

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND NINETY-SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 22 September 2005, at 10.15 a.m.

President:

Mr. Félix CALDERON

(Peru)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I call to order the 997th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

The following speakers have placed themselves on my list for today's plenary meeting: Ambassador In-kook Park of the Republic of Korea and Mr. Esenli Murat of Turkey. In keeping with usual practice, before concluding the work of the Conference I shall also make some concluding remarks.

Before turning to the list of speakers, I would like to extend a cordial welcome to Ambassador Danzannorov Boldbaatar of Mongolia, who has taken up the post of representative of his Government to the Conference. I take the opportunity to offer him our full cooperation and support in his new tasks.

The distinguished Ambassador of South Korea, In-kook Park, now has the floor.

Mr. PARK (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to you and the secretariat for all the hard work and efforts you have put into revitalizing the Conference during your presidency.

Today I would like to share with you and other colleagues the outcome of the fourth round of the six-party talks held in Beijing. Last Monday, the six parties succeeded in adopting a joint statement which sets out the principles and guidelines for the peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue. I will briefly highlight the major points of the joint statement as follows:

First and foremost, the DPRK committed to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes and returning, at an early date, to the NPT and to the IAEA safeguards.

Secondly, the six parties unanimously reaffirmed that the goal of the six-party talks was the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in a peaceful manner. In this regard, they agreed that the 1992 Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula should be observed and implemented.

Thirdly, the DPRK stated that it had the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The other parties expressed their respect and agreed to discuss, at an appropriate time, the subject of the provision of a light-water reactor to the DPRK.

Fourthly, the DPRK and the United States undertook to respect each other's sovereignty, exist together peacefully, and take steps to normalize their relations subject to their respective bilateral policies. The DPRK and Japan also undertook to take steps to normalize their relations in accordance with the Pyongyang Declaration.

Fifthly, the five parties involved in the talks stated their willingness to provide energy assistance to the DPRK. The ROK also reaffirmed its proposal of 12 July 2005 concerning the provision of 2 million kilowatts of electric power to the DPRK.

(Mr. Park, Republic of Korea)

The Korean Government expects that the joint statement will lead to substantial progress not only on the nuclear issue but also to realizing enduring peace on the Korean peninsula and beyond.

President Roh Moo-hyun gave a high evaluation to the endeavours by all the other parties, particularly by China, the host nation of the talks. The Korean Government will continue to engage in diplomatic efforts with perseverance and faithfulness for the eventual settlement of the nuclear issue and achieving permanent peace on the peninsula.

I am confident that the agreement will also contribute to further strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and advancing our common goal of making the world safer and more prosperous.

I request of the secretariat that the full text of the joint statement, together with this speech, be circulated to member States as an official document of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): Many thanks to the distinguished Ambassador of South Korea, In-kook Park. You have brought us very welcome news. We congratulate you on this tremendous cooperative effort among six countries to find a solution which will be acceptable to all, and which will ultimately mean the strengthening of subregional security in this important peninsula. We are all pleased, because here I think that I speak for all the States represented in this Conference, at this significant step, and we are sure that there will be lasting peace in the Korean peninsula.

Of course, as you have requested, this statement that you have just made, as well as the accompanying annex, will be distributed as an official document of the Conference.

I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Turkey.

Mr. ESENLI (Turkey): Mr. President, on behalf of the Turkish delegation to the Conference on Disarmament, allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and express our full confidence in your diplomatic skills, wise guidance, as well as your active and sincere spirit. We assure you of the support of the Turkish delegation during your presidency. I would also like to seize this opportunity to extend my appreciation to you and through you to the secretariat for the balanced draft report.

I have taken the floor to reiterate my country's position regarding the important question of the expansion of the membership of the Conference. As my country has indicated on previous occasions, in principle we view the expansion of the CD as a significant issue. Rule 2 of the CD rules of procedure states that "the membership of the Conference will be reviewed at regular intervals". This issue was last taken up on 22 August 2002 in a formal session. The conclusions of the Special Rapporteur, the former Ambassador of Bulgaria, Mr. Dimiter Tzantchev, are accurately reflected in the verbatim records. The CD later debated this issue in an informal sitting on 2 September 2003 during discussions of the CD's report for that year.

(Mr. Esenli, Turkey)

Unfortunately, the CD has not been able to agree on a work programme since 1998. This situation is accurately reflected in paragraph 12. In order to save the CD and the 2005 report from another negative reference, we would like to state that the CD ought to continue with its efforts to overcome the stalemate and then embark on the expansion issue on a case-by-case basis with a certain criterion met by some candidate States.

Since I am completing my tenure here in Geneva, I also wish to bid farewell to friends and colleagues. It was a great honour and a distinct pleasure to be part of this process, and I must admit that it was an important learning experience as well, to attend the meetings of the best club in town on behalf of my country. I derive some modest satisfaction in participating in the efforts which were products of hard and creative thinking to overcome the stalemate of the CD. The situation of the CD resembles a furnace of a blacksmith with dwindling coal. To live up to its past laurels and to the expectations of the international community at large, this furnace needs a bit of fanning to start beating the swords into ploughshares once again.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): Many thanks to the distinguished representative of Turkey for reminding the States represented in this Conference of the important issue of expansion of the membership. I thank him for the words he addressed to the Chair and convey to him our best wishes in his new post, which undoubtedly will be entrusted to him by his Government. I believe I see the distinguished representative of North Korea asking for the floor. You have the floor.

Mr. AN (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, my delegation would like to provide a briefing on the result of the fourth six-party talks.

The second phase of the fourth six-party talks on the nuclear issue between the DPRK and the United States closed on 19 September. The talks that started on the DPRK's initiative in August 2003 were held several times in the last more than two years. The talks, however, repeatedly proved fruitless and unproductive due to the conflicting stands among the parties concerned. We have approached the talks with magnanimity, patience and sincerity proceeding from the principled and fair position of wishing to achieve the general goal of denuclearization of the peninsula at any cost. As a result, we have at last succeeded in meeting all these challenges, making it possible to agree on the joint statement of "verbal commitments".

The joint statement reflects our consistent stand on the settlement of the nuclear issue between the DPRK and the United States and, at the same time, the commitments of the United States and South Korea responsible for denuclearizing the whole of the Korean peninsula.

The six parties agreed to take harmonious measures to implement phase by phase the points agreed on in the joint statement in accordance with the principle of "action for action" in the days ahead.

As clarified in the joint statement, we will return to the NPT and sign the safeguards agreement with IAEA and comply with it immediately upon the United States' provision of light-water reactors, a physical basis of confidence-building.

(Mr. An, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

As already clarified more than once, we do not have any need to keep even a single nuclear weapon if DPRK-United States relations are normalized, bilateral confidence is built and we are not exposed to the United States nuclear threat any longer.

What is essential here is that the United States provides light-water reactors to the DPRK as early as possible as evidence proving the former's substantial recognition of the latter's nuclear activity for peaceful purposes.

We will see how the agreement on "action for action" will be implemented in the future.

The delegation of the DPRK requests that this statement and the joint statement adopted at the six-party talks be circulated as an official document of the CD.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): Many thanks to the distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I also extend the Chair's congratulations to him, and I believe those of all the delegations represented here, for this effort which reflects goodwill and a vocation for peace in an important subregion of the world. Does any other delegation wish to speak? If not, that concludes the list of speakers for today.

I would now like to invite you to formalize the provisional agreement we reached at the informal plenary meetings on the draft annual report, as contained in document CD/WP.539, together with the amendments contained in document CD/WP.539/Amend.1. Since, thanks to the cooperation of the delegations represented here, we examined the draft annual report paragraph by paragraph at the informal plenary meetings held on Thursday, 15 September and Monday, 19 September 2005 in a very detailed manner, and since we have already considered all the amendments to the draft report, we shall proceed to the formal adoption of our annual report as a whole and as amended, without reverting to consideration of each paragraph or each section.

In this connection I must point out that all the blanks in the draft report, such as those related to the number of meetings or the day of the adoption of the report, will be filled in by the secretariat. Furthermore, all the documents that have already been submitted to the secretariat before the adoption of the report, including the statements which we have been asked to include in the report, will be added to the list of corresponding documents in the appropriate subsections.

May I take it that the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament in its entirety, as contained in document CD/WP.539, and with the amendments introduced by document CD/WP.539/Amend.1, is adopted?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): The secretariat will issue the report as an official document of the Conference in all the official the languages as soon as possible.

Would any delegation like to take the floor at this stage? I see the distinguished Ambassador of Japan, who has asked for the floor. You have the floor, Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. MINE (Japan): Mr. President, at the outset of the final meeting of this session, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and assure you of my delegation's full support for the remainder of your term. I hope it is not too late. First, I would like to congratulate you on the adoption of this year's final report under your able leadership.

Over the past year, we have been unable to make marked progress in this body, despite various initiatives tried by Presidents and member countries, starting with the "food for thought" paper presented by former President Chris Sanders, which was followed up by subsequent Presidents.

I must confess that the initiative presented by you, Mr. President, took me somewhat by surprise, as we knew very little about your intentions during your term. If we had known the working plan beforehand, and therefore had had more time to deliberate over your proposal throughout the session, we might have been able to react in a more forthcoming and constructive manner.

Nevertheless, we have come a long way in the CD since January, and, as pointed out by some member States two days ago, we are by no means at the end of the road. Although the President's proposal did not command wider support after preliminary discussions, it is my sincere hope that the comments made on the proposal will be used in a constructive manner to contribute to future work.

There is still some time remaining before you hand over the presidency. My predecessor, Ambassador Inoguchi, who is now a member of the Diet, endeavoured to make the most of the intersessional period to enrich, insofar as was possible, what was already on the table. We are confident that you, too, will utilize this time fully to explore ways to arrive at a programme of work that commands consensus based on the developments made in the CD to date. On this note, I would encourage all delegations to make constructive efforts to move the CD forward.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Japan for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? Very well. Before concluding our work for this year, allow me to make some concluding remarks.

First of all, my thanks go to all the delegations, distinguished Ambassadors, distinguished representatives, whose resolute and timely cooperation accompanied by goodwill has made it possible for this Conference to approve its final report without any major setbacks. There are grounds for satisfaction here, because we can see the determination to continue moving forward on the part of all the States represented here.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonkidze, as well as the Deputy Secretary-General, Ambassador Román-Morey, and the entire secretariat, including the translators and interpreters, for the professionalism, sense of responsibility and efficient work they have displayed, and without whose assistance it would have been very difficult for this Conference to conclude its work with success.

(The President)

Now when I say “with success” I wish to be moderate, because it can be a poor consolation to have a final report whose problem is that the Conference once again has been unable to come up with a consensus-based formula in order to have a programme of work. Therefore the satisfaction is diminished by this snag which is not in the Conference’s favour. As Ambassador Rodríguez, the President of this Conference, put it well on 1 September, we must avoid reaching the 10-year mark and holding a negative celebration, because this might be the situation, that we may be celebrating 10 years of nothing as regards the programme of work.

I understand that some delegations have been surprised, perhaps by matters of style. However, we must be honest in our judgement. Since January of this year there has been a new momentum in the Conference on Disarmament thanks to the very praiseworthy efforts made by Ambassador Sanders of the Netherlands. His efforts to seek a compromise formula for the programme of work, as well as his idea supported by the Secretary-General of inviting the Minister for Foreign Affairs to attend this forum, undoubtedly constituted a fresh impetus in the efforts being made by the Conference to find a consensus on the programme of work.

When taking its turn in the Chair, Peru could do no less than follow up this favourable impetus, this new momentum which has been pursued very wisely since January of this year. So that if there has been a surprise, it is that this year has been a promising year in that there is a new dynamic, a renewed impetus, thanks to the interest of all delegations in resolving the problem which has been the focus of an impasse up to now. Of course - and here I agree with the Ambassador of Japan - the shortness of the sessions which fall to the successive Presidents generates a degree of time pressure. If the presidential terms were longer, there might perhaps be more room for well-timed consultations.

On the other hand, the fact that the negotiation of the report and the adoption of the final report was added to the work of Peru’s term of office supplied additional pressure. This is why one acted with a degree of haste. Nevertheless, as I said at the previous plenary meeting, nothing that is happening here is new, nothing that is being considered here is totally unexpected. We have been working on this for nearly nine years; we are simply going round in circles. We are looking at ways of finding points of convergence among the delegations, because here national positions are respected, and here the priorities which States have set are respected, and on the basis of this mutual respect we have to work to find points of convergence - I don’t say identical views, because undoubtedly when national positions are solid it is a matter of making concessions for the sake of reasonably acceptable flexibility.

So, this effort by the Chair forms part of this new dynamic which we have seen since January of this year, and which in the final analysis does no more than continue earlier efforts. I refer to Ambassador Amorim’s proposal, I refer to the five Ambassadors’ proposal. In other words, we are working jointly - my predecessors, in this case, but also the delegations which are not in the Chair but actively show their interest in finding a consensus-based formula. And it is with this purpose, with this objective of continuing to work boldly to come up with a compromise formula on the programme of work, that the Chair will continue the consultations in this intersessional period in New York. It will do so, of course, in close coordination with the incoming President, the Ambassador of Poland. This will be both a bilateral and a multilateral

(The President)

exercise, and it will take into account everything that has been the subject of discussion and consideration in this Conference on Disarmament, because the consensus formula is not anybody's property, but that of everyone in particular.

Therefore, on the basis of these informal consultations which are also requested by you in paragraph 37 of the final report that has just been adopted, I repeat, on the basis of these intersessional consultations, the Chair will convene in December, on the 13th, a meeting open to all States in order, if it is considered necessary, to make known the results of these consultations and to present any recommendations that have been arrived at as the outcome of these consultations. I repeat, this will be done in close coordination with the incoming President, the Ambassador of Poland.

Before concluding, I would like to express my best wishes to all the delegations and all of their members for the future work. I would also like to tell you that the next plenary meeting will take place on 23 January 2006, and that, for the coming year, the Chair will be occupied by Poland, from 23 January to 17 February 2006, the Republic of Korea from 20 February to 17 March 2006, Romania from 20 March to 20 May, the Russian Federation from 29 May to 23 June, Senegal from 26 June to 18 August and Slovakia from 21 August to 15 September.

So with the hope that the delegations will retain the same enthusiasm and the same spirit of cooperation and goodwill for next year, I declare the 2005 session of the Conference on Disarmament closed.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.