
Conference on Disarmament

12 September 2019

Original: English

Note verbale dated 28 August 2019 from the Permanent Mission of Viet Nam addressed to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament submitting the Statement by Ambassador Duong Chi Dung, delivered in his capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament, and requesting its issuance as an official document of the 2019 session of the

Conference on Disarmament

The Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament and has the honour to submit herewith the President's Statement and two documents (CD/WP.621 and CD/WP.622), delivered and circulated by Permanent Mission of Viet Nam in its capacity as the President of the Conference on Disarmament, and kindly requests that the documents be issued as official Working papers of the Conference on Disarmament for the year 2019.

The Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations at Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament the assurance of its highest consideration.



President's Statement

Submitted by Viet Nam

1. The Statement of the President reflects the assessment made in the capacity of President of the Conference on Disarmament from June – August 2019, of the work done in his presidency and his views on the ideas and proposals of member countries of the Conference as put forward during plenary meetings as well as bilateral and multilateral consultations therein.

2. It is assessed by the President that in an era of increasing uncertainty and complex challenges, members of the Conference on Disarmament continue to recognize the importance of disarmament for international peace and security, as a way to create favorable conditions for development. Members also value the role of multilateralism in maintaining progress in this area and share the highest priority of building balanced and substantive works in this Conference towards this goal.

3. The current presidency of the Conference on Disarmament came about at a very late stage of 2019 when many attempts made by the previous Presidents did not result in consensus on a Programme of Work. However, in the spirit of best serving the interest of the Conference and with the intention of making positive contribution to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the President put forward a draft decision on the programme of work, built on the drafts presented by the previous Presidents, and then, a more simply-worded draft with little technicality, merely containing the elements that we believed should be discussed with regard to a Programme of Work. This process has been carried out in parallel with panel discussions on key thematic issues, which gathered high level panelists such as the Secretary General of ASEAN for the first time, the Executive Secretary of the CTBTO, distinguished Ambassadors and experts from UNIDIR and GCSP.

4. Many ideas and proposals have been put forward, while extensive and enriching bilateral and multilateral consultations have been held in order to reach common understanding on these elements of a programme of work, in the hope that these tireless efforts and time devoted could turn into substantive results, that is to break this 20-year stalemate and reach a consensus to move the Conference forward.

5. In this regard, it is timely to recognize and thank member states for their efforts and good will. The Conference stands enriched by contributions, ideas and proposals made by members. However, pending consensus on many key agenda items, there is a need for further discussions and clarification of positions among members.

6. While the importance of moving forward is well acknowledged, considering the time constraint and diversity of views expressed, the following are presented as the main observations of the President:

- There is a positive momentum generated by the active and enriching discussions on the main agenda items. It is clear that the Conference as a whole is keen to get back to substantive work and that the need to adopt a Programme of Work each year to guide the work of the Conference is still a priority.
- Delegations noted the existence of converging elements amongst the various proposals. The discussions on the Working Paper of the Netherlands, which suggests the Conference to work along the basic principles of the Conference, and other ideas put forward by many members, were fruitful in this sense.
- The principles and objectives of the Conference as stated in the Rules of Procedures should be stressed.
- The Conference on Disarmament should resume its substantive works, which could lead to negotiations for disarmament mechanisms.
- Despite concerns from some delegations, the proposal of continuity and better coordination among the presidents from a year to another remains the way forward.

7. Against this backdrop, and in order to improve the functioning of the Conference, the President wishes to present some suggestions on the possible elements for a future programme of work, as follows:

- A programme of work should be clear and simple, as a mere planning tool in an annual session, which includes a work plan and timetable for equal treatment of all substantive agenda items. The Rules of Procedure says the Conference shall establish its program of work at the beginning of its annual session.
- Work must be carried out based on principles already agreed in SSOD-I and the Rules of Procedure.
- The establishment of subsidiary bodies, nomination of coordinators and other issues, as the case may be, should be addressed properly in due time and in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.
- Continuity is key to sustain an effective discussion of substantive issues, without prejudice to the work of future Presidents.

8. Viet Nam's presidency commenced with a commitment to work in a spirit of cooperation, constructiveness, transparency and balance on all agenda items, to promote the work of the Conference and to comprehend the views and interests of member states. The fullest support, cooperation and trust manifested during its tenure are very much appreciated. The tenure ends now on a note of reflection that we succeeded in initiating substantive and enriching discussions on key issues of the agenda, which could contribute and facilitate future works of the Conference. We encourage the Presidents of 2020 to take into consideration these positive results in their future endeavour, subject to the discretion vested with them as per the mandate and the Rules of Procedure of the Conference. (ENDS)
