
Conference on Disarmament

10 September 2013

English

Final record of the one thousand three hundredth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 10 September 2013, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Gerard Corr(Ireland)

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The President: I call to order the 1300th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First, I would like to invite the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, to take the floor.

Mr. Tokayev (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to the Conference): As the 2013 session of the Conference draws to a close, I would like to make some observations about the past 24 weeks and take a forward look into 2014.

Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. President, and your predecessors for an active year. All six Presidents have placed their experience and expertise at the service of the Conference and the search for common ground to direct the Conference on Disarmament back towards substantive work.

I welcome the high level of engagement and interest by member States in the Conference and its activities. We need to build on and sustain this level of engagement. The international community rightly has high expectations of the Conference to fulfil its mandate for a safer and more secure world through disarmament. It is our collective responsibility and obligation to live up to their expectations, in a spirit of flexibility and compromise.

Progress can be slow in multilateral diplomacy. This is part and parcel of the process, aimed at producing sustainable results with the support of the international community. But we cannot accept a standstill.

There is no doubt that the differing security interests of the member States in this chamber have considerably slowed the pace of work and progress in the Conference on Disarmament, but your sustained commitment to finding common ground is now in the process of bearing some fruit. I therefore welcome the decision to establish the informal working group to produce a programme of work, and I thank the membership for the trust placed in my initial proposal. I believe that it can be a step, however small, in the right direction. It can help to lay the foundation for a new shared understanding of how the Conference on Disarmament can resume substantive work.

Our expectations need to be realistic – it cannot happen overnight, but we must also not allow it to become a diversion from substantive work and a reiteration of well-known positions.

While we work towards the realignment of the political priorities which would allow for negotiations to start in the Conference, the informal working group can produce a programme of work providing a basis for such negotiations to hit the ground running.

It is therefore important that the group be given the opportunity to continue its work next year. The three meetings you have had so far have been held in a constructive and interactive spirit. They represent an important first step.

The intersessional period can be used productively in support of the Conference. In this context, I would encourage the Co-Chair and the Vice Co-Chair to continue their work after the first committee session and convene open-ended informal consultations among members and observers of the Conference, with the close involvement of the outgoing and incoming presidents. That would help maintain the momentum as we approach 2014. It is my hope that these intersessional consultations will then be followed by an early revalidation of the decision contained in document CD/1956/Rev.I for the new year.

As I said on 18 June, when I presented my most recent proposals, I continue to believe in the value, importance and necessity of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. Today, I

wish to reiterate my firm belief in and my unwavering commitment to the Conference. As Secretary-General of the Conference, you may rely on my full support in taking the current process forward.

Allow me to conclude, Mr. President, by expressing to you my most heartfelt personal and professional wishes of success as you are going to leave Geneva and move on to your next assignment. Your professionalism, pragmatism and sense of humour will be missed, and will no doubt inspire disarmament diplomats in the years to come.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Tokayev, for his message and also for his kind good wishes to myself, and I would like to take this opportunity to convey our appreciation for his continuing support to the Conference on Disarmament, which has been greatly appreciated by the Conference and by all successive Presidents this year.

It is an honour to have with us today Ambassador Luis Gallegos Chiriboga of Ecuador, Co-Chair of the informal working group established pursuant to document CD/1956/Rev.1. The Co-Chair is here to brief the plenary on the progress of the work of the group. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a pleasure for me to be here today to report to the plenary Conference on Disarmament, at the request of the President, on the progress made by the working group that I have the honour to co-chair.

As you know, the informal working group held three meetings, on 26 August and 2 and 9 September. The first of these meetings was devoted to a general exchange of views, while the second and third meetings were an opportunity to exchange views on a food-for-thought paper that the secretariat of the Conference had circulated at my behest. I would also like to mention that, at the working group's first meeting, a delegation requested the secretariat to compile all the programmes of work and documents relating to the Committee on Disarmament and the Conference on Disarmament from 1979 to 2013. That compilation is now available on the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs web page under the section regarding proposals on a programme of work.

It is my sense that delegations are keenly interested in the group's work. By establishing this informal working group, the member States of the Conference have sent a clear message that they want to find innovative solutions in order to resume the substantive work of this august forum and bring us closer to possible negotiations.

I have taken due note of the wishes expressed at the three meetings of the working group and will do my best to find consensus points so that the President of the Conference may draft a programme of work as outlined in document CD/1956/Rev.1. With that in mind, I am planning on a very active intersessional period to deepen bilateral consultations already under way and also arrange additional, targeted consultations.

The President: I thank Ambassador Gallegos for his update and for his work as Co-Chair. I have one speaker inscribed on my list today, and would like to welcome our new colleague, Ambassador Mehmet Ferden Çarıkçı of Turkey, who has assumed responsibility as representative of his Government to the Conference. On behalf of my own Government and on behalf of the Conference, I would like to welcome the Ambassador, and assure you of our full cooperation and support. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Çarıkçı (Turkey): Mr. President, thank you very much for your warm words of welcome. As this is the first time I am addressing the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to seize this opportunity to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency and assure you of our support.

Let me extend my regards to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. I also want to thank my colleagues for their welcome. It is an honour for me to join the Conference on Disarmament.

As you know, Turkey is resolutely committed to the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Our security policies exclude the production and use of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction. Their proliferation is a matter of serious concern to us.

In order to address today's challenges and enhance our security in a volatile environment, multilateral efforts towards disarmament and non-proliferation are indispensable. Multilateralism is not a matter of choice but rather a matter of necessity.

Our ability to respond effectively to the pressing challenges to international peace and security depends heavily on how we make the best use of international forums, including the Conference on Disarmament.

The Conference on Disarmament has a special responsibility in the contemporary disarmament agenda. We should strive to maintain the relevance of the Conference by fulfilling its fundamental task. In this regard, we hope that the Conference will resume substantive work as early as possible.

We see the recently established informal working group — and I thank the Co-Chair for the briefing today in the morning — as an indication of a shared goal and need to come up with a consensual programme of work urgently. We hope the informal working group can generate more mutual understanding and confidence, and thus create the much needed breakthrough and move the Conference ahead into negotiations.

Starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty will be a significant building block in the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It will further pave the way for parallel advances in the other core agenda items.

I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize another issue to which we attach great importance — that is, the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We regret that the conference on this subject was postponed. We call once again upon all concerned to continue to work with the facilitator and conveners in order to hold this conference as early as possible.

Mr. President, there are challenges, but we need to strive to overcome the current stalemate. I am prepared to work with you in the Conference on Disarmament and elsewhere towards the achievement of our common vision.

The President: I thank the representative of Turkey, Ambassador Mehmet Ferden Çarikçi, for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Zamir Akram.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I would like to start by expressing our appreciation for the insightful comments made this morning by Mr. Tokayev, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, and also for the update given by Ambassador Gallegos, the Co-Chair of the informal working group. It also gives me great pleasure to welcome our Turkish friend, the new Ambassador of Turkey, and I look forward to working with him as I have done with his predecessors.

I have asked for the floor to read out a statement that was issued on 5 September this year by the National Command Authority of Pakistan. The National Command Authority is the country's highest decision-making body on strategic issues; it is chaired by the Prime Minister. That meeting was held to give direction to the strategic policy of the newly elected government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The statement was also forwarded to you, Mr. President, through a letter in which I requested you to circulate it to the Conference on Disarmament, as the contents of this statement are very relevant to this body.

Allow me, with your permission, Mr. President, to read out the statement.

A meeting of the National Command Authority was held under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on 5 September 2013. The meeting was attended by all members of the National Command Authority, the Federal Ministers of Finance and Interior, the Adviser to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs, the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and the three service chiefs.

The National Command Authority reaffirmed the centrality of the nuclear programme of Pakistan for the defence of the country. The National Command Authority reposed full confidence in the robust nuclear command and control structure of Pakistan and all the security controls related to strategic assets of the country. The National Command Authority paid rich tribute to the various scientists, as well as security and policy-level officials and diplomats, who are associated with the country's strategic programme.

The National Command Authority reviewed developments at the regional level and reiterated that, as a responsible nuclear-weapon State, Pakistan would continue to adhere to the policy of credible minimum deterrence without entering into an arms race with any other country. Pakistan, however, would not remain oblivious to the evolving security dynamics in South Asia and would maintain a full-spectrum deterrence capability to deter all forms of aggression.

The National Command Authority also reviewed the developments at the international level and took note of the discriminatory trends and policies that could have serious implications for the national security of Pakistan and the global non-proliferation regime. The National Command Authority reiterated that, while maintaining its principled position on various arms control and non-proliferation issues, Pakistan would continue to oppose any arrangement that is detrimental to its security and strategic interests. As for the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty, the position of Pakistan will be determined by its national security interests and the objectives of strategic stability in South Asia.

The meeting underscored the commitment of Pakistan to play its due part as a mainstream partner in the global non-proliferation regime, and renewed the country's keen interest in joining the multilateral export control regimes on a non-discriminatory basis. Pakistan has the requisite credentials for full access to civilian nuclear technology for peaceful purposes to meet its growing energy needs for continued economic growth. The meeting noted the importance of the positive outreach and enhanced engagement of Pakistan with all the multilateral export control regimes, including membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

The National Command Authority emphasized that Pakistan will continue to participate constructively in the Nuclear Security Summit process. As a responsible nuclear-weapon State with advanced technology and four-decades-long experience in safe and secure operation of nuclear power plants, Pakistan is ready to share its expertise with other interested States by providing fuel cycle services under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, and by providing training placements at its centres of excellence on nuclear security.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement. I have no other speakers inscribed on my list. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

As you all know, last week we provisionally adopted the bulk of the report of the Conference to the General Assembly, thanks to your great flexibility and spirit of cooperation. The text of document CD/WP.576 will be updated to reflect the amendments

that have been provisionally agreed upon, and it will be issued as document CD/WP.576/Rev.1 this coming Thursday, in time for the formal adoption of the report on that day.

However, we have still some outstanding issues to consider, particularly paragraph 19, which is related to the work of the informal working group, and we also have one phrase in square brackets in paragraph 20. I would like to address these two paragraphs, and for that purpose I will now suspend the formal plenary meeting, and we will continue in informal plenary meeting devoted to the consideration of the draft report

The 1300th plenary meeting is now suspended, and we will recommence in 2 minutes in informal mode.

The meeting was suspended at 10.30 a.m. and resumed at 10.45 a.m.

The President: I will now resume the formal plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Does any delegation wish to take the floor? I call on the Ambassador of Estonia.

Mr. Seilenthal (Estonia): Mr. President, since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, please allow me to congratulate you on assuming the post of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and at the same time on the successful completion of your tasks by achieving consensus on the draft report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly of the United Nations. We are satisfied with the way the issues of expansion of the Conference and improving its working methods were reflected in this report. That includes the call for the appointment of a special coordinator to examine and make proposals on the enlargement of the Conference. This very idea was elaborated by numerous delegations during the 2013 sessions, and was also tabled by Secretary-General Tokayev recently at the June plenary this year.

We deeply regret that another year is passing by with the Conference unable to start negotiations or even agree on a programme of a work. We are frustrated by the ongoing stalemate within the Conference despite the hard work by you and other Presidents over a long period of time. Moreover, there seems to be a minor likelihood that the Conference will be able to start negotiations soon. Unfortunately, the informal working group was not able to reach a consensus on a programme of work. We nevertheless would like to express gratitude for allowing observer States to take part in the work of this group.

Mr. President, we would like to commend you for the informal paper you shared with us on challenges and future directions. It is an excellent paper asking important questions and giving us all food for thought on how to move forward in revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament. The proposals of Secretary-General Tokayev on the need for internal reforms are also properly reflected there. The questions of the consensus rule in the Conference and the length of the period of the presidency place rightful emphasis that should be elaborated further.

Furthermore, we believe the time has come to take concrete steps in order to start the suggested procedural reforms to improve the working methods of the Conference, to enhance the engagement between the Conference and civil society and to enlarge the membership. These are the necessary prerequisites to increase the legitimacy of the Conference, and I quote Secretary-General Tokayev: "We should not underestimate both the practical and political value of procedural reform. Concrete steps to improve the functioning of the Conference can be politically significant as a demonstration of the membership's collective will to chart a way out of the impasse and can help to build trust." I would like to reaffirm our strong commitment to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. But we have to have in mind that the Conference's agenda encompasses global concerns, and we believe that those concerns

should be negotiated on a non-discriminatory, transparent and multilateral basis, with wider participation of interested States. Given the universal nature of the United Nations, we do not see any reason or moral justification why an interested State should not be allowed to participate fully and equally in the disarmament discussions and negotiations and to contribute to its aims.

We thank you, Mr. President, for your open, transparent and efficient approach of taking a step forward and commencing a regular briefing for the coordinator of the informal group of observer States during your presidency. We encourage subsequent Presidents to continue this useful and fair practice.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Estonia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? I see none.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held next Thursday, 12 September 2013, at 10 a.m., and on that day we will hear an address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar. We will then proceed to the formal adoption of the report of the Conference to the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.