

# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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## FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND AND EIGHTY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 31 January 2008, at 10.25 a.m.

President: Mr. Samir LABIDI (Tunisia)

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I call to order the 1086th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

We are meeting again in plenary session in order to continue our work after having submitted the timetable of activities at our last meeting and after having heard a number of general statements.

Since all the delegations are ready to continue our work in a structured manner in the framework of open and consensus-based discussion within the Conference, I should like to remind you once again that we would like this timetable of activities to be both effective and flexible, making it possible to take account of our commitment to make progress in our work in the light of the priorities of the Conference and the demands of the various parties. So our timetable is an indicative schedule which can be modified as we proceed with our work and in the light of any relevant request from the delegations, in whose hands the Chair remains fully. This timetable of activities is of course subject to certain readjustments which will depend on our consultations on the work programme. These consultations need to be pursued in particular in order to choose the most appropriate coordinators on the various topics discussed within the Conference on Disarmament. I shall keep you informed when the time comes. The smooth running of our work, which we have very much to heart, will prompt the Chair to contact you in order to continue its consultations with the delegations and the regional groups. In the next few days, the Conference on Disarmament will also have the honour to receive high-level guests who will come to address our assembly. The Chair welcomes this initiative, which boosts our work. It wishes to remind you that it is open to any step which may be considered appropriate by the delegations of the countries from which our guests come so as to organize these important visits in the best way, and any arrangements they deem appropriate in connection with such matters as possible wishes to take the floor, as is customary. In cooperation with the secretariat, the Chair will keep delegations informed in due course concerning any arrangements in connection with those visits. On the list of speakers for the plenary meeting today are Argentina, the Syrian Arab Republic, Colombia, Morocco and Mexico.

I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Argentina, who will speak on behalf of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela.

Mr. MARTINEZ GONDRA (Argentina) (spoke in Spanish): I am addressing this Conference on behalf of the Latin American countries which are members of the Conference on Disarmament - Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela, as well as the following observer countries: Costa Rica, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic.

First of all, Mr. President, we wish to congratulate you on taking the Chair of this forum, thank you for the efforts made during the intersessional period and assure you of the full cooperation of our delegations in the work it is hoped will be carried out during the coming meetings.

(Mr. Martínez Gondra, Argentina)

Allow us also, through you, to express our appreciation for the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia during the recent opening meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. His participation showed the importance attached by his country to this task and strengthens the need to count on the leadership and political will of member States as a key element to revitalize this forum.

Secondly, we highlight the presence of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, who addressed the members of this Conference on Disarmament for the first time at its opening meeting. The message from the highest official of the United Nations to the member States was clear in recognizing that we are faced with a historic opportunity to initiate the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament bearing in mind our positive work during the years 2007 and 2006.

Owing to the lack of consensus for more than 10 years which has made it impossible to adopt a work programme for the Conference on Disarmament, the member States have found it necessary to establish innovative mechanisms which have helped to secure some positive progress in aspects relating to procedure and substance. An example of this was the setting up of the P-6 platform in 2006, guaranteeing continuity in the direction of our work throughout the three sessions. Later, in 2007, with a pre-established timetable of meetings and the appointment of coordinators for the seven agenda items, we were able to make progress with substantive discussions, which included the participation of technical experts. We repeat our thanks to the aforementioned coordinators for the excellent work done.

As a result of these discussions, the draft Presidential decision circulated as document L.1 was submitted, complemented by documents CRP.5 and 6. Those documents suggest how to deal with themes considered as being of priority importance. We reiterate our gratitude to the six Presidents for 2007 for the dedication and determination they showed in constantly seeking to reactivate this forum.

This package of proposals secured the support of the majority of the member States of the Conference on Disarmament, and we consider that it could constitute a sound foundation on which consultations could be initiated for the adoption of a work programme for the present session. We would also like to mention the report of the Conference on Disarmament to the United Nations General Assembly adopted on 13 September last, and consider it indispensable to put into effect the commitment of the member States to take account of the proposals, ideas and positions which were presented in the past in order to guide our work during 2008.

In this regard, we reiterate the urgent need for the Conference to adopt a work programme promptly and to take up again its work and responsibilities as a negotiating forum for disarmament. We are confident that the experience, willingness and commitment of the delegations which make up the platform of the six Presidents for 2008 will guarantee continued positive results. Through the presence of Venezuela on the aforementioned platform, the countries which have signed this declaration promise that they will cooperate fully in carrying out these tasks.

(Mr. Martínez Gondra, Argentina)

We also express our appreciation, through you, for the proposal for a timetable of activities and the appointment of seven coordinators to guide our work in the coming meetings.

Our region will be represented by Chile, which will have responsibility for the coordination of the key theme of nuclear disarmament. We hope that, once again, this exercise will make it possible to strengthen the dialogue among delegations and reaffirm the importance of the international community's sole disarmament negotiating forum.

Our region has placed emphasis on the importance that nuclear disarmament should enjoy in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. The creation of the first inhabited nuclear-weapon-free zone, through the adoption of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, confirms this conviction on the part of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The conclusion of a multilateral and non-discriminatory treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other explosive devices would be the next logical step in the regime of disarmament and non-proliferation. In particular, it will be a practical step to renew the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty to comply with their obligations under article VI.

Shortly, the second Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference will take place in Geneva. Achieving substantive progress on disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament could give a clear signal for revitalizing the existing regime. This will be truly guaranteed once the aforementioned treaty becomes fully universal and all its provisions are fully complied with.

As the United Nations Secretary-General stated at the recent opening meeting, the prompt initiation of negotiations on an agreement on the prohibition on the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other explosive devices does not lessen the importance of dealing with the other three items to which delegations attach priority - PAROS, negative security assurances and nuclear disarmament. On the contrary, we once again reiterate our flexibility in supporting innovative formulas which will make it possible in a realistic, objective and balanced fashion to reactivate our work. In this connection, we all continue to give our support for trying out mechanisms which will enable us to continue the dialogue in order to come up with alternative consensus formulas, and in this way to translate the progress made into formal steps towards the adoption of a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament, and hence the conclusion of new disarmament and non-proliferation instruments.

We therefore wish to express our commitment to considering initiatives submitted by States on each of the themes defined as being priority issues. The reactivation of concrete proposals concerning nuclear disarmament, PAROS or negative security assurances would be extremely useful at this time, along with the impetus achieved in possible negotiations on an agreement on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other explosive devices, during which account must be taken of the concerns of States in relation to verification and existing arsenals.

It is significant that in the last few years we have found ourselves in the first few meetings of the Conference on Disarmament reiterating our desire to begin substantive negotiations. This

(Mr. Martínez Gondra, Argentina)

constant repetition might discourage us in terms of our obligation to seek to reactivate existing disarmament forums and machinery. However, the countries which have signed this declaration have chosen to maintain their confidence that the political will of the member States will make it possible to consolidate multilateralism and, in particular, the United Nations as an effective tool to respond to needs in the field of international peace and security.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank the distinguished representative of Argentina for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

(spoke in Arabic)

I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. HAMOUI (Syrian Arab Republic) (spoke in Arabic): Mr. President, I should like at the outset to congratulate you upon your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. I should also like to congratulate you for your success in securing the adoption of the agenda and for your active endeavours in conducting our deliberations. I should like to assure you that the Syrian delegation will cooperate with you and the other Presidents of the Conference for 2008 in full sincerity and transparency.

I should also like, in this statement, to associate myself with the statement which His Excellency the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, President of the Group of 21, made on 29 January.

Mr. President, your success in selecting new coordinators for the seven main topics of the Conference deserves all possible praise and thanks. The group of coordinators this time reflects due consideration for optimal geographical distribution. We congratulate the new coordinators for the trust placed in them and wish them every success in their work. We reiterate what you said in your statement on 29 January concerning the importance of adherence to the mandate and terms of reference of the coordinators.

The Conference on Disarmament achieved good results last year, thanks to cooperation among the six Presidents, to the members of the Conference, who demonstrated flexibility, to the efforts of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Sergei Ordzhonikidze, and to the organizational skill of the secretariat. We support an immediate launch of transparent negotiations on the adoption, by consensus, of a balanced programme of work that satisfies everyone, accommodates the concerns of all and builds on what has been achieved so far.

We consider nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation to be at the top of our priorities, given the danger that these weapons pose to humanity at large. Four basic issues must be given balanced and equal importance.

Here, I should like to recall that in 1998 our Conference was able to reach consensus on the commencement of negotiations on two of the four basic issues, namely, negative security assurances (NSA) and non-proliferation of fissile material for the production of nuclear weapons (FMCT).

(Mr. Hamoui, Syrian Arab Republic)

My delegation reserves the right to discuss the programme of work again at future meetings. Before concluding my statement, however, I should like to draw attention to and caution about the ill will manifested by one delegation on the 29th of this month when it tried to use this important negotiating forum to raise political questions that do not fall within its purview.

Politicizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament will only create an atmosphere of heightened tension and discord, which our Conference can do without.

The attempt to disrupt the work of the Conference was made by a State which is a member of this Conference, possesses hundreds of nuclear warheads and is secretly working to sabotage this Conference, because it wants to build up its own arsenal of nuclear weapons. It refuses to submit its installations to international monitoring. It is the only State in the Middle East which refuses to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and it dumps its nuclear waste in the occupied Syrian Golan. The whole world knows that it engages publicly and flagrantly in State terrorism. Its attempts will create an atmosphere of mutual recriminations at the Conference, escalating tensions, provoking intransigence and wasting our time during session and deliberations. No State which practises State terror has the right to cause our Conference to fail. We must all resist its attempts to politicize the Conference, sabotage its work and create an atmosphere of friction which would prevent the Conference from successfully accomplishing its work.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): I thank His Excellency the distinguished Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair.

(spoke in French): I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Colombia.

Ms. FORERO UCROS (Colombia) (spoke in Spanish): Mr. President, since I am taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, allow me on behalf of my delegation to say how pleased we are to see you guiding our work and to assure you that you can count on our full support. We are grateful for the proposed agenda that you have submitted for the 2008 session. We will also continue to support the steps taken by the future Presidents who will take on their tasks in the Conference, in order to seek solutions to overcome the current deadlock.

My delegation fully subscribes to the statement made by the delegation of Argentina a few moments ago. The countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region will continue to work together with the goal of making an active and positive contribution to the work of the Conference. We also note with satisfaction the presence of a Latin American country, Venezuela, in the Presidents' platform, and that of Chile in the group of coordinators, to whom we offer as of now our support in their work.

Allow me to highlight the presence of the United Nations Secretary-General and his urgent message to the members of the Conference at the opening meeting on 23 January past. We fully agree with his words and consider it essential that the Conference on Disarmament should return to its roots, in other words, return to discharging its functions as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, thereby avoiding a serious deterioration in its credibility.

(Ms. Forero Ucrós, Colombia)

To our way of thinking, we consider that we have spent a great deal of time reiterating our political will to save the Conference from its crisis. Well, it is now time to put that political will into effect in order to initiate the work in this forum.

Throughout the years, the delegation of Colombia has participated flexibly and constructively in efforts to identify solutions to enable us to overcome the differences among all of us. In this way, we have played an active role in the five Ambassadors' proposal and in the last two years we have supported the platform of the six Presidents.

I take this opportunity to highlight the role of the six Presidents last year, who, through their efforts, managed to submit document L.1. It is also important to highlight the work carried out by the coordinators, who opened up an important forum for discussion on various topics.

Last year, Colombia was one of the delegations that supported draft decision L.1, which had majority support in the Conference. This year we consider that L.1 is a foundation on which it is possible to continue building consultations which will lead to a consensus and the beginning of negotiations.

For this reason, one of the issues to which Colombia attaches importance in its development is that of initiating negotiations on the prohibition of fissile material for nuclear weapons, which could make a significant contribution to increasing international security. We can affirm that the Conference on Disarmament is ready to meet this challenge and that we must initiate this process rapidly. At the same time, we could make progress on the other items contained in the L.1 document, which are equally important for the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

My country has always upheld a policy of general and complete disarmament, emphasizing in all bilateral, subregional, regional and global forums the need to completely destroy nuclear weapons as the only way to guarantee the elimination of the threat of a nuclear war and to avoid proliferation at all costs.

For this reason, it is an honour for me to be able to inform the international community that, two days ago at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, Colombia deposited the instrument of ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. This is yet one more sign of my country's commitment to international peace and security.

For Colombia, it is equally important to deal with other issues in the sphere of disarmament and international security. We have thus actively promoted the development and implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all Its Aspects. For many years, Colombia has valiantly confronted the terrorist threat from illegal armed groups which acquire large amounts of weapons on the black market and by diverting State transfers. This makes it necessary for the international community to redouble its efforts to tackle the issue of non-State armed actors and to avoid the serious consequences of their actions for the civilian population and democratic institutions.

(Ms. Forero Ucrós, Colombia)

The country has also made progress in destroying weapons. To date more than 18,000 weapons surrendered by demobilized paramilitaries have been destroyed under the supervision of the Organization of American States. We shall continue increasing our efforts to seize and destroy weapons in the hands of the illegal armed groups.

Colombia is one of the countries most affected by anti-personnel mines insofar as the illegal armed groups still continue to promote the use of these devices which affect the civilian population and hold back economic and social development in the affected communities.

We are responding to the challenge set out in the provisions of the Ottawa Convention and, consequently, as you know, Colombia wishes to be the venue of the second conference to review the Convention, which is due to be held in the second half of 2009.

As a country affected by anti-personnel mines, we hope for the support of the international community in holding this historic event, since the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention is being marked and this would be the first occasion on which a South American country hosted a meeting under the Convention.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank the distinguished ambassador of Colombia for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Morocco.

Mr. ABDERRAZAK (Morocco) (spoke in French): Mr. President, it is a great pleasure and an honour for my delegation to see you in the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament. Your country's attachment to the principles set forth in the United Nations Charter and its commitment to continue to contribute to all efforts aiming at building international peace and security are shared by the Kingdom of Morocco. It is also a pleasure for me to congratulate you on the initiatives you have taken through open-ended consultations both in New York and here in Geneva with a view to facilitating dialogue among member States and encouraging them to find common ground in a forum where differences have prevented any progress from being made for a decade now. We are convinced that your personal commitment and your diplomatic tact will make it possible to move forward in the work of the Conference on Disarmament, which we consider the only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. Our conviction is further boosted by the recent statements made by the various regional groups and by the participation in the 2008 session of eminent personalities, the hope being that the Conference will emerge from the inertia of the past 10 years and start to move forward. This hope is encouraged by the efforts that were made by the Presidents in 2007, to whom we convey our congratulations. The adoption of the agenda for the 2008 session should be conducive to a real start to in-depth work in the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation welcomes the large number of countries which have expressed a wish to participate in the deliberations of the Conference as observers, bearing witness to a resumption of interest by the international community in issues related to disarmament.

In the introductory statement he delivered to our Conference, the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, pointed out that we needed progress because concerted disarmament will forestall an arms race and the halting of the arms race will make it possible to



(Mr. Abderrazak, Morocco)

devote the resources thus released to the achievement of the Millennium Goals. My delegation cannot but share the Secretary-General's conviction and appeal to member States to overcome differences and embark on genuine discussions on four issues on the agenda - nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances, the prevention of an arms race in space and cessation of the production of fissile material.

The progress made in the work of the Conference on Disarmament through the presentation of the Presidents' draft L.1 together with the Presidential statement and the other documents submitted to the Conference have given us a glimmer of hope for a real start to our work. We must all now build on what we have achieved and go forward taking into account the interests of all members. Let us focus on what unites us and have discussions in order to overcome our differences. During the adoption of the agenda on 23 January last, it was made clear that it was open to every member State to submit for consideration by the other members any issue it considered necessary to enhance discussion within the Conference on Disarmament. On the basis of that postulate, we need to begin our work without further delay on discussions which have shown their limits over the past 10 years. The challenges we are called upon to take up together are much too great for us to be able to continue to fill the gaps individually.

My delegation attaches particular importance to the implementation of and compliance with the provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to its universality. The outcome of the NPT review conference in 2000, which gave a significant boost to nuclear non-proliferation through the indefinite extension of the NPT and the establishment of negative security assurances as well as the progressive destruction of nuclear arsenals, is now a distant memory, and the failure of the review conference in 2005 dashed all hopes for a world free of nuclear weapons. This aggravated tensions in a world threatened by terrorism and all forms of extremism. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, particularly in the Middle East, remains an essential means of achieving nuclear non-proliferation and consequently nuclear disarmament.

The lack of progress in the establishment of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a continuing concern for my country, which calls for an agreement on this subject to be arrived at rapidly.

The Kingdom of Morocco's endorsement of the Statement of Principles under the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and its acceptance of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources demonstrate, if it were necessary, my country's commitment to combat all forms of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including radiological weapons, or what have come to be called "dirty bombs". Nevertheless, my country remains convinced that the effectiveness of our struggle against this type of weapon is a function of its universality. Hence there is an urgent need to strive for the universalization of the instruments for the safety and security of radiological sources and to reaffirm the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency when it comes to nuclear safety and security while also guaranteeing the legitimate use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

(Mr. Abderrazak, Morocco)

The Kingdom of Morocco calls for the launching of serious and transparent negotiations for the drawing up of a multilateral universal non-discriminatory instrument to effectively and verifiably prohibit the production of fissile material for military purposes. However, it remains flexible on the outcome of such negotiations. It is also important to embark on the negotiation of an instrument on the prevention of an arms race in space.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to assure you of my delegation's support in your noble and difficult endeavour and to declare the support of my delegation for the statement made on behalf of the G-21 by the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank the distinguished representative of the Kingdom of Morocco for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Mexico.

Ms. GOMEZ OLIVER (Mexico) (spoke in Spanish): First of all, Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on taking the Chair of this forum and assure you that my delegation will provide you and the platform of the six Presidents for 2008 with all possible cooperation in carrying out your tasks. I also wish to place on record Mexico's gratitude for the commitment which Tunisia has confirmed with respect to the objectives of this Conference, through its actions and the attendance by its Minister for Foreign Affairs at the opening meeting of this year's session.

My delegation fully endorses the statement made previously by the delegation of Argentina on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean member countries of the Conference on Disarmament as well as Costa Rica, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic, which are countries of our region that are participating as observers in this forum.

We support and express our thanks to the six Presidents for the timetable of activities that has been proposed to us and for the appointment of the seven coordinators who will be guiding our discussions on the various agenda items. It is, by the way, a cause for particular satisfaction that both in the Chair and amongst the coordinators, Latin America is to be so fittingly represented by Venezuela and Chile, to whom we convey, as well as the other Presidents and coordinators, our full backing for their work.

Various member States of this Conference have in the last few years displayed great initiative and imagination with the intention of creating conditions which will finally enable us to focus on fulfilling the huge responsibility we have towards the international community to make effective progress in negotiating disarmament agreements. Thanks to those dedicated and tireless efforts, we have been able in the course of 10 years of negotiating deadlock to benefit from the convenient annual mechanism of the six Presidents, as well as the appointment of coordinators who will at least enable us to carry out exchanges of opinions concerning the substantive items on our agenda.

My delegation does not in any way seek to minimize the activity that has been observed in this Conference in recent years, still less to detract from the appreciation undoubtedly due to all

(Ms. Gómez Oliver, Mexico)

the States that have displayed a true commitment to the objectives and the responsibility arising from their membership of this forum, whose glories, unfortunately, as Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon suggested some days ago, belong to the past.

On the contrary, Mexico wishes to express its hope that the presence and the important message conveyed to us by the Secretary-General in this room will stir our consciences and will trigger renewed political will which will lead not only to the adoption of the work programme but to real practical progress which will underpin our role as the only multilateral forum for negotiating disarmament agreements.

Last year, it was frankly disappointing that, despite the fact that the Presidential proposal contained in documents L.1, CRP.5 and CRP.6 enjoyed the support of an overwhelming number of countries, a very small number of delegations prevented the Conference on Disarmament from taking an important step by adopting its work programme, transcending the period that we are certainly experiencing in this room, and focusing on efforts to produce results which are concomitant with the expectations of the international community.

Although it did not precisely reflect the view of my delegation, which considers nuclear disarmament to be the priority on our agenda, that Presidential proposal received Mexico's support. Today we reiterate that support with the conviction that it is a proposal which reflects a realistic formula and constitutes a good foundation on which we can build the much-desired consensus that we require in order to channel our work and our efforts towards the real priority: broadening and strengthening the international disarmament regime, the effective implementation of which will make a decisive contribution to maintaining international peace and security.

Let us not once again miss the historic opportunity offered, as the Secretary-General said in his message to this Conference, by the adoption of this Presidential proposal. With the flexibility which has marked Mexico's participation in this forum, we affirm that the consideration of this proposal does not mean ruling out the possibility of taking account of new and constructive initiatives which could help to overcome the critical situation we are experiencing. The proliferation of initiatives, however, should not replace the political will and spirit of compromise that a few participants have been reluctant to display in recent years.

You can count upon Mexico to contribute constructively at any time to the creation of conditions to enable the Conference on Disarmament to retrieve the crucial role it is called upon to play in the international system.

We hope that the consensus-building exercise will be directed towards this objective. Let us no longer allow the requirement for consensus to conceal interests contrary to the principles and objectives set forth in the Charter of our Organization, on respect for which hopes for the future of humanity are ultimately pinned.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank the distinguished representative of Mexico for her statement and for her kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Indonesia.

Mr. TAVARES (Indonesia): Mr. President, let me first congratulate you and your fellow Presidents on assuming the task of chairing the Conference on Disarmament. I am sure that your determination will serve to advance the work that has been achieved thus far. I assure you of our full support and cooperation. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend your predecessors for their great efforts undertaken as Presidents of the 2007 Conference. My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of Sri Lanka on behalf of the Group of 21 last Tuesday.

Indonesia has always shown a strong commitment to and support for efforts geared at contributing to progress towards general and complete disarmament. As part of our commitment, we have actively engaged in the development of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in our region, which was then pursued by agreement on the Treaty on the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Free Zone in 1995. In order to give more significance to the treaty during the United Nations General Assembly, Indonesia, together with other ASEAN member States, introduced a draft resolution on the treaty. Encouragingly, the draft enjoyed enormous support and was adopted. It is, in our view, crucial to undertake similar efforts for nuclear-free-zone treaties in other regions.

Although we did not succeed last year, progress was nevertheless made. However, a balanced and comprehensive approach is also essential. We cannot address one issue at the expense of the other. They are all interconnected and of equal importance in contributing to global disarmament. Progress can best be achieved through consideration of the concerns of all. Therefore, a strenuous process of deliberations through intensive informal meetings, a spirit of coordination, understanding and flexibility will encourage us to achieve further progress.

Furthermore, I believe that we all agree that we must begin negotiations with a view to achieving the objectives for which the Conference was established. A number of proposals are already on the table. It is now up to us to ensure, through our strong determination and political will, that we move forward. For this reason, it is also my belief that our approach should be one in which we should persistently strive towards making the Conference more productive.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank the distinguished representative of Indonesia for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. BRASACK (Germany): I would like to take the floor firstly to congratulate Colombia on its accession to the CTBT, and also Malaysia, another country which has recently joined this very important instrument. As you know - and we have said that before and we might say that again next week, during the discussions - we see the CTBT, but also the issue of the fissile material cut-off, as the matters now on the table for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and we see a certain logical link between them, even a sequence between them. So this is certainly a very important step, and I congratulate Colombia and Malaysia as the most recent States parties to accede to this important instrument, and certainly Germany, but this also goes for the EU, hopes that that might be a universal instrument as soon as possible.

(Mr. Brasack, Germany)

Secondly, I would like to take the floor just to welcome very much the statement made by Argentina on behalf of many member countries, because Germany could have subscribed to every word, even joined that group, if there were no geographical obstacles. We are very much in favour of that and very grateful for that also because all of those States parties also signed on to a statement that we heard last Friday on behalf of a bigger group, but that was certainly not as precise, and more ambiguous than this very statement that we heard. Since I am a lawyer, there is a golden rule that special statements are always more meaningful and relevant than more generic statements. So that's why I attach a lot of importance to this kind of statement and the ones which subscribe to that.

But this cannot go so much to the statement that we heard today from the distinguished Syrian delegation. I have some questions. I do not expect these questions will be answered at this meeting.

Firstly, I would like to say that Germany very much respects and appreciates the efforts by the Syrian delegation as last year's CD presidency in bringing us to a good and substantial report without too many difficulties. That is very much appreciated.

In the introduction of the statement it was said that for the coordinators this time we have the appropriate geographical distribution, so this implied in one way or another that last year, in the 2007 platform, this was not so much the case. Certainly you can discuss these kinds of things, but I take it that the coordinators were chosen by the whole platform, and that certainly included Syria then, so this is certainly something I ask myself. Is there some dissatisfaction with the geographical distribution of last year's platform? One can discuss this kind of thing. Why have they found agreement and put forward together with Syria?

Then it was said - and I certainly agree to that kind of sentence - that we must build on what has been achieved so far (I take it last year), and under these achievements certainly this delegation, as many other delegations, sees particularly the Presidential proposal. But on the other hand, later it was said by the distinguished Syrian delegation that all four items must be treated with equal importance, and this is certainly a formula that was used last year by one State party for objections against this very proposal which was put forward last year. I take it also by Syria. I think it was brought forward by all the Presidents of last year's platform. So I am not very sure how this goes together.

Then later remarks, one other thing I think is very important. The Syrian delegation addressed one delegation in this room and the topics it proposed last Friday. It was said that this would not fit under the mandate of the CD. I think that that is leaving the platform under which we all work here, because when we adopted the agenda last year and when we adopted the agenda last Friday - only last Friday, just one meeting ago - it was said - and this is the understanding - that any issue that any delegation considers to be ripe for this body can be addressed here, so all these issues that are proposed fall under the mandate, if you say so, so I did not fully understand this kind of remark, and later remarks certainly are not appropriate in this room in my view, and they did just what was criticized - politicized this very room.

(Mr. Brasack, Germany)

So I wanted to take the floor to not leave the impression that we silently agreed to these kinds of things. I think this has to be said here. We cannot just make these kinds of statements without any reaction.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank the distinguished representative of Germany and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. SEMIN (Russian Federation) (spoke in Russian): Mr. President, I would like to say a few words about the organization of our meetings, for which you proposed a timetable on Tuesday. I would like to remind you that the distinguished representative of Germany, Ambassador Brasack, has already pointed out that it would perhaps be better to postpone the informal discussions on item 3 of the agenda, that is PAROS, scheduled for 7 February, to a later date, once the draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space has been introduced on 12 February. We believe that what was said by Ambassador Brasack is sensible. Of course, the holding of the first round of discussions on this issue after the introduction of the draft treaty would offer a certain amount of added value.

In that connection, Mr. President, we propose that you consider the possible postponement of this round of informal discussions from 7 February to 14 or 15 February, or shift all the discussions scheduled for week 3, shift all the informal negotiations one week later, particularly since week 7 allows us to do that: it is not a full week.

We have discussed this matter with the coordinators for item 3, with Canada, and alerted you that we would be making this statement, Sir. We ask you to reflect upon it, and through you ask the other Presidents for this session to think about how we can streamline our schedule.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation and inform him that the Chair is open to all suggestions and will study them. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. HAMOUI (Syrian Arab Republic) (spoke in Arabic): I would have liked to make a general statement today on the activities of the Conference, what it achieved over the past year and what we hope it will achieve this year. However, I was astonished by the statement made by the representative of Israel on Tuesday, who set himself up as judge accusing this State of terrorism, or referring to Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) as if we were in the Security Council chamber. This is totally outside the scope and terms of reference of the Conference. The 192 States of the world, as the representative of Germany very well knows, have still not managed to define terrorism and yet the representative of a State that practises State terrorism comes along and purports to decide who is a terrorist, who supports terrorism and who is not a terrorist. We are not here to discuss Security Council resolutions. We are here to discuss disarmament, which should be our sole concern. This and the efforts of the Conference should be our only focus.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

(spoke in French)

I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Israel.

Mr. ITZCHAKI (Israel): Mr. President, once again I would like to repeat our congratulations on the way you are handling the presidency of this Conference.

We did not intend to take the floor this morning, but I believe that we are moving away very much from what this Conference is about. In a way we are not surprised that the Syrian Arab Republic as well as another delegation have chosen to take the floor to refer to our statement. Since I wrote the statement I do not recall that we had mentioned any State by name, and the fact that those delegations decided to take the floor and react - that questions very much why do they react to a very simple fact that has been presented not only here in this Conference but worldwide.

There is a saying that on the criminal's hat the criminal's hat is burning, meaning that it would have been better if they had kept quiet and not demanded that other States keep quiet when they have serious security considerations to be brought here. I fully agree with the fact that once we have adopted the agenda and the Presidential statement, any State can bring any item it deems appropriate to the forum for consideration.

This is what we intend to do. This is what we will continue to do.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank the distinguished representative of Israel for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of China.

Mr. WANG (China) (spoke in Chinese): First of all, on behalf of the Chinese delegation I would like warmly to congratulate my neighbour, the representative of Colombia, on her country's ratification of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty. This is a very pleasing development. The Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty is concerned with the same important issues as the Conference on Disarmament: they are both important components of international arms control and of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We hope that substantial progress can be made in all these areas.

As I have already remarked in my statement to the plenary, China has always taken a constructive stance on the work of the Conference on Disarmament, and it is our hope that the Conference will very soon be able to make real progress and begin its substantive work. Similarly, with regard to the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, our position has always been a very constructive one.

Although the issue of final ratification is still being reviewed in Beijing, I am pleased to be able to inform you that we have made substantial progress, within the framework of the

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Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, in such areas as station certification and construction, an international monitoring system, data transmission and on-site inspections. In other words, although ratification of the Treaty is still under consideration, we have in fact already gone beyond the requirements which it lays down. This clearly demonstrates the positive commitment of the Beijing authorities to the Treaty.

In summary, China has all along followed its own approach to the process of international arms control and disarmament and has contributed to that process in its own way. It is our hope that this will find reflection in the dynamism of the Conference. China stands ready to work with other concerned parties in promoting the Conference on Disarmament and other disarmament-related efforts, in the hope of achieving substantive progress at the earliest possible date.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank the distinguished representative of China for his statement. I have no more speakers on my list. Does any delegation wish to take the floor? I now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of the Netherlands.

Mr. LANDMAN (Netherlands): Also from my side on behalf of the Netherlands, I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations to the Ambassador of Colombia, with this important news of the ratification of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty by that country. My German colleague quite rightly mentioned that this follows the important ratification by Malaysia, which means that now only two of the most important signatory Powers in the region - Asia - have not yet signed, and also for that reason, I am very happy about the comforting statement by the distinguished representative of China. In fact, with these two most recent ratifications, it means that we are leaving the double-digit numbers as regards annex 2, because now only nine countries remain that have to sign that treaty before it can become operational. That is really a very comforting thing to note.

Since I have the floor, I take the opportunity to commend the secretariat on its good initiative to circulate this note with the questionnaire as regards what desires are living among delegations with respect to the number of copies. I take it that this is a reaction to the remarks I made at our previous session, and I do hope indeed that all colleagues present have filled out that questionnaire. I think it's a simple question: if you want one copy or more copies, and just as an illustration, for my part and the Netherlands, our desire is one copy, and if necessary, upon request, a few more, under the understanding that if a copy is distributed in the Council chamber, there is no need to distribute a copy or copies in the pigeonholes. I hope that this will inspire others to follow suit, and I definitely intend at the end of the year to ask the secretariat what savings have been made in this manner.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank the distinguished representative of the Netherlands for his statement. We are very appreciative of his questions and his concerns.

Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. No other delegation wishes to take the floor. I would now like to invite the Conference to consider an additional request received from a State which is not a member of the Conference and which wishes to participate in our work as an observer during



(The President)

the current session. This request, reproduced in document CD/WP.547/Add.2, comes from Jordan. May I take it that the Conference decides to invite Jordan to participate in its work in accordance with the rules of procedure?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): That concludes our work for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 5 February 2008 at 10 a.m. in the Council chamber, when we will receive the Minister of Defence of the United Kingdom. In addition to this important visit, our proceedings will continue during the morning.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.