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# Conference on Disarmament

26 January 2011

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 26 January 2011, at 3.10 p.m.

*President:* Mr. Marius Grinius ..... (Canada)

**The President:** I declare open the 1199th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest today Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations. His presence here among us today is a clear testimony of the importance he attaches not only to the work of this distinguished body, but also to the cause of disarmament in general. Before giving the floor to the Secretary-General, I should like to inform you that because of his very, very tight schedule (which only allows him to be with us until 4 p.m.), it is my intention to suspend the formal plenary meeting right after his address to allow him to convene the informal disarmament meeting. After the conclusion of the informal meeting, I will reconvene the formal plenary meeting to allow delegations to take the floor as per the speakers' list. I should like to emphasize that the informal meeting with the Secretary-General of the United Nations will be for members and observers only. I now have the pleasure and the honour to invite Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, to take the floor.

**Mr. Ban Ki-moon** (Secretary-General of the United Nations) (*spoke in French*): It is a great pleasure to address the Conference on Disarmament. Thank you for welcoming me for the third time since I took office. I am here to express my confidence in the great potential of this body to play a catalytic role in advancing the disarmament agenda. But I am also here to make a fresh appeal to you to live up to that potential – and to meet the expectations of the international community.

In the past several years, we have built important momentum – hard-won momentum on which we can and must build. The next few years will be critical. We can push forward on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, or risk sliding back. This is why disarmament and non-proliferation are among my top priorities for the year ahead. As I told the General Assembly two weeks ago, if we are to build on the current momentum, we need even more concrete action than we have achieved to date.

(*continued in English*)

It is my sincere hope that such action will again emanate from the Conference on Disarmament. The world's multilateral disarmament machinery should deliver more and more quickly. I call on you to become a first harbinger of hope for 2011 in the field of disarmament.

The Conference on Disarmament is the undisputed home of international arms control efforts. From its inception the Conference has had a unique function. As the world's sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum it has produced landmark treaties that have promoted international security while demonstrating that multilateral collaboration can solve the global and national interest alike.

However, the Conference's record of achievement has been overshadowed by inertia that has now lasted for more than a decade. The very credibility of this body is at risk. Continued inaction will only endanger its future as a multilateral negotiating forum.

There was a brief glimmer of hope almost two years ago, when the sense of crisis led the Conference to adopt a programme of work by consensus under the Algerian presidency. Coming so soon after I last addressed you, this apparent break in the deadlock was very encouraging. It seemed like a real breakthrough and there was great expectation that the Conference, at long last, would fulfil its mandate and begin negotiations.

Unfortunately, the programme of work for your 2009 session was not implemented and the Conference ended its 2010 session without starting substantive work. This has been deeply disappointing. Indeed, there appears to be a disconnect between the Conference on Disarmament and the recent positive developments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

On the one hand, States have made welcome progress on a variety of matters that have a direct impact on the global security environment: they have taken steps to strengthen nuclear security, with more steps expected. The States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) had a successful review conference in 2010 – the first in 10 years. Important bilateral efforts are coming to fruition as we have seen with the new START treaty.

However, on the other hand, the Conference on Disarmament has played little or no role in these advances. Where States and civil society initiatives are on the move, this party has remained stagnant; because of the impasse, I decided to convene, in September 2010, a high-level meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations. The 2010 NPT Review Conference also invited me to convene such a meeting.

You are all aware that at that meeting many foreign ministers and other high-level political leaders expressed their deep concern about the inability of the Conference on Disarmament to overcome its differences and joined me in urging it to start substantive work in 2011. The participants at the meeting were also unanimous in stressing that the limited membership of the Conference on Disarmament is a privilege, as is the consensus rule. However, members of the Conference must accept that this privilege comes with responsibility.

The message was clear: this should not be another year of business as usual; one or two countries must not be able to block the process indefinitely. Moreover, we must not risk pushing States to resort to alternative arrangements outside the Conference on Disarmament.

The future of the Conference on Disarmament is in your hands. It is for you, the members, to decide whether it will live up to the expectations of the international community or face the consequences. At the meeting in September 2010, I also noted that the programme of work adopted by consensus in 2009 remains the most common denominator.

Therefore, I suggest, once again, that early in the 2011 session, the Conference should adopt this programme of work or any other similar subsequent proposal that the Conference can agree on by consensus. In this regard, I welcome the joint statement last week in Washington, D.C. by the Presidents of China and the United States of America reaffirming their support for the early commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament.

The continued deadlock has ominous implications for international security. The longer it persists the graver the nuclear threat – from existing arsenals, the proliferation of such weapons, and their possible acquisition by terrorists. The Conference on Disarmament must find a way to continue its invaluable work. It must focus on promoting global goals that are fully universal in scope. It must do its part to advance the rule of law in the field of disarmament. It must not let one lost decade for the Conference to turn into a second.

For my part, I have asked my Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters to undertake a thorough review of the issues raised at the high-level meeting, including the possible establishment of a high-level panel of eminent persons with a special focus on the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament. I will keep you updated on this matter.

The world is waiting for one bold step by the Conference on Disarmament, but it requires collective action from you, the members of the Conference. Multilateral efforts continue to show their immense value in addressing a wide variety of global challenges and threats. The Conference on Disarmament and the world's multilateral disarmament

machinery should keep pace. I call on you to put aside your differences. Let us serve the global interest. Let us build a safer world.

With respect to the fissile material treaty, it is clear that within the Conference on Disarmament there is almost universal support for negotiations on such a treaty. While many members continue to hope that formal negotiations will take place in the Conference, a number of members have recently suggested that alternative arrangements should be explored.

As a first step, I am wondering whether you could commence an informal process before you agree to formal negotiations on the fissile material treaty within the Conference. It could simply be a basic process to educate each other and build trust, which will inform and facilitate the formal process once the Conference adopts its programme of work.

*(continued in French)*

Before concluding, I would like to express my profound gratitude to Sergei Ordzhonikidze, my personal representative and Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, who will soon be leaving the organization. I hold the highest respect for the professionalism and dedication he brought to the critical period in which he has served.

Please accept my best wishes for the success of your work.

**The President:** I thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his statement to the Conference. At this point I shall suspend the formal meeting to allow for the informal disarmament meeting to be convened for members and observers only.

*The meeting was suspended at 3.25 p.m. and resumed at 4.45 p.m.*

**The President:** Dear colleagues, the plenary meeting is now resumed. We have one housekeeping item to deal with and we also have one speaker on the list – perhaps more, but definitely one. However, before turning to the list of speakers for today, I should like the Conference to take action on additional requests from non-member States to participate in the work of the 2011 session. These requests are contained in addendum 1 to document CD/WP.563, which you should have before you.

Since there are no comments, I take it that the Conference decides to invite the States in question to participate in our work in accordance with the rules of procedure.

*It is so decided.*

In terms of additional speakers for today, I think that we had a very good exchange with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and now I should like to give the floor to the Ambassador of Serbia to speak on behalf of the informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor, Mr. Ambassador.

**Mr. Zvekić (Serbia):** Mr. President, on behalf of the informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament, I should like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. We wish you much success in guiding the Conference towards the early adoption and implementation of a programme of work that fairly and equally addresses all topics on disarmament. The informal group of observer States stands ready to support all of the P6 members this year.

I should also like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Mr. Ordzhonikidze, Secretary-General of the Conference, for their efforts and engagement in revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

As stated earlier, this year is crucial for the Conference. Last year there were efforts to support the work of the Conference, such as the first successful NPT Review Conference

in 10 years, the high-level meeting in New York, relevant General Assembly resolutions and the approval of the START treaty. All point, yet again, towards the urgent need for the Conference to begin its work as soon as possible in order to match international expectations.

Last year was also an active year for the observer States to the Conference. This intensified interest in the work of the Conference shows its potential relevance for global security. It was our first year as a group; we appreciate the positive support from the members of the Conference and we look forward to their continuing support this year. We also take this opportunity to thank many members of the Conference such as those belonging to the Non-Aligned Movement and the European Union, who spoke during the high-level meeting in New York last September in support of the expansion of the membership of the Conference. Such support was clearly reflected in the Chairman's summary of the meeting.

While we respect the need for the substantive work of the Conference to begin at the earliest opportunity, we see that a parallel consideration on the membership issue is possible without distracting the Conference. In this regard, we urge the Conference to appoint a special rapporteur on the expansion of the membership of the Conference, as was done before, in 2001. Such an appointment should be seen as a way to begin serious discussion on this important issue without prejudging its outcome. We believe that this Conference has the will and the capacity to do so.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Serbia for his statement on behalf of the informal group of observer States. You will recall my statement yesterday concerning my priorities when I said that we will continue to consult on the issue of membership expansion. Is there anyone else who would like to take the floor at this time? If not, this concludes our business for today.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held tomorrow, 27 January at 10 a.m. We have a number of speakers on the list already, including Ms. Rose Gottemoeller, Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance of the United States of America, who will address the Conference. We have four or five other speakers on the list too.

If there is no other business this meeting stands adjourned.

*The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.*