

# Conference on Disarmament

12 September 2013

English

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## Final record of the one thousand three hundred and first plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 12 September 2013, at 10 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Gerard Corr .....(Ireland)

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**The President:** I call to order the 1301st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Allow me briefly to suspend the meeting so that the Secretary-General and I may accompany Mr. Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, to the podium.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.09 a.m. and resumed at 10.11 a.m.*

**The President:** I call to order the resumed 1301st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guest today, Mr. Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar.

You are of course familiar, Minister, with the Conference on Disarmament, so you are especially welcome back, and your presence here today is testimony to the importance you attach to the work of this distinguished body. I have the pleasure and the honour to invite Mr. Wunna Maung Lwin to take the floor.

**Mr. Lwin (Myanmar):** It is an honour for me to address the Conference on Disarmament on the final day of the 2013 session. I would like to thank all of you for this opportunity. As I am no stranger to this forum, I am very pleased to come back here today to speak and to see new and old colleagues.

I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Gerard Corr of Ireland, on your assumption as President — the second time for Ireland since it became a member of the Conference on Disarmament — as well as on your guidance leading to the successful adoption of the report of the Conference to the General Assembly of the United Nations. My appreciation and admiration also go to your predecessors as Presidents of the Conference this year, for their active and constructive contribution to the work of the Conference.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my country's long-standing commitment to and support of the Conference on Disarmament. As one of the original members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, Myanmar continues to attach great importance to the Conference as the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament created by the first special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted to disarmament.

The central role played by the Conference in producing several important multilateral disarmament treaties in the past is remarkable. We share the disappointment of many in this chamber at the continued inability, now going on 17 years, of the Conference to respond to the international community's calls to fulfil its mandate and resume substantive work. Despite this, we continue to believe that its existence and the unique composition of its membership are an important asset in our quest for peace and security through disarmament.

Nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority on the disarmament agenda of Myanmar. The continued presence of nuclear weapons, not to mention their deployment, is one of the security challenges posing the greatest threat to the very existence of mankind. They can be triggered at any time, by miscalculation, by mistake or by the wrong hands. This serious threat infringes on the security of all nations at all times. As such, the only absolute guarantee against a nuclear catastrophe is the complete and total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, Myanmar is also committed to other important issues on the disarmament agenda, such as a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices that addresses past, present and future production, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances

in the form of instruments that are legally binding internationally. We would welcome negotiations or pre-negotiations on these issues, within the framework of the Conference.

With regard to the expansion of membership in the Conference, Myanmar welcomes the call for the appointment of a special coordinator on this matter to examine modalities of review, without any prejudice to the outcome.

In keeping with the nature of the Conference as a negotiating forum, we support the strengthening of the Conference's interaction with civil society in the field of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament.

We would not like to single out the Conference for failing to make progress. In fact, the disarmament machinery of the United Nations as a whole has been stagnant. Myanmar believes that the fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament has the authority and the legitimacy to comprehensively review the functioning of the entire United Nations disarmament machinery, including the Conference. To this end, Myanmar supports the early convening of the fourth special session.

I would like to touch briefly on my country's commitment to disarmament. Myanmar has now ushered in a new era. Since the formation of the new government 30 months ago, we have successfully undertaken many key reforms within a short period of time. With the increasing support of and cooperation from the international community, we are confident that we will achieve our goals of democratic transformation, job creation, income generation and poverty alleviation sooner.

While focusing attention on achieving the aforementioned goals, Myanmar, at the same time, is reviewing its domestic laws that are not in line with international norms and practices. We are also taking progressive steps to enhance our status in connection with a number of strategic disarmament conventions, including the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. In the meantime, we will continue to actively participate in and follow the developments relating to said conventions.

Allow me to comment on the ongoing work of the Conference on Disarmament. Myanmar welcomes the establishment of an informal working group to produce a programme of work robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation. Although there are arguments for and against the efficacy of the informal working group, we believe that it is a step in the right direction and that it constitutes a new opportunity for us to move the work of the Conference forward. At the same time, the work of the working group has to be supported by political will and by the flexibility of all member States. I wish the working group and its officers every success.

High-level meetings are important tools to garner political will for a desired goal. They have proved beneficial in the past. We look forward to seeing a fruitful outcome of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament to be held on 26 September 2013 in New York.

As we are preparing for the forthcoming session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and of its First Committee in particular, I would like to inform you that Myanmar will once again be tabling its traditional resolution on nuclear disarmament this year. I would like to express our thanks and appreciation to all co-sponsors and delegations for supporting our resolution. I would also like to request you all to support the resolution again this year.

Before concluding, I would like to inform this forum that Myanmar has been making serious efforts to conclude a protocol additional to the safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the application of safeguards in connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. To this end, a

series of workshops has been conducted in Nay Pyi Taw in close cooperation with IAEA. We also had the opportunity to send our policy and technical-level officials to IAEA headquarters in Vienna. We worked with the Department of Energy of the United States of America through another series of workshops at the same time. I wish to express our appreciation to these agencies and the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation for its cooperation with Myanmar.

With all these efforts, I am happy to announce here that Myanmar will soon be concluding the additional protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

**The President:** I thank His Excellency Mr. Wunna Maung Lwin for his important statement and also for his kind words addressed to the President.

Allow me now to suspend the meeting for a short moment in order to escort the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar from the chamber.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.22 a.m. and resumed at 10.26 a.m.*

**The President:** The 1301st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed.

Allow me first to welcome Ambassador Jorge Valero Briceño of Venezuela, who has assumed his duties as representative of his Government to the Conference, and on behalf of the Conference, and on my own behalf, to assure him of our cooperation.

As you all know, we have provisionally adopted the entirety of the report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly. Document CD/WP.576/Rev.1 in all the official languages has been placed in the pigeonholes of delegations and is also available on the table.

Document CD/WP.576/Rev.1/Amend.1 reflects the changes in paragraphs 19 and 20 that were agreed upon last Tuesday morning, as well as the corrections in paragraph 6 and the addition of documents to paragraphs 38 and 42. This document is available in English only. These will, of course, be integrated into the main body of the report and issued as an official document of the Conference in all the official languages.

Before we adopt the report, does any delegation wish to make a statement on the adoption of the report, or on any other issue? It seems that none does. If delegations so wish, we can proceed to a paragraph-by-paragraph reading of the report. I would be grateful for an indication if there is a wish to proceed paragraph by paragraph. That does not appear to be the case. May I then take it, as was the case in 2012, that the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament in its entirety, as contained in CD/WP.576/Rev.1 and CD/WP.576/Rev.1/Amend.1, is adopted?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** I will now turn to the list of speakers for today, and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Venezuela.

**Mr. Valero** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, it is an honour for me to assume my duties as the Permanent Representative of Venezuela at a time when you are presiding over this Conference. Allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency: your recognized diplomatic experience has enabled us to make tangible progress in this forum and you may be assured of my delegation's full support.

Mr. President, despite the concerted efforts deployed again this year to resolve the Conference's deadlock, that goal sadly remained out of reach. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela stands committed to advancing the substantive work of this forum through inclusive, transparent and constructive dialogue and partnership.

We express our appreciation for the efforts put forth by the preceding Presidents of the 2013 session to move our work forward; and we welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, which is testimony to the importance of this forum.

The Conference has indeed made some headway in 2013, for instance through the informal working group that was established to conduct discussions and produce for us a consensus-based programme of work.

Distinguished colleagues, we must engage in systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons, with the ultimate aim of their total elimination. It is time to convert this aspiration into action that can lead to general and complete nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Negotiations therefore need to begin on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices as a step towards disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. That treaty should contain specific provisions on monitoring and it should cover existing stockpiles.

Until such time as the goal of nuclear disarmament is achieved, we must continue substantive discussions, without limitation, on possible international agreements to provide effective assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

It is imperative that substantive discussions, without limitation, are launched on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and on preserving outer space as the heritage of all humankind for strictly peaceful purposes. This is a priority of the Conference, and the applicable legal regime must be strengthened accordingly.

Venezuela reaffirms its commitment to all existing institutions and agreements on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, as well as its full espousal of the principle of multilateralism.

The overarching goal that unites us all is our desire for a stronger international arms control framework as we pursue our commitment to work for peace and international security.

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

I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Finland.

**Ms. Kairamo** (Finland): Let me first of all congratulate you, Mr. President, on your leadership and the conduct of our work and meetings here in the Conference on Disarmament. It has been a true pleasure to work with you throughout your presidency. I also want to wish you all the best in the future and in your new duties as you are now leaving us and Geneva.

The swift drafting process and adoption of the annual report of the Conference was an achievement due, of course, to your personal efforts, as well as to our common efforts.

This year has been reasonably active in the Conference, with several attempts to start the substantive work. Unfortunately, none of the attempts have been successful. Nevertheless, my delegation would like to warmly thank all this year's Presidents of the Conference for their tireless efforts to reach consensus on the programme of work.

Many of the questions you posed in your paper "Challenges and future direction" still remain open. We should continue to address them in order to modernize the Conference. We have already taken one step by adopting document CD/1956/Rev.1 in order to consider the programme of work in the informal working group and thereby to search for ways to break the Conference deadlock.

After so many years of deadlock, we all know that a consensus-based programme of work will not emerge easily. We need increased flexibility and outside-the-box thinking in order to move forward. I want to reiterate the support of Finland to the Co-Chairs of the informal working group, Ambassadors Luis Gallegos Chiriboga and Peter Woolcott. I would like to thank them warmly for their report on Tuesday. We stand ready to continue consultations and discussions in an informal or any other setting, as may be appropriate.

Finally, I would also warmly welcome, on behalf of my delegation, our new colleague from Venezuela.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Finland for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

I have concluded the list of speakers. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I see none.

This concludes, therefore, our business for today and the 2013 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

In concluding, on a personal note, as I will be leaving Geneva on a new assignment shortly, I wish to warmly thank all colleagues in the Conference for their friendship and support during the four years that I have been privileged to work in the Conference. The Conference on Disarmament matters a great deal, and I look forward to the day, hopefully soon, when it will resume substantive negotiations on multilateral disarmament issues.

I wish all colleagues in the Conference well in their important work in the field of multilateral disarmament. And in concluding the meeting, allow me to thank the five Presidents who have preceded Ireland as President this year — Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran and Iraq — for all their work; and also to thank the interpreters, on behalf of all of us, the conference officers and the Conference on Disarmament secretariat for all their work.

*The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.*