
Conference on Disarmament

6 September 2011

English

Final record of the one thousand two hundred and thirty-eighth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 6 September 2011, at 3.40 p.m.

President: Mr. Rodolfo Reyez Rodríguez (Cuba)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I declare open the 1238th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. We thank the secretariat for the work it has done, and we pay tribute to a group of delegations that are truly willing to fight for peace. They arrived here on time, but in the world of disarmament punctuality is not really a virtue. In any case, we will begin our work with those who are here. Allow me to first give the floor to Mr. Sareva, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, who will provide some explanations about the documents that have been distributed.

Mr. Sareva (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): You should have two papers in front of you. There is section G, which hopefully captures the inputs that we had received by about 2 p.m. today. It combines what was originally in section G, paragraph 25, and, as was provisionally agreed this morning, in paragraphs 8 through 11, which, it was agreed, would be moved under section G.

In addition, the section should include contributions from member State delegations. We have tried to capture those proposals as faithfully as possible, but I apologize in advance if there has been an oversight. You should also have a paper from the Islamic Republic of Iran which we unfortunately got so late that reproduction of section G was already completed.

Now, as I said, we have just compiled the inputs received without yet trying to come up with an amalgamated or merged version, because I think it's important for the secretariat to hear the views expressed by member States.

However, there are clearly some building blocks in section G which could form a basis for a future merged section. If we go paragraph by paragraph, and if paragraph 25 is marked as provisionally adopted, then there is some pretty standard language from years past, but then paragraphs 8 and 8 bis deal with high-level meeting follow-up. In the secretariat's view there would be some scope for merging these two. The second part of 8 bis, moreover, includes a reference to a document that is already listed in paragraph 9 (b), so there is overlap there.

Now, if we proceed to paragraphs 9 bis, 10 and 10 bis, they all deal one way or another with the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, and again there could probably be some scope for merging elements in these three paragraphs, if member States wish to do so.

Finally, paragraphs 10 ter and 11 both deal with the high-level meeting follow-up debate in the General Assembly plenary in late July and the subsequent discussions in the Conference on Disarmament. The second part of 10 ter refers to a document that is already listed in 9 (a). So we might be able to deal with the second part of 10 ter in the list of documents.

I just wanted to highlight the building blocks contained in this compilation. If member States so wish, we stand ready to try to merge these elements, but before doing it we definitely need to hear what is the wish of the member States, because it might well be that there is no agreement on including some of these building blocks.

The President: I think I am going to pass to you the responsibility of being the Cuban Ambassador in Geneva, and probably you would be the one to chair this consultation with us. I think you have a clear picture of things. I thank you very much for your contributions. I think that, as always, they have been very helpful.

My proposal is to try to get through the remaining paragraphs as soon as possible and to focus in the afternoon on what could, I think, be more controversial and require more substantive discussion, that is, section J. Anyway, we are going to listen to everyone. If you have problems with the remaining paragraphs, we are going to devote the time that is

needed to take your concerns into account. We are going to restart consideration of the document, and for doing that we will go back to paragraph 44.

In paragraph 44 we have the same problem of the reference to the three ambassadors, and I hope that the secretariat will have a marvellous formula to help us resolve the situation in the next round of consultations. I prefer to keep consideration of these elements pending. Does any delegation have other concerns regarding paragraph 44? If not, I think that the way to solve the pending question will be along the lines of the paragraphs that we were referring to this morning.

(continued in Spanish)

Let us then move on to section D. The section begins with paragraph 45, which was provisionally adopted, and we then come to paragraph 46, which has the same problem as paragraph 44. Apart from resolving the pending problem on the basis of the proposal by the delegation of Pakistan, does any delegation have any other issue it wishes to raise regarding paragraph 46? If not, let us move on to section E. At this point I would like to ask the delegation of Poland whether it insists on consolidating sections E, F and G. I give the floor to the representative of Poland to speak about the suggestion he made at the previous meeting.

Mr. Zaleski (Poland): I understand that in the meantime there were some revisions to sections E, F and G by the delegation of Belarus, which partly takes care of our concerns. I propose to look at those paragraphs as amended by the delegation of Belarus.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I am grateful for the flexibility shown by the delegation of Poland and for the exchanges taking place among neighbours, which has facilitated our work. Let us continue our review of the paragraphs in order, and we will consider the proposals made by the delegation of Belarus when we get to them. We now turn to paragraph 47. Are there any specific proposals regarding the titles of sections E, F and G? I understand that they are correct as they stand.

We will therefore adopt it provisionally. We thus move on to paragraph 47, also provisionally adopted, and reach paragraph 48, at which point we will hear from the delegation of Belarus.

Well, it seems that the representative of Belarus is satisfied with what he has already proposed. Rather, it is we who should be satisfied to hear this; we should be happy and make him happy. Here there is a pending issue, namely once again the proposal referring to the different presidencies. This issue will remain pending.

We cannot, therefore, adopt the paragraph, but I would nevertheless like to ask about the other proposals. There are two — actually, three — proposals from the delegation of Belarus. There is a proposal to omit the titles when referring to the topics. We have already followed this practice before. The proposals are listed on page 15. On page 16 there are also redrafting proposals by the delegation of Belarus. Does any delegation have difficulty accepting the proposals by the delegation of Belarus for redrafting this paragraph? As that does not appear to be the case, the proposals by the delegation of Belarus are adopted.

The only pending issue is that of reflecting the proposals put forward by the delegation of Pakistan in all the pending paragraphs.

Let us move on to section F and paragraph 49. Are there any difficulties with paragraph 49? As that is not the case, it is adopted.

The pending proposals by Pakistan appear once again in paragraph 50. I am referring to those that have been designated as proposals by Belarus. Are we in a position to accept the amendments to paragraph 50 proposed by the delegation of Belarus? As there are no objections, the paragraph is adopted.

Let us move on to section G of the report and specifically to paragraph 51. Does any delegation wish to speak regarding paragraph 51? As that is not the case, paragraph 51 is adopted.

Paragraph 52 contains two types of amendments from two delegations: those by Pakistan, which will remain pending, and those by Belarus. Can I take it that the amendments proposed by the delegation of Belarus can be adopted as we have done in preceding paragraphs?

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): Mr. President, I have to say that I am a bit confused now. I was under the impression that we would always try to find an identical solution for these paragraphs — in this case, 50, 52 and so on — and that you would go through all of them, so that we would not deal with very small amendments here. I also thought the intention was to try to considerably shorten and avoid repetition, but maybe I missed something. Maybe you could help me to understand the situation better.

The President: I am not sure that I will be able to explain anything to you, but I will try. There are two types of amendments to these three paragraphs. The amendments of Pakistan — starting, I think, with paragraph 37 — involve putting the three ambassadors — Ambassador Marius Grinius, Ambassador Pedro Oyarce and Ambassador Wang Qun — at the same level. This amendment is pending. We are postponing consideration of all those paragraphs.

We also have problems stemming from the first reading of the document, in particular with sections E, F and G, which the delegation of Poland proposed to merge, and where Belarus proposed to find a way to accommodate the concerns and make the wording more accurate. But probably my perception is wrong, because I don't have all the elements. Did you wish to raise any particular concern? You are free to do so.

I don't know if the secretariat has other elements that it would like to share.

Mr. Sareva (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): I believe there is a mistake in paragraph 52 in the sense that the text from “respectively” and so on in the third line until the beginning of the fourth line, including the words “radiological weapons”, should also be struck out if we are to be consistent in terms of addressing the three agenda items and each item alone in paragraphs 48, 50 and 52. This mistake may have confused some of you.

The President: What is the complete proposed solution? The deletion of the titles?

Mr. Sareva (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): We would have paragraph 52 read “in accordance with the schedule of informal meetings suggested by” — and of course we still need to deal with the names issue — “suggested by Ambassador Marius Grinius of Canada, agenda item 7 entitled” — and then we would drop the next line and the first two words from line 4 — “entitled ‘Transparency in armaments’ was considered in a plenary meeting on 17 February 2011”, and then it would continue as it reads here.

The President: I don't know if this has resolved the concern.

Mr. Ponomarev (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, I can only support the secretariat's suggestion.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We all agree on these changes. That being the case, we will adopt the remaining elements, pending a solution to the issues raised in the proposal from the delegation of Pakistan. I will not bang the gavel, because in fact the paragraph has not been adopted in its entirety.

Let us move on to section H, paragraph 53. Does any delegation wish to speak regarding this paragraph? There is a proposal from the delegation of Algeria. Now, I would like to ask the representative of Algeria about the nature of this paragraph, because I see that his proposal refers to 9 bis. I believe it would be best to consider his proposal when we review section G, because it seems to me that, based on the decision made this morning, the contents of the paragraph should be moved to section G. There are no problems with that. Well then, we can adopt paragraph 53. The paragraph is provisionally adopted.

Let us move on to section I, paragraph 54. Are there any comments on this paragraph? If not, then it is also adopted.

Paragraph 55 is adopted.

And, finally, paragraph 56 is provisionally adopted. We will be very happy when they have all been adopted.

We now turn to section E, which I think will require more attention. I believe you listened to the presentation by Mr. Sareva, which I think explained as well as possible the situation and the substantive characteristics of the document. In any case we will consider the document paragraph by paragraph, as has been our practice, and will specify when we wish to consider several paragraphs at a time. It is really just as well that you have come at the right time, delegate. I was just about to say that I regretted your absence here in the meeting room, because we are going to begin consideration of section G, and I plan to give priority to your proposals on the different paragraphs, so welcome.

Paragraph 25 has been provisionally adopted; I do not believe there are any problems with it. I remind you that we have to work with two documents: the document containing two pages, or really three pages given that one is double-sided, and the other document, which consists of "Organization of the work of the Conference" and section G, "Improved and effective functioning of the Conference", and there is also this other single-sided page that contains the proposals for this part by the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran. As I already explained, because these proposals were received after the information had already been compiled, they were not included, but there is really no discriminatory treatment at play, it is just that it is difficult to work with two documents.

Let us look, then, at what was paragraph 8. Here there were several proposals: the delegation of Poland proposed to refer to a verbatim record of the meeting, and the delegation of Algeria had also referred in some way to this paragraph. I have a doubt about the paragraph that we left in the document after paragraph fifty-something. Is it included in the compilation, or has it been lost from your proposal, after paragraph 53? The issue was the need to move paragraph 9 (b). I would like to ask the representative of Algeria whether it is somehow reflected in the document circulated by the secretariat or is an issue that we must keep in mind because it does not appear in this document.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): The Algerian delegation has no objection to including a reference to document CD/1911, which contains the letter addressed to the secretariat by 29 delegations, in section G on the improved functioning of the Conference on Disarmament.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): No proposals have been left out of the document, which guarantees that when we finish we will have considered all the proposals.

I will first invite comments on paragraph 8. Here we have paragraph 8 bis, but it could be confusing to refer to it that way. It seems to me that it actually replaces paragraph 8. In that case, Mr. Sareva — my apologies, because you already made the proposal — could you kindly tell us again which paragraphs are linked to paragraph 8 and how they are grouped, so that I refer to them correctly?

Mr. Sareva (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): Yes, as I indicated earlier, it seems that paragraphs 8 and 8 bis are closely related and seem to overlap and probably could be merged. Also, I mentioned that the latter part of paragraph 8 bis simply refers to document CD/1913, which is already listed in paragraph 9, and established practice in the Conference as well as in other parts of this report is to list documents in a separate paragraph. Therefore it would seem possible to move the reference to CD/1913 to the list of documentation. Of course we need to stress that this is for the member States to decide.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I would suggest the following, based on the clarifications given: with regard to paragraph 8, to work on the basis of the text proposed by the delegation of Colombia, which currently appears as 8 bis, while also considering the proposal by the delegation of Algeria to end the paragraph after the meeting of 24 September 2010 in New York. In any case, as Mr. Sareva explained, the document will be listed in the current paragraph 9, which includes the list of documents. I now give the floor to the delegations to speak about this suggestion or any other issue they deem relevant.

Mr. Daryaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): I think the important issue is the approach that we might take in dealing with this part, and that is related to the comments made by the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Sareva, which refer to the practice of this body. That practice is to separate the document from the events or the description of the events.

So, on the basis of my earlier comments, I tried very hard, in consultation with other colleagues and having considered the valuable proposal by the delegation of Colombia, to capture the essence of section G while avoiding repetition. If you read section G as it appears here, it has many, many repetitions. It has a mixture of reflection and other elements, so it's not consistent with our practice, so I tried very much to separate these two aspects.

First, we propose in paragraph 25 bis to describe very briefly and concisely all the activities that we have had in the Conference related to the strengthening of the work of the Conference.

Then in paragraph 25 ter we list all the documents. The list is not exhaustive, so if colleagues feel that their contribution is missing they can add it, but at least we have a systematic order to help improve the readability of the report and avoid confusion regarding this issue of reflection related to the high-level meeting.

I also invite other colleagues to read paragraph 25 bis in our proposal very carefully to see whether it captures all the activities that they have in mind without quoting any of the remarks related to the meeting or some other part which might lead us to unnecessary discussion of this issue.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): So is the logic behind your proposal basically to merge into a single paragraph the material that currently appears in paragraphs 8, 10 and 11, or would you keep paragraph 11 separate? Would paragraph 11 also be included in your proposal for paragraph 25 bis? Well, then, it is clear to me, there are two types of logic at work. There is the logic of maintaining the structure we have been working with, namely to consider separately paragraphs 8, 10 and 11. Paragraph 9 would remain separate, because it lists the documentation. With regard to paragraphs 8 and especially 10, there are interesting proposals by the delegation of Colombia in particular, and there is this other proposal by the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with a paragraph that the delegation refers to as 25 bis, which in practice would consolidate into a single paragraph the discussion of all the topics currently contained in paragraphs 8, 10 and 11.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): Mr. President, I have to say that when this new draft was distributed just before the afternoon meeting started I tried about three times to read it

and became rather dizzy. I am sorry to say that it is basically unreadable, and I don't think that we can really have a sensible and useful debate on this basis. There is a tremendous amount of overlap and repetition, and the problem is compounded by the fact that we have long titles referring to the high-level meeting, the revitalization, and so on, some with many dates.

In that sense I welcome the Iranian attempt to bring some clarity to this. As far as I understand, what needs to be done is to cover essentially three points. The first one is what has happened in this chamber in the procedural sense – that we have had debates about the high-level meeting process on certain days. This is what is basically done in the Iranian text. I am not saying that we need to base ourselves on the Iranian draft, but I think it is a step in the right direction to say that there was a high-level meeting in September 2010 and that we debated this meeting several times here.

The second important event is that on a certain date we had a meeting with the Advisory Board.

And the third one is that the General Assembly again discussed this whole issue in New York and we once again had a debate about it. Since this is a somewhat complicated situation, we need to make every effort to bring clarity to the way we present it here. I think it can be done, but not by simply adding 10 lines of text by various delegations one after the other, all covering the same thing. It's mind-boggling. Maybe others are more intelligent than I am — I am sure they are — but I find it a bit too demanding to deal with such a body of text.

So the first goal is to accurately reflect what has actually happened here — what we dealt with — and the second is to clarify what was the substance of all of this. We did not talk about apples or nuclear weapons or what have you. We talked about the situation of this body here. This was the theme of the debate in the General Assembly, and it was the theme of the, shall we say, reflective debate we had here. The high-level meeting of the General Assembly started the whole process in September 2010, and then we came back here and discussed what they discussed. It's kind of an iterative process.

In this regard we need to clarify what the substance of the matter was. Otherwise the text remains an empty box. When I proposed this morning to look at this comprehensively, I encouraged you and the secretariat to try your own hand at it, because you know the positions. Of course it's not an easy job, but I don't think it helps us much to just list all the elements one after another. I think two or three people need to look at the text and come up with a proposal, and then on that basis I think it makes sense to discuss it again in the chamber.

Mr. Gill (India): Thank you, Mr. President, and our thanks to the secretariat for quickly putting together this document. I believe that what the Deputy Secretary-General just said and what the delegation of Iran is trying to propose are going in the same direction, and I think we have to be thankful to our Iranian colleague as he has achieved something extraordinary. He has managed to capture in a very concise and complete manner all the points that have been made by different delegations on this issue.

The Ambassador of Germany earlier referred to three facts being of paramount importance here: the fact of the discussion in the Conference in June; the fact of the discussion in New York and the follow-up discussion to that; and the fact of the interaction with the Advisory Board. All three have been captured in paragraph 25 bis. All the documents that delegations would like to see reflected in this section have been captured in the subsequent paragraph, and we have also managed to stick to the format of the other sections where we are dealing with both substance and the documentation in about three paragraphs. I would like to suggest concretely that we base ourselves on the paper that has

been circulated by the secretariat on behalf of Iran and then see if we can tweak it to ensure that everyone is on board.

But I am afraid we will have to be factual. We will have to stick to the rules of procedure in terms of what they prescribe for the report, especially in rule 45, and we will have to stick to what we discussed here in the Conference, without too much garnishing in terms of what we would like to do with it in the General Assembly this year or in the Conference next year.

Mr. Zaleski (Poland): Mr. President, I fully agree with and support what Ambassador Hoffmann of Germany and the representative of India just said. Their comments are very pertinent. In both texts there are certain discrepancies. The name of the body is “Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters” only, not “Advisory Board of the Secretary-General”. So I would suggest using the right terminology.

I think that the proposal by Iran reflects very well what has happened. There is only one discrepancy, and it relates to references to the Polish proposal in the existing paragraph 8. It seems that in fact all the discussion happened in informal meetings, so the Polish proposal can be taken out of paragraph 8. I also think that the Iranian proposal on paragraph 25 bis should be changed a little bit to reflect the fact that there is no plenary record of it, since the discussion occurred in informal meetings.

I would also like to make a short comment on the proposal by Colombia. I do not understand what is meant by “the members of the Conference reflected on the situation” and how they did so taking into account “forthcoming events” – what kind of forthcoming events? I think that here the language referring to events should be clear and the events should be listed.

I agree with the Deputy Secretary-General that what appears in square brackets in the Colombian proposal should be deleted, because in fact the document is listed in the next paragraph, which rightly lists all the documents submitted under this particular issue.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): Mr. President, in line with what my colleague from India said, and in many ways with what the Ambassador of Germany has said, we greatly appreciate the contribution by Iran on this paragraph. In the last plenary meeting our colleague from Iran made an intervention stating that the report should be factual, and this is his effort with regard to section G and paragraph 25 bis. We are ready to discuss it further.

We also acknowledge the addition made by our colleague from Poland. The title is certainly “Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters”, and this should be reflected accordingly, but we can work on the proposal.

Mr. Valencia Muñoz (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I just wanted to explain the logic behind the proposal we made last week. It was precisely so that the report would include a record of the meetings we held in the Conference on 30 June and 4 August, as well as our informal activities, and so that this would be treated as a block of events. For this reason, we tried as far as possible to adapt our proposed paragraphs to the initial draft report we received. However, we agree that the proposal by the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran condenses the information and follows the logic that inspired the delegation of Colombia, and in terms of readability it would be an easier basis from which to work. We could therefore work from the proposal by the Islamic Republic of Iran for paragraphs 25 bis and 25 ter. The delegate said that the wording of the paragraphs was not so clear, and I think that we could redraft on the basis of the text proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I think that there is general agreement on the need to finish this task, which earlier seemed a mammoth and interminable undertaking. It

will be easier than I thought, thanks to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. We appreciate the efforts made thus far, and I urge all delegations to keep working like this and keep bringing us good news.

So, paragraph 25 has been provisionally adopted.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): In paragraph 25, or in section G, we are essentially aiming to reflect four elements of the discussions that took place this year: the discussions on the high-level meeting; the informal discussions on the strengthening of the Conference on Disarmament that took place on 9 and 14 June 2011 under the presidency of Colombia; the meeting with the Secretary-General's Advisory Board; and the meeting of the United Nations General Assembly held from 27 to 29 July 2011.

We believe that the proposal made by our colleague from Iran, a proposal for which we are grateful, contains these four elements. The text can be improved if some feel that other elements should be added, but we think that this text encompasses these four elements of the discussions we have had this year, with a view to reflecting them factually in the report, as required under the rules of procedure of the Conference.

With regard to the initial paragraph 11 about the letter sent by 49 Member States to the United Nations Secretary-General asking that a meeting be held from 27 to 29 July, that initiative was taken in New York outside of the Conference on Disarmament. If a report is submitted to the General Assembly, that would be the appropriate framework in which to refer to this letter, but in any case the letter was not sent to the Conference on Disarmament to be mentioned as a working document of the Conference.

As for the quotations about and assessments of the state of the Conference and the ongoing deadlock, for example, it is true that this assessment has been made by many delegations, but the various delegations and groups of countries do not agree on the causes of the situation. We believe that trying to reflect such an assessment and state the causes of the deadlock could be counterproductive and further complicate our task. The annual report should be factual, but it should also reflect the positions of all member States.

The President (*spoke in French*): Mr. Khelif, perhaps I am not accustomed to the working methods of the Conference, but I was first and foremost working on a point of procedure. I wanted to know if we could work on the basis of the proposal by Iran.

I may have made a mistake by starting such an exercise at a formal plenary session. In fact, I wanted to allow the NGO representatives to be able to stay in the meeting room.

The situation is not clear to me because, at meetings of the Human Rights Council, for example, when delegations share the same ideas and those ideas are accepted, a pragmatic approach is taken and an agreement is reached.

I will suspend the list of speakers for the time being and ask those who speak to respond to this specific question: Can we work on the basis of the proposal by the delegation of Iran?

I will give you the floor again, Mr. Khelif, so that you can be the first to speak from a procedural point of view.

I see that the delegations agree on working on the basis of the paragraphs submitted by the delegation of Iran. I therefore ask that you all make your statements on this basis. If you wish, you may propose to delete certain elements of the Iranian proposal or to add new ones.

I give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President. You interrupted me a moment ago; I had not yet finished commenting on the draft.

So, with regard to paragraph 25 of the proposal by Iran, we believe that it reflects the essential elements of the discussions that have taken place this year, including the high-level meeting, the meeting with the Advisory Board, the informal discussions and the discussions about the meeting of 4 August.

We would like to ask for clarification, because the text also mentions the views about the high-level meeting expressed by Conference members and by the Secretary-General of the Conference.

With reference to the rules of procedure, we would like to have an explanation of the remit of the member States and the secretariat concerning the activities of the Conference and their participation in establishing the programme of work of the Conference.

We will come back to the other paragraphs if other proposals are made.

The President: Is there anyone who would like to provide any clarifications in response to this request for information by the delegation of Algeria?

Mr. Sareva (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): Well, Mr. President, all I can say is what Mr. Tokayev himself has said on a number of occasions. Sometimes he is the Secretary, but sometimes he feels compelled to be at least a bit of a general as well, and the statement that he made on, I believe, 4 August, was made in order to convey to the Conference his sincere views on possible ways forward. He was bringing back to Geneva his impressions from New York, but I don't think the rules of procedure are very clear on this and, as is true of so many other issues and so many other organs, including the General Assembly, the Conference is master of its own procedures and ultimately master of what kind of report it wishes to adopt. Mr. Tokayev was acting very much in what he believes is the best interest of the Conference.

Ms. Fröhler (Austria): Mr. President, basically I just want to mention an additional discrepancy that probably still exists between the two documents. I note that we are in a very constructive spirit here now, and I see agreement that we are now actually basing our discussions on the Iranian proposal. So I want to make a comment pertaining to that. What is still missing here is, obviously, a reference to the Conference document as it will be issued by the Secretariat in due time. It does not yet have a Conference number, but it will soon have one and will be entitled "Letter dated 18 April 2011 on behalf of 49 member States". This will be circulated to Conference members in due time, and I think it needs to be reflected in paragraph 25 ter, probably in subparagraph (c), if we retain the chronological order of submission of these documents.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We could first resolve the issue of paragraph 25 bis. After that we would move on to paragraph 25 ter to try to accommodate the concerns expressed by the representative of Austria. Of course I do not think there will be any problem with being fair and including all the documents that have been submitted, as has been our practice, when the States that submitted them have requested this because the documents relate to a specific agenda item. In any case, we will see when we come to paragraph 25 ter, and we take note of your proposal. We are still looking at paragraph 25 bis.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): I am happy to base further work on the draft submitted by Iran, which does a good job of covering the procedural side of the matter, but it is still a somewhat dry and procedural account, because it only says that we have had certain meetings on certain dates. I think we need to inject substance into this paragraph to make clear what these meetings were all about, and of course we will have to remain fully factual here.

It is a fact that we spent a lot of time discussing the stagnation of this body, it's a fact that we met on a certain date, and it's a fact that we covered a certain theme. To try to

move this forward, I would like to make a concrete drafting proposal here to see how we could address the issue of substance.

In the penultimate line, after the words “as a follow-up to the plenary meeting to the HLM held on 24 September 2010”, the following text could be added. I will read it out very slowly: “In the meetings listed above, member States expressed deep concern about the repeated failure of the Conference to adopt and implement a programme of work for its annual session, thus continuing its more-than-a-decade-long inability to fulfil its function as a multilateral disarmament negotiating forum as stipulated in its rules of procedure.”

The rules of procedure in fact say that we are a negotiating forum. The word “multilateral” does not appear there, but the notion of a negotiating forum appears in the rules where they speak about the function of this body.

This is the first part. To have a bit more substance, I would add that we have a crown witness, our Secretary-General, who reported from the debate in the General Assembly about what we are doing here. My suggestion would be something like this: “The Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament highlighted the grave concern about the lack of progress in the Conference after having remained stagnant since 1998. Mr. Tokayev also reported views expressed during the General Assembly debates regarding possible approaches to revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament.”

One can certainly work to improve the language, but you get the thrust of what I am trying to say, and I would challenge anybody here to say that this is not factual. It was actually my intellectual understanding in the last 12 months or so that, whatever positions we may have taken, we all agreed that this was an unsatisfactory state of affairs.

Some said that we have to live with that. I accept that. Some say we have to have patience, that we need another 10 years to get out of this mess, but no one, I think, disputed the fact that this is unsatisfactory. So why don't we say so? Why don't we say that we had debates about the fact that we could not agree, and that even our own Secretary-General made remarks to that effect? I am certainly happy to provide you with the language that I just read out, though I need to write it down myself in a somewhat clearer way.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We will include it so that we can have a chance to see it in writing at the next reading of the document. In any case, it strikes me that, really, the first sentence you read might be enough. It seems to me that the second sentence has the same effect. But in any case we will consider it on the basis of your specific proposal.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Algeria would first like to thank the Ambassador of Germany for the proposal he has just made to give an account of the assessment of the current situation of the Conference. We thank him for his commitment, but we would like to see this proposal in writing so that we can comment on its content.

We would like to see included an account of the prevailing feelings in the Conference about this situation of continued deadlock, and not of feelings that have been expressed elsewhere, such as New York. That is our approach. We are not against the idea of reflecting what is happening within the Conference, but it has now been proposed that we should report the feelings of other parties outside the Conference, whereas our report should indicate what we have done within the Conference and not what others have done outside it.

Mr. Laassel (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): In fact, I asked for the floor to support what the representative of Algeria has just said. The proposal by the Ambassador of Germany is quite constructive. It is the member States of the Conference that, in their comments on the follow-up to the high-level meeting, have expressed their concern about the deadlock in the Conference.

Another issue raised is the fact that the Secretary-General of the Conference reported to the Conference about what had happened in New York. He reported to us here, in the same vein, in his capacity as Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General. He gave an account here of the views of the United Nations Secretary-General and of those expressed at the meeting in New York.

I thank our colleague from Iran for his very clear and constructive proposal, and I thank you also, Mr. President, for your suggestion to work on the basis of the Iranian proposal, because I must confess that I, like the Ambassador of Germany, was overwhelmed by the number of paragraphs in the other document that was distributed. In paragraph 25 bis, for example, the member States of the Conference and the Secretary-General of the Conference must not be placed on an equal footing, because the latter's task was to give an account of what had happened in New York and of the views of the United Nations about the situation of the Conference.

That fact should therefore be mentioned in the text just proposed by the Ambassador of Germany. I thank the Ambassador for his proposal.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I think the representative of Algeria had already pointed that out, and the representative of Morocco has now confirmed it. I think we could somehow work on a formulation that differentiates the nature of the work of the member States of the Conference from that of the involvement of the Secretary-General. I think this is not really difficult if we end one sentence and start another. We also take note of the proposal by the representative of Germany. We agreed to get it in writing so we can distribute it. In any case, I would like delegations to know that I intend to listen to any proposed additions and other contributions they might wish to put forward regarding the text. However, the substantive discussion of the proposals will be postponed until the next meeting so that all delegations have time to review the document containing all the proposals, including those just made by the delegation of Germany, once we have them in writing.

Ms. Verberne-Schreuder (Netherlands): Mr. President, first of all let me thank the Iranian delegation for a very constructive proposal. Secondly, I would like to express general support especially for the sentiment behind the suggestion made by the representative of Germany. We look forward to seeing his proposals in writing.

However, I asked for the floor in order to make more technical remarks relating to the Iranian proposal and to the dates of the informal plenary meetings held by the Conference on the issue of the high-level meeting, because I see that the Iranian proposal mentions 9 and 19 June, while the Colombian proposal has 9 and 14 June. I would ask the secretariat to reflect the right date. Secondly, since I am taking the floor on dates, I think it would be good to also insert the date of the meeting with the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, because it makes sense, if we list the dates, to also include that date, which is 30 June.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I think that your proposal regarding the date of the meeting with the Advisory Board is valid. I give the floor to the secretariat to provide clarification regarding the contradicting dates of 14 and 19 June.

Mr. Sareva (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): Yes, the date should read 14 June. This is simply a typo. The nineteenth was a Sunday and I know for sure that we did not convene a meeting on that day.

The President: Anyway, when you produce a revised version of the paragraph, you also need to include the date of the meeting with the Advisory Board, as has been proposed by the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Valencia Muñoz (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, first of all, I apologize for taking the floor again. Secondly, in my previous statement I forgot to thank the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the draft it submitted, which condenses the ideas put forward by my delegation. I also wanted to make a clarification regarding the dates. The correct date is indeed 14 June, which was also the date of the meeting with the Advisory Board, and also the discussions held on 9 and 14 June were on assessment and strengthening. I just wanted to clarify that, and also, as my Ambassador said in her statement last week, we believe that we should also send a substantive message in this part. We therefore welcome the initiative of the Ambassador of Germany and are eager to study his proposal.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the fact that these proposals have given us a way to properly address these issues. I think the efforts of the delegation of Colombia should also be acknowledged. Now, are you making a specific proposal to add something regarding the dates of 9 and 14 June? Are you insisting on a proposed substantive addition here, or did you just wish to remind us of the subject of the informal consultations?

Mr. Valencia Muñoz (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): In the second line, where it says “they discussed the issue of the”, I would like to point out that the informal meetings were about the assessment and strengthening of the Conference. That is to say, the word “assessment” or “situation” should be included; either one is fine, but we should point out that the informal meetings contained those two elements.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. Could the secretariat kindly also include this proposal from the delegation of Colombia, which we will consider at the next meeting?

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): As the discussion went on, I tried to work a little bit on the language which I proposed just a minute ago. If you want me to, I would be quite happy to read it out once again – maybe this is of some help. At the end of paragraph 1 of the Iranian draft, just before the phrase “their views are duly reflected”, I would propose to insert the following passage: “In the meetings listed above, member States expressed deep concern about the repeated failure of the Conference to adopt and implement a programme of work for its annual session, thus continuing its more-than-a-decade-long inability to fulfil its function as a multilateral disarmament negotiating forum as stipulated in its rules of procedure.”

The second sentence would be: “In his report from the debate of the General Assembly of the United Nations on ...” — and then you would insert the full title — “held on 27 to 29 July, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, in expressing his grave concern at the lack of progress in the Conference, reported in the session of 4 August on possible approaches to revitalize the work of the Conference put forward at that meeting.” “That meeting” refers back to the General Assembly meeting.

I think this is all factual, and it all has directly to do with our work and the charge that we are discussing here. Anything which took place somewhere else is, I think, beside the point, because we have been discussing certain things here which necessarily have a certain connection with what was discussed elsewhere, and I think that in that sense we are on very firm ground.

I will pass this on to you in a moment. It’s in handwriting, of course.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Ambassador, and thank you for the thought you have put into this. I understand that this proposal replaces your previous wording and will thus be the one that appears in the document the secretariat will prepare for our next meeting. I would like to reiterate that the purpose of this afternoon’s meeting is

not to give our views on the substance of the proposals, as we will do so at the next meeting. We are basically trying to assimilate all the necessary additions, so that when we begin our substantive discussion of the paragraph all delegations will have had the opportunity to consider the new ideas put forward. In any case, I am not limiting anyone's right to speak.

(continued in English)

But anyway, I think that the main objective today is to have a complete picture of the proposals relating to this paragraph as presented by Iran in the beginning. In the next round we will have all the time that we need to enter into substantive discussions on details.

Would any delegation like to speak concerning paragraph 25 bis? Otherwise I would like to move to 25 ter.

Mr. Reid (United States of America): Mr. President, just a short remark. I do think we are going more or less in the right direction – maybe sideways, but we are getting there.

One small comment on the last sentence in the Iranian proposal for 25 bis. It's probably just a typographical error. Rather than stating that the views "are dully reflected", I think we want to delete one of the l's. Let's presume the plenary records are bright and shining.

The President: There is an advantage to being from an English-speaking country. I think that you are in a very favourable situation, though the rest of us do try.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): Mr. President, I won't prolong the debate. As you rightly said, once the proposals have crystallized, we will discuss them.

But there is a point of principle which I thought I should flag right now, before we adopt a final position tomorrow. With respect to the suggestion made by the Ambassador of Germany, my delegation has made its position very clear, and I would like to repeat it. We are against any attempts to give a certain interpretation to a discussion in informal meetings or in formal plenary of the Conference. That's all I want to say at this point. One interpretation has been given by the German delegation. My delegation will suggest another interpretation, highlighting top priorities – the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament and a number of other things.

The President: Thank you, Sir, for alerting us in advance to what is going to be your delegation's positive reaction to the proposal. But anyway, we are going to have the substantive discussion in the next meeting.

In the case of paragraph 25 ter, we already have the proposal of Austria. I think that due note has been taken of this particular proposal. Would any other delegation like to refer to this paragraph?

Mr. Sareva (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): Mr. President, just a terminological issue — I believe that elsewhere in the draft report, when listing documents — and I checked, and this was also the case last year — instead of "related to" we say "dealing with". It's pretty much the same thing, but the standard terminology has been "dealing with".

The President: But this chapeau does not exactly follow the pattern that we already decided on for other agenda items, taking into account the proposal of South Africa. I prefer to keep all the chapeaux along the same lines. You say this is different? I think that in that case we cannot use the proposal of South Africa. If we are going to use "dealing with", then we need to say in all cases, "The following documents dealing with this agenda item were submitted to the Conference ...". We need to be consistent and use the same chapeau in all cases.

Does any delegation have any issue with this approach? I see that is not the case. It is adopted.

Mr. Wilson (Australia): Mr. President, really, this is a small matter. I just want to make the point that the chapeau proposed by South Africa in relation to the documents under specific agenda items was, I think, proposed because we were talking about agenda items. This isn't an agenda item; it is an issue. So in that sense the language proposed by the Deputy Secretary-General is probably more appropriate here. That is just to assist you, Mr. President.

The President: Sir, if you don't have a very strong feeling on this, then I would like to benefit from the support of the secretariat. I would like to follow their advice, because they have been working on this kind of report for many years.

If no delegation has a major problem with the proposal as presented by the secretariat, we are going to accept it. I know that there is no hidden agenda – only a wish to be clear and follow the rules governing our work.

(continued in Spanish)

So, we have reached a point where I believe we deserve a break. Actually, it is not because we have been so successful, but rather because we have worked so hard. I wish to thank in particular all the delegations that have made proposals to help us move forward. I will not try to list them all, because it would be unfair to leave anyone out, but this afternoon the contributions of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Germany in particular have been very important, and I thank them for their proposals.

I invite you all to meet again on Friday at 10 a.m. I would like to ask the secretariat to try to prepare, as it did for today's meeting, an evolving text that we can distribute as we would a conference room paper, in order to facilitate the third reading of the document. In fact, the secretariat and I promised to work on a proposal for paragraph 7 that would address the considerations put forward in the interim. If any other ambassadors or delegates have any ideas as brilliant as the one presented to us here this afternoon that could facilitate our work, this would be most welcome. Here in this room we truly encourage initiative and creativity, and we will grant an intellectual property licence to whoever submits the new wording. In any case, it would help us to finish our work on time. I wish you a good rest of the day, and we will meet again on Friday at 10 a.m.

I do not know if the secretariat wishes to say something before ending the 1238th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Sareva (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): Mr. President, I really have nothing to add except that we hope to be able to provide the next version by close of business tomorrow, so that delegations will have the opportunity to acquaint themselves with it before Friday. We will try to get back to you by fax in the course of tomorrow.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I would like to thank Mr. Sareva and the rest of the secretariat, which, as always, has provided essential help with our work. I have nothing more to say – I do not want to hold you up. I would like you to have more time to take advantage of the rest of the day, so I will adjourn the meeting and see you on Friday.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.