
Conference on Disarmament

25 June 2009

English

Final record of the one thousand one hundred and forty-third plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 25 June 2009, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Roberto García Moritán (Argentina)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call to order the 1143rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

In view of the fact that on the list for this morning no delegation is registered to speak, I wonder whether any delegation would care to make a statement on our agenda items? It seems not.

The Conference on Disarmament is a body with a clear and definite purpose. We have all emphasized that on more than one occasion. In addition, it has a membership the breadth of which enables all regions and subregions to see their interests properly addressed. These two features, among others, mean that the Conference on Disarmament has the clear possibility of fulfilling its responsibilities and meeting the international community's expectations of it. The Conference on Disarmament has done that in the past, and I am sure that it will very promptly bear this out once again with specific deeds.

The decision adopted by all of us a month ago on the programme of work spells this out. The intensive consultations I have held in the month of June clearly convey to me the same sensation and conviction. I have seen that there is a widespread determination and willingness to work which needs to be urgently put into action. From those consultations has arisen a draft calendar of activities to be found in document CD/1866 which will enable the Conference on Disarmament to immediately commence substantive work up to the end of the 2009 session. Within the limited time remaining to us, this schedule provides for the possibility of addressing the tasks of each working group and the special coordinators in a serious and comprehensive way in line with their mandates, as spelled out in document CD/1864. Likewise, each topic also has a time allotted to it in a balanced manner, which I understand is satisfactory to all the member States of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Secretary-General of our Conference has assured us that the secretariat stands ready to meet all the objectives and requirements associated with this schedule in terms of personnel, interpretation and other services. I think I speak for all of us when I express thanks for that support.

The consultations have likewise enabled me to establish the position of distinguished Ambassadors who are ready to contribute to steering our work by shouldering a range of responsibilities in the leadership of each of the subsidiary organs and in each office of special coordinator. My thanks and appreciation to them all. On that basis, I have proposed a list of possible candidates to chair the four working groups and the three posts of special coordinators, which is to be found in document 1867. This provides an appropriate geographical distribution for the leadership of our work.

In practical terms, all the necessary elements seem to be ready for us to move into action and begin substantive work straight away. Nevertheless, it is my feeling that the Conference on Disarmament is still not in a position to adopt these decisions. I am sure that in the days to come or the next few hours it will be possible to settle the minor outstanding details so that decisions can be taken on both draft decisions and the Conference on Disarmament can show that it is conducting negotiations and practical discussions in its subsidiary bodies.

Once we commence our work, it would also be important to begin giving thought to the importance of continuity, predictability and the ability to organize our work over time.

Both in the case of negotiations and in terms of discussion mandates, the element of predictability is vital and contributes to the best possible consideration of each of the topics.

It is my hope that in the weeks to come we will be able to find a formula enabling us to address this matter within the framework of what is laid down by our Conference's rules of procedure.

I would like to know whether any delegation wishes to take the floor at this point. I recognize the distinguished delegation of the United Kingdom, which has asked for the floor.

Mr. Duncan (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, thank you for the work that you have so nobly carried forward over the past few weeks. You are certainly to be commended on a difficult task as we try to implement the decision taken some weeks ago. I am very pleased to learn that you will be tabling a paper on the basis of the discussion papers which were shown to the regional groups, which we have passed back to our capital and looked at very seriously. I am happy to be able to say that, providing the final version follows the substance of the drafts that we saw in the regional groups, we would be happy to support that proposal.

I am particularly pleased to see that colleagues have stepped forward to take on the role of chair and coordinator. We know from personal experience that this is a difficult task requiring good judgement and quite a bit of energy, and these are important matters.

As a nuclear-weapon State, but also as a signatory of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), paying particular attention to article VI, and as a member of this Conference, it behoves us to exercise our responsibilities and to meet the undertakings that we have given formally in legally binding documents. It is therefore with that in mind that we have taken a look at these papers that you have put before us. Of course, were we to have drafted them, they would say something different, but this is a collective effort, a collective endeavour, to move towards, in our view, a world free of nuclear weapons. And the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is, together with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), one of the key building blocks of that vision, and therefore we have looked very seriously indeed at it.

I would say again, thank you very much for your hard work and consultation and, providing the papers that we saw in the regional group are reflected accurately in the paper you are about to circulate, we will be happy to support it.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the distinguished delegation of the United Kingdom for its statement and I give the floor to the distinguished delegation of France.

Mr. Danon (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would simply like to endorse what has just been said by our British colleague and congratulate you on the work accomplished, the drafting of the proposals you have made both on the working groups, the special coordinators and the timetable between now and the end of this session. We are in a position to take a very positive stand with respect to those proposals. You have told us you hoped that in the days, and perhaps even the hours to come, progress might still be made. We very much hope that that will be the case on the basis of the consultations you have held effectively and with brio to date.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of France for his statement.

Would any other delegation like to take the floor? I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of China, who has asked for the floor.

Mr. Wang Qun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank the distinguished Ambassador Moritán for having patiently conducted our informal consultations as President of the Conference for the past several weeks. We are happy to hear that he will distribute the relevant draft decisions; the Chinese delegation will make its comments at an appropriate time after having seen and studied them.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the distinguished delegation of China for its statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor?

I recognize the distinguished delegation of Brazil.

Mr. Tabajara de Oliveira (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, Mr. President, allow my delegation to congratulate you on your tireless efforts over recent weeks and to commend your wholehearted devotion to the consultations which will enable us in the Conference on Disarmament to take a further crucial step forward in the implementation of the programme of work.

The success of the consultations, which may be said to be a success, is a matter of time. This is not just due to your high degree of professionalism but also your sensitivity in perceiving that each delegation has its own perception of the programme of work – above all that each delegation has its own perception of the time within which the programme of work should be implemented. In respecting those perceptions, you have made everyone feel comfortable up until now.

But this question of time remains on the table, and, as you said, it will be necessary for us to bear in mind in our deliberations, in the short term and in the longer term as well, that we still lack a vision of how to roll out the programme of work over time at a pace which will be satisfactory to everyone. So allow me once again to thank you for all the efforts which have brought us to this point.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the distinguished delegation of Brazil for its statement. I recognize the distinguished delegation of the United States.

Mr. Larson (United States of America): Mr. President, I would very briefly like to join those who have already expressed their thanks and commendations for the work that has been done so far in putting forward for action the agreement — that momentous decision — that was reached on 29 May. We look forward to carrying that work forward with vigour and purpose as soon as possible. We welcome your efforts and look forward to the early adoption of that draft.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the distinguished delegation of the United States for its statement. I recognize the distinguished delegation of the Russian Federation, which has asked for the floor.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, the Russian delegation would also like to associate itself with the words of high appreciation for your work.

Just recently in this room we described as a breakthrough the decisions related to the adoption of the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament. And in this same room grand words have been uttered to the effect that this opportunity should not be missed. It seems the draft documents that were prepared by you, Mr. President, in our view, reflect these goals, and if they are submitted in the form in which they were agreed in practice in the regional groups, we would be ready to support them.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the distinguished delegation of the Russian Federation for its statement. Any other delegation?

I would like to point out, before I give the floor to the next speaker, that I referred to two documents – CD/1866 and CD/1867. I am going to ask the secretariat to circulate them among us so that we may all have them in front of us in order to analyse the situation better.

I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of Japan, who has asked for the floor.

Mr. Suda (Japan): Mr. President, I would like to support the statements made by the preceding speakers on the suggestions made by the President in the past few weeks. Japan can support these suggestions for our future work, and expresses great appreciation for the President's efforts in the past weeks. We now understand the President's explanation of

how hard it was to settle the working schedules and working group organization. But at the same time I think we should bear in mind that we are being watched by people in all countries, and we made a very important decision at the end of June to start our actual work for this year. The people watching us expect us now to move quite smoothly to start our actual work.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the distinguished delegation of Japan for its statement. Would any other delegation care to take the floor? I recognize the distinguished delegation of Pakistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. President, I would like to join the previous speakers in expressing the appreciation of my delegation for the work that you have done. I would like to commend you on the way you have conducted your presidency of the Conference. You have made concerted efforts to reach out to the Conference members and to consult them, and you have involved the regional groups at every step as well. Your presidency has been a model of multilateral diplomacy. I would also like to commend the hard work and dedication of your colleagues and your team.

You assumed the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at a very delicate juncture. Your task was to implement the decision of the Conference on its programme of work. At the very outset, you outlined the principles of equitable geographical distribution and balanced allocation of time for all the four working groups. You circulated the two draft papers through the regional coordinators. The papers were based on these two key principles, which will continue to guide our work in the future as well.

We understand that consultations are under way on the documents that you have formally presented now, CD/1866 and 1867. We will continue to constructively engage in this process to reach a consensus as early as possible. I would also like to point out that the application of the principle of rotation — though not applicable at this moment in time, since there is little time available for us in the 2009 session — will remain valid in our future deliberations. Our proposal in this regard remains on the table for consideration.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the distinguished delegation of Pakistan for its statement. Would any other delegation like to take the floor?

I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of Chile.

Mr. Portales (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I would like to begin by thanking you for your work this month. We have noted the tireless efforts you have made to progress towards consensus so as to set this Conference to work and we particularly appreciate all of your talent and that of your delegation with a view to making headway. We believe we stand at a very important point and your work, I am sure, will be a decisive factor in getting our activities under way.

On behalf of the delegation of Chile, I would like to convey my special thanks to you and to tell you that we are satisfied with the documents you have presented to us and we can work with them.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the distinguished delegation of Chile for its statement. Would any other delegation care to take the floor?

I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of Australia.

Ms. Millar (Australia): Mr. President, like others, I should like to commend you for your extensive consultations on helping to move our work forward, which we now see reflected in these two draft decisions today, CD/1866 and 1867.

CD/1864 was adopted a month ago, and was greeted with great enthusiasm and, dare I say, after 11 or 12 years, with relief by delegations here and also in capitals, including by

leaders. It seems to us it behoves us to move forward, and I say this a little self-servingly, as I will be stepping into your shoes next week. We know you have consulted very extensively on these documents. We have had meetings on them with regional groups. The proposals are well-known to us all. So I would just like to appeal to delegations that have not yet reached final positions to try and seek those as soon as possible so that we can adopt these decisions and move forward in our work expeditiously.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank to the distinguished delegation of Australia for its statement. I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of China.

Mr. Wang Qun (*spoke in Chinese*): My apologies for taking the floor again. I entirely agree with what the distinguished delegation of Australia just said, and would like to thank the President for having formally distributed the two draft decisions. I am of the view that these two draft decisions have provided a very good basis upon which we can all arrive at consensus. However, an issue has arisen that I should like to ask the President to clarify so that I can report back to Beijing. Document CD/1867 is about implementing document CD/1864, but doesn't document CD/1866 fall within the same category? In other words, doesn't the content of document CD/1866 belong at least partially within the framework of implementation of document CD/1866? Otherwise, one of the draft decisions is about implementing document CD/1864, but it's not entirely clear what the other is about. But I think this is only a technical problem; I don't know whether the President has any special concerns about this, but perhaps the two draft decisions could be combined, so that everyone would understand that they are about the implementation of document CD/1864.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of China for his statement and I think he is right – we are dealing with a technical matter. As you are aware, document CD/1864 indicates the path to be followed, as it were. The first step on that path, establishing the subsidiary bodies and the posts of special coordinators, involves the appointment of their officers. That is the purpose of proposal 1867.

Once we are in a position to adopt that decision, we can set out the structure for our work. It is in that context that the schedule was conceived and discussed among all of us. Document CD/1866 gives us an idea of the sequence of activities to be performed. Accordingly, I think that this provides us with a forward-looking picture of what document CD/1864 tell us.

Does any other delegation wish to make a statement on any item on our agenda?

If no one does for the time being, I think we should try to continue to make use of the time available to continue our consultations so as to see whether we are able to settle the minor outstanding matters and commence our activities as I understand we all wish to do.

That being the case, I would like to ask the regional coordinators and my friends from the P-6 whether we might meet this afternoon at 4 p.m. in our usual meeting room.

Similarly, it is my intention to convene a plenary meeting tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. to see whether we can continue with our discussions on the issues which we have considered this morning.

I wonder whether any delegation wishes to take the floor on this last question as well? I see none does for the time being.

Consequently, our next plenary would take place tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. in this same Council chamber. I thank you all for coming this morning.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.