

Conference on Disarmament

31 July 2014

English

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


Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 31 July 2014, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Anthony Andanje(Kenya)

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The President: I call to order the 1322nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. The recent break must have helped to lift your spirits. I can see you are all eager to resume work. I hope it will be with renewed vigour and enthusiasm. I would like to briefly provide an update on my consultations during the intersessional period.

I met delegations, the coordinators on the schedule of activities, the Co-Chairs and Vice-Co-Chairs of the informal working group. The focus of our discussions was how we could move forward our work in the Conference on Disarmament. We also considered the outcomes we envisage from ongoing activities and how they would be realized without losing momentum. We shared views on the proposal for the establishment of an informal working group on the methods of work of the Conference on Disarmament. On Monday, I presented the proposal to the coordinators of the regional groups during my consultations with them. I am now waiting for a response. I understand delegations are consulting their capitals.

As you will recall, a matter of concern to some delegations is the appointment of a Friend of the President in June. In the course of my consultations with delegations, I provided a formulation on the role of the Friend. The aim was to address the concerns of delegations. I presented the proposal to the coordinators for consideration by their respective groups.

It is regrettable that due to differences of views, the issue cannot be resolved today. However, I am continuing to consult to see whether we can find some accommodation.

I am pleased to report that some coordinators of the substantive agenda items on the schedule of activities have begun submitting their reports.

Ambassador Michael Biontino of Germany, who handled agenda items 1 and 2 with a general focus on the ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, submitted his report in the first week of July. I have since forwarded it to the Conference. Meanwhile, I await reports from the other coordinators. I am confident that I will receive them soon.

According to the indicative timetable of the schedule of activities, we still have some sessions left. Considering that decision CD/1978 explicitly states that the coordinators are required to report, in their personal capacity, on the various substantive items to the President, in view of this, I am seeking your views on the utility of the sessions scheduled for the first and second week of August. It is not my intention to diminish in any way the importance of the work that has been carried out. However, I am in your hands.

If you now allow me, I would like to turn to my list of speakers. I give the floor to the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ambassador So Se Pyong, who is making a statement on behalf of the G-21.

Mr. So Se Pyong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I have the honour to deliver the following statement on behalf of the Group of 21.

At the outset, the Group congratulates you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and expresses its appreciation for the open, transparent and efficient manner that you are guiding the proceedings of the Conference.

The Group also would like to extend its gratitude to the Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament for the efforts they deployed last year as a contribution to allow the Conference to resume substantive work, including negotiations at the earliest to end the long impasse.

The Group of 21 would like to stress once again that the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum mandated by the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament and

emphasize the importance of preserving it by strengthening the nature, role and mandate of this body. We must underscore the need to redouble our efforts in order to reinforce and revitalize the Conference on Disarmament and preserve its credibility through the resumption of substantive work including, inter alia, the negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The G-21 reaffirms its working papers submitted to the Conference in September 2013, namely CD/1959 on nuclear disarmament, CD/1960 on negative security assurances and CD/1961 on prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Nuclear disarmament continues to be the highest priority of the international community. The Group of 21 reiterates its deep concern at the danger posed to the survival of humankind by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use. The Group, stressing its strong commitment to nuclear disarmament, underscores the urgent need to commence negotiations on this issue in the Conference on Disarmament without further delay. As the highest priority, the Conference on Disarmament should start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the possession, development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified framework of time.

The Group welcomes the formal proclamation, for the first time in history, of Latin America and the Caribbean as zone of peace, on the occasion of the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana on 28 and 29 January 2014, which includes the commitment of all States of that region to further nuclear disarmament as a priority goal and to contribute to general and complete disarmament.

The Group reaffirms the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in these areas. The Group welcomes the convening of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament on 26 September 2013, and reaffirms its related resolution 68/32 to follow up this meeting. As the Secretary-General of the United Nations rightly mentioned in the Conference on Disarmament this year, “the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament demonstrated that this issue remains a major international priority and deserves attention at the highest levels”. In this vein, the Group fully supports the goals of this resolution, in particular its call for an urgent decision by the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiating nuclear disarmament, particularly a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. The Group of 21 has made a separate statement in the Conference on Disarmament plenary on this issue. The Group also welcomes the decision to convene, no later than 2018, a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to review the progress made in this regard.

The Group reaffirms the importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery. It notes the report of the Open-ended Working Group mandated by the United Nations General Assembly “to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons” and hopes that it will contribute towards negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament, particularly a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. To this end, the Group welcomes United Nations General Assembly resolution 68/46, which recognizes that the Open-ended Working Group engaged in an open, constructive, transparent and interactive manner to address various issues related to nuclear disarmament.

The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending the achievement of the complete elimination of such weapons, the Group reaffirms the urgent need for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as a matter of high priority. The Group expresses concern that despite the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States and long-standing requests by non-nuclear-weapon States to receive such legally binding assurances, no tangible progress has been achieved in this regard. It is a matter of more concern that non-nuclear-weapon States implicitly or explicitly have been subject to nuclear threats by some nuclear-weapon States, contrary to their obligations under the United Nations Charter.

The Group concurs with the United Nations Secretary-General that there is growing understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and in this regard welcomes the hosting of the conferences on this subject convened in Mexico on 13 and 14 February this year and in Oslo last year, and also the initiative of Austria to host the third one.

In this context, the Group expresses its deepest concern over the immediate, indiscriminate and massive death and destruction caused by any nuclear weapon detonation and its long-term catastrophic consequences on human health, environment and other vital economic resources, thus endangering the life of present and future generations. In this regard, the Group believes that the full realization of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons must underpin all approaches, efforts and international commitments towards nuclear disarmament, through an inclusive process involving all States.

The Group of 21 expresses its disappointment that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to undertake substantive work on its agenda. The Group takes note of various efforts to reach consensus on the Conference on Disarmament's programme of work, including the programme of work, adopted on 29 May 2009 that was not implemented and all subsequent efforts and proposals for a programme of work, including those tabled on 14 March 2012, 11 February, 21 June and 13 August 2013 that were not adopted, and the decision adopted in 2013 on the establishment of the informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work, and its re-establishment on 3 March 2014.

The Group reiterates the urgency that the Conference on Disarmament should adopt and implement a balanced and comprehensive programme of work on the basis of its agenda, while taking into account the security interests of all States and dealing with, inter alia, the core issues, including nuclear disarmament, in accordance with the rules of procedure, including the rule of consensus.

The Group furthermore believes that promoting the work of the United Nations disarmament machinery hinges on the need to exercise political will, taking into account the collective security interests of all States.

While expressing its deep concern over the persistent lack of consensus on the implementation of the multilateral disarmament agenda in the United Nations disarmament machinery, particularly in fulfilling the commitments on nuclear disarmament as the highest priority, the Group reaffirms its support for the early convening of the fourth special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament and expresses its deep concern over the fact that the session is yet to be convened.

The Group of 21 reiterates the importance of the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and deeply regrets the delay of concrete actions to that end.

The States in the Group of 21 parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) express their continued concern that one of the important decisions of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, namely the convening of a conference by the United Nations and the sponsors of the 1995 NPT Review Conference resolution on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in 2012, was not realized. The States in the Group of 21 parties to the NPT are disappointed that the following efforts to convene such a conference in 2013 were also not successful. They stress that the agreed mandate of the conference as contained in the 1995 NPT Review Conference action plan should be maintained and constitute the basis for convening the conference as well as its preparatory process. In this regard, they call upon the facilitator and co-conveners to hold the conference without any further delay in order to maintain the credibility and sustainability of the NPT regime.

The Group recognizes the importance of continuing consultations on the question of the possibility of expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Group also recognizes the importance of engagement between civil society and the Conference on Disarmament, according to decisions taken by the Conference, and continues to support the strengthening of the Conference on Disarmament's interaction with civil society.

The President: I'd like to thank Ambassador So for his statement and the kind words addressed to me. It seems I've already exhausted my list of speakers. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

You will recall that I sought your views on the outstanding sessions on the schedule of activities; that's for the first week and second week of August. I give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Matthew Rowland (United Kingdom): Mr. President, on your request for views, I'd just like to say that I thought the discussions, the contributions that were made during the discussions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space that I coordinated were very full, but I also felt that they reached a fairly natural conclusion. So it's not my intention, certainly at this stage, to have any further meetings on the subject. So, while I recognize there are some slots available to me, I do not intend to take those up.

The President: Does any other delegation wish to take the floor, or any coordinator? That does not seem to be the case. This concludes our business for today. The next meeting of the Conference will take place on Tuesday, 5 August 2014. This meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.