

# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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## FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 5 June 2003, at 10.20 a.m.

President:

Mr. Yaakov LEVY

(Israel)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 929th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Today I have the following speakers on my list for the plenary meeting: France, the United States, Japan, Mexico and the Russian Federation. I would first like to give the floor to the Ambassador of France, Mr. Hubert de La Fortelle.

Mr. de La FORTELLE (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to extend to you my best wishes for the success of your presidency. It was your wish that I take the floor today to present to the Conference on Disarmament the main conclusions on security issues reached at the recent G-8 summit, held in Evian from 1 to 3 June, under the presidency of France. I am very happy to do so, and shall confine my brief statement to the results of the G-8 which are of more direct relevance to the Conference on Disarmament. Before doing so, however, I would like to express my country's utmost gratitude to the Swiss authorities, with whom we worked in close cooperation, for the sound organization of this summit.

International security lies at the heart of the concerns of States and as such it represents an increasingly important part of the work of the G-8. Particular importance attaches, in this context, to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in several countries, and to the negative effect on international security of such proliferation and the need to prevent it effectively.

The Chair's summary notes the progress achieved in the worldwide campaign against terrorism and at the same time expresses its concern about the threats still posed by terrorist networks and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in several countries.

The G-8 summit in Evian endorsed five texts designed to improve international security. Three of these build on earlier documents adopted last year at Kananaskis on such matters as the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction and the principles aimed at preventing terrorists and those harbouring them from procuring weapons of mass destruction and associated materials. In addition to these, there are two new texts this year, which deal with the security of radioactive sources.

Turning first to the Global G-8 Partnership launched last year in Kananaskis, we may note that significant progress has been made, including in the pledging of substantial contributions towards the target of 20 billion dollars over 10 years. An annual implementation report was submitted at the Evian summit and a plan of action for the future was outlined, which can be broken down into six goals, namely: universal adoption of the non-proliferation principles; raising financial contributions; progress in specific projects; application of guidelines; expansion of the partnership; and awareness-raising. The third document was a political declaration adopted by all participants at the summit, which addressed the issue of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and which, among other matters, made reference in the strongest of terms to North Korea and Iran.

(Mr. de La Fortelle, France)

Welcoming the success of the international conference on the security of radioactive sources, held in Vienna from 11 to 13 May 2003, the G-8 summit agreed that the security arrangements relating to these materials should be improved. For that purpose a political statement was adopted on the issue. Its aims are, first of all, to identify elements of the IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources which are most likely to prevent terrorists from gaining access to high-risk radioactive sources; second, to develop recommendations on how those elements can be applied at the national level; third, to work towards agreement on those recommendations by the next summit meeting in 2004; fourth, to encourage all countries to strengthen controls on radioactive sources and to observe the Code of Conduct when its revised text has been completed and adopted, a process which is currently under way; fifth, to enhance cooperation on locating, recovering and securing high-risk radioactive sources; sixth, to support and advance the IAEA programmes in this area, including through the provision of additional resources to the Nuclear Security Fund; seventh, in conjunction with IAEA, to convene an international conference in 2005, in France, on the problem of radioactive sources; and, finally, to report to the G-8 at its next summit in 2004 on the implementation of the plan of action. With regard to security of radioactive sources, the G-8 also adopted a plan of action on the provision of support for the work of IAEA, support for the most vulnerable States, mechanisms for the control of radioactive sources, and the holding of an international conference in France in 2005 on radioactive sources.

In Evian we also adopted a plan of action intended to strengthen capacities for fighting terrorism and, to this end, agreed to create a counter-terrorism action group. This group will be entrusted with supporting the Counter-Terrorism Committee set up under the United Nations General Assembly and its membership will also be open to countries other than those of the G-8. I would not be giving a full account and my colleague from Japan would not forgive me - although she will also be talking to us shortly - if I omitted to inform you that, as stated in the Chair's summary, the G-8 welcomed the forthcoming meeting of States on the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, to be held at the United Nations in July 2003.

Finally, under the plan of action for Africa the G-8 committed itself to closer cooperation in the areas of mine clearance, small arms and light weapons and, more broadly, human security.

The documents which I have briefly introduced can be consulted on the Internet site of the French Mission. I would be grateful to the secretariat if it would distribute these texts as official documents of the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Ambassador, for a most timely and concise report on a major event which took place just a few days ago. I would also thank you for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

I would now like to call upon Mr. Sherwood McGinnis, Chargé d'affaires of the United States.

Mr. McGINNIS (United States of America): Mr. President, on behalf of the United States delegation, I wish to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of our Conference. Our delegation has confidence in your ability and wisdom in guiding the work of this body, and we look forward to supporting your efforts in every way possible.

Our delegation would like to highlight very briefly an event held over the past weekend that represents a historic step towards a safer and more secure world. On 1 June in Saint Petersburg in the Russian Federation, President Bush and President Putin exchanged instruments of ratification for the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions, known as the Moscow Treaty. The Treaty entered into force that same day. This joint action demonstrates anew, in the most concrete fashion possible, the continuing dedication of the United States and the Russian Federation to disarmament.

The Moscow Treaty provides for reductions of about two thirds in the strategic nuclear-warhead arsenals of our two countries, bringing them to the lowest level in decades. The Treaty demonstrates the resolve of our two countries to meet their commitments under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and the dramatic cuts that the Moscow Treaty entails represent a palpable, on-the-ground contribution to the ultimate goals of the NPT.

Just as important, the Treaty serves as another indication of the rapidly evolving relationship between the United States and Russia, a development which in itself has altered dramatically the international security environment. As President Bush noted in announcing the exchange of ratification instruments, the Moscow Treaty was founded on mutual respect and a common commitment to a more secure world. The President went on to highlight United States-Russian cooperation and joint determination to fight terrorism and to halt the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

As Ambassador de La Fortelle has elaborated in detail, at the Evian summit, G-8 leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to the Chemical Weapons Convention and to the Biological Weapons Convention. The G-8 leaders called these treaties “the essential instruments to maintain international peace and security and cornerstones of non-proliferation and disarmament”.

We believe that the full membership of the Conference on Disarmament will join us in welcoming the important contribution to the cause of nuclear disarmament and the enhancement of international security that these developments represent.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States for his most pertinent presentation on a subject of great importance and for the kind words and the confidence that he has expressed in the Chair.

It now gives me pleasure to call upon the Ambassador of Japan, Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi.

Ms. INOBUCHI (Japan): Allow me at the outset, Mr. President, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency. Clearly, the Conference has been going through an extremely difficult period, having now not had a programme of work for more than four consecutive years. I do not believe that this is the time for us to start blaming one another for the failure, but rather for us to reflect deeply on possible solutions to the current stalemate. I assure you of our full support for any efforts you are able to make to lead us in the right direction. I hope that the efforts made by you and the subsequent Italian president will lead to more favourable conditions for the Conference when I assume the presidency in August.

As Ambassador de La Fortelle has mentioned, the G-8 summit in Evian, chaired by President Jacques Chirac of France, ended on Tuesday. The Chair's summary, as Ambassador de La Fortelle kindly mentioned, contained the phrase "we welcomed the upcoming meeting of States on the illicit traffic in small arms to be held at the United Nations in New York in July 2003". A similar reference was also made in the summary of the G-8 Foreign Ministers' meeting held in Paris on 22 and 23 May. The meeting on small arms referred to in both summaries is the first biennial meeting of States to consider national, regional and global implementation of the programme of action that was adopted at the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Japan believes that this biennial meeting will offer an important opportunity for generating momentum in promoting the further implementation of the programme of action.

As chair-designate of the biennial meeting, I would like to call the attention of the Conference to this reference in the Chair's summary, which shows the steadfast commitment of G-8 member States to efforts to tackle this issue and the urgency and high priority which they attach to it. It also gives me great pleasure to see this reference made at the highest G-8 level, particularly since I have been encouraging all States to regard the issue as a priority in the field of disarmament. I reiterate my determination to ensure that the same high level of political commitment of Member States of the United Nations, including the G-8 countries, is reflected in the discussions held at this meeting.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to explain the informal preparatory work for the July meeting that I have done thus far in my capacity as chair-designate. Since last December I have conducted a number of consultations, bilateral, group and open-ended, both in Geneva and in New York. Through these consultations, procedural issues, such as the agenda, timetable and rules of procedure, have been discussed. It has also been suggested to me by member States that I should produce a factual summary of the meeting under my responsibility as chair. I have made the utmost efforts in this preparatory lead-up process, and I am confident that substantial common ground has been created on these points.

I also intend to devote a few sessions to discussions on themes mainly covered by chapter III of the programme of action, entitled "Implementation, international cooperation and assistance", and other parts of the programme of action. I am receiving positive responses to this proposal. Although the exact formula of the thematic debate is still under consideration, I hope to be able to share my ideas in this regard with States in due course.

(Ms. Inoguchi, Japan)

I have encouraged all States to submit their national reports on their implementation of the programme of action to the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs and, to my knowledge, the Department has to date received some 39 reports. I would also like to urge those who have not yet done so to submit their reports as early as possible, so that not only the Chair, but also all States can peruse them in advance of the meeting.

I am going to New York later this week - actually, right after this meeting - to have an informal meeting with my distinguished bureau member candidates, who are from Canada, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Peru, the Philippines, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia and Uganda. I look forward to a productive meeting in preparation for the July meeting.

I would also like to stress the important role that the mass media can play in enhancing public awareness of events in the conference room and on the field in connection with small arms. As chair-designate, I will therefore endeavour to alert members of the international press community to the forthcoming meeting and promote their understanding on the issue.

Last, but not least, I invite all States to send high-level representatives to the meeting, in accordance with the political importance attached to the global efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Ambassador, for your contribution, as always, to our work and discussions, as well as for your advance information regarding the biannual meeting to take place in New York and the state of consultations, and especially for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

It now gives me pleasure to call upon the Ambassador of Mexico, Ambassador Gustavo Albin.

Mr. ALBIN (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, as this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor during your presidency, may I congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and on the way in which you have conducted its business. At the same time, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation of the work done by your predecessors. May I assure you, Mr. President, of my delegation's support as you carry out your duties.

Today my delegation wishes to refer to the proposal made by your predecessor, Ambassador Mary Whelan of Ireland, regarding the participation of civil society in the work of this Conference. Mexico is convinced of the value that the participation of non-governmental organizations adds to our work. The work of many of these organizations in the area of disarmament is of very high quality. First of all, they are important actors in fostering the cause of disarmament. Their proposals usually include valuable and interesting concepts that contribute to our consideration of the challenges that we are facing and, at the same time, they put forward options for our work.

(Mr. Albin, Mexico)

Given all this, my delegation would like most respectfully to suggest that you continue holding consultations on the basis of the unofficial document submitted by Ambassador Whelan and the opinion of the United Nations Legal Counsel, stating that there is nothing in the Conference's rules of procedure to stop it from inviting non-governmental organizations to attend its meetings and from drawing up rules of procedure for their participation.

My delegation is convinced that, to safeguard the credibility of the Conference and to give effect to our shared commitment to achieving greater transparency, it is essential for this sole multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament to adapt to new times and, as so many other forums have done, to permit the wider and more substantial participation of civil society in its work.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador, for having taken up a very important issue which has been on our agenda for a while. Indeed, your proposal highlights the importance of continuity, which I, like my predecessors, am trying to maintain. Your suggestion has been noted and consultations will continue on the subject. Thank you also for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

It is my pleasure now to call upon Mr. Anton Vasiliev, the deputy head of delegation of the Russian Federation.

Mr. VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, first of all I would like to wish you success in your work and to assure you of the support and cooperation of the Russian delegation.

I have taken the floor today to touch upon two issues: first, the entry into force of the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty and, second, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the implementation of the Russian Federation's specific initiative on the advance notification of spacecraft launches.

On 1 June 2001, the Moscow Treaty entered into force. This demonstrates the commitment by Russia and the United States to a totally new kind of partnership, based on the principles of mutual security, cooperation, openness and predictability. This cooperation is also in the interests of strengthening strategic stability and international security. By committing ourselves to reduce our strategic nuclear potentials to one fourth of their previous levels, our countries have reinforced the continuity of the nuclear disarmament process.

The Treaty represents a further substantial contribution to the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, an undertaking of particular urgency in the worldwide fight against international terrorism, which, in pursuit of its criminal ambitions, also has designs on weapons of mass destruction.

(Mr. Vasiliev, Russian Federation)

We are now embarking on the implementation of the Treaty. A bilateral commission will be set up to oversee its implementation. The existing arrangements set up under the broad agenda of Russian-American cooperation in the field of strategic weapons will remain in operation.

Russia has always been in favour of keeping space peaceful and regards prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space as a matter of priority. We appeal for work to be commenced as soon as possible on this issue in the Conference on Disarmament, as part of a balanced programme of work.

Following the initiative of President Putin of the Russian Federation, an international conference was held in Moscow, in the spring of 2001, under the auspices of the United Nations, on preventing the militarization of outer space, timed to coincide with the fortieth anniversary of the first manned space flight. Its purpose was to accomplish the twin tasks of examining the issue of the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space and of exploring the prospects for the peaceful use of space. It worked under the slogan "Space without weapons - an arena for peaceful cooperation in the twenty-first century", and brought together about 1,300 participants from 105 countries.

In Russia's statement at the fifty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly, on 24 September 2001, it proposed that preparations begin on a comprehensive agreement on the non-deployment of weapons in outer space and the non-use of force or the threat of force in relation to space objects, and also outlined certain specific obligations which could serve as a basis for such an agreement. A new proposal was also put forward for a moratorium on the deployment of weapons in outer space until such time as an agreement is reached on that subject.

The Russian initiative put forward at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly in 2001 was reflected in the joint Russian-Chinese draft on possible elements for a future international legal agreement on the prevention of deployment of weapons in outer space, which was distributed in Geneva in June 2002, during the session of the Conference on Disarmament, as document CD/1679.

In the joint declaration by the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China adopted on 27 May 2003, the two countries pledged to continue the necessary work on these issues in cooperation with other States.

Russia firmly believes that an agreement of this kind would be conducive to the effective implementation of peaceful activities in outer space and the development of multilateral cooperation in accordance with international law and would help strengthen the legal norms to protect spacecraft already in space or those yet to be launched, on the basis of the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter on refraining from the threat or use of force in international relations.

(Mr. Vasiliev, Russian Federation)

In October 2002, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Igor Ivanov, put forward a new initiative designed to promote openness and strengthen confidence in the field of space activities, with a view to ensuring predictability in the use of outer space and preventing the deployment of weapons of any kind in outer space. The substance of this proposal is to affirm Russia's readiness to provide advance notification of forthcoming launches of spacecraft, and of their purpose and basic parameters.

As of today, now that the necessary preparations have been completed, work has started on the practical implementation of this idea. The relevant notifications by the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation and the Russian Aviation and Space Agency of forthcoming spacecraft launches are placed ahead of the launches on the official Internet web site of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The disarmament section of this site contains a special subsection on notifications of forthcoming spacecraft launches in the Russian Federation.

We appeal to the space Powers which have their own spacecraft launching facilities to join our initiative. By doing so they will help build confidence in the domain of space activities and set the stage for further joint efforts to strengthen the peaceful status of outer space. We shall shortly be preparing a letter containing the specific address and parameters of this site, which we intend to distribute through the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament for the information of delegations.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you very much for taking up a very pertinent and timely issue, and we look forward to the information about the Internet site, so that we can see for ourselves the details of this new initiative undertaken by the Russian Federation.

I would now like to ask if any other delegation wishes to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case. Today we have heard five presentations, in several languages, focusing on a variety of very relevant issues, and I thank the distinguished representatives who made the presentations.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting will be held next Thursday, 12 June 2003, at 10 a.m. in this conference room.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.