

Conference on Disarmament

13 September 2019

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Note Verbale dated 6 September 2019 from the Permanent Mission of Zimbabwe addressed to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament requesting to distribute the statement presented by His Excellency Ambassador T. Mushayavanhu on 3 September 2019, at the 1522nd Conference on Disarmament Plenary meeting, as an official document of the Conference of Disarmament

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zimbabwe to the United Nations and Other International Organisations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament and has the honour to request the latter to issue as an official document of the Conference, the attached statement delivered to the plenary of the Conference delivered by His Excellency Ambassador T. Mushayavanhu on 3 September 2019.

The Permanent Mission also requests that the statement be included on the list of documents in paragraphs 29, 32, 35 and 38 of the annual report.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zimbabwe to the United Nations and Other International Organisations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament the assurances of its highest consideration.



Address by the President of the Conference on Disarmament Ambassador T. Mushayavanhu at the Plenary Meeting of the Conference on Disarmament on 3 September 2019

Distinguished Colleagues,

It gives me much pleasure, indeed it is an honour, to be presiding over our last plenary meeting of the 2019 CD Session. I wish to pay well-deserved tribute to all of you colleagues for the support and co-operation that you extended to me personally, and to my delegation, as I presided over the preparation of the Annual Report for this Session.

The Annual Report that we have just adopted represents a delicate compromise. This outcome is not one that some of you, indeed even my delegation, would have preferred but the circumstances that we faced made us adopt a realistic approach. As we all appreciate, in the final analysis, there is nothing like a perfect report, but a consensus report: and a consensus report is what we have just adopted today. I want to sincerely thank all Members for the compromises you made, for the flexibility and restraint that you demonstrated.

As we conclude the 2019 Session of the Conference on Disarmament, I have mixed emotions, reflecting both the challenges that we experienced this year, and the missed opportunities that remain stuck on the horizon like an ever-receding mirage. I feel a sense of frustration about a year that was, but I also detect an atmosphere in the Chamber of hope for the future of this Conference. The consensual spirit that characterised the negotiations of the Annual Report is instructive. My appeal to Members is not to spoil this conducive atmosphere, but to carry it forward to the 2020 Session.

Distinguished Colleagues,

Although we were not able to agree on a Programme of Work during this 2019 Session, I must applaud the commendable efforts of my predecessors. I do believe that their sterling efforts were not in vain, and that the next Session's presidencies, especially Algeria, the first president for the 2020 Session, will draw lessons from the experience. After all, the last Programme of Work to garner consensus in the Conference was agreed to under the Presidency of Algeria on 29 May 2009, that must be a good sign.

Distinguished Colleagues,

Earlier this year, I submitted a proposal to inject some continuity in the work of the CD. This initiative by Zimbabwe was borne out of our frustration with the short-termism associated with individual CD Presidency's limited horizon and four-week focus. We listened to other different ideas about the issue of continuity, and we think that the ensuing debate was rich and enlightening. We are glad that we ignited a useful debate on the possibility and utility of rolling over an agreed Programme of Work to other sessions, especially if such consensus on a Programme of Work is achieved towards the end of any one session.

Colleagues,

As we look to the future, with a view to resuming substantive work, one important discussion that comes to mind is that of determining which issues have reached maturity for negotiations, while at the same time respecting the established principle of balance in the treatment of all core items on the Agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. My sense is that this highly contentious issue cannot be postponed forever. The fact is that, because we hold different views and positions, we must start negotiations. This Conference is a forum for negotiations, and we should not be afraid to discuss our differences and to negotiate. What we cannot afford is to postpone *ad infinitum* the difficult discussions to resolve our differences.

Finally, Distinguished Colleagues,

Zimbabwe firmly believes that we should collectively take decisive measures to address the institutional drift and mandate creep, affecting the CD, and bring the Conference back on

track. We call on Member States refrain from politicising the Conference, because that has the negative effect of further undermining the credibility of this institution.

Once again, thank you all for the cooperation extended to my presidency, including during the preparation of the draft Report to the General Assembly and also to thank the interpreters, the conference officers and the Secretariat for their work.

I thank you!
