

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand three hundred and ninety-seventh plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 16 August 2016, at 10.05 a.m.

President: Mr. Piotr Stachńczyk (Poland)

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The President: I call to order the 1397th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I thank you all for coming this morning and, as our presidency is ending, I would like to make a few remarks from my side.

It has been a challenging, sometimes difficult, but always very interesting, if not exciting, exercise. We have sought to properly respond to the needs of the Conference on Disarmament and the expectations of its member States. Whether we succeeded or not — it is your opinion which matters — but we definitely tried. We have consulted a significant number of States in order to identify problems and to understand the most important elements of their positions.

Our approach resulted in putting in action one of the proposals on a programme of work. We are very close to reaching compromise and we hope that the Conference will agree on the programme of work in next year's session. Last week, during the debate at the seminar, we offered an opportunity to exchange views on the main challenges for disarmament. I thank you for your presence and for several valuable inputs.

As this is the last plenary meeting under our presidency, please allow me to give you an update on our informal consultations. After the presentation on 4 August by Ambassador Borodavkin of a new version of the Russian proposal on the programme of work, we conducted several consultations. On the basis of the results of these consultations, as well as talks and observation, I can state as follows — and I think this will not be a surprise to you. There are four groups of postures concerning this proposal: a group of countries which strongly supports this proposal, a group of countries which has a lot of open questions and doubts about the proposal; some Conference members have no clear position, quite often because there has been no response from their capital; and finally there are countries which, for different reasons, oppose this proposal.

As I said, this did not come as a surprise. In my view, the situation is not mature enough to indicate at this point a direction for work on this proposal. It will be something for us to do and to discuss next year.

You will recall that, at the 1396th plenary meeting, the delegation of Japan informed us that today it would include a representative of the group of high-school students who are Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons, as was the case last year and in previous years around this time. I would like to welcome her and her fellow students in the public gallery to the Conference on Disarmament.

On the list of speakers for today I have the following delegations: Japan, China, the Russian Federation, the United States and the Republic of Korea. I understand that the Republic of Korea wishes to speak last in order to outline the plans concerning the report.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Ambassador Toshio Sano of Japan.

Mr. Sano (Japan): Mr. President, this morning I would like to introduce Ms. Nanako Nagaishi, who is a high-school student from Nagasaki and who will shortly take the floor as a member of my delegation. She is visiting Geneva together with 21 other Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons commissioned by the Japanese Foreign Minister, Mr. Kishida. They are now observing the Conference on Disarmament from the balcony of this chamber.

As our Foreign Minister has repeatedly stated that nuclear disarmament must be promoted based on an objective assessment of the reality of the international security environment as well as a clear understanding of the humanitarian aspect of the use of nuclear weapons, the main mission of the Youth Communicators is to relay the harsh experiences of hibakusha across national borders and generations. They have volunteered from different regions of Japan and act as Hiroshima/Nagasaki Peace Messengers, running a campaign to collect signatures in Japan for the sake of a world free of nuclear weapons, which are submitted to the United Nations in Geneva every year.

Now, Mr. President, please allow me to pass the floor to her.

Ms. Nagaishi (Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons): Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I am honoured to have the opportunity to speak to you at the Conference on Disarmament. Twenty-two members of the Hiroshima/Nagasaki Peace Messengers were appointed as Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Today, I would like to convey the message of hibakusha — people who have survived the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki — and to express our will to work towards nuclear disarmament. On 9 August 1945, the beautiful port town of Nagasaki was turned into ruins by a single atomic bomb. Some people were burned to death in an instant, and others died soon after due to serious injuries caused by the bomb. Those who escaped death have suffered from the after-effects of radiation. Many of the survivors have also suffered social discrimination throughout their lives. In a sense, they have experienced the fear of dying alongside the hardship of staying alive. I wonder to what extent their sufferings are known to people around the world.

When I was overseas as an exchange student, I made an oral presentation about the atomic bombings in one of my history classes. Prior to that presentation, one of my classmates had told me that nuclear weapons were necessary to protect her country. However, the moment she saw a picture of a man who had been horribly burnt by the bomb, her opinion changed. Having heard my presentation, she realized that the atomic bombings are a living story and not simply an event that happened in the past. This provided me with the confidence to work towards the elimination of nuclear weapons and it gave me the idea that I could pass along the message from the hibakusha calling for peace.

Now, 71 years after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we have few chances to hear directly from the hibakusha, and people around the world seem to pay little attention to the threat of nuclear weapons. “The opposite of love is not hate, it is indifference.” This is a quote from Elie Wiesel who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986. If we do not stand up now, some countries will continue to be indifferent to the voices of the hibakusha.

The Hiroshima/Nagasaki Peace Messengers have visited the United Nations for 19 years. Their High-School Students 10,000 Signatures Campaign was launched in 2001 to ask for a world without nuclear weapons and to work towards making world peace a reality. The campaign has now spread to many countries. The total number of signatures we have collected over the last 15 years has come to 1,462,912, and this year we have brought to the Conference on Disarmament 125,314 signatures.

We will keep raising our voices so that people throughout the world know more about the realities of the atomic bombings and the horror of nuclear weapons. Even though our individual powers are small, I am certain that the united power of young people such as ourselves will be able to move people throughout the world in the direction of nuclear disarmament.

I understand that delegates at the Conference on Disarmament are making a steady contribution towards nuclear disarmament. I wish to take this opportunity to ask all of you to listen to the voices of hibakusha and, once again, to pay attention to the inhumanity of nuclear weapons. We want to join this worthwhile endeavour and make modest contributions towards creating a world without nuclear weapons in which all people will be able to live in peace and harmony.

The President: I would like to thank very much the Ambassador of Japan and the Youth Communicator for their statements. I now give the floor to the representative of China, His Excellency Ambassador Fu.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First, I should like to express a cordial welcome to the high-school students from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, who are visiting the Conference on Disarmament. Your presence here not only spurs us to recall the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the brutal and tragic chapter in history that was the Second World War, but also reminds us of our important mission, here in the Conference, of carrying forward the process of multilateral disarmament and promoting world peace.

I am confident that, as ambassadors of peace, you are visiting these solemn chambers of the Conference on Disarmament with the beautiful hopes of a generation of

Japanese youth who long fervently for the realization of a world that is nuclear-free and eternally at peace. The Japanese people are known for their long traditions of modesty and studiousness. This extended journey to Geneva that you have so readily undertaken is not only an opportunity for you to speak out, but also an opportunity for you to listen; your presence here bespeaks the shared aspirations of your peers, and you will be able to bring home what you have seen and heard on this trip to share with your friends.

The late leader of China, Chairman Mao Zedong, once said: “The world is yours, as well as ours, but in the long run it is yours.” The younger generation must shoulder its historic mission to build a more beautiful world; for that, one needs not only sufficient knowledge and skills, but also a correct outlook on the world and on history. History is a mirror; only with a correct view of history can one avoid repeating the tragedies of history. The shadows of the Second World War have long since dispersed, but the question of how to view the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the history of that war remains a deeply relevant issue. I should like to take this opportunity to frankly and honestly share some of my own personal views with you.

First, one needs a panoramic view of history. The Second World War was the darkest page in humanity’s history; the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were a part of that tragedy. To correctly view that history, however, one needs a deep and comprehensive understanding of the war’s origins and trajectory, including who started it and how it developed, as well as of the systematic cause-and-effect relationship among the various events that took place during that period. Ignoring the overall background of the war to concentrate exclusively on the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki could very well lead to erroneous conclusions.

Second, one should have a sense of empathy. The flames of that war extended through Asia, Europe, Africa and the Pacific, with 100 million military and civilian casualties; there were 35 million in China alone, and another 27 million in the Soviet Union. During the war, in violation of international law, a single country used chemical and biological weapons that killed or maimed several million Chinese soldiers and civilians. Selectively remembering or selectively forgetting are both betrayals of human conscience. If one sees only the suffering of the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and ignores the even greater suffering of people in other countries, it will inevitably lead to a skewed understanding of history.

Third, when facing the future, one should use history as a guide. During the war, all the peoples of Asia, including the Japanese, were victims of fascist militarism. We remember history not to perpetuate hatred, but draw on the lessons that history offers, so as to be vigilant against the resurgence of fascism and other erroneous ideological trends, and to avoid the repetition of the tragedy of war. Only by remembering history can we come to terms with it and make correct judgments of the present and correct choices for the future. Forgetting, distorting and concealing the facts are of no help to us in relieving ourselves of the burdens of history.

In light of all this, I encourage you to seek a comprehensive and thorough understanding of history. Read some more books about the history of the Second World War, and find out about some things that are not in your textbooks. Likewise, just as you welcome people from other countries to your home towns, I encourage you to visit war-torn cities like Nanjing, where I am sure that you will be welcomed warmly. I am confident that a younger generation with the ability to comprehensively and correctly view history will most certainly create a brighter future for Asia and the world.

The President: I thank the Ambassador for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation, Mr. Malov.

Mr. Malov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, we would like to thank the Polish presidency for deftly guiding our efforts in the Conference on Disarmament. We are convinced that the momentum thereby generated will be carried on and that we will conclude this session of the Conference as successfully as possible.

I would also like to welcome the Youth Communicators of Japan who came here today to convey their feelings about the aftermath of the bombing of Hiroshima and

Nagasaki. We share the worthy goals advocated by the young people of Japan and consider a world without nuclear weapons to be one of the major strategic objectives of humankind.

In this context, I would like to make a number of observations relating to the work both of the Conference on Disarmament and of the Open-ended Working Group on nuclear disarmament, as the latter's work is now coming to an end.

We in Moscow — like people in the capitals of other nuclear Powers, we imagine — are very receptive to the world community's aspirations to rapidly achieve the noble goal of "global zero". Nevertheless, we think that hasty, radical action by proponents of the launch of negotiations on the prohibition of nuclear weapons could, unfortunately, have the opposite effect: to undermine the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and break down the existing non-proliferation regime and the entire multilateral disarmament mechanism within the United Nations.

We are supportive of the efforts of countries working within the Open-ended Working Group. However, we consider that compelling the nuclear Powers to discard their existing arsenals without any regard for their national security interests or the existing strategic realities would lead to a sharp rise in antagonism between nuclear and non-nuclear States. As we see it, real progress can be made solely through respectful and inclusive inter-State dialogue during which all factors affecting global strategic stability are taken into account. Only such dialogue can help to create an international atmosphere conducive to further steps forward in nuclear disarmament.

We in Russia by no means condone the continued existence of nuclear weapons, but to ignore their strong deterrent role, their importance in keeping the world from slipping into strategic instability and the destruction of the entire international security architecture, would be short-sighted, in our view. In such circumstances, the hasty and ill-conceived rejection of nuclear weapons, without taking into account the whole array of factors that affect strategic stability, would only lead to a sharp drop in the threshold for the use of force in international relations. A new generation of so-called conventional weapons, namely weapons with strategic applications but without nuclear components, has already come close to equalling nuclear devices in their destructive and devastating force.

We cannot agree with the thesis frequently expounded by the proponents of accelerated nuclear disarmament that there are some legal "gaps" in this area. For example, in the preamble and article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, it is clearly stipulated that the elimination of nuclear arsenals should take place under a treaty on general and complete disarmament. Of late, this provision has been deliberately ignored. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is the sole functional and legally binding consensus document underpinning the global system of non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. To dismantle and undermine it would be extremely dangerous.

We would like to underline in this connection that we are not against the formulation of a legally binding prohibition of nuclear weapons — it is just that, in order to ensure that it is irreversible, we think it must be adopted at the concluding stage of a global process of general and complete disarmament.

We consider that, for all its importance, a "humanitarian" approach to questions of nuclear disarmament could in practice lead only to an unjustified shift in emphasis in the nuclear sphere away from preserving global strategic stability and towards achieving some vague "humanitarian standards". This way of looking at the problem in diplomatic circles is a distraction from real, practical, comprehensive steps towards a world free of nuclear weapons. It unfortunately plunges us into the realm of emotion, and frequently propaganda, without taking due account of the historical, strategic and legal context.

We are in no way trying to avoid the discussion of nuclear disarmament, and we are open to a solid, substantive dialogue with non-nuclear States. Let us say once again that we respect their positions. We are amenable to the search for solutions that will strengthen the security of all States without exception. We think, however, that our work towards this goal should be guided by the primary criteria of realism and maintaining a balance of interests. Only on this basis can we achieve practical results.

Our commitment to these goals is demonstrated by the Russian draft programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament, a text based on a balanced combination of the current British ideas for in-depth discussion of nuclear disarmament issues and negotiations on the Russian initiative for the formulation of an international convention for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism.

Despite all the different reactions to our proposal and the various positions expressed, which we understand and respect, we would like once again to call on the participants in our plenary meeting to take a fresh and constructive look at our proposal, to assess it as a practical way of helping the Conference emerge from its impasse and, in broader terms, as a means for the Conference to make a practical contribution to strengthening international security while, importantly, retaining a realistic approach.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States, Ambassador Wood.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, first, let me thank you and your team for the exemplary stewardship you all have exhibited during the presidency of Poland. I also wish to welcome the young Japanese visitors here to the Conference on Disarmament chamber.

Mr. President, the United States has carefully reviewed the revised proposal from Russia for a convention on the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism. A close reading of the revised proposal reveals that, with only minor modifications, the text closely resembles the proposal previously tabled, and thus the conceptual underpinnings remained flawed. Like Russia, we recognize that recent uses of chemical weapons in Iraq and Syria highlight that the threat of the use of chemical and biological weapons by both State and non-State actors is a real and complex problem that challenges our collective security. We do not question the malady, only the proposed remedy.

At its core, the Russian proposal is founded on what we believe to be the false premise that there are gaps in the current international framework that can only be addressed by a new legally binding convention. Fortunately, this is not the case. There are no serious legal gaps in the existing international framework. Instead, what do exist are robust and multifaceted tools already available to combat this threat, including the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the International Convention on the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings and United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). To accept the Russian claim of a gap would require ignoring these mechanisms and the tools they offer to counter the threat. Intellectual honesty demands that we first move beyond lofty rhetoric to closely scrutinize the Russian proposal and, second, that we rigorously apply the means at our disposal, instead of falling for the temptation of something that appears new but is, in fact, redundant.

Russia also claimed during the last Conference plenary meeting that its chemical and biological weapons terrorism proposal was necessary because the issue “could not be tackled at the national level” and should not be scattered under various existing mechanisms. In fact, the Russian proposal itself relies on the same mechanisms, that is national implementation, which Russia criticizes as inadequate. Article 5 of the proposed Russian treaty follows the typical format for international counterterrorism instruments and requires that States parties criminalize at the national level the defined offence. The success of the existing framework largely depends on domestic implementation and we would welcome the assistance of the Russian Federation in advancing these tools already at our disposal.

To this end, the United States has long sought to develop and promote practical steps to advance the universal implementation of these tools. Again, let us look at the facts. In June, the United States issued a non-paper during the open consultations for the second comprehensive review of the status of implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). It calls for specific enhancements that can be made to that resolution in addressing chemical and biological weapons use by non-State actors. Together, we can work to enhance the strength and effectiveness of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

The Russian proposal also understates the impact of full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. For instance, article 7 of the Chemical Weapons Convention imposes significant binding legal obligations on all States parties to adopt domestic penal measures that prohibit anyone, including non-State actors, from engaging in chemical weapons-related activities. Full implementation of article 7 would ensure that violators of any type, whether State or non-State, can be punished by the 192 States parties to the Convention. Unfortunately, there are currently 44 States parties to the Convention without national implementation legislation. To this end, at the eighty-second session of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Executive Council in July, the United States tabled a draft decision to support the full and effective national implementation of the Convention and enable the safety and security of facilities that produce, process or store toxic chemicals. The decision also calls for enhancing the opportunities for those States parties facing implementation challenges to seek assistance. Sixteen co-sponsors have signed on to this effort at OPCW, and we welcome others to join us and help ensure its adoption at the eighty-third session of the Executive Council in October. The United States also welcomes recent initiatives by the OPCW Technical Secretariat to enhance its capacity and readiness to respond to alleged use of chemical weapons by State and non-State actors alike. We invite Russia to join us in promoting this effort.

Regarding the Biological Weapons Convention, we call on States parties to improve national implementation of article 4, which requires States parties to prohibit and prevent biological weapons development, production, stockpiling, acquisition or retention by anyone on their territory or under their jurisdiction or control. The 2016 Review Conference should also stress the importance of enacting and fully implementing effective national measures and should call on States parties that have not yet done so to take these steps without delay. States parties that have enacted measures should be called upon to regularly review and update them. The Review Conference should also take steps to promote more organized and institutionalized support for States parties seeking to strengthen their national implementation and actively encourage States parties to offer assistance or training in support of national implementation as well as enhance international capacities to investigate and respond to the use of biological weapons.

Unlike the Russian proposal, these initiatives are available to us now, under the existing framework built up over the past two decades. The assertion by Russia that this issue cannot be tackled at the national level and that existing obligations are scattered undersells both the breadth of the existing international framework and the commitment of its member States. Negotiations for a new legally binding convention would, at best, result in a superfluous and unnecessary mechanism, after the exertion of substantial diplomatic time and energy, and, at worst, distract the international community and provide the very actors we aim to deter opportunities for their exploitation.

Finally, Mr. President, my delegation has often heard from our Russian colleagues that their chemical biological terrorism proposal is the best vehicle through which to get the Conference on Disarmament back to work. Let me remind colleagues that there was a proposal recently put forward by the United Kingdom delegation that would have broken the current logjam in this august body — a proposal that should have easily commanded consensus. However, Russia, by rejecting the British text, took the position that relentlessly pursuing in the Conference its own bioterrorism initiative — which Russia itself said could be negotiated elsewhere — was more important than joining consensus on a non-controversial text that would have moved the Conference forward. In my view, Mr. President, the Russian decision to block the creative proposal by the United Kingdom was an unfortunate one that only serves as fodder for those promoting a radical disarmament narrative.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United States for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Rowland.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): Mr. President, I have some remarks on the Russian proposal.

We welcome the fact that the Russian proposal contains the operative part of the United Kingdom proposal to identify, elaborate and recommend effective measures for nuclear disarmament. It is a pity, however, given the concerns that have been consistently expressed about the Russian proposal, that Russia insists on a package approach. Everyone else here seemed willing to get the Conference on Disarmament back to work on the basis of the United Kingdom proposal while trying separately to resolve their concerns about the Russian idea.

Turning to the Russian proposal in detail, I want to be clear that the United Kingdom condemns all forms of terrorism, and the terrorist use of chemical and biological materials is a serious concern for us. We are determined to take effective action to prevent such use and are equally determined to hold to account all perpetrators of chemical or biological weapon attacks, whether State or non-State. We are, however, far from convinced that this issue is the right focus for our work at the Conference. Robust and rigorous counterterrorism methods are already under way elsewhere. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the United Nations Security Council and others are looking at how to reinforce the existing framework. There have already been ground-breaking OPCW and Security Council efforts to hold accountable States and non-State actors in Syria alleged to have used chemical weapons.

As you pointed out last week, when Russia raised this issue at the Preparatory Meeting for the Eighth Review Conference for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the key issue is the implementation of existing legal instruments. In the last year or so, the United Kingdom has convicted individuals for terrorism offences under legislation put in place to implement the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. We do not currently see how a new convention would make non-State use of chemical and biological weapons harder or less likely, or make it easier to hold perpetrators to account.

In summary, we have yet to be convinced of the utility of this work, and even then we would question whether the Conference on Disarmament is the right venue for such work to take place.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Canada.

Ms. McCarney (Canada): Mr. President, allow me to thank the Japanese delegation of students for their commitment and for reminding us of the work we have committed to getting done here in the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President, this is the first time I take the floor under your presidency as it comes to a close. I wish to express our appreciation for your efforts to find a way forward on a programme of work and for last week's informal discussion, which we found both interesting and worthwhile.

Turning to the revised paper on a convention on the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism, on biological and chemical weapons and the related programme of work, I wish to thank the Russian Federation for its constructive and sustained engagement on this issue and its efforts to get the Conference back to work.

We have studied the Russian proposal with care. We recognize the challenges posed to global security by continued efforts by non-State actors who seek to access and use weapons of mass destruction. It is against such threats that Canada led the creation of the Global Partnership Programme in 2002 and continues to fund concrete projects to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and acts of terrorism. As we noted in March, we remain unconvinced that there is significant value added to be gained from new legally binding measures to counter the risk of non-State actors seeking to access chemical and biological weapons in the face of the working group of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention Review Conference upcoming in November and the ongoing work of over 30 countries in the Global Partnership Programme, among other instruments and programmes addressing these issues. We believe that our collective goal here should be to reinforce the need for all States to first fully implement their existing national implementation obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

The President: I thank the representative of Canada for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation. Mr. Malov, the floor is yours.

Mr. Malov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will be very brief. I would simply like to react to a number of the remarks made by our colleagues from the United States and the United Kingdom. We respect their positions and their arguments, but we have our own assessment of our proposal on a convention. Despite the remarks made, we hope that a fresh look will be taken at our proposal, which remains on the table and will be issued as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

As regards our blocking the British proposal, as we said in our statement just 15 minutes ago, the proposal was very relevant. We did not block the British proposal in itself, we blocked the precedent that it created, since it would turn the Conference into a forum for discussing only one item of the agenda and would infringe the fundamental principle of balance in the Conference. That was the only reason why we blocked the proposal. Actually, the British proposal was extremely interesting, and it remains interesting to us. That was precisely why we were trying to balance it so as not to create a precedent of a programme of work with only one item on the agenda — we balanced it out with our proposal. We ask you to understand the logic behind our actions this way and wish to say yet again that they were not directed against the British proposal itself which, in fact, we consider to be extremely interesting and relevant. However, it is another matter to see how to present it — what to pack it in, so to speak — in order that we may respect the principle of the balanced and comprehensive nature of the Conference's programme of work.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case. I will therefore now give the floor to our next President, His Excellency Mr. Kim In-chul, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the Conference on Disarmament. Ambassador, the floor is yours.

Mr. Kim In-chul (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, first of all I would like to join others in congratulating and commending you on the excellent way in which you have conducted our work.

I asked for the floor to briefly announce that, with the cooperation of your team and the secretariat, we have reserved a room in this building, specifically room S-190, this week for one-on-one consultations with our members on the report of the Conference, which is requested by General Assembly resolution 70/67. I would like to respectfully ask colleagues to kindly approach our team, preferably during the course of the day today, so that we can schedule consultations sometime during this week.

The President: I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement and especially for the kind words addressed to the President.

Ladies and gentlemen, before concluding our meeting, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support during our presidency. We received much good advice, words of encouragement and gestures of sympathy. For the presidency, these are the most precious things. I would like to address special thanks to Madam Soliman and her fantastic team from the secretariat, Mr. Marco, Mrs. Sylvia and Mr. Reint. Thank you for your professionalism and friendship. Let me also address my appreciation to the interpreters.

We look forward to continue working with you under the presidency of the Republic of Korea. Please allow me also to invite you all to the reception at the Permanent Mission of Poland on Thursday, 18 August 2016, at 6.15 p.m.

This concludes our meeting of today. Our next formal plenary meeting will be on Tuesday, 22 August 2016, at 10 a.m., in the Council Chamber under the presidency of the Republic of Korea. This meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.