

THE P6 VISION PAPER

Submitted by the P6: Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Senegal and Slovakia

Introduction

1. Despite the dynamics reached in the Conference on Disarmament in 2004-2005, consultations at the threshold of its 2006 session on the A5 and other proposals and ideas on the programme of work, including the non-paper by Ambassador Chris Sanders of the Netherlands and the proposal by Peru, demonstrated that within the static positions of some Member States it was not possible to reach an agreement. At the same time, all the 2006 CD Presidents (the P6) noted wide support for the resumption of the substantive work in the CD. This situation and the conviction that the CD Presidents bear a special responsibility for facilitating the work of the Conference, led the P6 to decide to cooperate closely with the aim of revitalizing substantive work of the CD. That cooperation among the P6 resulted, *inter alia*, with:

- (i) coherence and continuity of all CD Presidents' activities during the entire session, including through participation of the P6 in the presidential consultations with group coordinators, as well as in consultations among themselves;
- (ii) the implementation of the "time-table", which scheduled the work of the CD for the entire session;
- (iii) structured debates on all agenda items, which provided for focused discussion on all "core issues", as well as other issues relevant to international peace and security;
- (iv) participation of experts from capitals in thematic debates on agenda items;
- (v) appointment of the Friends of the Presidents, who assisted the P6 in consulting delegations on the issues of the agenda and the improvement of methods of work.

2. The above developments allowed the CD to hold structured and constructive debates on all issues, contributing to better understanding of those issues. They helped delegations to determine the level of preparedness for future substantive work. Furthermore, in the P6 opinion, those debates and a more positive climate were conducive to progress in finding the consensus on a programme of work.

3. The P6 would like to thank all the delegations for their constant and inspiring support of the P6 endeavours throughout the CD 2006 session. The Secretariat of the CD was very helpful and efficient, and its work deserves our highest marks.

Current state of affairs

4. We note a specific momentum in the CD. The CD delegations are now engaged in a real dialogue concerning the CD agenda items. Both statements and informal consultations show a real engagement of all in the debate on the prospects of a programme of work and substantive issues. We also note a higher level of confidence among delegations.

5. Despite the developments in the 2006 session, including the ideas and proposals on ways to resume substantive work in the CD, there is still no consensus either on a programme of work or on a possible format of that programme. Views of the delegations vary from:

- (a) acknowledgement that the “schedule of activities” is *de facto* a programme of work, to
- (b) conviction that a comprehensive approach (covering all issues and mandates for subsidiary bodies) is the only acceptable solution.

Moreover, some delegations make a *iunctim* between an agreement on negotiation on issues that, in the view of some delegations, are most mature for negotiations and an agreement on further discussion – including in the framework of subsidiary bodies – on other issues. Those other issues, in the opinion of some delegations, are no less mature for negotiations. While the focused structured debates in 2006 allowed delegations to understand better which issues are close to opening negotiations and which need further harmonization of views, the gaps between positions of the CD members continue to exist.

6. At the same time, we note a growing apprehensiveness that in 2007 a mere “remake” of discussions, however detailed and prolonged they might be, under a non-binding arrangement of “an invitation by the President(s)” could, at a certain point, exhaust the possibilities of delegations to take part in the debate, make the discussions repetitive and deprived of purpose unless there is a decision of the Conference on the organization of its work. The need for such a decision has become more pressing.

7. While recognizing that decisions on a programme of work and the establishment of subsidiary bodies are in the hands of all delegations, there is a growing expectation that the CD Presidents – through an innovative and open-minded approach – would contribute to further advancement of substantive work of the CD.

8. Through the mechanism of the Friends of Presidents, the more structured consultations on issues traditionally present in the CD – review of the agenda and improvement of methods of work – were initiated in 2006. Although it was agreed that the CD agenda is acceptable to all delegations and needs no changing, it was concluded that, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the agenda is the basis for and, therefore, an initial point for consultation on establishment of the programme of work. In the opinion of the P6, themes covered by Friends of Presidents (FoPs) activities should be the subject of further debate in the CD.

Possible next steps

9. Based on the 2006 experience and evaluation of the situation in the CD at the end of the 2006 session, the P6 is of the opinion that the following elements could provide basis for further advancement of substantive work of the CD:

(a) Drawing the right conclusions from the 2006 experience

10. The 2006 CD session has provided some important new experience in understanding the substance of the issues of the agenda and the awareness of the level and nature of support of the relevant proposals. Based on that, the delegations and their capitals may wish to draw expeditiously their own objective and forward-looking conclusions. The solutions, opening way to the resumption of the substantive work of the CD, can only be balanced, i.e. taking into consideration the interests and priorities of all Member States and striking a reasonable, acceptable and workable compromise between them. To sustain the positive momentum in the CD, which emerged in 2004-2005 and was further developed and accelerated in 2006, there is an urgent need for flexibility in the positions of Member States. The intersessional period between 2006 and 2007 sessions of the CD could be crucial in this respect.

(b) Agenda, programme of work and substantive work of the Conference

11. The agenda is wide and flexible enough to cover all issues of interest to all delegations. It can and should serve as a basis for future schedule of activities. The present stage of debates on substantive issues of the CD agenda creates a specific *momentum* – at present, it becomes possible to determine which items are maturing to start substantive work on and which should be further discussed. This creates a basis for reaching an agreement on a future programme of work of the CD. At the beginning of the 2007 session, the CD could contemplate making separate decisions on the establishment of subsidiary bodies to negotiate and/or to “deal with” or – in order not to prejudge the procedural outcome of the deliberations – to “consider” the issues. Also, a “schedule of activities”, which would provide for substantive discussion of all topics under the CD agenda, might be adopted by the decision of the Conference. And also, the establishment of subsidiary bodies, other than Ad Hoc Committees (working groups, technical groups or groups of governmental experts), can be contemplated in accordance with the Rules of procedures of the CD. Noting the importance of the “core issues” of the CD agenda, which could have equal status in terms of the way they are dealt with in the CD, the mandates for such subsidiary bodies and/or the time allocated for the consideration of all issues could differ and be subject to agreement by the delegations and decisions by the CD.

(c) Schedule of activities and focused structured debates

12. The “schedule of activities” provides an efficient framework to advance substantive work of the CD, pending agreement on the programme of work and/or establishment of subsidiary bodies. Future focused structured debates could take longer than one week per agenda item (2-3 weeks) and there is no need for limiting them to a certain period which could be adjusted accordingly to better use the presence of experts in Geneva. As another option, the “schedule of activities” need not cover the entire session, but, for example, could be proposed for each part of the session (i.e. after evaluation/discussion on results of previous part) or even shorter periods. In such a case, however, specific plans for respective Presidencies, including specific sub-items to be discussed, could be announced well in advance to allow good preparation (including experts from capitals) for addressing specific issues and sub-items.

(d) Other aspects:

13. The experts could be invited not only from the capitals, but also from the relevant international organizations and the UN bodies (Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)/United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), etc.). The “Friends of Presidents” mechanism can be relied upon in searching for consensus on specific substantive issues (including mandates).

Final remarks

14. The purpose of this “food-for-thought” paper is – based on the experience of the 2006 session – to share with the CD delegations the P6 evaluations on where we stand now in the Conference on Disarmament and what might be the possible next steps on the road to revitalization of the CD. The views expressed in this non-paper are without any prejudice neither to the future plans nor actions by the incoming CD Presidents nor to the future decisions by the CD on establishment of subsidiary bodies or the programme of work and other arrangements. The non-paper is prepared and circulated to all CD delegations to show the range of opportunities for the CD in future, as we see them today.

15 September 2006
