

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 2 September 2004, at 10.20 a.m.

President:

Mr. Mya THAN

(Myanmar)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 967th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the very outset, I should like to extend a cordial welcome to Ambassador Itzhak Levanon, who has recently assumed his responsibilities as Permanent Representative of Israel to the Conference on Disarmament. I wish to take this opportunity to assure him of our cooperation and support in his new assignment.

I should also like to welcome the participants in the 2004 United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament, who are observing the proceedings of the plenary this morning. I am sure they will benefit from exposure to our forum, and especially from the presentations that will be made to them on various aspects of the work of the Conference. I wish them a fruitful stay in Geneva.

Today, we are going to bid farewell to two of our distinguished colleagues, Ambassador Rajmah Hussain of Malaysia and Ambassador Nurlan Danenov of Kazakhstan, who will soon complete their duties as the representatives of their respective countries to the Conference on Disarmament.

We are all familiar with the outstanding diplomatic skills of Ambassador Rajmah Hussain and her professionalism in presenting the position of her country in the Conference on Disarmament and in other disarmament forums. During her presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, we have always appreciated her commitment to solving the outstanding issues before the Conference and to facilitating the commencement of the substantive work of the CD. Ambassador Rajmah Hussain will also be remembered as a strong advocate of improving the working methods of the Conference.

Ambassador Nurlan Danenov joined the Conference in 1999, the year Kazakhstan was admitted as a member State of the Conference. He has represented his Government with remarkable authority and diplomatic skill. We all remember his unwavering commitment to the idea of nuclear-weapon-free zones, and the statements in which he eloquently presented to the Conference reports on progress in the realization of this idea in Central Asia and on the development of confidence-building measures in the region.

On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament, as well as on my own, I should like to wish Ambassador Rajmah Hussain and Ambassador Nurlan Danenov and their families much success and happiness in the future.

I have the following speakers for today's plenary meeting: Mr. Marcelo Valle Fonrouge of Argentina, Ambassador Itzhak Levanon of Israel, Ambassador Rajmah Hussain of Malaysia and Ambassador Nurlan Danenov of Kazakhstan. I now call upon Mr. Marcelo Valle Fonrouge of Argentina.

Mr. VALLE FONROUGE (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): Firstly, Mr. President, I would like to thank you for addressing me as Ambassador, a title I have not earned yet, but of course I thank you for the prediction. First and foremost our delegation would also like to express thanks to you for the way in which you have been presiding over our activities.

Four years ago now the United Nations General Assembly emphasized the primary role of the Conference on Disarmament in negotiating an agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We have no doubt that the establishment of a subsidiary body on PAROS in this Conference will make a major contribution to the development of confidence-building measures, which are important as a preliminary step in ensuring stability and security in outer space.

Argentina is convinced that the next negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament should be on a treaty on the prohibition of fissile material for nuclear weapons (FMCT). The political will expressed by the United States in support of such negotiations, combined with the fact that this agenda item has recorded the largest number of expressions of support from members of this Conference, offers us grounds for hoping for speedy approval of a programme of work.

We are interested in technical contributions on verification methodology. Argentina is in favour of the adoption of verification clauses which highlight a focused approach designed to achieve acceptable verification without involving the States which are subject to such verification procedures in unnecessary expenditure.

Argentina considers that there are specific forums for addressing the proposal for the commencement of multilateral negotiations for the prohibition of the sale and export of persistent landmines. Argentina is a State party to the Convention on the total prohibition of the production, transfer and use of anti-personnel landmines, and consequently is in favour of its universal application without distinction between persistent and self-disactivating landmines. Argentina supports the establishment of a legally binding instrument on anti-vehicle landmines within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). It is encouraging to note the presentation of these proposals for negotiations on an FMCT and landmines, which spur us to step up our efforts to find a solution to the impasse so as to discharge the negotiating mandate of this multilateral forum

The PRESIDENT: I thank Mr. Marcelo Valle Fonrouge of Argentina for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to Ambassador Itzhak Levanon of Israel.

Mr. LEVANON (Israel): Mr. President, since this is my first appearance before this august body, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am confident that under your stewardship the report on the work of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly will be smoothly adopted and that you will diligently conduct the work of the Conference in the interim period leading to our next session.

(Mr. Levanon, Israel)

Let me also express the pleasure I have in sitting in this hall for my first plenary meeting, and I look forward to actively participating in the work of this distinguished forum.

Mr. President, I would like to assure you of my delegation's full support in your future endeavours. Let me also convey to you, and through you to the incoming and outgoing Presidents, Ambassador Chris Sanders of the Netherlands and Ambassador Omar Hilale of Morocco, my intention to remain unreservedly available to work in close cooperation with you and with all my other distinguished colleagues and to start working on relevant matters as soon as possible.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Itzhak Levanon of Israel for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call upon Ambassador Rajmah Hussain of Malaysia.

Ms. RAJMAH (Malaysia): Since the meetings of the Conference on Disarmament will soon come to a close for this year, and as I am scheduled to leave my post in October after having completed my tour of duty in Geneva, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor to make a farewell statement to the CD.

Let me first congratulate you on your assumption of the CD presidency, and Malaysia is certainly pleased to see Myanmar, an ASEAN and G-21 member, in the Chair. Having gone through the experience of presiding over the CD myself earlier this year, I know how much effort you are exerting to get the CD to make some progress in its work after languishing in a state of inactivity for the last eight years. The experience of having been a CD President myself for a month in February/March this year has led me to observe, as others have observed before and after me, that the duration of the presidency is perhaps too short for any concrete proposal to be pushed to a successful conclusion by any one President. But reality, however, is not related to time. The reality is that the outcome of any negotiations or proposals in the CD is very much beyond the control of any one CD President, since tangible progress in the complex field of disarmament is willy-nilly a factor of the international political and security climate. It is therefore not for lack of effort on the part of past CD Presidents that the CD has not been able to make substantive progress in its work. The reality is that the much elusive "political will" by some key States to make progress is still not forthcoming.

As I reflect on my remaining days as the Ambassador of Malaysia to the Conference on Disarmament, I recall how I first came to be associated with the all-important issue of disarmament and international peace and security. I first walked into this very ornate Council chamber in 1982, not as a disarmament Ambassador, but as a Disarmament Fellow. I was then the first young diplomat from Malaysia to be given the opportunity of following the United Nations Fellowship Programme on Disarmament, and I would like to thank the United Nations for that enlightening experience. Little did I envisage way back in 1982, as I grappled with disarmament issues in a cold war era, that I would one day become the Ambassador of Malaysia to the CD and preside over the CD itself, the first time that Malaysia had done so since our membership of the CD in August 1999. It is a strange coincidence, then,

(Ms. Rajmah, Malaysia)

that as I prepare to bid farewell to the CD, I am able to welcome with other Ambassadors today the new Disarmament Fellows who have joined us in this Council chamber. I would like to welcome them most warmly - among them is a fellow Malaysian colleague - and to express the hope that they too will one day assume their respective roles as ambassadors to represent their respective countries in the CD and even to preside over the CD itself.

To the Disarmament Fellows, I would like to confess that while the United Nations Fellowship Programme exposed me for the first time to various disarmament concepts, my real education in disarmament came very much later, that is, during my visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 2002, when I was invited as a CD Ambassador to take part in the commemorative ceremony of the 1945 atomic bombings of the two cities in Japan. And it was in Hiroshima and Nagasaki that I came face to face with the stark reality and the devastating effects of a nuclear war as I spoke to the survivors of the atomic bombings, known as the *Hibakushas*, and witnessed for myself the devastating scenes of human suffering that were preserved in the museums, images that continue to haunt me to this very day. It was indeed horrific to note that the impact of the atomic bombing was so great that the shadow of a man sitting on a stone step was forever imprinted and exhibited in the museum for all to see many decades later. It was in Hiroshima and Nagasaki that the realization sank in that as a CD Ambassador I must do my little bit, however small, to ensure that the world must never, ever experience another Hiroshima or another Nagasaki.

The Non-Aligned Movement, which Malaysia has currently the honour to chair, is also doing its bit for the future survival of humanity by putting the highest priority on the issue of nuclear disarmament. The Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have also been quick to recognize the impact of personal visits to their two cities, and have graciously invited the CD Ambassadors to visit and to witness for themselves the horror of a nuclear war. It would in my view certainly be a pity if CD Ambassadors do not take up these invitations to experience what I have emotionally gone through myself. I am gratified to know that, through the courtesy of the Japanese Government, the Disarmament Fellows will have the opportunity to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki as part of their fellowship programme. To these young diplomats, I would like to say that they should savour the experience that will become the foundation of their future work in disarmament.

As I take my leave, I would like to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Deputy Secretary-General Mr. Enrique Román-Morey and other staff of the CD secretariat, the interpreters and the Conference secretariat for their unstinting support and cooperation during my tenure as CD President. To my dear colleagues in the CD, in particular to my group members in the G-21, I would like to thank them for their camaraderie and cooperation, and I will also fully endorse the view, as frequently expressed in this Council chamber, that the CD - in spite of its lack of progress on a work programme in the past years - is still the best club in town to belong to. I certainly hope that the time will come, sooner rather than later, when the CD will live up to its name as the only negotiating forum on disarmament and do its bit for the survival of mankind. I will certainly be monitoring the progress of the CD in the coming years from my new diplomatic posting, where I will continue to deal with disarmament issues, albeit from a different perspective.

(Ms. Rajmah, Malaysia)

In closing, I would like to extend my very best wishes to all present today and to thank them for their attention. I thank you, Mr. President, and good luck for the remaining weeks of your presidency. I fully commend you for your personal interest and dedication to the noble cause of disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Rajmah Hussain of Malaysia for her statement and farewell message and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to Ambassador Nurlan Danenov of Kazakhstan.

Mr. DANENOV (Kazakhstan) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, first of all I would like to express my appreciation to you for your efforts as President of the Conference and assure you that my delegation will do its utmost to assist you in achieving progress in its work. Thank you for the kind words addressed to me.

During the forthcoming inter-sessional period, my term as Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament will come to an end as I have been appointed to a new post. In connection with this I would like today, on the basis of a number of matters I have observed, to share some comments on the work of this forum.

Exactly five years have elapsed since Kazakhstan became a fully fledged member of the CD, but to our great regret the Conference has not been able yet to adopt its programme of work. The unique mandate of the CD as the sole negotiating forum for disarmament issues and its enormous potential, despite the expanding threat to international security, have remained unrealized for a long period of time. The reasons for this extremely paradoxical situation are well known to everyone. We are deeply convinced that when combating new threats to international and national security, appropriate and coordinated political efforts are required. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, K. Tokaev, said in this room two years ago, "There is ... a great necessity for a new political vision to combat new threats in the new century. We must understand that there are no alternatives to the spirit of good will and cooperation. New threats must face new, more efficient forms of action by the international community."

Political will for cooperation and for compromise with a view to successfully countering new threats are what are absent in our view in terms of overcoming the situation that has arisen. And, as my colleagues have pointed out repeatedly, the Conference's lengthy failure to implement its true mandate and the lack of real negotiations can leave it on the sidelines of the disarmament process. This is why we must critically reinterpret the existing situation and use this important forum and its intellectual potential in a responsible way to solve key problems relating to disarmament.

Over the recent period a number of proposals and initiatives have been put forward with a view to adopting a programme of work for the Conference. But because of divergent interests and priorities in different countries they have not been adopted. In our opinion, at present the most balanced and well-rounded basis for beginning the substantive work of the Conference continues to be the five Ambassadors' initiative, which we fully support.

(Mr. Danenov, Kazakhstan)

On the matter of priorities, Kazakhstan is in favour of starting as soon as possible negotiations on a treaty to ban the production of fissile material and on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We are firmly convinced that these two agreements are most essential for ensuring international security, and work on them should be carried out in parallel. The task of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remains very important.

The life which surrounds us is wiser and more dynamic than the atmosphere prevailing in this room. My colleagues have spoken of this repeatedly, and I think it is also clear to everyone. The past five years, despite the sluggish process in the Conference on Disarmament, have nonetheless been marked by a certain degree of progress and even some success in the multilateral disarmament process. The successful implementation of the Ottawa Convention, the adoption of the fifth protocol to the Convention on inhumane weapons, measures to control the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and other measures attest to gradual movement on the part of the international community along the path of disarmament.

Kazakhstan attaches great importance to questions of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. We believe that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is one of the main challenges to international security, and this is why we have constantly advocated that existing non-proliferation regimes must be strengthened. We very much value the establishment of the Global Partnership against the spread of WMD which was adopted by the G-8 at their summit at Kananaskis, and the Action Plan on Non-proliferation adopted in June this year in Sea Island, as important statements by this group of developed countries in the area of non-proliferation. Kazakhstan fully supports United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 concerning the non-proliferation of WMD. We are convinced that against the background of existing threats to international security, all countries should take measures to prevent terrorists from gaining access to WMD and their components.

For its part, Kazakhstan, in addition to what it has already done to contribute in a substantive way to strengthening international security and the process of nuclear disarmament since it became a member of the Conference on Disarmament - efforts that are well known to the international community - has taken practical steps to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. In particular, in addition to the CTBT, we have ratified the Convention on Chemical Weapons, we have signed the additional protocol to the comprehensive safeguards agreement with IAEA, our country has become a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and domestic procedures are under way for accession to the Convention on Biological and Toxin Weapons. Negotiations are under way to enable Kazakhstan to join the Missile Technology Control Regime. We are actively involved in the process of creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. Our Government is considering the question of joining the Zanger Committee, the Australia Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement. I also wish to inform you that Kazakhstan, with active support and participation by Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Iran and a number of other States, is successfully pursuing the initiative submitted to the United Nations General Assembly in 1992 by President N. Nazarbaev concerning the convening of a Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia. The first summit on this topic was held in June 2002

(Mr. Danenov, Kazakhstan)

in Almaty. Efforts to agree on one of the Conference's basic documents have been virtually completed. This is a list of confidence-building measures, which reflects principles and measures leading to the strengthening of confidence and security on the Asian continent. I believe the members of the CD will agree that without strengthening confidence-building measures it is difficult to speak of real results in the area of disarmament.

I believe that the list of measures I have cited convincingly attests to the responsible approach taken by Kazakhstan to the disarmament process. Kazakhstan has been consistently pursuing the goals that it has set for itself because it is deeply convinced that if every State - I stress, every State - adopts domestic measures to strengthen the non-proliferation regime, then the world will become much safer.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all my colleagues for their kind cooperation and their friendly approach. I would also like to express appreciation to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, and the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Román-Morey, for their untiring leadership, professionalism and devotion to the cause of disarmament. I am convinced that the intellectual potential of the members of the Conference and their keen sense of responsibility constitute a reliable guarantee of renewal in the mandate of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Nurlan Danenov of Kazakhstan for his farewell message as well as for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

I have no more speakers on my list for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? That does not appear to be the case.

This concludes our business for the formal plenary meeting today. However, we will convene in an informal plenary meeting in 10 minutes' time to continue the consideration of the draft annual report. As usual, this meeting will be open only to the member States of the Conference and the observer States.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday, 7 September 2004, at 11 a.m. It is my intention to formalize at that plenary meeting, on 7 September, the agreement provisionally reached at the informal plenary meeting devoted to the consideration of the draft report and to adopt it.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.