

Conference on Disarmament

5 August 2014

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 5 August 2014, at 10.05 a.m.

President: Mr. Anthony Andanje(Kenya)

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The President: I call to order the 1323rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like to begin by extending a warm welcome to Ambassador Julio Herráiz of Spain, who has assumed responsibilities as the representative of his Government to the Conference. On behalf of the Conference and on behalf of my own Government, I would like to take this opportunity to assure you of our full cooperation and support in your assignment.

Allow me now to provide an update on the status of consultations. Consultations on the Friend of the President and the proposal on the establishment of an informal working group on methods of work of the Conference are ongoing.

You will recall that last week I sought the views of delegations on the way forward with regard to the outstanding informal sessions on the indicative timetable of the schedule of activities for this week and next week. This was informed by the fact that the coordinators are required to report, in their personal capacity, on the discussions of the various substantive agenda items to the President. Apart from the statement by the representative of the United Kingdom, who stated that he did not require further sessions, there was no response from other delegations. During the presidential consultations yesterday, I requested regional coordinators to provide a response by close of business on Wednesday, 6 August 2014. However, in an effort to expedite our work, I have since consulted with all the coordinators of the substantive agenda items on the schedule of activities. They have all informed me that, in their view, it will not be necessary to hold further informal sessions on their respective agenda items. In view of the circumstances, and being mindful of the decision contained in document CD/1978 adopted by this Conference on 26 March 2014, on a schedule of activities for the 2014 session, I now seek the concurrence of the Conference in cancelling the scheduled sessions. If there is no objection, I will inform the secretariat that there is no need for further sessions. I see none.

It was so decided.

The President: I will inform the secretariat to cancel the sessions. I will now turn to the list of speakers. I give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ambassador So Se Pyong, who is delivering a statement on behalf of the Group of 21.

Mr. So Se Pyong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I have the honour to deliver the following statement on behalf of the Group of 21 on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. 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 in which you are guiding the proceedings of the Conference.

The Group of 21 believes that space technology has indeed become an indispensable and integral part of our daily lives. Never before have information, communication, banking, economic transactions, navigation, and even political and strategic decision-making been so dependent on space-based technologies, which are themselves witnessing rapid growth.

The Group reiterates that outer space and other celestial bodies are the common heritage of humankind and must be used, explored and utilized for the benefit and interest of all humankind in a spirit of cooperation. The Group reaffirms that the exploration and use of outer space and other celestial bodies

shall be for peaceful purposes only and shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development.

The Group stresses that the growing use of outer space increases the need for greater transparency, confidence-building measures and better information on the part of the international community. The Group believes that all States with major space capabilities have a special responsibility to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. All States should refrain from actions contrary to that objective and to the relevant existing treaties in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international cooperation.

The Group recognizes that the prevention of an arms race in outer space would avert a grave danger for international peace and security. The Group emphasizes the necessity of further measures with appropriate and effective verification provisions to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

The Group emphasizes the importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space. In this regard, the Group is deeply concerned over the negative implications of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic-missile defence systems and the pursuit of advanced military technologies capable of being deployed in outer space which have, inter alia, contributed to the further erosion of an international climate conducive to the promotion of disarmament and the strengthening of international security.

The Group stresses that all countries bear a responsibility to refrain from activities that could jeopardize the collective goal of maintaining outer space free from weapons of mass destruction and all other forms of weaponization so as to ensure that its benefits are available to all.

The Group considers that the multilateral disarmament agreements provide mechanisms for States parties to consult one another and to cooperate in solving any problems which may arise in relation to the objective of, or in the application of, the provisions of the agreements, and that such consultations and cooperation may also be undertaken through appropriate international procedures within the framework of the United Nations and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space has assumed greater urgency because of legitimate concerns that existing legal instruments are inadequate to deter further militarization of outer space, or prevent its weaponization. The Group further reaffirms its recognition that the legal regime applicable to outer space does not in itself guarantee the prevention of an arms race in outer space. For that purpose, the Group stresses the need to consolidate and reinforce that regime and enhance its effectiveness.

In this regard, the Group reaffirms that the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, which has the primary role in substantive negotiations on priority questions of disarmament. The Group considers that the Conference should start negotiations on matters related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

In addition, resolution 68/29 of the General Assembly of the United Nations, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, further made the following observations with regard to the Conference: the Conference on Disarmament has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements on

the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects; and the Conference should establish a working group under its agenda item entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" as early as possible during its 2014 session.

The Group of 21 takes note of the completion of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts and the adoption of a study on outer space transparency and confidence-building measures as requested by General Assembly resolution 65/68 on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, which was adopted by consensus at the sixty-eighth session of the Assembly. The Group, while stressing the priority of negotiation of legally binding instruments on strengthening the international legal regime on outer space, recognizes that global and inclusive transparency and confidence-building measures, arrived at through broad international consultations, could be important complementary measures. The Group recognizes the value of transparency and confidence-building measures including a non-legally binding code of conduct in promoting trust among States. However, such voluntary measures cannot be a substitute for a legally binding treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The Group welcomes the updated draft treaty text submitted jointly by the Russian Federation and China on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects to the Conference in June 2014. This initiative is a constructive contribution to the work of the Conference, and is a good basis for discussions towards adopting an international binding instrument.

The Group takes note of the substantive and interactive informal discussions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space held in the Conference from 11 to 13 June 2014 in pursuance of the schedule of activities of the 2014 session contained in document CD/1978.

The President: I thank Ambassador So for his statement on behalf of the Group of 21 and for the kind words addressed to me. It seems I have exhausted my list of speakers. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me, on behalf of the Russian delegation, to begin by expressing my gratitude to the President of the Conference on Disarmament for his efforts, which have brought clarity to the current situation through additional consultations around the issues on the Conference's agenda and which have helped us to find a mutually acceptable compromise. The Russian Federation raised no objections to the adoption of this decision although we are far from entirely happy with it.

Mainly, I wish to state that the group coordinators, particularly for the group addressing a topic of interest to us — the prevention of an arms race in outer space — could, in the spirit of openness and transparency, have shared with us their findings before submitting their report to the President of the Conference. Such an open and engaged dialogue could only help us in our joint efforts. It is a universally accepted diplomatic practice for reports, even those not adopted by consensus, to be shared for review with those who participated in the diplomatic processes. I am sure that not only the Russian delegation but also other Conference members would have had comments to make.

Among the other concerns of the Russian delegation, we had laid high hopes on the additional consultations. We planned to have a high-level expert come from Moscow to inform the Conference about consultations on new developments since June and to share the plans and activities that Russia intends to propose,

including in respect of the work at the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. Given that the consultations were cancelled, we will look for other opportunities to set out our position.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case. This concludes our business for today. The next meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will take place on Tuesday, 12 August 2014.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.