
Conference on Disarmament

19 April 2011

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 19 April 2011, at 11.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Wang Qun (China)

The President: I declare open the 1222nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. As you are aware, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, completes his term of office at the end of this month.

Mr. Ordzhonikidze, a Russian national, was appointed to the post of Director-General by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, and took up his post on 1 March 2002. And he was also subsequently appointed by Mr. Kofi Annan as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

A career diplomat, Mr. Ordzhonikidze joined the Soviet diplomatic service in 1969, and served primarily in the Permanent Mission of the Soviet Union and later the Russian Federation to the United Nations in New York and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow. Throughout his diplomatic career, Mr. Ordzhonikidze has served as head of the delegations of the Russian Federation to a great many international conferences and bilateral negotiations. He has also had many works published on international and legal affairs.

For nine years of his tenure, Mr. Ordzhonikidze has been closely linked with the Conference on Disarmament as its Secretary-General and the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

In this capacity, he has discharged his duties with perseverance, authority and professionalism. Indeed, the Conference on Disarmament has benefited greatly from his experience and skilfulness earned during his long-lasting career as an eminent diplomat of his country and then as a high-ranking official of the United Nations, as well as from his extensive knowledge of the intricacies of arms control and disarmament.

His tenacity and dedication in strengthening the role of the Conference as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament and encouraging it to respond to new challenges with determination have earned him the respect of us all. On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, I would like to wish Mr. Ordzhonikidze and his family much success and happiness in the future.

So I propose to give a round of applause to Mr. Ordzhonikidze.

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The President: At this point, I would like to turn to the list of speakers today, and now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of France, on behalf of the Western Group.

Mr. Sirakov (France) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of Ambassador Danon and the delegations that are members of the Western Group, I would like to express our appreciation for the contribution made by Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze to the work of our Conference over the last nine years, and our regret at his departure.

Mr. Secretary-General, you took up this prestigious office on 1 March 2002 after being appointed Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in Geneva. This appointment was a direct result of your knowledge of international law and your experience in multilateral diplomacy and the United Nations system. After graduating from the Moscow Institute of International Relations, you completed your postgraduate studies in international law in 1978 at the Diplomatic Academy. You then entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and were appointed a number of times to the Permanent Mission of the Soviet Union, and then of the Russian Federation, to the United Nations in New York, where in particular you served as Deputy Permanent Representative. You also worked in Moscow in the International Legal Department and the Department of International Organizations before being promoted to the role of Deputy Minister of

Foreign Affairs. You have therefore served as the head of your country's delegation on many occasions at international conferences and bilateral negotiations. In addition, you have had a number of works published on legal affairs and major international issues.

Since arriving in Geneva as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, you have personified the continuity of the work of this forum and worked alongside more than 55 Presidents of the Conference, assisting them with your knowledge of the rules and procedures of the Conference, while offering member States your political sense and insight.

That being said, personifying continuity did not mean that you resigned yourself to the deadlock with which we have been confronted for far too long, but had the courage on many occasions to denounce the stalemate in the Conference. Encouraged by the declarations of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, you urged all member States to set aside their political differences and show flexibility so that the Conference could fulfil its role as the unique multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. You also quite rightly reminded us that any international institution has to produce results if it wishes to remain legitimate in the eyes of the international community. Furthermore, you played a major role in the preparations for the high-level meeting on 24 September 2010 on revitalizing the work of the Conference.

We are very grateful for your committed service with us and for the encouragement you gave to stimulate our debates. We are sorry to see you leave and we wish you and your family much happiness and success.

The President: I would now like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Mexico, on behalf of the G-21.

Ms. Jáquez Huacuja (Mexico): The Group of 21 wishes to express its appreciation for the years that Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze served as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament. The Group recognizes Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze's assistance to the Conference and its Presidents in the organization of this body's work. The Group of 21 wishes Mr. Ordzhonikidze the best of luck in his new endeavours, and takes this opportunity to extend its support to the new Secretary-General of the Conference and wish him success.

In this regard, the Group of 21 reiterates its commitment to the work of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating disarmament body.

The President: I now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Kazakhstan, on behalf of the Eastern European Group. You have the floor.

Mr. Tileuberdi (Kazakhstan): It is a great honour for me to take the floor on behalf of the Eastern European Group at this special plenary meeting to bid farewell to His Excellency Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze.

First of all, let me convey deep gratitude and heartfelt appreciation from each distinguished delegation of our Group to Mr. Ordzhonikidze for his serious engagement, competent leadership and tireless efforts shown in his capacity as the United Nations Office at Geneva Director-General and the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

I believe that all distinguished colleagues present here and many of our predecessors have good memories of the relationship that we have enjoyed with Mr. Ordzhonikidze over the last nine years. We are especially grateful for his openness to listen to each of us and his efforts to reach out to all.

As we know, the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. And the United Nations Office at Geneva Director-General, as Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the United Nations

Secretary-General to the Conference is responsible for overseeing the support and assistance provided to it.

In this regard, let me say that Mr. Ordzhonikidze has made every effort in generating political will towards that universal goal. He has served with a professionalism, loyalty and impartiality as a high official of the United Nations.

I have to commend Mr. Ordzhonikidze for his diplomatic skills and knowledge as well as constructive ideas to stimulate the work of this Conference. Our special thanks for his patience in that respect.

Finally, we would like to say that it was a great pleasure to work with Mr. Ordzhonikidze, and we wish him all the best in his further endeavours.

The President: I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of China.

Mr. Li Yang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, the Chinese delegation endorses the comments just made by all our colleagues in praise of the distinguished Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Ordzhonikidze. For many years, as the Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Director-General of the United Nations Office in Geneva and Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Ordzhonikidze has made important contributions to and tireless efforts for the promotion of the international arms control and disarmament process and the maintenance of international peace and security, and for this China would like to express its deep appreciation and gratitude. We are convinced that Mr. Ordzhonikidze should undoubtedly be proud of his abundant leadership abilities and a diplomatic career full of achievements. As you all know, for a long time now Mr. Ordzhonikidze has consistently given full play to his outstanding leadership abilities with a spirit of professionalism, integrity and dedication, and has provided timely, effective and valuable support and assistance to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Relying on his extensive diplomatic experience, he has put forward many valuable suggestions for the work of the Conference, winning the respect of the member States and greatly benefiting us. Whenever the Conference has faced difficulties, he has always worked in close cooperation with member States and made great joint efforts with them to promote the early start of substantive work by the Conference. The Chinese delegation has had the honour of engaging in positive and pleasant cooperation with Mr. Ordzhonikidze and the Conference on Disarmament secretariat led by him. During Mr. Ordzhonikidze's term of office, he and the secretariat gave the Chinese delegation a great deal of useful assistance and left many fond memories. We are very sorry to see him leave office. In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to wish Mr. Ordzhonikidze further success in his future career. I wish him and his family health and happiness in the years to come.

The President: I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation. You have the floor, Ambassador.

Mr. Loshchinin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We extend a heartfelt welcome to our distinguished compatriot Sergei Alexandrovich Ordzhonikidze, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on disarmament matters. We have every reason to be proud of your outstanding achievements.

You have played a substantial role in the success of so many international forums, including most recently the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the Global Nuclear Security Summit in Washington and the high-level meeting on multilateral disarmament in New York.

You have been untiring in your efforts to bring the Conference on Disarmament out of its deadlock and in supporting the adoption of a balanced programme of work. You have convincingly explained the nuances of the Conference's rules of procedure to us with patience and, where necessary, you managed to get us back on the right track when sometimes in this conference room our passions got the better of us.

Of course, I cannot fail to mention that Mr. Ordzhonikidze is a shining example of the Russian school of diplomacy. As a highly qualified specialist on international law, he has been active and successful in so many international forums, undertaking to promote legal standards and principles in order to address the issues of our time, from the primacy of human rights to security in outer space. As the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Mr. Ordzhonikidze was in charge of and guided Russian delegations at many multilateral forums.

However, in the life of every diplomat and in the life of any high-ranking international civil servant, there comes a time when you have to bid farewell to colleagues, associates and friends.

I sincerely wish you the very best in terms of health, happiness and love – especially as we come up to Easter which is the most important holiday celebrated in the Russian Federation.

Back in Moscow you have a large and loving family and many friends and comrades who are waiting for you to return. I am sure that your wealth of experience and considerable knowledge will remain much sought after, not only back home but also internationally.

I wish you every success and until we meet again.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador. And now I give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Switzerland.

Mr. Lauber (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of Switzerland, the host country today, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze for the invaluable contribution that he has made to the Conference on Disarmament over the last nine years.

His dual role as Secretary-General of the Conference on the one hand, and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference on the other, is entirely consistent with the sincere and sustained interest which he is known to have for disarmament.

Over the same period, that is to say since 2002, he has taken on additional important responsibilities in his position as Director-General of the United Nations Office in Geneva.

As the host country, we have particularly appreciated the way in which he has successfully carried out his various responsibilities.

In guiding the Secretariat of the Conference, Mr. Ordzhonikidze has facilitated and given strong support to the work carried out by States, and has also been proactive in encouraging efforts made not only by member States but also by the entire Geneva disarmament community, in particular by promoting interaction with non-governmental organizations. Outside of the Conference on Disarmament, his support has been decisive in the progress that has been made here in Geneva in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation.

I would like to note here the essential role played by the Conference on Disarmament. It is a nucleus which has in its orbit a large number of processes linked to disarmament which have yielded major achievements and results.

We have particularly appreciated Mr. Ordzhonikidze's encouragement of delegations to agree on a programme of work, as well as the new impetus that he provided to the process of revitalizing disarmament mechanisms.

His approach has brought new value to our work and has reflected the long and valuable diplomatic experience which he acquired in the service of both his country and the United Nations.

We thank him warmly for his committed and constructive ideas which have helped to stimulate the work of this Conference. Although there has been progress under his leadership, we regret the lack of results in the negotiations of the last few years and we are convinced that Mr. Ordzhonikidze shares this feeling.

We are sorry to see Mr. Ordzhonikidze leave us and we wish him every success in his future projects.

Immediately after this meeting, I have the pleasure to invite all the delegations, whether members of the Conference or not, and also Government and non-governmental representatives to a reception in honour of our Secretary-General. Conference officers and interpreters are also cordially invited to come to the reception.

The President: I now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Slovenia, on behalf of the informal group of observer States.

Mr. Kovačič (Slovenia): On behalf of the informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament, I wish to express our most heartfelt appreciation to Ambassador Sergei Ordzhonikidze for his distinguished service to the United Nations as Director-General of the United Nations Office in Geneva and as Secretary-General of the Conference.

We applaud his leadership in guiding the secretariat in support of our work in the Conference and other disarmament processes. We particularly appreciate his assistance and encouragement to our group in the cause of membership expansion. We also look forward to his continuing engagement with the disarmament community and the work of the United Nations. His experience and counsel can continue to guide us. We, the representatives of the informal group, remain committed to our goal of expansion.

Our group would like to bid Mr. Ordzhonikidze a fond farewell, and to wish him every success in his future endeavours.

The President: I now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria. You have the floor, Ambassador.

Mr. Idriss (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have asked to take the floor in Arabic, a language that we have not heard yet today, in order to join previous speakers, especially the representative of Mexico who spoke on behalf of the Group of 21, in conveying on my own behalf and on behalf of my country's delegation our deep gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, who will leave us shortly, for his admirable efforts since taking office on 19 March 2002. As the former President of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Markku Reimaa of Finland, put it on 21 March 2002 in a statement welcoming the appointment of Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament: "I am sure that the Conference will benefit immensely from his vast experience and his diplomatic skills."

Mr. Ordzhonikidze has not disappointed the hopes invested in him. On the contrary, the skill and dedication with which he has discharged his responsibilities merit our full respect. His performance is not surprising, since he spent his entire professional life in the diplomatic service, accumulating valuable experience during his years as a Russian diplomat. He was thus well prepared for his move to the area of multilateral cooperation, in

which he has occupied the exalted posts of Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva and Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Ordzhonikidze's wide-ranging experience, his qualifications and his personal qualities have been of immense importance and, as noted by the President of the Conference on Disarmament in 2002, the Conference has benefited from them. Indeed it was in greater need of such attention than other United Nations bodies at the time, and it has been ever since. I should be wanting in my duty if I failed to mention on this occasion that Mr. Ordzhonikidze has successfully performed the tasks entrusted to him. We have all witnessed his highly professional endeavours over the years to enable the Conference to achieve its lofty goals. He has been an unstinting source of wise advice, and his pertinent guidance has been of great importance. We are convinced that his efforts stemmed from his unwavering aspiration to enable the Conference to pursue and intensify its work as the sole multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament issues.

Finally, Mr. Ordzhonikidze, we wish you and your family health and happiness. We are confident that you will remain in touch and that you will follow the work of our Conference and keep track of disarmament issues. The efforts you have expended will no doubt enjoy a considerable share of recognition on the part of the international community when the Conference, God willing, achieves its goal, hopefully in the near future.

The President: I now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Sri Lanka. You have the floor, Ambassador.

Ms. Senewiratne (Sri Lanka): Mr. President, at the outset, I wish to express our appreciation to you for convening the Conference on Disarmament in special session to pay tribute to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, and associate myself with the statement of the representative of the G-21 delivered by the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Ordzhonikidze's long and distinguished diplomatic career representing the former Soviet Union and subsequently the Russian Federation is well known. On the multilateral side, he served in missions both in New York and Geneva, subsequently being appointed as the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Such experience bears ample testimony to his illustrious career in the diplomatic service. We are of the view that the United Nations Office at Geneva in general, and the Conference on Disarmament in particular, are privileged to avail of his vast experience during the nine-year tenure of Mr. Ordzhonikidze here in Geneva.

My delegation welcomes and appreciates the contribution Mr. Ordzhonikidze has made to the Conference, especially in maintaining the subject at high priority to the United Nations Secretary-General. Undoubtedly, this constructive approach of Mr. Ordzhonikidze to the work of the Conference at the highest level culminated in the United Nations Secretary-General's addressing this august body earlier this year. His efforts in this regard were exemplified with the organizing of the High-level Meeting of all United Nations Member States in September last year on revitalizing the work of the Conference and taking forward the multilateral disarmament negotiations.

On a personal note, I have observed the humanness of Mr. Ordzhonikidze, which has been amply demonstrated through his subtle sense of humour. He will be missed. I take this opportunity to warmly felicitate Mr. Ordzhonikidze on a highly successful tenure and wish him the very best in his future endeavours.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador. Also, we wish to thank you for the kind words you addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Iran. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Sajjadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, let me associate myself with the statement made by Mexico on behalf of the G-21. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the manner that you are conducting your presidency over the Conference on Disarmament. I appreciate your efforts in convening this meeting outside the schedule of the meetings of the Conference to provide the opportunity for the delegations to express their appreciation for many years of hard work of His Excellency Mr. Ordzhonikidze.

We attach great importance to the Conference as the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. We have to preserve the nature, role and purpose of this august body with the top priority of nuclear disarmament. Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze served almost nine years as Secretary-General of the Conference. During this period, he has provided much assistance to the Conference and its Presidents. Due to the lack of political will for the resumption of nuclear disarmament, the Conference could not start its formal task of negotiation. However, the valuable work and patience of Mr. Ordzhonikidze is commendable. We wish Mr. Ordzhonikidze all the best in his new life, and take this opportunity to extend our support to the new Secretary-General of the Conference.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador, for your statement, and also for the kind words you addressed to the Chair.

Would any other delegation like to take the floor? It does not seem to be the case.

It is now my privilege to give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze.

Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): Thank you very much, Mr. President, for giving me the floor, and thank you very much for all those who spoke and all those who came here, and especially my colleagues and friends, Ambassadors from different countries, to support me in my tenure. I am still there for a couple of weeks as Secretary-General, though I don't expect the Conference will create a miracle. I appreciate all your help, assistance, your sympathy, your flexibility, your willingness. I especially appreciate the Secretary-General who gave me this important job, a job as his representative to the CD and the Secretary-General of the Conference. I believe that was one of the most difficult and challenging jobs in the United Nations.

Indeed, this is my final plenary meeting in my capacity as the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to the Conference. I value this opportunity to express to all of you my appreciation for your very professional collaboration. I admit that I never felt myself distracted sitting here on the podium, distracted from you, from your positions, your preoccupations, your concerns, your willingness to do something. I always felt that it is my duty to help you in a case that was permissible to me in that capacity that I have.

It has been a privilege to serve the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations and the cause of multilateral disarmament over these nine years. You all know that this is a cause in which I believe strongly and that I am passionate about. That is why the Conference is both my passion and, of course, it is my pain. It is a cause that I am committed to because it is essential for a safer and more prosperous world.

I will reveal something to you. Every year the Secretary-General has his compact with all Under-Secretaries-General, promoting United Nations goals, and the Under-Secretaries-General should put down the actions that they have to take and what they have achieved, what they have not achieved, what they achieved partially and so on and so forth. For a number of years, I was one of the top managers of the United Nations, according to unofficial estimates, and only this year I was not on the very top because in the part of my compact, which is about 50 pages, I said that I will try my best to promote the Conference

on Disarmament. The mark was negative. So I take all the responsibility on myself, so you don't worry, it's my negative approach that prevented you from agreeing on this issue.

I believe that multilateral disarmament is fundamental if the United Nations is to achieve its overall mission. And the Conference on Disarmament is a key to that effort. The ambassadors in this room carry a tremendous responsibility on behalf of the international community and the human family. It is as simple as that. And I understand why it is not that easy to have progress in the Conference on Disarmament, because we are not adopting the resolutions that other organs adopt, and the resolutions that nobody remembers in a couple of years. But we are fighting for resolutions at the United Nations. Here, we are not fighting for those resolutions. Here great political problems are at stake, and sometimes it is a problem of survival to many States, problems of military-political significance that are far-reaching.

Disarmament and non-proliferation bring stability, build confidence among States and can be part of establishing conditions conducive to development. With annual military expenditures over \$1.5 trillion, and in the wake of an economic and financial crisis that affected millions of vulnerable people around the world, we have an obligation to assess critically this spending, and our activity in particular.

The Conference on Disarmament has potential to be the driving force and the linchpin in multilateral disarmament. The Conference has produced landmark treaties that have promoted international security while demonstrating that multilateral collaboration can serve the global and national interest alike. It is a source of disappointment for me that this undisputed record of achievement is being overshadowed by the stalemate that we are experiencing today at the Conference.

I have to be blunt — as I have been many times before from this podium and the podium in New York — and say to you that not only the credibility of the Conference is at risk; its very future is at risk.

It is clear that the voices advocating taking some of the work of the Conference into other arenas are growing stronger, and they are increasingly being listened to. This development is a reflection of the deep frustration and disappointment of the international community at the inability of the Conference to overcome its differences and show genuine political will.

There is no doubt that the adoption of a programme of work in 2009 — and I am especially thankful for that to the Ambassador of Algeria, who showed his top-level diplomatic skills in adopting this programme of work — this programme of work represented a highlight and indeed a proud moment for me during my time in Geneva, because I was helping him and all those who tried to adopt this programme. This showed the unique potential of the Conference when the right balance of compromise and consensus had been found.

I commend the Conference for the political will and vision, leadership and sense of responsibility that the programme of work represented. And I most sincerely hope that the same can be found again to rejuvenate this achievement.

I have enjoyed working with you to further the cause of multilateral disarmament. It is our common cause. I never felt somebody who is outside of this room, I felt as one of you. I felt that your success is my success, and your lack of success is my problem. Maybe the Secretary-General was right putting me a negative mark. I encourage you — as I have done many times over the past years — to always keep in mind this vision of a more secure world and to find innovative ways to allow the Conference to take its work forward.

I remain convinced that the world needs the Conference on Disarmament. People across the world look to the Conference to take its responsibility very seriously, and to use

its potential to the full. Just as the Conference has a proud history of accomplishments that have helped to make the world more secure, as I just mentioned, I am convinced that it also has a proud future ahead – if its members wish it to be so, of course.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear ambassadors, dear colleagues, dear friends, I wish the Conference on Disarmament and its members all the best in taking forward this crucial work for international peace and security. As a diplomat, I am not only positive, I am optimistic because my favourite proverb is that any diplomat, if he is a real diplomat, should be optimistic. Otherwise, he or she shouldn't be a diplomat, especially if it concerns a multilateral process where more than two or just a few participants are acting. In our case, on 65 member States depends the success of the Conference. I wish you all to be optimistic and don't lose sight that you are sitting here in Geneva in one of the most important organs of the United Nations system, and in general, one of the most important organs that we have in multilateral affairs. I don't want to somehow denigrate other United Nations activities, but as I told you, disarmament is everything in this world. Disarmament is peace, disarmament is confidence, disarmament is friendly relations and disarmament is also development.

So you have on your shoulders an enormous burden. You have to be up to this task before you. I wish you very well, and I hope you will find a solution in this or another way. Remember, I am retiring as Under-Secretary-General, as Director-General, as a Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Secretary-General of this Conference, but your Director-General is watching you very carefully! And I'm going to write about my favourite passion and pain, the Conference on Disarmament — some articles, do some lecturing — because I am truly a believer in this disarmament process. So I wish you very well in that.

The President: Thank you, Mr. Ordzhonikidze, for your farewell speech. This concludes our business for today in this Council chamber. This plenary session stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12 p.m