

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.928
27 May 2003

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 27 May 2003, at 10.15 a.m.

President:

Mr. Yaakov LEVY

(Israel)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 928th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

It is with profound grief that we have learned about a tragic aircraft crash yesterday in northern Turkey, which killed 62 Spanish peacekeepers returning from a six-month tour of duty in Afghanistan, as well as 12 Ukrainian crew members. I would like to take this opportunity to express, on behalf of all the delegations to the Conference on Disarmament, our deep sorrow and sympathy at the tragic loss of so many lives. At the same time, I would like to convey, on behalf of the Conference on Disarmament, our condolences to the families of the victims and to the Governments of Spain and Ukraine.

Distinguished delegates, I have no speakers on my list for today's plenary meeting. I would, however, like to make some opening remarks as Israel assumes the presidency of the Conference. As this is the first time that my country has assumed the role of presiding over the Conference on Disarmament since our joining this esteemed forum in 1996, allow me to express how honoured and awed I feel as I embark on these honourable and important tasks. As I assume the post of president of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to reiterate my deep appreciation for the contribution of my predecessors, especially, Ambassador Sood of India, Ambassador Kasri of Indonesia and Ambassador Whelan of Ireland. I will do my utmost to continue their fine work. I wish also to express my gratitude to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Secretary-General of this Conference, and to Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General. My special thanks go also to the secretariat of the Conference and to the interpreters.

Since it is evident that the solution to the current stalemate is not to be found in this hall but elsewhere, I shall follow in the footsteps of my predecessors, who did their utmost to facilitate a professional and dispassionate exchange of views. Having said this, I urge all members to think in a creative and open-minded manner, for our goal here is to be instrumental in creating a safer world for future generations. Let me assure you of my country's deep commitment to the values of this Conference. We all have legitimate security concerns; we might have different perceptions of the path to follow in order to reach this better and safer world to which we all aspire. Dialogue, recognition and acceptance will enable us successfully to shoulder the heavy burden that has been placed upon us.

At this point, I should like to ask if any delegation wishes to take the floor. I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of Spain.

Mr. MIRANDA (Spain) (translated from Spanish): Mr President, since this is the first time that I take the floor under your presidency, may I avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate you on your new post.

I would like to respond to your kind words on the loss of the lives of 62 Spanish soldiers in a tragic accident: allow me to thank you for the condolences that you and the Conference

(Mr. Miranda, Spain)

have expressed on the death of these members of the Spanish armed forces in a tragic plane crash on a flight from Afghanistan, where they were engaged in the noble task of keeping the peace in today's world.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Ambassador, especially on this tragic occasion, with such loss of life of people who worked for such a holy cause, which we all support.

Would any other delegation like, at this stage, to take the floor?

This concludes our short business for today. We plan to hold our next plenary meeting on the Thursday of next week, according to our usual system. The next plenary meeting will be held, therefore, on Thursday, 5 June 2003, at 10 a.m. in this conference room.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.