

# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.1104  
20 May 2008

ENGLISH

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## FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Tuesday, 20 May 2008, at 10.15 a.m.

President:

Mr. Yevhen BERSHEDA

(Ukraine)

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I declare open the 1104th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. I would now like to turn to the list of speakers for today. The representatives of the following countries are on the list of speakers for today's plenary meeting: Germany, Brazil, Syria and Canada. I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. BRASACK (Germany): Mr. President, it is a pleasure to take the floor under your distinguished presidency. First of all, I would like to assure you and the other members of the P-6 platform of Germany's fullest support for your efforts to guide the work of this Conference and, in particular, to bring the CD back to substantial work and to its core tasks.

I would also like fully to associate myself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union at the last formal plenary debate on Thursday, 15 May 2008.

We were very much encouraged by the momentum developed as a result of the initiative taken jointly by the six Presidents for the 2006 Conference on Disarmament session. This momentum has clearly been brought to an even higher level in 2007, which has fostered our hope that, finally, the deadlock in the work of the CD can be overcome in 2008.

Germany very much welcomes the collective efforts of the six Presidents of the 2008 session of the Conference on Disarmament to draw the appropriate conclusions from the discussions of the past year and the first part of our 2008 session. In particular, we highly commend the way in which the P-6, building on the work of their 2007 predecessors, again gathered the views of the CD member States and managed to merge them all into a coherent layout for our work. Solid bridges have been built by the Presidents and the other member States of the CD throughout last year and during the present session of the CD in order to help the few remaining CD members to join the existing consensus.

In our view, the carefully crafted draft decision of the Presidents for the 2008 CD session, as contained in document CD/1840, takes into account in an honest, fair, balanced and comprehensive manner the interests of all CD members and, in a realistic sense of compromise, leaves them equally unhappy with it. Germany therefore wholeheartedly welcomes this draft decision, the elements of which reflect the agreements that the CD will have to reach in order to get back to work. I am happy to express Germany's full and unequivocal support for the draft decision contained in document CD/1840 as it stands.

It is all the more urgent to bring the CD back to fulfilling its function as the single multilateral forum at the disposal of the international community for disarmament negotiations against the backdrop of the security challenges that we face today. The threats to our security are more diverse, less visible and less predictable. Non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control remain indispensable elements of cooperative global security between States and are essential for effectively addressing those threats in a global manner.

(Mr. Brasack, Germany)

The adoption by the Presidents for the 2008 CD session of the draft decision as it stands would send a clear and decisive signal to the world outside this Council Chamber that we take this task seriously. Moreover, it would underscore the relevance of a multilateral approach to security and testify to our commitment to the multilateral treaty system, which provides the legal and normative basis for all disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

For now, it is of the utmost importance that the CD adopts the fundamental decision to return to work. We therefore call upon all delegations to show the utmost flexibility and to demonstrate a constructive approach to the swift achievement of this goal by adopting the draft decision of the Presidents of the 2008 CD session contained in document CD/1840. There is no realistic and viable alternative to this approach.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank Ambassador Brasack for his statement and I now call on the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Macedo Soares.

Mr. MACEDO SOARES (Brazil): Mr. President, my participation as representative of Brazil to this Conference on Disarmament started on the very day that your term as its President began. During this short period of time, I have appreciated the wisdom with which you have conducted our work and your efforts to keep the Conference on its central course as a disarmament negotiating forum.

As you said in your intervention at the last plenary meeting, we are possibly the closest to consensus that we have been for years in this forum, with regard to the adoption of a programme of work that will put the CD back on the right track, namely, to resume negotiations on disarmament issues. We must seize this opportunity.

Brazil is greatly concerned by the deterioration in the international security environment, which affects political as well as economic prospects. The lack of progress in terms of nuclear disarmament lies at the base of the general insecurity. The growing number of local and regional conflicts may receive more attention in the media, but an ominous lethal potential lies in the nuclear arsenals.

The impasse in disarmament negotiations undermines the multilateral machinery established for this purpose and causes the multilateral system as a whole to suffer, as individual States remain aloof or, worse, adamantly maintain their arsenals and improve their technological weapons capabilities. Brazil, which has a long-standing commitment to disarmament, feels affected by this current state of affairs.

Since the early days of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee and the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, we have acted in a constructive and cooperative manner. Likewise, since the creation of the CD in 1979, we have always demonstrated our flexibility and spirit of compromise and have engaged in the work of this body in good faith, with a view to reaching what we believe is our common goal, namely, to contribute to building a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, through the negotiation of multilateral agreements.

(Mr. Macedo Soares, Brazil)

Brazil does not identify itself with the logic of any system which relies upon the accumulation and refining of armaments in order to ensure stability. We respect the Charter of the United Nations and fully share its objectives. We remain convinced that disarmament cannot be understood apart from the fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon pointed out in his statement at the opening of the 2008 session of the CD on 23 January 2008, “Disarmament and non-proliferation are closely associated with the very mission of the United Nations. They are widely recognized as indispensable to achieving the maintenance of international peace and security, a core principle in the United Nations Charter.”

We believe that issues related to international security have a universal character and thus require multilateral responses within a framework of collective responsibility. In order to reach stable and predictable results, nothing can replace legally binding agreements negotiated multilaterally. That is why we stand committed to the CD as the sole multilateral forum in charge of negotiating disarmament instruments and to the cause of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

These are the principles that have always guided and will continue to guide Brazil’s participation in this forum. I thought it appropriate and convenient to reiterate them as we engage in the second part of this year’s session.

Having adopted its agenda for the 2008 session, the Conference should now focus on the organization of its work. The draft decision presented by the six Presidents in document CD/1840 on 13 March, in accordance with rule 29 of our rules of procedure, contains the elements which, in my view, could serve as a stepping stone for our work during the current session.

Of course, the adoption of that draft decision would not preclude other decisions concerning the activities of the Conference. Likewise, it should not be read as a prejudgement of the outcome of discussions and negotiations. Moreover, it should not be considered as closing the possibility of new avenues being opened in the future.

In fact, the scenario drawn in the draft decision represents less than many member States, including my own, would wish for in terms of negotiation of legally binding instruments. Nevertheless, it would allow the Conference a way out of its present immobility.

Brazil is fully aware that some delegations remain concerned with the implications for their security of starting negotiations on an FMCT without preconditions. We understand and, in many respects, share these concerns. However, we would like to recall that the introduction of that element in the corresponding decision simply means that no member State is prevented from raising any issue that it may consider vital to its security interests in the course of the negotiations. It is our understanding that any State is free to present any proposal, according to its respective position, with a view to reaching agreement on the targeted objectives. Needless to say, the freedom to submit proposals corresponds to an analogous right to accept or reject proposals from others.

(Mr. Macedo Soares, Brazil)

Brazil favours an FMCT which includes a multilateral verification mechanism and stockpile controls. By the same token, we favour negotiations on all items on the agenda. We understand that the CD will engage in a sequential process and establish negotiating mandates for the other items on the agenda, as determined by the development of the discussions. That said, I would like to highlight that Brazil agrees to start negotiations on an FMCT without preconditions and to start substantive discussions on the other agenda items, as a contribution to building consensus and ending the long stalemate which the CD is facing. We invite all delegations to display the same flexibility and goodwill. The proposal drafted by the 2008 Presidents has the merit of being broad enough to allow us to move forward without losing sight of the vital security interests of the States parties.

Brazil, together with all other member States, continues to support the CD because it deals with issues of international security, which affect the security of every one of us, and because we believe that progressive understandings are possible.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the presidency and I now call on the Syrian Ambassador, Mr. Hamoui.

Mr. HAMOUI (Syrian Arab Republic) (spoke in Arabic): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 21. On behalf of the Group of 21 and on behalf of my own delegation, I should like to extend out deepest condolences to the distinguished delegations of China and Myanmar.

We were all very saddened by the natural disasters to which both countries were subjected and we hope that their peoples will overcome this trial with courage and patience. At the same time, I have the honour to welcome, on behalf of the Group of 21 and on behalf of my own delegation, the distinguished Ambassadors of Brazil and Chile. I wish them and their delegations every success. We shall continue to cooperate sincerely with them.

The role of the delegations of Chile and Brazil at our Conference is an important and necessary one, as they are an important pillar of our Group and we value their role and appreciate their wisdom.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank the representative of the Group of 21 for his statement and now give the floor to the Ambassador of Canada, Mr. Grinius.

Mr. GRINIUS (Canada): Mr. President, I certainly can associate myself with what was said by Germany, Brazil and Syria in the various contexts that they were expressed.

You will recall that Canada supported and continues to support the further work of the Conference on Disarmament on the basis of document CD/1840. In this context, we applaud your efforts and those of the P-6 to move things forward, and certainly, besides negotiations on the FMCT, Canada would certainly like to see progress in terms of discussions on outer space.

(Mr. Grinius, Canada)

In a more personal capacity, I have listened to colleagues, particularly last week, express sincere willingness to move forward on the substantive work of the CD. Yet, we have gone 10 years and now we have 10 years of stalemate and a lot of, shall we say, polite expressions of hope to move forward. We are halfway through this year's session, and I think now, before we know it, we will have to be writing a report saying what we have achieved, and I am afraid now, I am not sure but I suspect that report will be quite short.

There is much obviously for me to learn in this multilateral forum, and this is the forum that professes to be the sole multilateral arms control and disarmament negotiating forum, but the last real productive work that it has done seems to be the CTBT, and that was some time ago. Experienced colleagues around here have told me many times to be patient, and that the progress will occur when the time is ripe, but it appears that this is not yet the case. Of course, we will work with everybody else to move that forward and perhaps ripen the time. Quite frankly, I was not posted to Geneva to be idle, and I have more than enough work with my other United Nations responsibilities, but I would most definitely like to be gainfully employed with respect to the Conference on Disarmament, and I remain an optimist and I certainly rely on the words of wisdom of many more experienced colleagues.

Perhaps one way forward may be to have a number of unofficial, off the record discussions that would really try to ascertain what the fundamental concerns, with respect to States' sovereign and security interests, are and to have those discussions, again unofficially, informally, so that certainly persons like myself would understand a lot better what it is that does not allow this negotiating forum to move forward. Certainly, I would welcome that more than simply the polite official exchanges that we tend to have.

Again, I really do support the efforts of the P-6 to break this impasse, but suggest that maybe more work has to be done outside this chamber and unofficially.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank the representative of Canada for his statement and for his thoughts and proposals. Would any other delegation like to take the floor at this point? I give the floor to the Ambassador of China.

Mr. WANG (China) (spoke in French): China wishes warmly to thank the distinguished Syrian Ambassador for the sympathy and condolences voiced to China on behalf of the Group of 21 on account of the destructive earthquake.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): Would any other delegation like to take the floor? It seems not. As today's meeting is the last under the Ukrainian presidency, I would like to present you with some final conclusions.

The PRESIDENT: The term of the Ukrainian presidency at the Conference on Disarmament is coming to an end on 25 May 2008. The peculiarity of this term is that the four working weeks of our presidency started at the end of March and will last until next Monday.

(The President)

This timetable has made it possible to use an important intersessional period for conducting bilateral and multilateral consultations with the CD membership immediately after the tabling by my distinguished predecessor, the Ambassador of Turkey, Ahmet Üzümcü, of draft proposal CD/1840 on behalf of the six Presidents.

During our previous plenary, I had the opportunity to inform you about the generally positive feedback resulting from the outcome of the aforementioned consultations, as well as about the endeavours of the Presidents to reach a consensus programme of work. The statements of the Ambassador of Slovenia on behalf of European Union and aligned countries, the Ambassador of Belarus on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, and a number of representatives of countries from the Group of 21 allow us to assert that CD/1840 enjoys wide support.

Along with the end of the term of the Ukrainian presidency, the Conference on Disarmament crosses the time equator of this year's session. Clearly, it is not yet time to sum up: let us leave that to our Venezuelan colleagues. However, it can be asserted that our common achievement is an atmosphere of constructive approach, tolerance and transparency and a united commitment to reaching consensus in order to step up the work of the Conference.

Soon, the delegation of Ukraine will join colleagues from Tunisia and Turkey who have completed their presidential terms and continue to work effectively in the P-6 format, enriching it with their professionalism and recently obtained experience of presiding over the CD.

The mechanism of cooperation between the six Presidents, which was jointly created after complicated and long-lasting discussions, increasingly demonstrates its viability. It serves to soften the transition of the presidency from one country to another, contributes to the creation of a spirit of tolerance and takes into account the interests of each and every member of the CD.

The presentation of document CD/1840 and its support by the majority of the delegations provides practical evidence of the effectiveness of the P-6 format.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to all the delegations of the CD members and to the regional coordinators for their energetic and constructive activity aimed at turning the Conference towards substantive work.

I would also like to thank you, Mr. Secretary-General, for your support and advice on improving the work of our forum. I address special words of thanks to the Deputy Secretary-General of the CD, Mr. Tim Caughley, as well as to Conference secretariat staff members Jerzy Zaleski and Valère Mantels and their colleagues for their professional and responsible attitude to the cause.

I cannot but express words of special gratitude to our interpreters, patient and high-performance specialists who prevent the Conference from turning into the Tower of Babel.

(The President)

Taking this opportunity, I would like to emphasize once more the efforts of our agenda item coordinators. The informal discussions which they chaired this year have proved that the essence of the 2007 Presidents' proposal, namely, the L.1 package, is still up to date.

Last but not least, let me thank my P-6 colleagues and wish every success to the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador John Duncan, in his responsible mission and assure him of our support. We are proud that, this year, Ukraine and I personally have had the honour to preside over the Conference and work along with our P-6 colleagues, who are true professionals, from four continents and three regional groups. Owing to their devoted job, the cooperation of the 2008 CD Presidents has become an important factor for the Conference in finding compromise decisions.

(spoke in French)

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference under the presidency of the United Kingdom will be held on Tuesday, 27 May 2008 at 10.30 a.m. in this chamber.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.