyn Gryshchenko, during the plenary meeting of the Conference on 11 June 2010, Ukraine is convinced that it is crucially important to achieve consensus on the programme of work as soon as possible. That is why we welcome all constructive steps taken by member States in order to unblock the substantive work of the Conference.

I am perhaps not being original in presenting our position again, because it is not a day-to-day opinion but the long-standing approach of Ukraine to the reason for the existence of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President, I would like to underline once again the fact that Ukraine fully supports document CD/1889. If necessary, and you have just said that you will continue to explore the way to consensus, we are ready to discuss it further in the most appropriate format. Thank you.

The President: I thank Ambassador Maimeskul of Ukraine for his statement. I would now like to give the floor to Ambassador Manfredi of Italy.

Mr. Manfredi (Italy): Mr. President, since this is the first time I address the Conference during your presidency, allow me to congratulate you and pledge my delegation's full support for your work.

I take this opportunity to express my disappointment in learning of the approaching departure of our Hungarian and Zimbabwean colleagues, and I wish them every success in their future activities. We will sincerely miss them.

Italy aligns itself, of course, with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. I would like to express my country's gratitude for Ambassador Macedo Soares' hard work and dedication in conducting consultations with all delegations and in drafting document CD/1889. We are also grateful to you for pursuing the effort to achieve its adoption.

We consider document CD/1889 to be a balanced and inclusive proposal that is, for us, quite acceptable. Hopefully, we will be able to undertake the high-level meeting on 24 September having achieved real progress on the essential question of the programme of work for the Conference.

The President: I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Italy for his statement.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Laura Kennedy of the United States of America.

Ms. Kennedy (United States of America): Mr. President, like other speakers, I wish to congratulate you on your new position and say that we very much look forward to working with you. I also would like to express similar gratitude for the opportunity to listen to your Foreign Minister's very comprehensive and excellent speech. I would like to tell Ambassador Chipaziwa that we very much look forward to working with him in his next post and wish him all the very best. We also wish all the best to our very distinguished colleague from Hungary, and I hope to work with her in the future as well.

I have one question and one comment, if I might. I would like to note, once again, that my country continues to see the proposal set forth in document CD/1864 as the gold-standard milestone that was achieved by our distinguished Algerian colleague. Our equally distinguished Brazilian colleague performed yeoman service in trying to find a consensus. We appreciate your hard work, Mr. President, in continuing your efforts to consult with delegations and find a way forward. We very much regret, as other speakers, that you cannot yet report consensus. Now, since this is the last plenary of this portion of the session, I wondered if you might be able to give us any more information, perhaps a status report. At this point, I note that, when we discussed document CD/1889 earlier, some delegations said that they had not yet had time to obtain instructions on this new draft, so we would be pleased to hear of any new developments on that front before this portion of the session is concluded. It is, of course, of great interest to my country and, I assume, to everyone else's.

I would also like to turn to the subject of the informal discussions. I would like to express our appreciation to all those Coordinators who stepped forward to run these meetings. I know that they are all very busy people. They took time away from a very demanding portfolio, and we very much appreciate their work. In fact, they were so devoted to their task that they were willing to hold meetings even after they had reported that the speakers' list had been exhausted and, in some cases, when they indeed no longer saw the need for further meetings.

As I say, we attended all of these informal discussions. We supported the process but, at the same time, we wonder at the practice whereby Coordinators would hold meetings that they no longer felt were necessary, since all the speakers had been heard. We do not put a price on disarmament. We have it at the very top of our national agenda. But, I

do think, like responsible bill-payers everywhere, that we want to make sure that our funds are spent as effectively as possible.

I understand that, any time a meeting is called, it entails a certain expense. I would therefore plead that we leave this decision in the hands of our Coordinators, all very distinguished colleagues who have taken on this work, and allow them to make the judgement as to whether an additional meeting is required or not.

We fully appreciate the desire to have balance accorded to all these topics, but common sense and fiscal prudence seem to suggest that you should not feel it incumbent upon you to call a meeting if you have determined that there are no further requests to speak on a given topic.

Mr. President, thank you very much, again, for your efforts. We look forward to working with you.

The President: I thank the distinguished Ambassador of the United States of America for her statement. I now give the floor to the distinguished delegate of Argentina.

Ms. Fogante (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor during your term as President, allow me to convey my delegation's congratulations to you on assuming your functions and assure you of our support during your term of office.

I have requested the floor at this time to express my country's traditional position with regard to the start of substantive work in this forum, to which we attach the highest priority. We believe that the best way to defend its relevance is to adopt and implement a programme of work. Here we should like to express our gratitude for the efforts made by your predecessor, Ambassador Macedo Soares, to find consensus language that might accommodate the concerns of the delegations in this Conference. My delegation will remain flexible in this regard in order to join in such a consensus, bearing in mind document CD/1899.

As you said at the beginning of today's meeting, this document provides a basis for continuing consultations during the intersessional period with a view to facilitating the reaching of such a consensus before the end of the 2010 session.

Lastly, allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to pay a tribute to the Ambassadors of Zimbabwe and Hungary but also to those colleagues who are attending their last plenary meeting today. Their contributions to this forum have been invaluable, and we wish them every success in their next assignments.

The President: I thank the distinguished representative of Argentina for her statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Japan.

Mr. Suda (Japan): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency at this very critical juncture for the Conference, and I would also like to express my regret at seeing the Ambassadors of Zimbabwe and Hungary leaving us so soon. We would like to express our gratitude for their cooperation with all the members, including our delegation.

I would like to say that, as we talk about the programme of work today, it seems clear that everybody — or at least most of us — are eager to see an early consensus agreement on the programme of work so that we can begin our substantive work. Japan's position is clear. We supported the working paper submitted by the Belarus presidency, and we are also supportive of the present proposal submitted by Ambassador Macedo Soares as document CD/1889, if that is agreeable by consensus.

I would like to add that I support the concerns and the point raised by Ambassador Kennedy about the informal meetings that we have conducted in the past two weeks. I found the informal meetings to be very useful and substantive but, at the same time, I believe that we should be more flexible in conducting that kind of informal meeting. If the arguments have been exhausted, if that is judged to be the case by the Coordinator, then there should be sufficient flexibility for all of us to accept the determination of the Coordinators as to how to wind up an informal discussion of this nature.

The President: I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Japan, and I now give the floor to the distinguished delegate of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. IM Han-taek (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of an important responsibility. We also appreciate your efforts to revitalize the Conference.

Putting aside further diplomatic pleasantries, I would like to make our position clear: the Korean delegation wishes to express its willingness to accept the draft contained in document CD/1889, which was proposed by your predecessor, Ambassador Macedo Soares.

We also would like to see the utmost flexibility so that consensus in the Conference can be reached as soon as possible.

The President: I thank the distinguished delegate of the Republic of Korea for his statement.

Judging from what I have heard today, I think I can conclude that document CD/1889 is widely supported, widely accepted, by the member States of the Conference. This is the impression I have received up to this point.

Bearing in mind Ambassador Kennedy's request for an update on the status of document CD/1889, I would like to invite delegations that may have received reactions from their Governments in the period between last week and today to share any such information with us.

I recognize the distinguished representative of Turkey.

Ms. Sancar (Turkey): Mr. President, since this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, I would like to express my best wishes and congratulations.

I would simply like to state that Turkey, as a long-standing policy, is willing to go along with the consensus on the basis of document CD/1889.

The President: I thank the distinguished representative of Turkey.

I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of Germany.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): Mr. President, may I also congratulate you on assuming the presidency and wish you well. I would also like to express my regret at the departure of our colleagues from Hungary and Zimbabwe.

I have asked for the floor because it would seem to me that the question is quite obvious. You have put it very clearly. If there are no objections to the programme of work which is before us, can we not then state that there is consensus on it?

The President: I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Germany for his statement.

I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. President, as I mentioned in our last meeting, chaired by your predecessor, my delegation has always made its position very clear. The negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, which for reasons that we have explained, and for reasons

that are already very well known to every delegation in this room, is unacceptable to us because it undermines our security interests.

That position has not changed.

The President: I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan for his statement.

Is there any other delegation that would like to take the floor? I see none. Then this concludes our business for today. Our next plenary meeting will take place after the recess and will be announced by the secretariat in due time.

This meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.