
Conference on Disarmament

28 May 2013

English

Final record of the one thousand two hundred and eighty-seventh plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 28 May 2013, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Mohsen Naziri Asl.....(Islamic Republic of Iran)



The President: I declare open the 1287th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

As this is my first plenary meeting as the President of the Conference on Disarmament, before we proceed to the business of the day I would like to make a few remarks about the orientation and direction of the presidency of Iran over the coming four weeks.

It is an honour for the Islamic Republic of Iran to assume the duties of President of the Conference on Disarmament. The Islamic Republic of Iran, in fulfilling its responsibility of presiding over the Conference, will be guided by the Conference's rules of procedure and expresses its full readiness to consult with the members of the Conference in an open and transparent manner. Although, according to the current number of members of the Conference, every 11 years a member State is to assume the presidency, this responsibility is not merely a procedural one. The President may take initiatives, but the end result depends very much on all the members of the Conference, and the success of the Conference is a collective responsibility.

Therefore, I would like to request that the members of the Conference work closely together to sustain the momentum created by the useful discussions held in the Conference.

Allow me to thank my predecessor, Ambassador András Dékány of Hungary, for his utmost efforts in trying to break the impasse in the Conference by proposing a draft programme of work (document CD/1948). My appreciation also goes to Ambassador Sujata Mehta of India and Ambassador Triyono Wibowo of Indonesia for their dedicated efforts in conducting ongoing consultations with all members of the Conference and seeking their views on ways to advance the work of the Conference.

As had been agreed in the Conference, two core issues, namely nuclear disarmament and a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), were discussed during the presidency of India, while the other two core issues, namely prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) and negative security assurances, and other agenda items were discussed during the presidency of Indonesia. These discussions were useful and provided a good opportunity for the members of the Conference to make known their updated positions on the issues related to these agenda items.

The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly believes that the Conference on Disarmament is the world's sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. Nuclear disarmament has always been our utmost priority, and we have always been committed to the attainment of a world free of nuclear weapons. In view of the present circumstances, Iran, as the current President of the Conference, is fully aware of the complexity involved in breaking the impasse in the Conference and reaching consensus on the programme of work.

The Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to spare no effort to consult member States in an effort to find ways and means of breaking the impasse in the Conference. The deadlock in the Conference is not related to procedural issues; rather, it is caused mainly by a lack of serious political will in the field of nuclear disarmament.

I believe that the first priority for the formal start of the work of the Conference is to agree on the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. Thus, my priority will be to work with other members of the Conference on a programme of work. I will try to continue the constructive consultations that started at the beginning of this year and meet with interested delegations that might have helpful proposals to make concerning the programme of work. I am also planning to have meetings with the regional groups in order to seek their views on issues related to the work of the Conference.

For the plenary meetings, based on my plan, which is subject to your approval, today I will be in a listening mode and will invite the delegations to express their views, present their recommendations and discuss their priorities as regards the issues related to the work of the Conference and their expectations of the President. The second plenary meeting during my presidency will be devoted to discussions on the programme of work. I have some topics in mind for the discussions to be held at the third and fourth plenary meetings during my presidency, which I will inform you about and finalize in due time after consultations with member States.

I would also like to continue consultations with the delegations on the expansion of Conference's membership and the participation of civil society in its work.

I am of the firm conviction that multilateralism is the best tool for advancing the work of the Conference and that multilaterally adopted norms and agreements are the key to collective security. The Conference, as the sole negotiating body in the field of disarmament, can play a fundamental role in this regard.

Bearing in mind the devastating and inhumane nature of nuclear weapons, the Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, has the primary responsibility to negotiate and conclude multilateral treaties that eliminate all threats emanating from nuclear weapons by ensuring their total destruction. I am from a group that holds nuclear disarmament as its top priority, and I am fully committed to that goal.

I am also very much committed to the Conference as the sole negotiating forum body and, during my presidency, I will welcome any constructive proposal that might facilitate the work of this august body.

I stand ready to work closely with the members of the Conference to lay the groundwork for the start of a fair and comprehensive self-assessment of the Conference's work. I believe that this internal evaluation should help us to tackle the root causes of the problems that we are facing as we strive to advance in the work of the Conference. Simplistic approaches that ascribe full responsibility for the Conference's 16 years of inactivity to the rules of procedure cannot be helpful.

With regard to developments outside the Conference, we should take note of the United Nations high-level meeting on disarmament that is to be held this year, as well as the open-ended working group tasked with developing proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which started its meetings in Geneva two weeks ago.

In our view, nothing should undermine the credibility and integrity of the Conference on Disarmament. Therefore, we should work together in a positive atmosphere to strengthen its role as the sole negotiating body in the field of disarmament, and to preserve the credibility of the Conference by respecting and upholding its rules of procedure and giving equal weight to the legitimate security concerns of all countries. We should bear in mind that there is no alternative to the Conference on Disarmament.

We need to identify obstacles to the attainment of consensus on a programme of work by finding acceptable or agreeable options in terms of language, methodologies and modalities. During my presidency, I will explore all possible avenues for producing a programme of work, using as a reference and as a basis for consultation the various drafts and proposed programmes of work that have been formulated during previous presidencies. I will give due consideration to the continuation of consultations on the recent draft text distributed by the outgoing President of the Conference.

We must not lose sight of the urgency of adopting and implementing a balanced and comprehensive programme of work that includes negotiations on nuclear disarmament. Therefore, I will take into account views and constructive proposals put forward by member States in an attempt to find common ground on substantive issues and procedural matters.

This is the end of my statement. As you will see in our programme, today's plenary meeting is devoted to an interactive exchange of views on the work of the Conference on Disarmament. As I have just indicated in my remarks, its purpose is to help me fine-tune the elements upon which I intend to carry out broad consultations from this day forward.

I will now turn to the list of speakers for today. I give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Ms. Rodríguez Camejo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Your Excellency, my dear friend Mohsen Naziri Asl, allow me first of all to welcome you. Your recent arrival here in Geneva has come at a difficult moment in our work, although I know that you are very familiar with the situation here. Allow me also to congratulate you, your country, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and your delegation on your assumption of the presidency of this important negotiating forum. The delegation of Cuba offers you its full support and is confident that you have the experience and diplomatic skills needed to discharge this responsibility and push forward the work of the Conference.

I would also like to recognize the excellent work carried out by our friend, the Ambassador of Indonesia, and the enormous efforts made over the past four weeks to agree on a programme of work.

Cuba attaches great importance to the need to make real progress in the negotiations and deliberations in the field of disarmament and arms control. In particular, we, together with the Group of 21 and the Non-Aligned Movement, accord the highest priority to achieving nuclear disarmament.

We reaffirm the importance of multilateralism as a core principle in disarmament negotiations. Solutions reached through multilateralism, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, are the only truly effective way of dealing with matters relating to disarmament and international security. In this regard, our country reaffirms its confidence in the Conference on Disarmament and its willingness to negotiate in the Conference any topic agreed on by all member States of this forum.

Cuba supports the optimization of the disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. We are concerned by the initiatives that some are promoting to remove certain topics from the Conference and resort to alternative processes. Undermining the role of the Conference, diminishing its importance and maintaining this deadlock indefinitely cannot be the solution. On the contrary, now more than ever we hold the joint responsibility to preserve and strengthen it. Doing so requires, firstly, political will, particularly on the part of certain States, to respond to the international community's call to make real progress, especially in the field of nuclear disarmament.

Cuba will continue to strongly support this forum and is confident that the discussions we have had in recent weeks will contribute to the adoption of a programme of work for the Conference in which nuclear disarmament is granted the priority it deserves. To that end I reaffirm, Mr. President, our full and firm support.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Cuba for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Hamoui (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by congratulating the Islamic Republic of Iran and you personally, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We are hopeful and confident that your friendly country's contribution in the field of disarmament, as well as the high degree of competence and the broad experience that you and the members of your delegation enjoy, will help us to achieve progress in our work. We thank your predecessor, the Ambassador of Indonesia, for the commendable efforts that he made during his presidency. We also welcome the forward-looking intentions and views expressed in your opening statement and wish you success in their application.

Mr. President, Syria believes in the importance of the Conference on Disarmament and in the need to preserve it as the sole multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament. Syria also shares the view held by its fellow members of the Group of 21 and the Non-Aligned Movement that the highest priority must be accorded to nuclear disarmament. In the light of the prolonged deadlock that has beset the Conference, we call upon all States to intensify their efforts and display the maximum degree of flexibility and constructive cooperation. In our view, there is nothing to prevent the Conference from addressing the four main issues on its agenda in an equitable and balanced manner and, consequently, we are in favour of the adoption of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that takes into consideration the security concerns of all member States and makes provision for the establishment of subsidiary bodies to negotiate on those four issues. We will support any constructive proposals to address these four important issues in such a way as to reach agreement on a legally binding instrument or instruments regardless of the unconvincing argument put forward by some who maintain that one of these issues is riper for negotiation than others. We believe that precedence should not be accorded to one issue at the expense of others.

Agreement on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices would be a commendable and significant achievement if applied as a measure to ensure nuclear disarmament — and not solely non-proliferation — since nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are interrelated processes and any treaty on fissile material that fails to address the issue of stockpiles would be useless insofar as the enormous stockpiles of such material unquestionably pose a serious threat to international peace and security.

Mr. President, in conclusion, I wish you every success in your tasks and can assure you of my delegation's full willingness to cooperate with you and support your endeavours to give added impetus to this forum's work.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Syria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

The representative of Pakistan now has the floor.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I have taken the floor to formally welcome you to Geneva, Mr. President, and to heartily congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of this very important body.

Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran are not only neighbours but also countries with a shared history, a shared culture, a shared language and a shared religion.

We are extremely glad and proud to see you presiding over this Conference on Disarmament, and I would like to take this opportunity to assure you of our fullest cooperation in your efforts to help this body move forward.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank your predecessor, the Ambassador of Indonesia, who conducted his presidency in a most transparent, balanced, objective and constructive manner. I appreciate his efforts. Unfortunately, we were not able to progress during his term of office, but I think his contribution is that he has set a standard, a foundation on which we can build, and I think that that is a very important contribution on the part of the Indonesian President.

While I have the floor, I would also like to welcome the statement that you have just made with regard to the approach that you will take to move the work forward in this chamber, and we appreciate and agree with your assessment of the prevailing situation.

We agree with you fully that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral negotiating body. We also fully agree with you that the reason for the lack of progress is the absence of the necessary political will to make that leap of faith that could unblock the present stalemate.

Unfortunately, there is a presumption, or at least an attitude, that the Conference functions in its own realm, which is out of sync with the world outside this room. That is not a realistic proposition. This Conference cannot function in a manner that does not take into account the realities that exist on the ground in the real world.

Nor can this Conference function in an environment where there are double standards and discrimination. Every State that is a member of this Conference approaches the work of this Conference on the basis of its security interests. That is why we need to be sensitive to the security interests of all members of the Conference in order to make progress. On this basis, and in consonance with this approach, my delegation is fully prepared to work with you and your successors to make headway.

Finally, we welcome the emphasis that you and the other speakers who have spoken before me have placed on the issue of nuclear disarmament. As a member of the Group of 21 and as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Pakistan is committed to the objectives of nuclear disarmament, and we feel that nuclear disarmament is the *raison d'être* of this Conference. This is why it was created, but unfortunately, more than three decades later, no progress at all has been made in the context of nuclear disarmament. Therefore, I think that it is high time that we start to focus on this very important aspect of our agenda.

I thank you, Mr. President, and I again welcome you to this Conference.

The President: I thank you, Ambassador Akram, for your statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

The Deputy Permanent Representative of Russia now has the floor.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, we would like to welcome you and wish you every success in your work in this high office. You and the entire Iranian delegation can count on the support and cooperation of the delegation of the Russian Federation.

This year's session of the Conference on Disarmament marks a turning point, and that places a special responsibility on you and all six Presidents of this session. You have shared with us a programme of work and working modalities for the Conference for the term of your presidency, and my delegation is prepared to agree to them.

Our work is truly at a crucial juncture. Decisions were taken at the sixty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly that in essence strip away from the Conference parts of its agenda, in particular by placing discussion of the issue of nuclear disarmament under the auspices of the General Assembly. Such a trend

threatens to fragment multilateral disarmament, marginalize the Conference and, ultimately, bring about the collapse of the entire United Nations disarmament machinery.

We are convinced that the only possible way to restore the Conference's credibility is to reach agreement on a programme of work for this forum. We welcome the efforts of the previous Presidents, including the two most recent ones, the Ambassadors of Indonesia and Hungary, who made contributions towards resolving this issue but, unfortunately, were unable to achieve their goals on the basis of their proposals. Russia, for its part, also sincerely strove to do its part to reach a compromise on a programme of work.

It is clear that different groups of States at the Conference have their own priorities. For some, a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is the priority; for others, it is the issue of nuclear weapons. We have repeatedly stated that our priority is to prevent an arms race in outer space. Nevertheless, we take into account all the priorities and all the views of the States represented here in this forum.

As you know, we have informally put forward the idea of preparing — as an interim measure — a so-called simplified programme of work that would focus on in-depth discussion of the four core agenda items: nuclear disarmament, an FMCT, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances. The mandates of the working groups on these four themes would be identical: to deal with a specific issue. The wording of the mandate for an FMCT, however, would involve consideration of a treaty: to deal with a treaty. This, in our view, would allow us to gain time in order to continue efforts on the Conference's negotiating mandate and, no less important in the current circumstances, to preserve the Conference as a multilateral disarmament forum.

This was the idea underlying the joint statement that concerned Governments made in support of the Conference to the First Committee of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. Seventeen States representing various groups and continents aligned themselves with this statement. Unfortunately, consensus was not reached on the proposal in question, but I would describe the response as a situation in which the pendulum had very nearly achieved equilibrium.

The situation has worsened since then, and we trust that the individual delegations on which compromise depends will take a responsible decision and agree to a programme of work. Of course, we stand ready to discuss other approaches to relaunching substantive work in the Conference.

I thank you, Mr. President, and again wish you success in your work.

The President: I thank the representative of Russia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

The Ambassador of China now has the floor.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, first of all I would like to welcome you to Geneva and congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. You have the full cooperation of the Chinese delegation. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for all the hard work and efforts of the outgoing President, the Ambassador of Indonesia.

China supports the adoption of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work by the Conference as soon as possible. Such a programme of work will ensure that the work of the Conference proceeds in a smooth and orderly manner and would

also be a reflection of member States' commitment to moving forward the multilateral disarmament process.

Several recent Presidents of the Conference have put forward draft programmes of work, and a number of member States have also submitted proposals. Building on the foundation laid through these efforts, we should focus on beginning substantive work. It is imperative that all member States think creatively and take proactive steps towards the adoption of a programme of work as soon as possible and resume without delay substantive work in the Conference.

At the same time, all Conference members should take into account each other's legitimate security concerns, promote mutual trust and actively create a positive environment that is conducive to dialogue and negotiations. China supports any effort that will contribute to the adoption of a programme of work and hopes that through your broad consultations, Mr. President, we will be able to bridge our differences, build consensus and agree on a programme of work as soon as possible.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

The representative of Algeria now has the floor.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, like the previous speakers, the Algerian delegation wishes to welcome you, Mr. Ambassador, to Geneva and to the Conference on Disarmament while, at the same time, offering its sincere congratulations to the Islamic Republic of Iran on its assumption of the presidency of the Conference. We also wish to express our deep gratitude for the diligent endeavours made by your predecessor, the Ambassador of Indonesia, during his presidency of the Conference.

At the beginning of this session, the Algerian delegation expressed its positions concerning the Conference on Disarmament and the priorities which it regards as essential issues that the Conference must address.

Mr. President, you are chairing the Conference at a difficult juncture when we are all aware that our repeated and ongoing failure to reach a consensus on the programme of work is giving rise to deep concern in the international community. The recent General Assembly resolution calling for the establishment of a governmental working group on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as well as its resolution on the establishment of an expanded working group to move forward with the negotiations on nuclear disarmament, may be regarded as a clear expression of concern at the ongoing deadlock in the Conference.

In order to demonstrate that the Conference is the sole multilateral forum in the field of nuclear disarmament — and the position of Algeria has always been to support the Conference in that capacity — it needs to engage in active and substantive work on the main issues before us. We will support you, Mr. President, in your efforts to reach a consensus on the programme of work by identifying and defining points on which there are differences of opinion and attempting to find satisfactory solutions to remedy them. Since the Conference has not yet reached the customary consensus on a programme of work, we endorse the proposal made by the Russian delegation, which reflects our previously expressed position, namely that we could try out a simplified programme of work that would at least enable us to begin an in-depth substantive discussion on the four core issues before the Conference: nuclear disarmament, a ban on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances.

Mr. President, having previously worked with you in other multilateral forums, we are well aware of your conciliatory spirit and your ability to work towards a consensus. We therefore rely on you to move forward in that direction. Finally, we would like to say that you are not starting from scratch, since a number of ideas and proposals can be found in the decision contained in document CD/1864, which was adopted by consensus at the Conference in 2009, and several other ideas were also subsequently tabled before the Conference. You can use all these ideas as a basis for the achievement of a consensus on the programme of work.

The President: I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

The representative of Egypt now has the floor.

Mr. El-Atawy (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to affirm our full willingness to help in any way to give momentum to the work of this Conference, which is the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament issues. We are pleased to note that the Islamic Republic of Iran is undertaking this presidency in tandem with its presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement of which we are proud to be a member. Please also allow me, through you, to commend your predecessor, the Ambassador of Indonesia, for his diligent endeavours during his exemplary presidency of the Conference.

As we have already stated on numerous occasions, the top priority in the Conference's work is to make a diligent effort to agree on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that will enable negotiations to begin on legally binding instruments concerning disarmament and, primarily, nuclear disarmament. In this connection, we wish to reaffirm that we would welcome any draft programme of work that would achieve progress in the move towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. To this end, a start should be made within the framework of a draft programme of work based on that proposed last year in document CD/1933/Rev.1, with particular emphasis on the need for the formation of a working group to address nuclear disarmament, as well as the need to ensure that the issue of fissile material is addressed within the context of both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and, consequently, in such a way as to cover existing stockpiles of fissile material.

Mr. President, we look forward to working with you during your presidency of the Conference and wish you every success in breaking the current deadlock in the Conference and initiating substantive work, particularly towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The President: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

The Ambassador of Indonesia now has the floor.

Mr. Wibowo (Indonesia): Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Mr. President, upon your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation stands ready to support and cooperate with you as you take up your duties. My delegation is happy to learn that during your presidency you plan to continue to work towards adopting a programme of work in the Conference on the basis of previous draft programmes of work.

I concur with the speaker before me that the Conference is the sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations. Let us uphold this principle so that the Conference can get back on track.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Conference for their kind words, for their full support and cooperation during my presidency and for their frankness and openness during my consultations with them.

Again, Mr. President, you can rest assured of our full support and cooperation as you take up your duties.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Indonesia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

The representative of Zimbabwe now has the floor.

Mr. Mucheka (Zimbabwe): Allow me to take this opportunity on behalf of the delegation of Zimbabwe to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Zimbabwe and Iran have excellent bilateral relations.

I would also like to express my country's appreciation for the work carried out during the previous presidencies of Indonesia, India and Hungary. Zimbabwe regrets, however, that no agreement was reached on a programme of work that would allow us to resume substantive negotiations in the Conference.

Zimbabwe, like other members of the Non-Aligned Movement, places high priority on nuclear disarmament. To our great concern, no meaningful progress is being made on this front. My country is worried that this subject continues to receive nothing more than lip service.

Mr. President, Zimbabwe fully supports your proposals and plans for your term as President of the Conference. We hope that some progress will be made soon.

The President: I thank the representative of Zimbabwe for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

Would any other delegation like to take the floor at this stage? That does not seem to be the case.

I have listened very carefully to all the positions expressed by our distinguished colleagues. I will take into account all these views and the existing proposals when planning for future discussions. I will continue to consult with all the members of the Conference, and I stand ready to hear any constructive views or proposals.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held next Tuesday, 4 June 2013, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.