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# Conference on Disarmament

24 May 2011

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 24 May 2011, at 11.10 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Wang Qun .....(China)

**The President:** I declare open the 1224th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Following the formal decision taken by the Conference on 17 May 2011 with respect to the appointment of Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and my subsequent letter sent, in my capacity as President of the Conference, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon informed me on 19 May that he had appointed Mr. Tokayev, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and as his personal representative thereto.

I therefore have the honour and the pleasure to congratulate Mr. Tokayev, on his appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and as Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon. We in the Council Chamber have kept this seat warm for Mr. Tokayev and much appreciate his coming to meet us here earlier. The Secretary-General is a well-known statesman with much political foresight and sagacity as well as enormous diplomatic experience. We hope that he will not only bring his wealth of experience to this position but also new impetus and vitality to the Conference on Disarmament, this august body, especially at this critical juncture. In the meantime, I would also like to assure him, on behalf of the Conference, of our support in the execution of his duties.

Before turning to the list of speakers for today, I would first like to give the floor to our Secretary-General, Mr. Tokayev.

**Mr. Tokayev** (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): It is a great pleasure to address this distinguished body in my new function as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament. I am grateful for your support of my nomination and I stand ready, together with the secretariat, to support the membership in its activities.

Incidentally, I had the honour to address the Conference some nine years ago in this same chamber. At that time I stated that "it is necessary to commence work in parallel, conducting negotiations on some issues and beginning discussions on the possibility of pursuing negotiations on other issues. Otherwise, the Conference on Disarmament will lose its credibility and, afterwards, we will have to seek other ways of solving the relevant problems."

Now I have to concede that, since that time, not much has evolved. We have seen a number of cleverly drafted proposals to commence substantive work but, unfortunately, none has led to breaking the political impasse that this body is confronted with.

There is no doubt that the adoption of a programme of work in May 2009 represented a milestone in the work of the Conference. It showed the unique potential of the Conference when the right balance of compromise and consensus is found.

I commend the Conference for the political will, vision and leadership that the programme of work represented. But again, even such an important proposal went astray through procedural discussions that seemed endless.

As the United Nations Secretary-General has said, the continued deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament has ominous implications for international security. While States and civil society are on the move, this body has remained stagnant.

The successful Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in May of last year was an important achievement. Bilateral efforts are coming to fruition, such as the new START treaty. But the Conference on Disarmament, as you all know, ended its 2010 session without starting substantive work.

This fact is very disappointing for the whole international community.

I must indicate that half of this year has been very constructive, due to the efforts of the successive presidencies of Canada, Chile and China. I congratulate and thank them for this. I still hope that you, distinguished Ambassadors, will use this positive atmosphere to build further momentum to start substantive work in the Conference.

I have arrived in Geneva from a country that voluntarily renounced its nuclear arsenal, joined the NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and closed down its nuclear testing ground.

I came here at a crucial moment in the life of the Conference. There is obvious disagreement on how to proceed in the future.

Some underscore the important position of the Conference as the sole multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament, while others think that, in the absence of substantive work, the resources dedicated to it might be better used elsewhere.

Calls are being clearly heard to take issues outside the Conference. While this may be a way to advance some issues, such an approach will seriously affect the Conference on Disarmament and make this body irrelevant.

The General Assembly will hold a debate on the appropriate issues in July and has placed the item on its agenda for its next session in September.

We all must be realistic and see the truth, regardless of whether it pleases or troubles us. If this year ends again without agreement on a programme of work, the discussions on the future of the Conference at the General Assembly might be very complicated.

It is against this sobering backdrop that I assume my functions as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament. I was hoping I could have been a bit more optimistic. But still, I am more optimistic than pessimistic, because I really look forward to your wisdom and sense of responsibility, and I am also hopeful about your diplomatic creativity. It is time to look at disarmament issues in the broader political context of sustaining global security.

The latest op-ed from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, which was published only some days ago in a number of newspapers around the world, including *Le Temps* in Switzerland, is yet another clear message and urgent call for the membership to overcome its difficulties.

Mr. Ban Ki-moon was absolutely eloquent and blunt in his assessment of the present situation in the Conference on Disarmament. He indicated the real controversy between the tendency in the world and what we see here. "The tide of disarmament is rising", he said, "yet the Conference on Disarmament is in danger of sinking".

Nonetheless, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has made several calls for the Conference to overcome its differences, including for a high-level meeting.

His five-point proposal needs to be taken very seriously and considered as a platform for starting substantive work.

He has also tasked his Advisory Board to look into the matter, and I understand there will be a possibility for the Conference to interact with the Board during its second session here in Geneva at the end of June.

That is why I believe that the Conference on Disarmament still has the capacity to drag itself out of its impasse. For this goal to be attained, deliberations and discussions must be complemented with negotiations.

As a true supporter of multilateral disarmament, I will take it upon myself to do everything in my power to help you to preserve this valued body from falling into disarray.

It would indeed be extremely unfortunate if this body, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, which has seen so many successes and contributions to international security, were not able to overcome its differences.

So, you all should be winners, dear Ambassadors, not losers. Diplomatic history shows that winners are not judged; they are hailed. Losers are to be blamed.

I still trust in collective wisdom and in your sense of responsibility. I am eager to work closely with you.

**The President:** I thank the distinguished Secretary-General for his statement, in particular for his pertinent and thought-provoking observations. I would also like to thank him for his commitment to strengthening the Conference on Disarmament, this august body. I now would like to turn to the list of speakers for today.

The following delegations have requested the floor: Kazakhstan, on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States; Morocco, on behalf of the Group of 21; France, on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States; China; Switzerland, as the host country; Indonesia, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); Iraq; the Philippines, on behalf of the informal group of observer States; the Russian Federation; Belarus; and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Kazakhstan.

**Mr. Tilieuberdi** (Kazakhstan): Today I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

The Group expresses its most cordial welcome to Mr. Tokayev, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, and warmly congratulates him on the occasion of his appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and as Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference on Disarmament.

We know Mr. Tokayev as a staunch advocate of global nuclear disarmament. It is the right time to recall his personal engagement in the process of accession by Kazakhstan to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the establishment of the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone, especially as in 1996, on behalf of the Government of Kazakhstan, Mr. Tokayev signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The Group firmly believes that his diplomatic background and impressive political experience enable him to fulfil all expectations.

For many years we have witnessed continuous efforts to overcome stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. The Group stresses that the Conference on Disarmament continues to be a unique and the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body.

In that sense, the Group believes that, with the sustained engagement and leadership of the Secretary-General, backed by the responsible and flexible approaches of all member States, we will succeed in revitalizing multilateral disarmament.

In turn, our Group pledges its full support and cooperation to work towards achieving nuclear disarmament.

**Mr. Hilale** (Morocco): I am honoured to take the floor on behalf of the Group of 21, and congratulate Mr. Tokayev on his appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, which has been endorsed by the Conference.

The Group of 21 is certain that the qualifications, experience and proven diplomatic skills of Mr. Tokayev and his remarkable multilateral career will be of significant value in supporting the work of the Conference. The Group of 21 wants to express its full support and cooperation to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament in his endeavours.

The Group of 21 reaffirms that nuclear disarmament remains its highest priority, and reiterates its full readiness to start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time, including a nuclear weapons convention.

**Mr. Danon** (France) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of all my colleagues who are members of the Western Group, I too wish to convey our very warm congratulations to Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev on his confirmation in the post of Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The career path that has led Mr. Tokayev to Geneva speaks for itself. I refer, in particular, to the successive cabinet posts he has held while in the service of his country, notably in his capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan and as Prime Minister. I refer also to his experience in parliamentary practice, which he was able to develop as a result of his election as President of the Senate within the Kazakh Parliament.

In performing these many functions he has unquestionably become well versed in decision-making and compromise. These are qualities that will stand him in good stead here within the Conference on Disarmament, where diplomacy sometimes appears to have been abandoned when it comes to resolving differences. Therefore, buoyed by the hope and confidence that we place in his authority, we welcome Mr. Tokayev, while at the same time assuring him that we stand ready to support all his efforts to breathe new life into the Conference.

**Mr. Li Yang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, the Chinese delegation would like to congratulate and welcome Mr. Tokayev as he assumes his post as Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Tokayev, who is from Kazakhstan, holds a doctorate in political science and is a well-known expert in international affairs with profound knowledge and a mastery of his field. In Kazakhstan he has served as the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister, President of the Senate within the Kazakh Parliament, and in other important roles, and thus has extensive experience in administration and outstanding leadership skills. Not only has he made steadfast efforts to develop bilateral relations between China and Kazakhstan and promoted mutually beneficial cooperation and peaceful coexistence between Kazakhstan and other countries, but by using his in-depth understanding of and personal experience in multilateral diplomacy and international arms control and disarmament activities, including the Conference on Disarmament, he has also made significant contributions to the promotion of multilateralism and the safeguarding of international peace and security.

China has full confidence in Mr. Tokayev's diplomatic experience, professional expertise and leadership skills. We are confident that under his outstanding leadership, the Conference is sure to overcome any difficulties that lie ahead and will continue to fulfil its important mission as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and its obligations to safeguard international security.

The Chinese delegation is pleased that the new Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament is from China's important and friendly neighbour, Kazakhstan. Using the

relationship between China and Kazakhstan and the current situation of multilateral disarmament work as a starting point, China will actively support the work of the Secretary-General and will continue to maintain good cooperation with the Secretary-General and the secretariat under his leadership, in order to promote the early start of substantive work within the Conference on Disarmament.

**Mr. Lauber** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of Switzerland, host country to the Conference on Disarmament, I welcome the new Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, and congratulate him on the assumption of his new functions within the Conference.

We appreciate the fact that our new Secretary-General has first-hand experience in the field of disarmament and is familiar with the challenges we face in various areas that relate to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation.

The Conference on Disarmament has the mandate and the means needed to take up many of these challenges. Yet it is obvious that, in the past few years, the Conference has not been in a position to fulfil its principal function, which is to negotiate treaties on disarmament and non-proliferation.

Switzerland believes that it is incumbent, first and foremost, upon the 65 member States of the Conference to shoulder their responsibilities and take decisive action to find a way out of this impasse. The Secretary-General cannot relieve us of this responsibility, but in his capacity as Secretary-General, he has an important role to play in the success of this Conference, and we are counting on his commitment and advice.

In particular, I encourage him to remind us regularly and unequivocally, as he did a few moments ago, of our responsibilities as member States of the Conference, and to give us his advice and recommendations on how we can revive, and revitalize the work of the Conference.

We hope that, with his commitment and the support of an effective and skilled secretariat, the Conference on Disarmament will get down to work and fulfil its mandate through the negotiation of disarmament and non-proliferation treaties in order to improve global security.

I wish him an excellent start here at the Conference on Disarmament and assure him once more that he can rely on the full support of Switzerland as host country to and member State of the Conference on Disarmament.

**Mr. Percaya** (Indonesia): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the ASEAN member States in the Conference on Disarmament, namely, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Viet Nam. The ASEAN observer States in the Conference on Disarmament, namely, the Philippines and Thailand, also associate themselves with this statement.

The aforementioned ASEAN member States would also like to associate themselves with the statement made by Morocco on behalf of the Group of 21.

Allow me, at the outset, on behalf of ASEAN, to congratulate Mr. Tokayev on his appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and as Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference on Disarmament.

We are confident that, with the benefit of a wealth of experience at a senior level in Government, in addition to his diplomatic skills and thorough knowledge of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Tokayev will be of significant value to the Conference.

Let me also take this opportunity to reiterate that nuclear disarmament has always been our utmost priority and that we have always been committed to efforts towards the attainment of a world free of nuclear weapons.

We believe that pursuing nuclear disarmament was always, and should continue to be, the rationale for the establishment of the Conference on Disarmament.

It is regrettable that the stalemate has prevented this body from commencing any negotiation on substantive issues in its agenda.

We have always been supportive of the work of the Conference on Disarmament. In this regard, we would like to reiterate our full support and express our readiness to continue consultations on any proposal aimed at fostering consensus on the programme of work.

We also support the appointment of a special coordinator for the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament.

It is our belief that this engagement and expansion will create the much-needed political impetus that will contribute to the progress of the Conference on Disarmament's work.

**Mr. Alhakim** (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, my country's delegation supports the statement of the Group of 21. First of all, I congratulate you warmly on the assumption by your friendly fellow country of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and emphasize that you have the full support and cooperation of the delegation of Iraq in discharging your functions. We have every confidence that with your skills and knowledge, you will lead our work to fruitful results. I take this opportunity to offer my congratulations to Mr. Tokayev on his appointment to the post of Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament; we are confident that Mr. Tokayev's professional qualifications and the diplomatic skills and experience will be of great value and will contribute a great deal to the Conference, in particular as the Conference on Disarmament is in need of new blood to bring it back to work.

As you know, Iraq was elected to preside over the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission that was held in New York from 4 to 21 April 2011; the task entrusted to Iraq at that time was highly significant. Iraq for the first time assumed the presidency of a forum on disarmament having been, since 1991, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and the sanctions imposed upon it because of the aggressive armament policies pursued by the former regime. Today, since the new Iraq has pledged to live in peace with itself and its neighbours and has succeeded in bringing to an end the mechanisms and restrictions imposed upon it by the Security Council for reasons known to all, it has been able, with the help and support of friends, to bring these restrictions to an end with the adoption of Security Council resolution 1957 (2010), and has begun taking steps to return to the international community as a country that supports and is active in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Government of my country believes in the importance of the work of the Disarmament Commission, as the specialized deliberative body in the field of disarmament. It is one of the most important means of achieving and maintaining international peace and security. Furthermore, the work that must be accomplished within the Disarmament Commission is of considerable importance and influence on the progress of the international community towards achieving disarmament objectives. We must recall the successes achieved by the commission during the course of its work, including reaching consensus in 1999 on guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and on principles relating to conventional arms control.

The Commission elected the chairs of the three working groups: Norway was elected to chair Working Group I, related to agenda item 4, entitled "Recommendations for

achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons". Nigeria was elected to chair Working Group II, on agenda item 5, entitled "Elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade". Venezuela was elected to chair Working Group III, on agenda item 6, entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons". At this year's session of the Disarmament Commission, delegations have participated actively in discussions and the chairs of the three working groups performed extremely well, working hard to bring viewpoints closer in order to produce papers that would form a sound basis for future discussions. There were also some indicators that there is progress in the work of the Disarmament Commission in respect of its experience over 11 years. The President of the session reaffirmed the importance of maintaining the momentum achieved by the Commission this year by reviewing its working methods and playing a more active role as one of the major disarmament mechanisms. The delegations commended the role played by Iraq during its presidency of the Disarmament Commission session in bringing together viewpoints with a focus on the common denominators linking the positions of States, and avoiding going into details that would bring conflicting viewpoints to the fore.

During the substantive session of the Commission in 2011, no documents were submitted. The Disarmament Commission adopted the reports of its subsidiary bodies and the conclusions contained therein by consensus. No recommendations were submitted, and it was agreed to transmit the texts of those reports to the General Assembly. The Commission adopted as a whole the report that it would submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

On this occasion, my country's delegation would like to affirm its position on a number of disarmament issues.

My country's Government believes firmly in the responsibility to respect and implement disarmament and non-proliferation conventions and treaties, and reaffirms its respect for international arrangements on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. Moreover, the Government of Iraq attaches great importance to the issue of disarmament in general. Iraq has therefore acceded to all of the major disarmament treaties and affirms that it is fully committed to implementing all of the provisions and meeting all of the requirements contained therein, including the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. Furthermore, it has been a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty since 1969.

Iraq has also signed the model additional protocol to the International Atomic Energy Agency comprehensive safeguards regime, in addition to the Anti-Personnel-Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Furthermore, Iraq acceded to the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, so becoming the 131st party thereto, on 11 August 2010, and presented its initial declaration on 30 March 2011. Moreover, the Government of Iraq has agreed to accede to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

The Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, is at a highly critical turning point. In this regard, Iraq attaches particular importance to the Conference on Disarmament. It is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and has a record of previous successes. Therefore, we need to redouble our efforts in order to reach agreement on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that responds to the concerns of all member States, in accordance with the rules of procedure, and to make progress on the issues before us relating to international peace and security.

Nuclear disarmament must remain a top priority of the Conference. In accordance with the special status granted to it in the final document of the First Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament in 1978, in addition to the conclusions of the

International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of 1996, the destructive nature of these weapons means that their complete and permanent removal is necessary for the survival of humanity, and their continuing existence continues to pose a threat to international peace and security. Hence we call for negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time frame, including a convention on nuclear weapons.

Although positive steps have been taken recently in the international arena, the fact that the greater part of nuclear arsenals are being maintained and that new types of these weapons and their delivery systems are being developed continues to be a source of concern. We have to agree on the need to develop a binding international legal instrument that will provide assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, and to identify the means whereby progress towards this objective can be made. Although negative security assurances are a key element and an important step along this path, besides being a fair and legitimate demand of non-nuclear States that have voluntarily renounced any nuclear military options by acceding to the Treaty, they cannot be considered as a substitute for the objective of comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

The continued production of fissile material threatens both the nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament processes. Iraq supports the elaboration of a multilateral, non-discriminatory, internationally verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

On this occasion, we express our deep concern that an entire year has passed since the action plan pertaining to the Middle East was adopted by the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons without any of the measures contained therein having begun to be implemented, or a facilitator appointed to the Conference, or a host country designated in consultation with the countries of the region. We emphasize that the delay on the part of the international parties concerned, and in particular the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the three depositaries of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, in discharging the obligations with which they were entrusted by the Review Conference is a setback to international efforts aimed at establishing a world free of nuclear weapons and an impediment to any progress in non-proliferation efforts. The delay will cause the Non-Proliferation Treaty in the Middle East region to collapse, and make it unable to provide security for the members of the League of Arab States which are confronted by the dangers of nuclear armament and nuclear proliferation in the Middle East; that situation would make it necessary for these countries to review their policies.

In conclusion, we reiterate our call to achieve the main objective of this Conference by redoubling our efforts, demonstrating flexibility and reaching agreement on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that responds to the concerns of all member States.

**Mr. Garcia** (Philippines): On behalf of the informal group of observer States, it is my honour and privilege to convey our warmest welcome to Mr. Tokayev, our newly appointed Director General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference and Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

We applaud United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his inspired appointment of Mr. Tokayev. Our new Secretary-General brings with him a wealth of experience as former Prime Minister, Senate Chairman and Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan. He has a deep understanding and appreciation of the Conference on Disarmament and disarmament affairs and will certainly bring renewed vigour to the proceedings of the Conference.

The informal group of observer States looks forward to working with Mr. Tokayev and the Presidents of the Conference, particularly on expanding Conference on Disarmament membership. We wish to assure the Secretary-General of our fullest support and extend him our best wishes for the success of his term at the helm of the United Nations Office at Geneva and of the Conference on Disarmament.

Speaking in my national capacity, the delegation of the Philippines wishes to associate itself with the statements given by the distinguished Ambassador of Morocco on behalf of the G21 and by the distinguished Ambassador of Indonesia on behalf of ASEAN.

**Mr. Loshchinin** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation warmly welcomes and supports the appointment to this forum of Mr. Kassym-Jomart Kemelevich Tokayev as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon.

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev is well known in international circles. He has had a long and distinguished career not only as a professional diplomat but also as one of Kazakhstan's outstanding politicians and statesmen. As Minister for Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister, and then President of the Parliament of Kazakhstan, he has done a great deal to strengthen friendship and cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan. We greatly appreciate that and thank him.

Mr. Tokayev, Doctor of Political Sciences, is an authoritative scholar in the field of international relations and author of several books and monographs. As Ambassador, Mr. Tokayev did considerable and fruitful work in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. In the 1990s here, in Geneva, he took part in negotiations on nuclear arms reduction and was a member of the Joint Committee on the Implementation of START I. He has a deep understanding of international peace and security matters, and thus is equally well versed in the specific issues on the agenda and the problems of the Conference on Disarmament.

In connection with Mr. Tokayev's appointment, I cannot omit to make mention of a symbolic event. By a quirk of fate, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, at the time Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, was the first at the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament on 21 March 2002 to congratulate Sergei Ordzhonikidze on taking up the post of Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

Today it is he who takes up this position of responsibility, and we wish him every possible success. We believe that this significant coincidence, a continuity of sorts, will lead to a significant result – approval of the forum's programme of work and an end to its stagnation. The Russian delegation is convinced that we will all find in esteemed Kassym-Jomart Tokayev an experienced, thoughtful and wise leader and partner who, as head of the United Nations Office at Geneva, will contribute greatly to progress in the tasks of disarmament and non-proliferation, and preserve the role of the Conference on Disarmament as the unique and sole multilateral body for disarmament. His confirmation in positions of responsibility already constitutes a positive beginning.

Today, we very much hope that Kassym-Jomart Tokayev will, at 6 p.m., open the exhibition marking the fiftieth anniversary of Yuri Gagarin's space flight. We invite all our colleagues to take part in this event and the friendly reception that will immediately follow the opening of the exhibition.

**Mr. Ponomarev** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Ambassador Khvostov has asked me to read out this message, since he has to personally attend the election of the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization.

Belarus associates itself with the statement made by Kazakhstan on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

My delegation would like to sincerely congratulate Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev on his appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Secretary-General's appointment has come at a critical moment, when the international community's expectations with regard to the resumption of substantive work by this important negotiating body are higher than ever before. My delegation is profoundly convinced that his leadership skills, rich diplomatic experience and vision will enable all that is necessary to be done to restore the prestige and significance of the Conference.

As Ambassador Loshchinin of Russia has already remarked, he was indeed the first speaker to present a statement after the appointment to the position of his predecessor, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze. He stated then his conviction that the Conference on Disarmament, as a symbol of multilateral efforts, could and must prove its effectiveness. We support that view, which is just as relevant today and has found support in his new appointment.

As Ambassador Soares of Brazil noted last week, not a single State in the course of the past years has wished to withdraw from membership of the Conference. In our view, that can mean only one thing – that the hope of renewing negotiations in the Conference remains alive. We do not have the right not to seize that hope.

We would like to assure him of our full support and wish him success in his post.

**Mr. Sajjadi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on the manner in which you are conducting your presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I will also associate myself with the statement of G21 which has just been read by Morocco. It is a great pleasure for me, and I am honoured to take the floor and congratulate Mr. Tokayev on his appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, which has been endorsed by the Conference.

We attach great importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole 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 and the total elimination of all nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time.

I am sure that the excellent multilateral experience and proven diplomatic skills of Mr. Tokayev will be of major importance in his assistance to the Conference. I use this opportunity to assure the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in his endeavours.

**Mr. Chebihi** (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): Ambassador Jazairy would have liked to deliver this statement, but because he is attending another meeting he assigned me to deliver the following statement.

“I wanted to take the floor today to associate myself with the statement of the Group of 21 in welcoming Mr. Tokayev and congratulating him warmly on his appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to this body. You are well aware, Secretary-General of the Conference, that your appointment comes in a highly sensitive context in view of the difficulties confronting the Conference in returning to the path of negotiations and the impact of this situation on our Conference. At a time when the human race and all creatures on Earth are faced with the perils of tremendous nuclear arsenals and dangerous military doctrines, we find ourselves shackled and unable to take any palpable action to vouch for security concerns, in particular for non-nuclear-weapon countries; the fundamental reason for this is the selfish security policies of some. Because this troubling situation persists, the credibility of the Conference is at stake and its future is at a crossroads facing destinations unknown.

“We need the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum in order to face up to the serious challenges that threaten us all. Therefore, we have not lost and will not lose hope, and will continue with our efforts; perhaps our persistence will allow us to reach an innovative formula soon that will permit the Conference to discharge its mandated functions. In this context, we are certain that the Secretary-General of the Conference has the necessary experience, skills and qualities to discharge his functions properly as he accompanies us on our journey, within his powers; the delegation of Algeria will not hesitate to extend the necessary support to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament so that he can discharge his functions in the best possible way.”

**Mr. Kwon Haeryong** (Republic of Korea): First of all, I would like to join my colleagues in conveying a heartfelt welcome to Mr. Tokayev on his appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

We are witnessing a change of Secretaries-General of the Conference on Disarmament amid a long stalemate in the negotiation here. Mr. Tokayev’s home country, Kazakhstan, carried out a number of concrete measures which show its firm intention to strengthen its non-proliferation and disarmament regime by closing down its nuclear arsenal and nuclear test site. Through this, Kazakhstan has set an example in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

As Mr. Tokayev mentioned in his statement, he addressed the Conference on Disarmament nine years ago, and like today, urged it to start the negotiations here as soon as possible.

As you all know, the Conference on Disarmament is at a critical juncture this year. I hope that Mr. Tokayev’s outstanding leadership in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation could give some momentum for the reactivation of the Conference on Disarmament.

**The President:** Would any other delegation like to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

Before concluding this meeting, I would like the Conference to take action on an additional request from a non-member State to participate in our work in 2011. The request emanates from Armenia and is contained in document CD/WP.563/Add.3, which is before you.

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite Armenia to participate in our work in accordance with the rules of procedure? It is so decided.

This concludes our business for this morning in the Council Chamber. The next plenary meeting will take place this afternoon at 3 p.m. At that time, we will have the pleasure of welcoming the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Mr. Ahmet Üzümcü, who will address the Conference.

This formal plenary meeting stands adjourned.

*The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.*