
Conference on Disarmament

11 February 2014

English

Final record of the one thousand three hundred and fifth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 11 February 2014, at 10.05 a.m.

President: Mr. Eviatar Manor. (Israel)



The President: I call to order the 1305th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Allow me to update you and to indicate a possible way forward for our work. Following the discussions that took place in the plenary last week on non-paper 1, containing a draft decision for the re-establishment of the informal working group, I reflected all comments received by delegations in a revised version entitled “Proposed amendments for non-paper 1: decision for the re-establishment of an informal working group”, which the secretariat circulated yesterday to all delegations.

I would like to inform you that the session’s other five Presidents and I (the P6) held extensive consultations over the past week to address open issues and items raised in the previous plenary meeting. I would like to reiterate that I have always believed that our work should be done in full transparency in order to allow as many views as possible to be reflected in the decision-making process of the Conference.

I am pleased to report that it seems that all have expressed their support in principle for re-establishing the informal working group. While many support this approach, some have expressed a desire for further discussions on some elements of the proposed informal text that was circulated and discussed in last week’s plenary as non-paper No. 1.

Yesterday, we requested the secretariat to circulate a second non-paper regarding re-establishing the mandate of the informal working group for 2014. This non-paper comprises all the proposed amendments received following the previous plenary meeting. I believe that it was necessary to submit this proposal unofficially for your consideration and to have a discussion concerning the relevant issues. We would like to keep things as simple and straightforward as possible. If we all feel that further discussions are required, I shall launch additional consultations with concerned parties regarding the non-paper in order to take action in the upcoming plenary meetings. I do hope we can reach consensus soon on an agreed text.

Regarding the schedule of activities, significant progress has been made based on P6 consultations. Further consultations with the regional groups are expected to take place based on a P6 non-paper to be presented soon. I therefore open the floor for discussions related to non-paper No. 2, entitled “Proposed amendments for non-paper No. 1”.

I have on my list of speakers the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Ambassador, I give you the floor.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): Mr. President, as this is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you on the assumption of your role and take this opportunity to assure you of my delegation’s full support for your efforts. My congratulations are belated because you have, of course, been striving for some weeks now on behalf of us all to ensure that this 2014 session of the Conference got off to a purposeful start, building on the solid platform constructed by the Irish presidency at the end of last year’s session.

We are grateful to you for the determination and pragmatism with which you have undertaken this task, and to the other members of the P6 for their willingness to work together from the outset.

The United Kingdom is, of course, disappointed that, despite your best effort, you had no choice but to conclude that consensus on a programme of work could not be achieved under your presidency. We note the stated willingness of many members to repeat the flexibility that they have shown in the past in the interests of getting the Conference back to work, but that, for many, that flexibility has already reached its limits. Our continued failure to get the Conference back to work can do nothing but

erode its credibility, and with it the consensus-based approach that provides the essential fail-safe for preserving our national security interests.

We fully understand the needs of all members to preserve those interests, but equally strongly believe that all would have the opportunity to do so should consensus be reached again on a programme of work identical in essence to the last programme of work adopted by the Conference.

While consensus on a programme of work remains elusive, the United Kingdom supports the re-establishment of the informal working group. I applaud Ambassadors Gallegos and Woolcott on their willingness to reprise their roles at the helm of the group. In the short time available to the group last year, both made sincere efforts towards the attainment of the group's mandate.

We believe that that mandate should remain the same. There has been no significant change in the context in which we are working that would require it to change. Similarly, we see no reason to amend the decision taken to establish that group, other than to update it in a purely technical manner.

We look forward to giving consideration to the outcome of your consultations on the proposed schedule of activities as early as possible.

On a separate issue, I take this opportunity to inform colleagues that the United Kingdom will not attend the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons later this week in Mexico. We do this in the interests of being transparent, as we take this approach through all that we do at this Conference.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? I recognize the representative of India.

Mr. Varma (India): Mr. President, we had the opportunity in the last plenary to formally convey our congratulations to you and the Israeli delegation for holding the presidency of the Conference, but let me add how pleased we are to see you, a representative of a friendly country, holding the presidency of the Conference. We would like to thank you for the diligent efforts that you have undertaken in taking the work of the Conference forward, in particular in conducting consultations as widely as has been possible in the Conference.

Let me add a few points with reference to your comments today. We believe that the early adoption of a programme of work in the Conference should continue to be the priority for the presidency of the Conference and the membership. Both you and the succeeding presidents should keep that as the priority objective, i.e., the adoption and implementation of a programme of work which is comprehensive and balanced and takes forward the consensus agenda that was adopted earlier this month.

On the informal working group, we thank you for bringing forth non-paper 2, which was made available to us yesterday evening by the secretariat. We have heard very carefully your comments today and this morning. Should you decide to go forward with respect to further consideration and action on non-paper 2, India would not stand in the way. However, if it is your view that further consultations are required, in whatever format, India would be very pleased to participate in those consultations.

With respect to a schedule of activities, we still await a specific proposal, either from the President or from the P6. India would take a view on the schedule of activities when a proposal is made available to the members of the Conference.

Mr. President, let me add once again our appreciation for the manner in which you have conducted our work. Rest assured that in any further consultations, you have the full support and cooperation of the Indian delegation.

Mr. President: I thank the representative of India for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): Mr. President, as you are aware, Pakistan had joined the consensus on the establishment of an informal working group last August with the mandate to produce a programme of work robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation.

We had participated actively and constructively in the meetings of the informal working group, as well as in the intersessional work ably led by Ambassador Gallegos of Ecuador and Ambassador Woolcott of Australia.

Pakistan is perfectly happy to re-establish the informal working group in 2014. We were ready to do so on the basis of the non-paper circulated last week, which contained a draft decision for the re-establishment of the informal working group that was almost identical to the consensus decision adopted in August 2013 and contained in document CD/1956/Rev.I.

We now note that a second non-paper was circulated by the secretariat yesterday, 10 February 2014, containing the amendments proposed by the delegations on the first non-paper.

My delegation would request the deletion of any reference in the revised draft decision to any past programme of work, in particular the one contained in document CD/1864 of May 2009.

If the approach envisaged in document CD/1864 had enjoyed the consensus of all Conference members, there was no need to establish the informal working group in the first place.

The very idea of establishing the informal working group took off from the need to review the Conference's deadlock afresh, in an open-ended setting, without any strings attached to past proposals and decisions.

By inserting divisive references, such as document CD/1864, we run the risk of reopening the past debate, which in our view would be regressive.

Therefore, my delegation cannot join the consensus on the revised draft decision that may be elaborated on the basis of the amendments circulated yesterday. We would, however, be ready to do so if the reference to document CD/1864 is dropped from the text.

This statement was only made to explain the position of my delegation on the revised draft decision for the re-establishment of the informal working group. We have not addressed the other substantive and procedural issues under consideration in the Conference, and would come back to those at a later stage.

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

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

I think we have heard all relevant remarks and comments, and I thank you very much for this open discussion. It seems that we shall need further discussions on the informal working group decision, and therefore we would conduct further consultations with concerned parties regarding the text of the decision. Nevertheless,

in the light of the discussion we have just had, I feel that we have made substantial progress with regard to the informal working group text.

As this will be my last plenary meeting as President of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your cooperation with the presidency and your constructive approach. It has also been a pleasure and honour for me to preside over Conference meetings in which we have unanimously adopted the agenda, heard a programmatic statement by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and by the Acting Under-Secretary for Arms Control and International Security of the United States of America.

I hope that, during my time as President of the Conference, I have been able to demonstrate my country's pragmatic and realistic approach and perspective on the issues concerned. I believe I have acted in full transparency and with a deep sense of responsibility. I would like to extend my appreciation to the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Michael Møller, the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jarmo Sareva, the Secretary of the Conference, Mr. Ivor Richard Fung, the secretariat and the interpreters. Let me wish member States, the delegates here present, fruitful deliberations and every success in the Conference's important activity, which will hopefully benefit all.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate our next President, Ambassador Vinicio Mati of Italy, and his team. We shall certainly share all the relevant information we have gathered through our consultations with the next President. Ambassador Mati, we will stand ready in our national capacity, as well as part of the P6, to be at your service, having full confidence in your leadership.

During our presidency, we feel we have put the dual track on course and moved it forward to be taken by the next Presidents of 2014. By doing so, we believe we have echoed the Secretary-General's call and the collective will of the Conference's member States.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held next Tuesday, 18 February 2014, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.