

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Thursday, 22 August 2002, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. András Szabó (Hungary)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 911th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. I have nine speakers on my list of speakers for today: the representatives of Turkey, Chile, Sweden, Malaysia, Japan and Norway. We will also hear the reports of the three special coordinators, Ambassador Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka, Ambassador Chung of the Republic of Korea and Ambassador Tzantchev of Bulgaria.

Before giving them the floor, however, I should like to make some opening remarks as Hungary assumes the presidency of the Conference.

Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished colleagues: at the moment when Hungary has the honour and privilege to take over the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, allow me to share with you some reflections on the state of affairs in this body and on possible future actions. Before turning to the substantive points, I wish to pay tribute to and commend the efforts of my predecessors from Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France and Germany. All of them steered the work of the Conference with high professionalism and determination to find a way out of the deadlock which grips this body for the fourth consecutive year. Let me express my special appreciation to my predecessor, Ambassador Volker Heinsberg of Germany, for his intensive efforts aimed at facilitating the commencement of the substantive work of the Conference. We also highly value his regular information on all the consultations he had with delegations. I am convinced that his full and active participation in our future activities will help bring us closer to our common goal. I am confident that in carrying out my duties I will be able to rely on the well-known expertise and dedication of the secretariat, headed by the Secretary-General, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, and the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey.

Our deliberations this year have demonstrated a strengthened sense of solidarity. New, unprecedented patterns of international cooperation including on security matters, have emerged, particularly in the aftermath of the events of 11 September. These may have a positive impact on the trends in the Conference's activities. Though we have been navigating in troubled waters, we should never forget that we are in the same boat, in a boat where the steersmen may change, but the motion towards the declared destination should remain the same. We need joint efforts, the understanding of our reliance on each other, because only such an attitude can guarantee the accomplishment of our common goals. Failures and setbacks should not undermine the overarching conviction that this boat has a destination to reach.

Hungary served as President of the Conference on Disarmament the last time in May 1994. That was a period when this sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament matters was working almost to its full capacity. It had just successfully completed the negotiations of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and was about to start negotiating the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Much has changed within and outside this forum since that time. New risks and challenges have unfolded, profoundly shaping the way we perceive what constitutes a real threat to peace and stability in our world. The challenge of successful adaptation to the changing security environment still lies ahead of us.

(The President)

The dynamic evolution of the world around us lends added urgency to the task of breaking the lasting stalemate in the Conference. This is further highlighted by parallel new initiatives aimed at meeting the new challenges. The signing of the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation marked a qualitatively new beginning in the strategic relationship between the two major Powers, by paving the way to substantive reductions of the respective nuclear arsenals. Diplomatic efforts to curb the proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction have gained new momentum this year. The new NPT review cycle has made a promising start, which bodes well for its successful continuation during the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee next April/May here in Geneva.

The Conference is entering the last month of the 2002 session. We have four weeks at our disposal to live up to the expectations of the international community that we reinvigorate the central role this body is obliged to play in negotiating global legal instruments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The presidency cannot but be optimistic in this regard. A recurrent feature of all statements, without exception, in the plenary meetings this year has been the reiteration of the commitment to multilateralism as a core principle in negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation with a view to maintaining and strengthening universal norms and enlarging their scope. To continue in the words of United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/24 T, submitted by my distinguished colleague, Ambassador André Erdős in his capacity as Chair of the First Committee, "progress is urgently needed in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation in order to help to maintain international peace and security and to contribute to global efforts against terrorism". I am hopeful that this sense of urgency still exists and will drive the last part of the 2002 session under the Hungarian presidency to a smooth transition to continued work in 2003.

The last presidency of the annual session has to carry out a twofold task. First, it should wrap up the work for the year in an orderly manner. It is part of the routine of this Conference to inform the international community at large about our proceedings in the form of an annual report to be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly. The drafting of this document will certainly take up much of our time. I will propose that we follow the pattern of previous years in this respect and prepare the report for this year on that basis.

In addition to this essentially house-keeping exercise, it is also my intention to address the until now unresolved issue of the programme of work. I invite you to do so for several reasons. First, it is never too late to explore new possibilities. Second, even in the closing phase of the session we can do a useful job with a view to preparing the smooth commencement of the next annual session. Third, recent proposals and initiatives have brought renewed dynamism to our deliberations, reflecting an unrelenting search for compromise. While a new beginning would seem to remain beyond the reach of the Conference, we cannot afford to lose the momentum created over the last weeks. In this respect, I wish to refer to the informal steps undertaken by a group of former presidents, as well as to the initiative by Germany to have a fresh look at the issue of radiological weapons.

(The President)

At the present stage it is up to the proponents of these new initiatives to promote their acceptance. Both in procedural and substantive terms the time is not ripe for the involvement of the President. At the same time, I encourage my respective colleagues to continue their efforts. My consultations until now have convinced me that they are pursuing their objectives with the sincere desire to present us with a realistic and balanced approach which takes into account the interests of all members of the Conference.

The three special coordinators will submit their reports today. I attach great importance to their work in further developing certain organizational aspects of the life of the Conference on Disarmament. I am sure that their respective reports will provide us with useful ideas concerning possible reforms in this forum.

In conclusion, I wish to call on each and every delegation to use the remaining time as effectively as possible and for us to continue our efforts aimed at plotting a viable route out of our long-lasting stalemate. I hope to rely on the collective wisdom of this body and will conduct a number of bilateral and multilateral consultations. Moreover, I will be available to groups and individual delegations who might want to meet with me. The President's efforts can yield viable results if they grow organically out of broadly-based discussions. With this in mind, I am looking forward to constructive cooperation with all the delegations in this room.

Before giving the floor to the first speaker on my list, Ambassador Murat Sungar of Turkey, I should like, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to bid farewell to him as he will soon leave Geneva, having been called by his Government to assume other important duties. Ambassador Sungar joined the Conference on 11 May 1998. During his time here, he presented the position of his Government with authority and diplomatic talent. Very soon after his arrival, Ambassador Sungar assumed the presidency of the Conference. His contribution during that period to our collective efforts to facilitate consensus on a programme of work of the Conference and, in particular, his deep commitment during consultations on appropriate methods and approaches for dealing with agenda item 1, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", were appreciated by all. On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament, and on my own behalf, I should like to wish him every success and happiness in the future.

Ambassador Sungar, you have the floor.

Mr. SUNGAR (Turkey): Mr. President, at the outset, allow me to express my warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to assure you of the support and cooperation of my delegation in our common endeavour to bring the existing stalemate to an end. I would like to express my appreciation to your predecessors, Ambassador Volker Heinsberg of Germany, Ambassador Hubert Forquenot de La Fortelle of France, Ambassador Markku Reimaa of Finland, Ambassador Fisseha Yimer of Ethiopia and acting Chargé d'Affaires Mr. Mohammed Tawfik of Egypt. They all made every conceivable effort to move our work forward.

(Mr. Sungar, Turkey)

I also wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, an able diplomat with vast experience, on his appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference.

Since I shall be leaving Geneva soon, I cannot help but be retro as well as introspective about my last four years as the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the Conference on Disarmament. I seek your kind indulgence for some personal observations and taking this opportunity, I also wish to emphasize my Government's position on some of the issues in the field of disarmament.

When I first arrived at the Conference on Disarmament in 1998, I found myself in the midst of the South Asian nuclear test crisis in my capacity as President of the Conference. To say the least, it was a warm welcome. Even the initial shock I felt did not deter me from thinking that this august body was capable of fulfilling its noble duty. In those days the Conference on Disarmament had a work programme and a prestigious background on which it could rely.

For a while I believed that the active engagement of the Conference on Disarmament in the international disarmament field would continue unabated. To my and many others' dismay, however, a long period of institutional deadlock set in.

It is a fact that the Conference on Disarmament can easily become hostage to the dynamics of the outside world. And there are times when it cannot keep up with the pace of changes that unfold in the international arena either. This was the case when the international community was unable to benefit fully from the propitious environment that the end of the cold war provided. The reality of today is such that the key players, perhaps with the best of all intentions, continue to pursue diverging means to the same end, that is, to enhance global security and stability in the post-cold war era.

And yet, in this hall the most repeated, yet least substantiated phrase since 1998, still remains "the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament". Turkey is fully committed to the unique role of the Conference and believes that it should do its utmost to be responsive to present as well as future dangers. We sincerely hope that with new initiatives and efforts the atmosphere of convergence will prevail over divergence and the current stalemate on the work programme can be circumvented.

The date 11 September 2001 is one which has left an indelible scar on our memories on numerous counts. In my opinion, the most critical points of which the Conference on Disarmament must take stock are the magnitude of the dastardly terrorist attacks; the cunningness of the terrorists in transforming innocent means of civilian transportation into deadly weapons of mass destruction; and the fact that the abominable attacks, though aimed at the United States of America also targeted all humanity and the civilized world as a whole, towards which the Conference on Disarmament has assumed a considerable responsibility.

(Mr. Sungar, Turkey)

The 11 September terror attacks and the emergence of bio-terrorism, along with the serious threat of the so-called “dirty bomb”, are - to an extreme degree - loud and clear messages which the Conference on Disarmament must have registered and must act upon resolutely without further delay.

Unfortunately, even the attacks which we witnessed on the grim day of 11 September were not powerful enough to persuade this Conference to set aside its diverging views with the aim of working together so that the real weapons of mass destruction would not one day end up in the hands of terrorists as agents of destruction.

I regret that the Conference, for the fourth year in a row, has not been able to initiate negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. Turkey considers that, together with the early entry into force of the CTBT, the immediate commencement of FMCT negotiations constitutes the next essential multilateral step in nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

We continue to attach particular importance to achieving universal adherence to the NPT in order to reinforce global non-proliferation and disarmament objectives, as well as to prepare the necessary foundation to pre-empt present and future challenges.

The fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), which will resume its work on 11 November of this year, offers yet another opportunity for us to reinforce the multilateral system of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The recent acts of bio-terrorism which took the form of anthrax attacks provide a clear indication of the need for resolute action against biological weapons as well. There is no doubt that we have to approach the BWC with new vigour and a renewed sense of urgency. I think it is high time to make every effort to establish a multilaterally negotiated compliance and verification mechanism. We also have to be vigilant about its universality and effective implementation.

The international community is not only being challenged by the risks brought by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction but also by their means of delivery. In a precarious geography, the proliferation of ballistic missiles with destabilizing consequences is of particular concern to Turkey. We see an urgent need for a global and multilateral approach to intensify existing efforts against the proliferation of ballistic missiles. Consequently, Turkey strongly supports the process of the universalization of the international code of conduct against the proliferation of ballistic missiles.

While the disarmament track record has been mixed, there are, nonetheless, encouraging developments as well, and these should be recognized. The signing of the Treaty between the

(Mr. Sungar, Turkey)

United States of America and the Russian Federation on Strategic Offensive Reductions and the Joint Declaration by President Bush and President Putin on the new strategic relationship between the two countries on 24 May 2002 are cases in point.

Important progress has also been registered in the campaign against the use of anti-personnel landmines. Thanks to concerted efforts by States and non-governmental organizations, 143 countries are now States Parties to the Ottawa Convention.

Turkey is fully conscious of the human suffering and casualties caused by the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. The security situation around Turkey precluded it from signing the Convention at the time of its conclusion. Nevertheless, as an expression of its commitment to the humanitarian objectives of the Convention, Turkey extended its national moratorium on the export and transfer of anti-personnel landmines indefinitely in March 2002.

Turkey also concluded agreements with Bulgaria in March 1999 and with Georgia in January 2001, with a view to establishing regimes for keeping the common borders free of these mines. We have proposed similar arrangements to our neighbouring countries Greece and Azerbaijan.

Last year I announced at this Conference my Government's firm decision to become a party to the Convention. Our intentions to this effect were already made public on 6 April 2001, during the visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece to Turkey. On that occasion our two foreign ministers, Mr. Cem and Mr. Papandreou, decided that Turkey and Greece would simultaneously deposit their instruments of ratification with the Secretary-General of the United Nations following the completion of their respective constitutional procedures.

At this juncture, I would like to report that the Convention has been submitted to the Turkish Parliament for ratification. On 9 May 2002, the Foreign Affairs Committee of Parliament endorsed the Convention and passed it to the General Assembly for final approval.

On a further positive note, I note that, for two years in a row, we have been able to appoint three special coordinators to break the stalemate and set the stage for justifying the existence of the Conference on Disarmament. We would like to commend the distinguished ambassadors of both past and present for their tireless efforts in that direction.

Before concluding, I would like to thank Mr. Petrovsky, the former Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Zaleski and all the other staff of the secretariat for the invaluable professional assistance that they have extended to me and my delegation. I would also like to express my appreciation to all the interpreters for their dedication, efficiency and patience.

(Mr. Sungar, Turkey)

I take this opportunity to welcome the new permanent representatives and delegates who have joined this sagacious body in 2002. In terms of its work programme, I sincerely hope that my successor will be more fortunate than I have been.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Turkey for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

I now give the floor to the representative of Chile, Ambassador Vega.

Mr. VEGA (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me to begin by congratulating you on your appointment as President of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to assure you of Chile's cooperation in your work. We trust that your efforts will continue the trend which promises to lead us out of our current deadlock.

My delegation would also like to express its thanks to the Ambassador of Germany, Mr. Volker Heinsberg, for his very intelligent and generous leadership. His management of our work has borne fruit in much valuable progress.

Three weeks ago a group of five ambassadors, myself included, expressed our joint position in this Conference through Ambassador Dembri, the Permanent Representative of Algeria, who had circulated a comprehensive draft work programme drawn up on the basis of the formal and informal proposals which had been formulated ever since 1999. In this provisional text, our attempt was to incorporate the basic elements which together have constituted the collective work of this body over the last few years.

Our purpose was to reaffirm our hope in the survival of a forum for multilateral discussion which we deem to be very important. Security is a collective good of humankind, a heritage and a responsibility that we should all promote and preserve without any exceptions or exclusions. The joint position that we have tried to articulate reveals that that hope - coupled, however, with frustration - are crosscutting phenomena which, in equal share, affect the majority of the States making up each group.

As a draft the paper that has been circulated is - and continues to be - a work in progress open to comments, suggestions and - let it be said - criticism from all delegations.

We are continuing with the process of drafting and editing. It is only too clear, however, that no skilful wording will be able to overcome the lack of political will.

We know that there are legitimate national interests and, in many cases, differing concepts of international security. At the same time, there is a sincere conviction, shared by the majority, of the need for the Conference to resume its work of discussion and negotiation. The idea is to try to ensure that politics, in its best possible manifestation as a marriage of ideals and reality, will be able to play its indispensable role.

(Mr. Vega, Chile)

Those of us who are here today know where the difficulties lie. They derive basically from the paragraphs on PAROS. Yet these should - at least in theory - be acceptable to States which in substance still maintain mutually incompatible positions. For some time now, endeavours to come up with a draft programme of work have taken the form of a search for the lowest common denominator of certain delegations requirements.

I would like to conclude by saying that, throughout our consultations based on certain wordings, we received a broad range of positive responses. We value these highly. We have, of course, taken note of the reservations. Exercising our right to optimism - a dogged optimism perhaps - we would like to see something positive in these reservations too. We will creatively examine all options of substance and procedure available to us within our rules of procedure and suggested by common good sense, and to explore the broad range of opportunities afforded by formal and informal meetings, including those held in the margins, for consideration and analysis.

We promise to keep you informed of our efforts and of the path taken by this initiative. We know that we are in uncharted waters but we are making progress by working paragraph by paragraph. It remains our intention to come up with a specific proposal - but even this objective is secondary compared to the need to prevent any further exacerbation of the difficulties already being experienced by the Conference on Disarmament.

We would like to thank the outgoing President, Ambassador Heinsberg, for his support and counsel and to give you, Mr. President, assurances that we will maintain the same level of coordination with you.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Chile for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden, Ambassador Salander.

Mr. SALANDER (Sweden): Let me first pledge to you my delegation's full and active support of all efforts that you will make in order to overcome the paralysis in the Conference on Disarmament. As we all know, it is a difficult task. You will have the advantage over other presidents of having a longer period, stretching from the end of the current session of the Conference on Disarmament to the end of the year, in which you can sound delegations out, if we do not succeed in deciding on a programme of work before the end of this session.

Let me also say, on my own part and on that of the others in the group of five ambassadors who have recently been trying to explore alternative solutions, that we will keep you fully informed about anything and everything that we may do in the coming weeks. You are also welcome to take part in the meetings among the five of us, at any time. This is what our previous president did. I want to thank Ambassador Heinsberg sincerely for the dedication, sensitivity and sound judgement he showed during his presidency.

(Mr. Salander, Sweden)

I will not elaborate here on the textual intricacies of the discussions that we have had with interested delegations. They consist of slight variations on the themes where positions still differ. Many points have been covered - but as everybody might have suspected, the issue of outer space is the part of the programme of work where consensus seems most difficult to reach. I would even go so far as to say that, in all other contested areas, there seem to exist good possibilities of arriving at formulations which will be acceptable to all delegations of the Conference. But on PAROS it is not certain that we can find such a solution.

Rather than discussing difficulties of which we are all well aware, let me emphasize a couple of points that may be useful to note regarding the initiative that we five have undertaken. The first point is that our working tool, the text, is evolving and will, we hope, be given the chance to continue to evolve. It is not something carved in stone nor a set of formulations that our group finds superior to other formulations. Ideas are coming in from different quarters, including the most involved delegations, and it is therefore important that flexibility and continuity be preserved.

The second point is that this continuity also reflects the fact that we are building on earlier proposals, and that we try to cover the distance from the Amorim proposal, as a basis for continued consultations, to the actual arrival at something built on that base, containing both the necessary and the sufficient elements for all delegations.

The third point is a consequence of the second. We will not present anything which takes the Conference further from consensus than the Amorim proposal. Of course, this judgement of comparison is in the eye of the beholder and may differ from delegation to delegation, and has indeed done so as our text has evolved. Among the five of us, we can only try to determine what might be closer to or further away from a solution before we present anything. Coupled with flexibility and continued consultations, the judgements of delegations are also not carved in stone - they will evolve with the text.

As a fourth point, I want to stress that our group will not try to put pressure on anybody, or try to corner any delegation, or - even less constructive - try to isolate any delegation. Such an approach would of course not only run contrary to our initiative generally, but it would also more specifically contradict the very essence of what the five of us have tried to undertake, namely a cross-group effort to arrive at a programme of work acceptable to all member States of the Conference.

We are fully aware of the risks involved in this effort. We will not undermine the platform which Ambassador Amorim reached by exposing any delegation or forcing anyone to take exception officially at formulations developed from his proposal.

But there are risks involved also in the alternative. For the Conference to state repeatedly that it has a basis for consultations to reach a balanced programme of work, and then do nothing about it, is a very high risk indeed.

(Mr. Salander, Sweden)

Let me thank all delegations that have given us their views and comments. Suggestions are still welcome. Drafting and consultations will continue. Our group will present a development of the Amorim proposal quite soon, but only if and when we believe that the criteria that I have mentioned have been fulfilled.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Sweden for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia, Ambassador Rajmah Hussain.

Ms. RAJMAH (Malaysia): Let me first convey my greetings and congratulations to Ambassador Andras Szabo of Hungary on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Malaysia would like to assure him of its full cooperation during his presidency. With the various new initiatives which have been tabled recently in the Conference on Disarmament, the delegation of Malaysia sincerely hopes that we can make some tangible movement forward in the field of disarmament so that we can make this world a safer place for ourselves and for the generations to come.

I have taken the floor to report to the Conference on Disarmament on my recent visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, two cities in Japan which were the target of atomic bombs respectively on 6 and 9 August 1945. My visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki was to attend the 2002 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs held consecutively in Hiroshima and Nagasaki from 2 to 9 August 2002. This Conference was essentially a conference of non-governmental organizations organized by the Japan Council against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs (Gensuikyo), a non-governmental organization based in Tokyo, which is dedicated to the elimination of nuclear weapons. About 250 delegates from international peace movements and non-governmental organizations attended the Conference. Also present were survivors of the atomic bombing, more commonly referred to as the "Hibakushas".

Four government representatives were invited to take part in the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs - Egypt, Malaysia, South Africa and Bangladesh. Egypt was represented by Mr. Mahmoud Mubarak, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs with responsibility for multilateral relations, while South Africa and Bangladesh were represented by members of their diplomatic missions in Tokyo. Malaysia, which I represented, had been invited because of its annual initiative at the United Nations General Assembly to follow up on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of threat or use of nuclear weapons. Egypt had been invited in recognition of its role as a member of the New Agenda Coalition, the group of States with a common vision of a nuclear-free world. Bangladesh and South Africa represented developing countries with a strong interest in nuclear disarmament, South Africa having voluntarily dismantled its nuclear capability by mid-1991.

The World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs received moral support from several countries. The presidents of Viet Nam, Laos and South Africa and the prime ministers of Malaysia, Sweden and New Zealand sent messages of support and good wishes for the success of the Conference. In his message the Prime Minister of Malaysia,

(Ms. Rajmah, Malaysia)

Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, commended the Conference on being an important reminder of the great folly of nuclear warfare that had taken place in the two cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 and of the need to learn from that tragic experience. Dr. Mahathir lamented the fact that, despite the end of the cold war, the threat posed by nuclear weapons was more acute and entrenched than ever before and that the capability of those weapons had advanced scientifically by leaps and bounds, dwarfing the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Dr. Mahathir expressed his concern that the threat of nuclear weapons had never been greater than now with the emergence of terrorism and the terrorist acts carried out with weapons of mass destruction would inflict far greater devastation and loss of lives. There was therefore an urgent need for the world community to accelerate the process of nuclear disarmament. He stressed that we must continue to be vigilant to the dangers of nuclear war and give our continued support to the global disarmament campaign, of which the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs provided the moral force.

Besides attendance at the World Conference, the delegates also took part in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony on 6 August 2002 and the Nagasaki Peace Ceremony on 9 August 2002, in remembrance of the victims of the atomic bombs which were dropped on the two cities 57 years ago. Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and the mayors of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as survivors and families of the victims, attended these ceremonies. Peace declarations from the two cities were read out by the mayors during the respective ceremonies.

I must confess that my visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki left a stark and lasting impression on me as to the devastating effects of nuclear war. If before I had only read about the nuclear tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the visit provided me with the opportunity to see the effects of nuclear bombs with my own eyes. And seeing is believing! My visit to the atomic bomb museums in Hiroshima and Nagasaki was an emotional and moving experience as I was able to witness the devastating effects of atomic bombs. The damage caused by these atomic bombs, which are as nothing by comparison with the even more sophisticated and more powerful nuclear weapons of today, was horrendous, to say the least. The scenes that I witnessed in the two museums were like pictures out of a horror movie: black, burned bodies; charred buildings; a city completely obliterated; pieces of skin dripping like plastic from the ghostly-looking figures of men, women and children scurrying desperately to look for water to quench an unbearable thirst, only to find the water equally polluted by a viscous substance that rendered the water unfit for consumption; pictures of thousands of dead bodies. The blast from the atomic bomb in Hiroshima was so strong that the shadow of a man sitting on some stone steps was forever imprinted on the stone slabs and exhibited in the museum for all to see. Radiation from the atomic bombs lingered on for years to sow its effects on the health of the victims who survived. The “Hibakushas”, as the survivors of the 1945 atomic bombings came to be known in Japan, live on to tell the tragic tale of the mornings of 6 August and 9 August 1945, when atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, at precisely 8.15 a.m. and 11.02 a.m., respectively.

What I saw in the museums in Hiroshima and Nagasaki must never be allowed to happen again. As I stressed in my speeches to the World Conference, nuclear weapons are not weapons of deterrence, they are rather weapons of human annihilation. The nuclear-weapon States must

(Ms. Rajmah, Malaysia)

find other means of achieving global security, not through the threat of nuclear weapons, since the possibility of resorting to their use is not remote at all. Could we allow another Hiroshima to happen again? The answer by any peace-loving person is definitely a resounding “No!”

Based on my personal experience, I feel that it is important for all the Conference on Disarmament ambassadors to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki to see and feel for themselves the horrific consequences of nuclear bombs, so that we can be further motivated to make progress in our work here in the Conference on Disarmament. Nuclear disarmament must remain our top priority. Seeing Hiroshima and Nagasaki will provide us ambassadors with a sense of perspective of our work and our objectives. Talking to the Hibakushas will provide us with a living account of the effects and fall-out of a nuclear bomb explosion and the effects of radiation on the human body. I was therefore pleased and grateful that, during my meeting with the Mayor of Nagasaki, Mr. Iccho Itoh, on 8 August 2002, Mayor Itoh extended an invitation to the Conference on Disarmament ambassadors to come to Nagasaki and hold a meeting of the Conference on Disarmament in that city. Both the representative of Egypt, Mr. Mahmoud Mubarak, and I thanked the Mayor for his kind invitation but we also volunteered the opinion that the Mayor should communicate his invitation to the ambassadors through the Government of Japan as well. I am sure that our distinguished colleague, the Ambassador of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament, Dr. Inoguchi Kuniko, will be happy to pursue this matter further with both her Government and the Mayor of Nagasaki. We must try to translate the kind invitation of the Mayor of Nagasaki into reality.

Given the current impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, where we have not been able to agree on a programme of work for the last four years, a visit to the two cities which have suffered from the devastating effects of weapons of mass destruction may invigorate us to move towards finding a way forward. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are human tragedies which must never be allowed to happen again. As ambassadors to the Conference on Disarmament - the only multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, which therefore has the moral, legal and political responsibility to work towards disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament - it is our duty to ensure that there will never be any more Hiroshimas, never any more Nagasakis and never any more Hibakushas. Let us all go to Hiroshima and Nagasaki to see, and feel, the horror of nuclear bombs and, from there, find the inspiration to give greater meaning to our efforts in the Conference on Disarmament, where substantive progress has eluded us for the last few years. Substantive progress in nuclear disarmament is even more crucial now after the events of 11 September, when the existing arsenals of nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of terrorists and cause untold damage and suffering.

I would like to wish the Conference on Disarmament every success and to thank you for your attention.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Malaysia for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. We appreciate her information on the generous invitation extended by Mayor Itoh to the ambassadors.

(The President)

We are now going to hear the reports presented by the special coordinators. I give the floor first to Ambassador Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka, the special coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, who will report on his consultations.

Mr. KARIYAWASAM (Sri Lanka): Mr. President, it is indeed a pleasure to take the floor under your stewardship of the Conference on Disarmament. May I take this opportunity to congratulate you and your country on your assumption of this important responsibility. I assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation in all your endeavours at this difficult juncture for the Conference. I also wish to express my full appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Volker Heinsberg, for his professional efforts as the President of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the 896th meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, I was appointed special coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament, to follow up on work already undertaken on this subject during the previous year. I thank my group, the Group of 21, as well as all other members of this Conference, for their confidence demonstrated once again by reappointing me to this onerous task and for the continued cooperation that I received during my tenure.

In my efforts to fulfil my mandate, I employed several methods of consultation that would enable me to reach out to all delegations, without exception. Having indicated in writing to all delegations a number of possible areas for discussion, I conducted several rounds of open-ended informal consultations. In addition, several bilateral discussions were conducted with interested delegations. In this connection, I wish to express my appreciation for the interest shown by many members of this Conference in this issue by attending open-ended consultations and contributing to them substantively and meaningfully. In addition to oral presentations, some delegations also communicated their views in writing, both formally and informally.

I believe, as I said in my statement at the conclusion of last year's session of the Conference, that the decision to appoint a special coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament is primarily a manifestation of the desire of the members of the Conference to explore measures for further improvement of the methods of its functioning.

Nevertheless, it was made clear by many that our work on procedure should not be construed as a substitute for work on substance, nor divert our attention from the continuation of efforts to find common ground to agree on the most important substantive issues. The general view was that the inability of this Conference to conduct substantive work was not a procedural impasse, but a substantive political issue. Nevertheless, many believed that there was room to be innovative with a view to streamlining some procedural aspects of our work so that such reform could at least be useful and, it was hoped, engender fully fledged substantive negotiations of this Conference, sooner rather than later. It was also felt that it would be a useful exercise to prepare and evolve a better procedural framework for our work, pending agreement to conduct substantive negotiations.

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As we proceeded with our consultations, there was an air of expectation that this time around there might be a possibility of agreeing on at least a few procedural mechanisms that would enhance the effective functioning, if not the image, of the Conference. As consultations became more focused, however, devil crept into detail, and it became evident that this year too reaching consensus on any specific measures for reforming the procedures of the Conference would elude us. This conclusion perhaps gives credence to the view that the procedural status quo of the Conference on Disarmament does not require reform as yet, and that it is not the reason why the Conference has tied itself with innumerable knots into a deadlock.

During consultations, many issues were highlighted by delegations: the application of the rule of consensus; the adoption of the agenda and the programme of work; the expansion of the Conference; the current system of groupings; the optimal use of the mechanisms provided for in the rules of procedure, in particular on CD/1036; the establishment of a new category of subsidiary bodies for substantive discussions on agenda items; the continuation of the previously existing subsidiary bodies; wider and frequent use of informal open-ended consultations; structured and substantive discussions at the plenary on each agenda item; the automatic establishment of ad hoc committees on all agenda items; the appointment of "friends of the President"; participation by non-governmental organizations; the tenure of the presidency; whether to include in the annual report a summary of the main issues discussed at plenary meetings; the study of improved and effective functioning by a small group; the role of the secretariat; the establishment of a bureau for the Conference; and the re-examination of the rules of procedure.

Of these issues of interest to delegations, several, in my opinion, enjoyed general agreement for reform, but not consensus.

For the preponderant majority of delegations, it was an anomalous situation that this Conference still remained practically closed to non-governmental organizations at a time when civil society groups are recognized as major participants and contributors in almost all other areas of human collective effort, in particular, in other United Nations forums. In this context, there was substantial support for several alternative methods that could enhance the participation of non-governmental organizations. Some favoured convening a special meeting or meetings of the plenary of the Conference for non-governmental organizations to attend, express their views and make contributions to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Such a modality, it was argued, was in line with the practice followed at many intergovernmental conferences, such as the NPT review conferences. It was also argued that States could benefit from contributions by the non-governmental organizations which were now considered as well-informed stakeholders in many disarmament endeavours. The exclusion of non-governmental organizations from the activities of the Conference, according to many, was therefore not only anachronistic but also denied the Conference of the perspective of civil society and its valuable expertise.

It was generally recognized that the greater involvement of non-governmental organizations in the Conference on Disarmament might not readily contribute to overcoming the current substantive deadlock and that this should not in fact be the reason for their enhanced

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participation. There was also a common understanding that, in view of the nature of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral intergovernmental negotiating forum on disarmament, the presence of non-governmental organizations would not be appropriate in ad hoc subsidiary bodies and at closed sessions.

There was a fundamentally different view, however, that participation in any and all activities of the Conference must remain limited to representatives of Governments. This view made it impossible to reach consensus on any measure that would enhance the participation of non-governmental organizations beyond that prescribed in the current rules of procedure of the Conference.

Nevertheless, in the light of the apparent overwhelming desire of many delegations in the Conference on Disarmament to provide an enhanced role for non-governmental organizations, it is my belief that the secretariat, as well as individual delegations, will take all possible measures within the current regulations of the Conference on Disarmament to offer a maximum level of facilities to interested organizations to make their presence felt at the Conference.

Many delegations made valuable contributions on the need for the optimal use of mechanisms already available under the agreed procedures of the Conference on Disarmament. In this regard, there were specific proposals that received greater attention. The content of CD/1036, which was adopted in August 1990, and in particular its paragraph 5 (d), was considered with a view to making this paragraph less ambiguous. Although some did not see any ambiguity in the paragraph, they were prepared to consider a proposal to reformulate it. Here a general view emerged that, in the event of an absence of consensus on the establishment of any particular subsidiary body or its mandate, the incumbent president might appoint a special coordinator on that subject to assist in carrying out informal consultations with a view to reaching consensus. Moreover, if no agreement could be reached to establish a subsidiary body on a particular subject, the incumbent president might convene informal open-ended discussions on that subject, pending agreement on a mandate to establish a subsidiary body. Consensus on this view could not be achieved, however, since some strongly believed that these ideas were not workable.

Nevertheless, there was widespread support for the wider and more frequent use of informal and open-ended consultations on specific issues in general. It is my hope that your presidency and future presidents will take this general agreement of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament into consideration in conducting its work. Indeed, I reckon that your predecessor, Ambassador Volker Heinsberg, has already set the ball rolling in this regard. According to many delegations, these consultations - both formal and informal - should be encouraged to examine and debate issues contained in the agenda or the programme of work. Such action was viewed as conveying a message to the public that the Conference on Disarmament, though not yet able to adopt a programme of work, was active and maximizing the use of its resources. Informal and open-ended consultations were also viewed by some delegations as a flexible method that could provide an opportunity for dealing with issues in a substantive manner, pending agreement on the establishment of subsidiary bodies to commence negotiations.

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There was also a specific view that the Conference's rules of procedure provided sufficient flexibility to establish ad hoc committees on relevant agenda items with a simple mandate, rather than looking for new structures such as informal plenaries. It was argued that such ad hoc committees could then determine how to structure their work.

While there was no strong objection to the idea of appointing "friends of the President", some were of the view that the possible nomination of special coordinators by proactively using the provisions of paragraph 5 (d) of CD/1036 could address this requirement. The need to ensure geographical balance in appointing such "friends" was also emphasized, however.

There are several other key issues, which may require further substantial mutual accommodation for the Conference on Disarmament to reach even a general level of agreement.

First and foremost, there were, once again, several passionate and well-reasoned positions expressed critical of the current rule of consensus, which is unanimity. It was asserted that excessive and extensive use of the rule of consensus on every issue represents an element of unnecessary rigidity and does not facilitate the work of the Conference. In this view, while consensus is required for substantive issues, decisions concerning procedural matters could be approved on the basis of majority rule principle or a less stringent form of consensus. Some were of the view, however, that circumventing the current consensus rule would not be a solution to deeper causes of differences on substance. At the same time, some referred to the linkage between substance and procedure. In their view these linkages blurred the lines between procedure and substance, and could make a mockery of any efforts to dilute the rule of consensus for procedural matters. It seemed that an issue of procedure for one was often an issue of substance for another. It is therefore clear that the Conference on Disarmament is not yet ready to accept any change of or derogation from the rule of consensus as applicable now.

On the issue of the adoption of the agenda and the programme of work, some were of the view that both should be adopted at the beginning of each year on a rolling basis, with a year-to-year automatic renewal. There was another view that, if a programme of work were not adopted, the work of the Conference on Disarmament should continue on the basis of the last adopted programme of work. Both these ideas were not generally acceptable, however.

The efficacy of the present system of grouping also came under scrutiny. Some expressed the view that a greater degree of flexibility with regard to the system of grouping could contribute positively to the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament. Others even went further to suggest that the current group system in the Conference is in need of an overhaul. But such whole-scale overhaul, they agreed, required wider reform over and above the Conference on Disarmament, encompassing the entire United Nations family. It was also queried whether the Conference on Disarmament should adopt a geographical grouping system similar to that of certain other United Nations bodies. Moreover, some would prefer the Conference on Disarmament to set up an established format

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whereby the president would conduct consultations with delegations on a one-to-one basis, coupled with plurilateral consultations, including with like-minded groups. In general, many were of the view that the current strict channelling of information through group coordinators to the president and vice versa led to the unnecessary suffocation of proposals, thereby denying the flexibility required to further explore alternate possibilities expeditiously.

For many, the establishment of new categories of subsidiary bodies did not seem appropriate either for the purposes of overcoming the current impasse in the Conference or for enhancing its effective functioning.

On the issue as to whether there could be a continuation of the work of previously existing subsidiary bodies, many believed that, if the consideration of a subject for which a mandate had been approved had not reached a conclusion at the end of a session, that mandate could be renewed automatically on a rolling basis for the following year, unless explicit consensus for such a measure was lacking. Others supported the automatic establishment of ad hoc committees on all agenda items, even prior to the adoption of a programme of work. But none of these proposals commanded even general agreement.

The present four-week term for each presidency, in the view of some, is short and limiting. For them, ideally, one president should preside over each part of the Conference on Disarmament, meaning that it has only three presidents a year. As second best, each presidency should at least be allowed a two-month term. Some expected the Conference to explore the possibility of establishing a “troika” of current, past and future presidencies, to facilitate the conduct of all work. The idea of establishing a bureau of the Conference did not find much support either. Nevertheless, there was a view that the establishment of a bureau could be considered if there were agreement on the establishment of new geographical groups to replace the present group system.

Finally, there was interest in completely re-examining the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament, with a view to simplifying those rules that appear cumbersome.

There is one exception to this not so encouraging outcome of my work. All seem to agree on the need to establish a dedicated web site for the Conference on Disarmament, in such a manner that it will be a useful tool for members of the Conference as well as to the general public and non-governmental organizations. This is only a constructive proposal for consideration by the United Nations Secretariat, however, and, in my view, will by no means contribute towards reform of our work methods. In this regard, I would recommend that the Conference take action by reflecting this proposal in its report, as appropriate, requesting the Secretary-General of the United Nations to take measures to set up a web site for the Conference on Disarmament, initially in English. This web site could contain, in the first instance, all public documents of the Conference on Disarmament, should be accessible to all Member States of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and the public and should be regularly updated. The Secretariat of the United Nations might in due course consider also including the working documents of the Conference in this web site for restricted access.

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As I reflect on my work, the tenure of which spanned almost four sessions of the Conference commencing with the last session in 2001, I observe that, notwithstanding the enthusiasm of some delegations to reform the Conference's procedures, including in very sensitive areas such as the method of decision-making and the establishment of subsidiary bodies, there is sufficient reluctance on the part of some who would wish to maintain the status quo, which in their view befits a negotiating forum of this nature and stature. In the short term, in my reckoning, the substantial or even limited reform of procedures of the Conference on Disarmament may not be a possibility. The reform of its procedures is not seen as a panacea for the substantive ills of the Conference on Disarmament. It seems that procedural innovations are neither feasible nor welcome as a means of effectively addressing security issues connected with strategic balance and the larger security interests of States or groups of States. In my view, therefore, we may wait a while before, once again, attempting a reform of the Conference's procedures.

In conclusion, let me take this opportunity to express my profound appreciation to all the presidents of the Conference with whom I have had the pleasure to work on my mandate this year. In this regard, I recall with gratitude the support provided by Ambassador Fisseha Yimer of Ethiopia, Ambassador Markku Reimaa of Finland, Ambassador Hubert de La Fortelle of France and Ambassador Volker Heinsberg of Germany. The encouragement offered by Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General, and the assistance of Mr. Jerzy Zaleski, Political Affairs Officer of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, as well as the understanding of the interpreters during my tenure as special coordinator were most valuable and I appreciate their support.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Kariyawasam for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

May I take it that the Conference wishes to take note of the report of the special coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I now give the floor to Ambassador Chung of the Republic of Korea, the special coordinator on the review of the agenda of the Conference.

Mr. CHUNG (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I wish you every success in carrying out this important task to the smooth conclusion of this year's session of the Conference, and I assure you of my delegation's continued support and cooperation.

I have asked for the floor to present a report to the Conference on the consultations that I have undertaken as special coordinator on the review of the agenda. I take this opportunity to express my thanks to all members of the Conference on Disarmament for appointing me as

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special coordinator on this important subject and providing me with their full cooperation. Let me stress at the beginning that any observations or conclusions which this report contains are my own and are not binding on delegations. In other words, my report is rather a personal interpretation of a snapshot of the current situation on the review of the agenda and I ask delegations for their understanding if their views are not properly reflected in the report.

Following the adoption of decision CD/1667 in February 2002, I conducted bilateral or small-group consultations and contacts with most delegations, and received written replies from many delegations to the questionnaire which I circulated on 5 April. In addition, I held a round of informal open-ended consultations on 6 June, at which delegations had the opportunity to express their positions.

I wish to make some general observations on my consultations. As previous special coordinators have done, I have focused on two aspects of the question of the agenda: the role and function of the agenda and its reform. As a consequence, my report could have some views in common with previous ones, since I have built upon contributions which were made by my predecessors. A detailed summary of the findings of my work is being circulated together with my statement and I would like to use this opportunity to highlight some major observations.

With respect to the role and function of the agenda, my observation is that, in general, the positions of most delegations remain unchanged compared with those of last year. Overall, most delegations recognized the continuing significance of the agenda itself as a framework for addressing various disarmament issues and the general guidance of the proceedings of the Conference. Some delegations are of the view that the Conference should continue its efforts to reflect appropriately the current changes in the international security situation in the agenda, so that the Conference's activities can maintain their relevance.

Other delegations, however, expressed the view that priority should be given to the adoption of the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament rather than to procedural issues such as the review of the agenda. Furthermore, there was a view that the review of the agenda might not significantly contribute to resolving the current stalemate in the Conference. This is not to say that the review is unimportant, rather, the general feeling is that our efforts should be concentrated on the adoption of the programme of work. In this regard, it should be noted that a few delegations felt that ambitious efforts to reform the agenda at this juncture might rather distract or complicate our efforts in the process of reaching a consensus on the programme of work.

With respect to the reform of the agenda, I could detect a slight shift from last year in the positions of some delegations towards retaining the agenda as it is. As a result, more delegations now wish to keep the current agenda. The heightened concern, in the aftermath of the 11 September terrorist attacks and the increased security tensions in certain regions, stemming from the threat of non-State actors gaining access to new types of weapons of mass destruction was cited as the rationale for those who had shifted their positions towards maintaining the agenda.

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In addition, there continue to be two different approaches to the question of how to reform the agenda, should the Conference agree to do so. The first is to change the general structure of the agenda with a view to making it more comprehensive so as to create greater flexibility, and the second is to take a more gradual and evolutionary approach to the restructuring of the agenda, since new controversy might be caused regarding the wording of general titles and the whole structure made very rigid.

From my consultations, there does not seem to be one single item, currently on the agenda or recently proposed, which delegations could agree to change by consensus, either in substance or in its wording. I therefore believe at this stage that any change in the existing items of the agenda would not be realistic, even with additional consultations.

I also had the impression that many delegations are not very interested in reviewing the agenda until the Conference resumes its substantive work and shows the necessary political will to move forward.

I would like to report to the Conference, however, that it was the general feeling that we should continue the consultations on the review of the agenda, together with other procedural issues, in parallel with our efforts to adopt the work programme.

I hope that the past reports that have been submitted since 1993 and other materials, including a background paper with the chronological analysis of the agenda which I circulated on 5 April, can be used as reference materials for future work on the review of the agenda. This concludes the brief report on the outcome of my consultations as the special coordinator on this subject.

Finally, I would like to thank all delegations for their contribution to our discussions and for their constructive and cooperative spirit. It has been a privilege and pleasure for me to serve as the special coordinator. I also extend my gratitude to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jerzy Zaleski and the other secretariat staff for their support and assistance.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Chung for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

May I take it that the Conference has taken note of the report of the special coordinator on the review of the agenda of the Conference?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I now give the floor to Ambassador Tzantchev of Bulgaria, the special coordinator on the expansion of the membership of the Conference.

Mr. TZANTCHEV (Bulgaria): Mr. President, allow me first to extend my warmest congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to wish you every success in your work. Let me assure you that, in carrying out your service, you can count on my delegation's continued cooperation and full support. I would also like to extend our gratitude to your predecessors - Ambassador Volker Heinsberg of Germany, Ambassador Hubert de La Fortelle of France, Ambassador Markku Reimaa of Finland, Ambassador Fisseha Yimer of Ethiopia and Mr. Mohamed Tawfik of Egypt - for the valuable endeavour that they have made to help overcome the difficulties faced by this august body.

I am delivering my statement today in my capacity as special coordinator on the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament, thus discharging the mandate contained in decision CD/1667, dated 14 February 2002, adopted in accordance with paragraph 41 of the 2001 annual report of the Conference (CD/1653). I think it is also worth recalling that, under rule 2 of its rules of procedure, the membership of the Conference on Disarmament is to be reviewed at regular intervals.

As you will remember, earlier this year I suggested that in addressing the issue under consideration we should continue the very pragmatic approach initiated last year by my predecessors, rather than engaging anew in a scientific study of the problem of enlargement of the Conference. The purpose of adopting such an approach was clear - we needed more clarity on two basic questions, namely:

- First, as the Conference on Disarmament takes its decisions by consensus and any change in its membership is possible only if it meets our unanimous support, whether its member States were ready to proceed with such an expansion; and
- Second, under what possible conditions the member States would be prepared to undertake such action and which of the envisaged options for action (in particular - limited expansion, expansion by all the countries which have applied for membership, qualified universality) they would be willing to adopt.

You will also recall, however, that the intention was not to limit our activities only to the consideration of the pros and cons of the possible options for expansion. On the contrary, I had the feeling that we should go beyond our past and very rich experience and look for some fresh ideas and new proposals that might contribute to the evolution of the issue and facilitate its appropriate solution.

In discharging my responsibilities, I organized informal consultations on 16 May 2002. I was very pleased by the active involvement of a considerable number of delegations in these consultations - in fact, 25 delegations expressed their views during our informals, thus making possible an effective evaluation of the available options for action. I also expressed my willingness and readiness to consult bilaterally with all the interested member States of the

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Conference. I consider the result of my bilateral consultations as being very helpful as they have provided me with an additional awareness, gained at first hand, of the most sensitive issues and the areas in which they subsist.

Today, in reporting on the results of my activities, I may confirm what my predecessors then drew as a preliminary evaluation of the situation, namely, that the overwhelming majority in the Conference on Disarmament is in favour of the principle of expansion of its membership. In fact, I have noticed a strong determination among many delegations to democratize the Conference by way of the universalization of its membership, or at least, by ensuring that it adequately represents its universal ambitions. Undoubtedly, international peace and security and disarmament are core concerns of the entire international community and most of the delegations felt it imperative that the Conference should become truly representative if we were really sincere in our willingness to endow this body with the authority to exercise the leadership which was its due in disarmament affairs and to make it an effective negotiating structure, rather than pave the way for future disarmament negotiations in ad hoc forums outside the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

It should be stressed, however, that, even though there is a greater convergence of views in their support, member States are still not unanimous on the modalities of such expansion. While many favour an unconditional and non-discriminatory enlargement of the Conference, based mainly on the principles and the criteria of the United Nations, several delegations continued to insist that some preconditions should be taken into account, in particular the principle of the geographical or geo-strategic balance, the date of application or an expressed interest in joining this forum and actively participating in its activities, to quote just a few. Along the same lines, some delegations questioned the exact timing of a possible expansion.

I do not intend to enter into all the details of the different approaches and views expressed during my multilateral and bilateral consultations or into an evaluation of the feasibility of the possible options for action, as they coincide to a great extent with the findings reported by the respective special coordinator last year and may be found in his interim report. Notwithstanding the support of the member States for the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament, however, the reply to the basic, more general question whether the member States are ready to proceed with such an expansion, the answer is still "no". The issue of increasing the membership of the Conference on Disarmament remains a sensitive one for those member States, which are still not fully persuaded that we should proceed now with a new expansion of the Conference before it has started work.

Against this background, I would sum up my observations as follows:

- First, it is obvious that an overwhelming majority of the member States supports an expansion of the membership of the Conference;

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- Second, even if the prevailing feeling is in favour of the acceptance of new member States, the exact framework, timing and all the modalities of a possible expansion are still to be negotiated and determined. As a general rule all delegations have shown flexibility and have expressed their readiness to consult further on the issue in an attempt to find a mutually acceptable solution;
- Third, there is still no consensus among the member States on the necessity to expand the membership of the Conference at this stage; and
- Fourth, under the rules of procedure the membership of the Conference on Disarmament is to be reviewed at regular intervals. This rule is not challenged by anyone. In order to give more freedom and flexibility to our colleagues - the five ambassadors, former presidents of the Conference - in their initiative, however, I will refrain from formally recommending the continuation of this important exercise through the reappointment at the beginning of the 2003 session of the Conference of a special coordinator on the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to express once again my appreciation and gratitude for the cooperation, understanding and valuable support I have received from all member States of the Conference in discharging my duties. My gratitude goes also to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, and to his deputy, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, as well as to Mr. Jerzy Zaleski and to the other members of the secretariat, who provided me with their excellent professional assistance in my work as special coordinator.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Tzantchev for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

May I take it that the Conference has taken note of the report of the special coordinator on the expansion of the membership of the Conference?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I now have two more speakers on my list. First, I would kindly request Ambassador Inoguchi of Japan to take the floor.

Ms. INOUCHI (Japan): At the outset, allow me to express my warmest congratulations, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency during the concluding segment of this year's annual session of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in our common effort to do something decisive to break the current stalemate.

(Ms. Inoguchi, Japan)

The Conference has just heard from the distinguished Ambassador of Malaysia that the ambassadors of the Conference have been invited by the Mayor of Nagasaki to visit and hold their meetings in his city. I would like to express my deep appreciation to the distinguished Ambassador of Malaysia, Dr. Rajmah Hussain, for sharing this information within the Conference today and for the most moving account of her visit to the cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima and their museums.

Nagasaki, like Hiroshima, is a city that experienced devastation from a nuclear bomb. The strong desire of the people of Japan, including the citizens of both cities, that such tragic experiences should never be repeated by the generations to come in any part of the world is well-known. Against this background, the Government of Japan has been making its utmost efforts to promote nuclear disarmament, with the aim of achieving a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons. It is the duty of my Government to explore ways of implementing the will of the people of Japan.

In the context of the Conference on Disarmament in particular, my country accords the highest priority to the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and has been trying to contribute to common efforts to achieve a breakthrough that will bring such negotiations into existence. Given that the current impasse in the Conference reflects existing differences among some member States, the invitation by the Mayor of Nagasaki should certainly be given the serious attention of my Government.

Most importantly, the frustrations of the citizens of Nagasaki about the lack of progress here in the Conference on Disarmament are real and mounting with each day that passes without any substantive work being done. I would like to ask all delegations to the Conference to share the fervent desire of those citizens to see progress achieved in the field of disarmament. This important body must make further efforts to achieve such tangible progress.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Inoguchi for her statement confirming the kind invitation to Nagasaki extended by Mayor Itoh and I also thank you for your kind words addressed to the Chair.

The last speaker on my list is Mr. Knut Langeland of Norway.

Mr. LANGE LAND (Norway): First, Mr. President, I would like to join other speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of this Conference. Let me assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

My delegation takes the floor in its capacity as one of the co-chairs of the Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction - the Mine Ban Convention. The other co-chair is Thailand.

(Mr. Langeland, Norway)

The Fourth Meeting of the States Parties of the Mine Ban Convention will take place in Geneva in the period from 16 to 20 September 2002. This Convention was negotiated in Oslo some five years ago and entered into force almost three and a half years ago. Over these years the Convention has proved its high relevance in addressing an urgent humanitarian challenge and has been ratified by 125 countries.

It has been the practice in previous years for the co-chairs of the Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention to invite all States parties, along with interested organizations and States not parties to the Convention, to an informal information meeting on matters pertaining to the Fourth Meeting. This informal meeting will take place on Monday, 26 August, at 3 p.m. in the Palais des Nations, Room XII.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Mr. Langeland for his statement on the Mine Ban Convention and also for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

This concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? If that is not the case, then we can move to the next agenda item, which concerns the timetable and the meetings in the weeks to come.

With regard to the timetable of meetings for next week, I would like to recall that, in accordance with paragraph 4 of the decision on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament, contained in document CD/1036, next week the Conference shall hold two plenary meetings.

At this stage, there are no speakers for next week. Therefore, if I hear no views to the contrary, I propose that the Conference hold only one plenary meeting next week, on Thursday.

As I see no comments, I take it that the proposal has been accepted.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: As you are aware, we have less than four weeks until the end of the 2002 session, part of which will be devoted to the consideration of the annual report presented to the General Assembly. Rule 44 of the Conference's rules of procedure provides that the draft annual report shall be made available to all members of the Conference at least two weeks before the scheduled date of its adoption. With the assistance of the secretariat, I am currently preparing the draft report, which, in accordance with rule 45 of the rules of procedure, will be factual. The draft report will be available in all official languages in delegations' pigeon-holes on Wednesday, 28 August 2002, in the morning. It is my intention to conduct the first reading of the draft report at an informal meeting following the plenary on Thursday, 29 August 2002.

(The President)

This concludes our business for today, but before closing, I have one communication to bring to your attention, which I have just received from the secretariat. I have been informed that the 2001 United Nations Disarmament Yearbook is now available. Since the secretariat has received only a limited number of copies of the Yearbook, only one copy per delegation will be provided. I would therefore kindly ask you to remain in your seats after the conclusion of the meeting so that the secretariat can distribute a copy of the Yearbook to each delegation.

May I also announce that the next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 29 August, at 10 a.m., and it will be followed by an informal plenary meeting devoted to the first reading of the draft report of the Conference.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.