

# Conference on Disarmament

5 February 2013

English

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## Final record of the one thousand two hundred and seventy-fifth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 5 February 2013, at 10.10 a.m.

*President:* Mr. András Dékány..... (Hungary)

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**The President:** I hereby declare open the 1275th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Before we proceed, I would like to invite you to consider the request from States not members of the Conference to participate in our work during the 2013 session, in addition to those whose participation we approved during the 1274th plenary meeting last week. The secretariat has received requests from the following: Kuwait, Malta and Montenegro. These requests are now before you in document CD/WP.575/Add.2, which includes all the requests that the secretariat received before 4 p.m. yesterday. All requests from non-member States received after that point will be presented for your consideration and decision at the next plenary meetings.

Are there any comments on these requests? If not, may I take it that the Conference decides to invite these States to participate in our work, in accordance with the rules of procedure?

It is so decided.

It is my pleasure now to update you on the status of the consultations I have been conducting with a view to advancing our work. I wish to briefly inform you about the state of play of my ongoing consultations on a draft programme of work.

Last week, through the regional coordinators, you received the unofficial first draft of the text of a possible programme of work. Since then I have continued bilateral consultations on the text with individual member States, including the presidents of the session.

I have been invited by the G-21 to meet with the group and explain the rationale behind my proposal as well as to answer any questions that may arise. I happily accepted the invitation and will meet with the G-21 on Wednesday. I wish to underline that, according to the rules of procedure, it is my obligation to submit before the end of my tenure a draft programme of work, an obligation I intend to fulfil.

In the light of the outcome of my further consultations, I will decide about circulating only the draft programme of work as a Conference document and, later on, the exact date of submission of, and possible action on, the final draft, which will already be accompanied by the implementation plan as an annex. It is my hope that as a result of our common efforts we will be able to agree on a package acceptable to all.

I wish once again to reiterate that I am always open to further consultations with every group and delegation.

Now it is my honour to give the floor to Ambassador Mitsuru Kitano, Director-General of the Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

**Mr. Kitano (Japan):** It is a great honour and pleasure for me to be granted this opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament. With the benefit of this valuable occasion, I would like to take the time to briefly elaborate on the views of the Government of Japan on the Conference on Disarmament.

At the end of last year, a new Government came to power in Japan and Mr. Fumio Kishida was appointed our new Foreign Minister. Despite this change, the high priority placed on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in our foreign policy remains steadfastly the same. Foreign Minister Kishida noted in his first speech that the new Government would continue to engage actively in these fields.

With our historical background, Japan has attached importance to nuclear disarmament. We care about progress in this area. Multilateral consultations should produce tangible results to come closer to a world without nuclear weapons.

It is for this reason that we continue to find value in the Conference on Disarmament, since it is deemed to be the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body of the international community.

At the same time, it truly saddens me that the Conference on Disarmament has remained ineffective for so long. I personally was involved in Japan's ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1997, or 16 years ago. Here, in attending this Conference with you, I cannot but reflect upon why we have not achieved anything in this body since then. Given the high expectations regarding the Conference and the large amount of resources devoted to this forum, the international community is impatient for an outcome.

I welcome, therefore, the efforts by you, Mr. President, and the other Conference member States dedicated to seeking agreement on a programme of work that will pull the Conference on Disarmament out of its years of deadlock. Although every item on the Conference agenda is important, Japan attaches highest priority to a fissile material cut-off treaty, which in our view should be the next step in the process of nuclear disarmament. In this context, we support your idea, Mr. President, and request every delegation to show utmost flexibility. We need to move ahead before the member States shift away from the Conference.

Although the Conference on Disarmament is the best venue for negotiating multilateral instruments, we do not need to limit our endeavours to advance nuclear disarmament to just this body. Last year, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to set up a group of governmental experts to work on the issue of a fissile material cut-off treaty. The group should produce tangible outcomes and give added value to past discussions. With our considerable experience in the field of nuclear energy, Japan is ready to contribute to the group of governmental experts. In addition, an open-ended working group is to meet in Geneva. Japan hopes that participants will undertake constructive discussions that will develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

Mr. President, please allow me to touch upon the issue of the NPT regime itself. Japan places great emphasis on maintaining and strengthening the NPT regime as a key multilateral instrument for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference will be held here in Geneva starting on 22 April of this year. In this connection, Japan is working closely with its Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) partner countries to put forward specific and practical proposals for the steady implementation of the 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan.

The activities of the NPDI are not limited to mere advocacy – we are an action-oriented group. In this regard, we are going to submit to the second session of the Preparatory Committee, with our partner countries, six joint working papers on non-strategic nuclear weapons, the reduction of the role of the nuclear weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, export controls, nuclear-weapon-free zones and the wider application of safeguards in nuclear-weapon States. We trust they will bring new ideas and fresh impetus to the NPT review process.

Before the meeting of the Preparatory Committee, ministers of the NPDI countries will meet at the Hague to express their political support for the steady implementation of the 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan and also to put forward concrete proposals to that end. Moreover, Japan has the honour to host a ministerial meeting in Hiroshima before the Preparatory Committee's third session next year.

Finally, Japan sincerely hopes that the Conference on Disarmament will revitalize its work and once again fulfil its mandated role. We must not only enjoy the privileges of this august body but fulfil the collective responsibility. I would like to stress that Japan stands ready to work with you, Mr. President, and all other States to achieve that goal.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Japan, and I give the floor to the next speaker on my list, to the distinguished Ambassador of the Netherlands.

Excellency, you have the floor.

**Mr. van den IJssel** (Netherlands): Mr. President, as you can see, life is not entirely risk-free even for ambassadors to the Conference on Disarmament, but I am sure that with your skills and with the energy you and your team have already displayed you will come through this presidency unbruised. Please be assured of our support and of any assistance we can provide.

Like other speakers before me, I would also like to use this opportunity to thank Ambassador Hoffmann and his team for their efforts with regard to last year's negotiations on the Conference report and resolution. I think they did a very good job. Lastly, let me extend a warm welcome to all newly arrived colleagues. I look forward to working with them, and I hope that their fresh ideas and hopes can help us in bringing desperately needed oxygen to the Conference.

Many speakers before me have spoken about it being 5 minutes to 12 for the Conference, or about 2013 being the last chance for the Conference, and I think almost all speakers before me have expressed their frustration about almost 15 years of deadlock, about 15 years of being unable to do substantive work in this forum. I will not add to that. Our views on the lack of progress in this body are well known, but I hope that this sense of urgency that is expressed will be translated into flexibility and into real willingness to compromise so we can end this negative spiral and prevent the Conference from fading away completely.

As I have said on previous occasions in this room, the Netherlands has always had a pragmatic and flexible approach to the programme of work. For us a programme of work is not a goal in itself but a means to start substantive work, including negotiations in the Conference. Let me be clear: our main objective is to make progress on priority disarmament issues by starting negotiations, and not the survival of the Conference itself.

Our first priority is to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), as an indispensable first step towards a world free of nuclear weapons. This priority is shared by an overwhelming majority of delegations, and in pursuing this goal we are willing to look creatively at all possibilities that will enable us to start such negotiations, inside but, if need be, also outside the Conference.

In this regard, we look back with satisfaction at the outcome of last year's First Committee session. In our view it was one of that committee's more productive sessions of recent years. The Committee adopted, among other things, three important resolutions, with large majorities: a resolution on the establishment of a group of governmental experts with the task of drafting text for inclusion in an FMCT, a resolution which establishes an open-ended working group on nuclear disarmament, and a resolution regarding a high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament. We sincerely hope that the adoption of these resolutions will guide us to the start of real negotiations on an FMCT and, henceforth, nuclear disarmament.

Mr. President, let me now turn to the draft programme of work you have presented to us. You have clearly made a serious attempt in trying to accommodate the different positions. However, in order for this effort to succeed, all sides will have to be willing to compromise. As I have stated, starting negotiations on an FMCT is my country's first

priority. However, in the draft programme of work, priority is given to the issue of nuclear disarmament negotiations. FMCT negotiations are no longer a separate item, but are now part of the nuclear disarmament paragraph. You ask us, therefore, to make a major concession on this point.

In our search for pragmatic ways to achieve progress on disarmament issues, we are indeed willing to make that compromise, and we call upon other delegations to do the same. We think that if we are really serious about the importance of this body, if we are really serious about nuclear disarmament, your proposal offers a glimmer of hope. It may not be the bright light we are looking for, but it should be enough to start our journey.

**The President:** I thank you and I give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of China. Excellency, you have the floor.

**Mr. Wu Haitao (China)** (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, first of all, the Chinese delegation would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the first presidency of the 2013 session of the Conference. I am confident that with your wealth of diplomatic experience and wisdom you will be able to guide the work of the Conference to a good start this year. The Chinese delegation is ready to actively support you and cooperate with you in your work. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new colleagues who have recently taken up their posts.

Mr. President, since the opening of this year's session of the Conference, you, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Director-General Tokayev and other colleagues have each expressed your own views on the work of the Conference, all calling for the Conference to break its deadlock, adopt a programme of work and begin substantive work as soon as possible. While some colleagues are anxious and worried about the current situation in the Conference, most still believe that the Conference is the most appropriate forum for the negotiation of multilateral arms control and disarmament treaties and that its stature should be preserved and enhanced.

China supports the early adoption of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work for the Conference and the start of substantive work on this basis. A programme of work will ensure that the Conference proceeds in an orderly manner and will also give expression to the commitment of member States to move the multilateral disarmament forward. Mr. President, my delegation wishes to express its appreciation and support for your efforts to promote the adoption of a programme of work, and we are carefully studying the suggestion you have put forward. We hope that you will hold broad consultations, fully address the concerns of the different parties and strive to bridge the differences between them.

China has always supported the status and role of the Conference as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body. The Conference and its predecessors have already concluded a number of multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation treaties. The membership of the Conference is broadly representative and reflects the current overall situation in the field of international security, arms control and disarmament. The principle of consensus set out in the Conference's rules of procedure is capable of protecting the legitimate security concerns of member States. Thus, the authority and advantages of the Conference are irreplaceable.

Recently, and particularly during last year's session of the General Assembly, the parties put forward various views and positions on how to move the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty forward and give an impetus to the process of nuclear disarmament. China believes that the Conference is the sole and most appropriate forum for FMCT negotiations, as it can ensure the participation of all major parties in the negotiations, so as to achieve a treaty that will fulfil the dual objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. With regard to the former, an action plan for carrying forward the nuclear

disarmament process has already been set out by the 2010 NPT Review Conference. This issue is also under discussion in the Conference. The parties should move steadily forward in the disarmament process at the Conference and other existing mechanisms, in accordance with the action plan. China does not support the removal of core issues such as nuclear disarmament and an FMCT from the Conference, as this would undermine the authority of the Conference and negatively affect the international arms control and disarmament process.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is one of the core issues in the Conference and has always been a high priority for China. Since 1982, the United Nations General Assembly has adopted resolutions on this issue for more than 30 consecutive years, calling for the negotiation and conclusion of a legal instrument on outer space, and the Conference too established ad hoc committees for 10 consecutive years to discuss issues relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

China has consistently advocated the peaceful use of outer space and opposed the weaponization of and engagement in an arms race in outer space, actively promoting the negotiation of an international legal instrument in this regard. In 2008 China and the Russian Federation jointly proposed the draft treaty on prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects (PPWT). In August 2009, China and the Russian Federation submitted to the Conference a working paper addressing the principal questions and comments on the draft treaty (CD/1872), providing further clarification and elaboration on issues of concern to States. China believes that the draft treaty is the most ripe of all the proposals put forward to date on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and we look forward to the Conference beginning substantive discussions on the subject as soon as possible and launching negotiations on the basis of this draft.

China will continue to strengthen its coordination and cooperation with all parties to move the work of the Conference in a positive direction.

**The President:** I thank you and I give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Ambassador, you have the floor.

**Ms. Adamson** (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, first let me join others in thanking you for the work which you and your team have already undertaken to bring us closer to a programme of work. Let me thank others on the podium for the work they did last year and wish those yet to come into the president's seat all the best for the coming year. Under your energetic leadership, and with the cooperation of everyone in this room, I believe that we can reverse the tide of pessimism which has enveloped us for many years. It is not too late. Critics say that we lack commitment to disarmament. Let me reiterate that the United Kingdom remains absolutely committed to achieving our long-term objective of a world without nuclear weapons.

Knowing that words alone are not enough, let me draw attention to the United Kingdom's strong record of taking unilateral action on disarmament, and of meeting our international and legal obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We know what we agreed to do in the last action plan in 2010. We will rededicate our efforts to implementing that plan, which covered all three pillars of the NPT as well as the Middle East. We are behind on some commitments, but we have not abandoned them.

Prioritization will be critical to creating the right international environment to deliver our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons. A fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is one of the key building blocks of that environment. We believe that it is the next logical step.

John F. Kennedy once said that we should never negotiate out of fear, but never fear to negotiate. We want FMCT negotiations to begin as soon as possible. We should not attempt to put in place preconditions, but explore all of the issues as part of the negotiations themselves. It is the United Kingdom's conviction that with an FMCT in place we will be a significant step closer to our goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Without an FMCT, we still have no legally binding way of putting a stop to the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons.

So we welcome the Canadian initiative to establish a group of governmental experts that will explore the issues around an FMCT to feed into negotiations within the Conference. Perhaps it can help us to move forward.

The Conference on Disarmament remains the best option for FMCT negotiations. There is little point in trying to develop a treaty not based on consensus or in a forum without all the key players. At the same time, frustration is mounting. We must be able to demonstrate progress if the value of the Conference is not to be called into question and rival initiatives put forward that will undermine it. Now is the time to take a risk. It is in all our interests to start work on the Conference's four agenda items. It may take a leap of faith by some, but as consensus is a requirement of our work the risks to any State are minimal.

I would like to briefly comment, and to echo the comments from my colleague from the Netherlands who talked about your draft programme of work. As the representative of the Netherlands pointed out, this draft programme of work is not optimal. Document CD/1864, which was brokered by the Algerian Ambassador, followed by document CD/1933, brokered by our Egyptian President, are closer to what the United Kingdom is seeking. By that I mean that the FMCT issue should be in its own working group. However, given what I said earlier, you would not be surprised that we believe that everyone in this room should give your approach a try. It is a chance to get us back to work, and I believe that the United Kingdom would also be willing to show flexibility if others do the same.

**The President:** We have just heard the last speaker on my list. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? It does not seem to be the case. This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on 12 February 2013 at 10 a.m.

The meeting stands adjourned.

*The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.*