

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.959
10 June 2004

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 10 June 2004, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Khasbazaryn BEKHBAT (Mongolia)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The 959th meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is called to order.

We have been deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Ronald Reagan, the fortieth president of the United States of America. President Reagan will be remembered in the Conference of Disarmament for his efforts which resulted in the conclusion of historic agreements on reductions in nuclear weapons and which created favourable conditions for the negotiations on the Chemical Weapons Convention. On behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, I wish to extend our sincere condolences to Mrs. Nancy Reagan, to the family of the former President, and to the Government and people of the United States.

Allow me now to extend a cordial welcome to Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba, who has taken up the post of Permanent Representative of Mexico and who replaces Ambassador Gustavo Albin. Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba is with us today, that is to say at the plenary meeting of our Conference, and I would like to take this opportunity to assure him of our cooperation and support in the exercise of his new functions.

On the list of speakers for today we have the United States. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States, Ambassador Jackie Sanders.

Ms. SANDERS (United States of America): Thank you, Mr. President, for the very kind words about the passing of President Ronald Reagan. I will get to that further on in this statement today, too.

I take the floor today to mention some world events of significance that have occurred over the past 10 days. Last week our Polish colleague addressed us regarding the Kraków meeting on the one-year anniversary of the Proliferation Security Initiative. More than 60 countries have united behind this practical initiative designed to stem proliferation and help prevent weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of terrorists. The success PSI has enjoyed in such a relatively short time demonstrates in a concrete way how dozens of countries can agree to work together toward our common security.

This week, leaders of G-8 countries are meeting in Sea Island, Georgia, to tackle some of the most difficult international problems, including proliferation and weapons of mass destruction. The G-8 Action Plan on non-proliferation was agreed and announced yesterday. The plan, which I have asked the secretariat to distribute, among other elements, takes new action against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including expanding PSI and the Global Partnership, strengthening IAEA, promoting universal adherence to the Additional Protocol and making it a condition of supply of nuclear technology. The G-8 leaders committed to refraining for one year from initiating new transfers of uranium enrichment and reprocessing technology to additional States, aiming to implement permanent controls before the 2005 G-8 summit to keep these materials out of the hands of outlaw States seeking nuclear weapons. The G-8 leaders also urged all States to implement recently passed United Nations Security Council resolution 1540, which calls on States to criminalize proliferation.

(Ms. Sanders, United States)

Turning to other world events, this past Sunday many of us watched coverage of the D-Day commemorations on television, which were interspersed throughout the day with news of President Ronald Reagan's death. If you will allow me a few personal thoughts, I have been blessed with many great things in life, but among the best of these happened as a consequence of my association with Ronald Reagan. I met my husband through our work for President Reagan back in the 1980s. And as part of a Presidential delegation representing then President Reagan when I worked for him at the White House, I first visited Normandy in 1988. It was an unforgettable experience standing on Omaha Beach with some of the American D-Day veterans who described what happened during those first hours on 6 June 1944.

Twenty years ago at Pointe de Hoc, Ronald Reagan said: "We're here to mark that day in history when the Allied peoples joined in battle to reclaim this continent to liberty." And as President Bush said this week of Ronald Reagan, "through his courage and determination, he enhanced America's security and advanced the spread of peace, liberty, and democracy to millions of people who had lived in darkness and oppression". President Reagan's unswerving vision led to some of the most far-reaching arms control and disarmament agreements and ultimately to the end of the cold war. On behalf of the United States, I wish to deeply thank all of you who have extended condolences on President Reagan's death.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the United States, Ambassador Jackie Sanders, for her statement. We have come to the end of the list of speakers for today. Would any other delegation like to take the floor at this stage? It seems not. So we have completed our work for today.

According to our schedule, following this official meeting the Conference will hold an informal plenary meeting to conclude the discussion on item 4 of the agenda, entitled "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons". The Conference will then move on to consideration of item 5 of the agenda, which is entitled "New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons". I would like to remind you that, in accordance with our normal custom, this informal meeting will be open only to delegations of member States of the Conference, as well as delegations of States which have the status of observers.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place on Thursday 17 June at 10 a.m. in this room. It will be followed by an informal plenary meeting on item 6 of the agenda, entitled "Comprehensive programme of disarmament".

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to inform you that, having been appointed by my Government to head the Mongolian delegation at the 11th United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which is to be held next week in São Paulo, Brazil, I will be away all next week. During my absence, Presidential duties will be performed by Mr. Suren Badral, who is the deputy Permanent Representative of Mongolia, and he will chair both the formal and the informal plenary meetings on Thursday 17 June, next week and the Presidential consultations the day before.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.