

Conference on Disarmament

18 February 2014

English

Final record of the one thousand three hundred and sixth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 18 February 2014, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Vinicio Mati(Italy)

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The President: I call to order the 1306th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Before we proceed, I would like to extend a warm welcome to Ambassador Walid Mahmoud Abdelnasser of Egypt, who has assumed the responsibilities as a representative of his Government to the Conference. On behalf of the Conference and on behalf of my own Government, I would like to take this opportunity to assure you, Mr. Ambassador, of our full cooperation and support in your new assignment.

As this is the first time that I am taking the floor as President of the Conference on Disarmament, allow me to make a statement in this capacity. I have the privilege and honour to assume today the presidency of this assembly. It is my intention to do my utmost and to make a positive contribution to the work of this body.

Let me at the very outset express my warmest congratulations to my predecessor, Ambassador Eviatar Manor, and his team for their strong engagement in finding possible ways to put the Conference on Disarmament in a position to overcome its current difficulties. I very much appreciated his pragmatic and realistic approach. He has been able to put the 2014 session of the Conference on the right track. It is my intention to go along the same path and to found my presidency on the principle of continuity among the session's six Presidents.

I would also like to thank the Acting Secretary-General for his active involvement and commitment to the Conference, and the staff of the secretariat for the invaluable support received so far.

Last but not least, my thanks also go to the other Presidents of the 2014 session for their cooperation and for their willingness to make the current session a welcome starting point on the road to the revitalization of the Conference.

This is not the first time that Italy has been called to bear the responsibility of leading the work of this body. My country has been member of the Conference since its foundation in its current format, and even before, when the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament was established in 1961.

The commitment to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation is an essential component of Italian foreign policy. Italy has long been active on various fronts that include the United Nations, the European Union and the Group of Eight, as well as in the context of major international conventions, coherently with its guiding principles, which are multilateralism as well as international cooperation.

In this framework, Italy is currently supporting the efforts of the international community in the Syrian Arab Republic, where one of the most important disarmament operations in the last 10 years is ongoing.

This operation testifies, *inter alia*, to the value and the effectiveness of one of the most important conventions negotiated within these walls, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and shows how important the work that we are called to carry out can be for humankind, and also the importance of the role that the Conference on Disarmament can play for a safer world.

In line with my country's traditional engagement in this field, I will spare no effort to revitalize and strengthen the credibility of this forum. In this respect I welcome and share the encouraging message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. His appeal to put the Conference back to work cannot go unheeded.

The risk that the Conference on Disarmament will be marginalized and overcome by events is real and unacceptable. In order to avoid this, a certain amount of flexibility is required. I am convinced that flexibility and the protection of national interests are not contradictory. On the contrary, they are mutually reinforcing, and both of them can be exercised at the same time.

I am quite confident that the time is ripe for the Conference to resume its activity, even if the conditions for the adoption of a programme of work with a negotiating mandate

are not there yet, as stated by the previous President and confirmed by my bilateral consultations.

Therefore, an innovative approach is required under the current situation.

From the discussions conducted until now and from my bilateral consultations, it seems to me that there is a general consensus on the so-called dual-track approach.

On the first track, namely the renewal of the mandate of the informal working group, I did not hear strong opposition but rather various constructive comments to the draft text that is on the table. The discussion is still open, and after further consultations I hope that we will be able to circulate a draft decision as soon as possible. In any event, I would like to thank Ambassador Gallegos Chiriboga of Ecuador and Ambassador Woolcott of Australia for their willingness to continue to serve as Co-Chairs.

On the second track — the schedule of activities — we, the six Presidents of this session of the Conference, are determined to work in a spirit of transparency, in close cooperation with the regional groups and with the full involvement of the whole membership. In the coming days we hope to deepen the consultations and have comments and reactions from the regional groups on the proposal circulated last week by the Presidents of the 2014 session. In this vein, I would like to reiterate our willingness to illustrate the Presidents' proposal to the regional groups.

As mentioned in my statement delivered at the first plenary meeting, it is of paramount importance for the Conference on Disarmament to resume its work and to meet the expectations that the international community had when it created this forum. We have a great responsibility. Let us show that we are worthy of the trust we have been granted.

Now I would like to turn to the list of speakers of today. The following delegations have requested to take the floor: Cuba, Venezuela, Egypt and Mexico. I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba, Ambassador Anayansi Rodríguez Camejo.

Ms. Rodríguez Camejo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time I have taken the floor this year, Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of this important forum. I am confident that your extensive diplomatic experience will enable us to advance the work of the Conference on Disarmament. I would also like to join you in welcoming our friend Ambassador Nasser of Egypt and assure you of our willingness to strive together to advance the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President, the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) was held in Havana on 28 and 29 January. CELAC is a regional organization that brings together all the States of Latin America and the Caribbean, from the Rio Grande to Patagonia. All 33 countries of the region were represented at the event.

In a historic milestone, the CELAC summit formally proclaimed the region of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace. In the proclamation, the Heads of State and Government pledged to continue promoting nuclear disarmament as a priority objective and to contribute to progress towards general and complete disarmament as a means of strengthening trust among nations.

They also pledged to respect the principles and rules of international law and to resolve their disputes through peaceful means, forever eschewing the threat or use of force in the region.

Furthermore, they reaffirmed the commitment of the Latin American and Caribbean countries not to intervene in the internal affairs of States and to respect the principles of national sovereignty, equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

The Havana Summit also adopted a special declaration on nuclear disarmament, which established complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament as one of the objectives of CELAC and reiterated that the only effective guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination and prohibition.

The declaration affirmed that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and international

humanitarian law, as unanimously affirmed by the International Court of Justice in a 1996 advisory opinion.

The dignitaries of Latin America and the Caribbean further affirmed their legitimate interest in receiving unequivocal and legally binding assurances from nuclear-weapon States that they will not use or threaten to use such weapons and called on them to work towards the adoption, as quickly as possible, of a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances. The nuclear powers were urged to respect the denuclearized character of Latin America and the Caribbean and to withdraw the interpretative declarations attached to protocols I and II to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which amount to reservations that are prohibited by that instrument.

The special declaration on nuclear disarmament called upon nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their commitments under article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to implement, fully and immediately, the 13 practical steps for nuclear disarmament agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, as well as the plan of action adopted in 2010.

The Heads of State and Government also emphasized their intention to ensure proper follow-up to General Assembly resolution 68/32, entitled “Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament”.

At the same time, they reiterated the strong commitment of CELAC to the convening of a high-level international conference to identify measures and actions needed to eliminate nuclear weapons in the shortest possible time, with a view to adopting a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time frame, banning the development, production, procurement, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and provide for their destruction.

As a demonstration of its strong commitment to nuclear disarmament and peace, Latin America and the Caribbean was the first populated region in the world to establish, through the Treaty of Tlatelolco, a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We are proud that at the Second Summit of CELAC that commitment has been deepened through the proclamation, for first time in the history of humanity, of an entire region as a zone of peace, forever free from war and the threat or use of force, in which we ourselves will resolve disputes between our countries, through peaceful means and negotiation, in accordance with the principles of international law.

Given the importance of the outcomes of the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States for the achievement of general and complete disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament, we have asked the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament to publish both statements as official documents of the Conference. Once that has occurred, we will circulate the English and Spanish versions of both statements to the missions accredited to the Conference on Disarmament.

The President: I thank the representative of Cuba for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Venezuela, Ambassador Rebeca Sánchez.

Ms. Sánchez (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, first, we would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of this forum. We take this opportunity to assure you of the support and cooperation of our delegation in all your endeavours in the coming weeks.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wishes to reiterate its commitment to this forum and to multilateralism. We have a responsibility to the international community to work for international peace and security.

The 2014 session of the Conference on Disarmament will be decisive. We can no longer delay the start of substantive work. The degree of urgency with which we approach this task will be crucial to ensuring the continued relevance and even the continued existence of this forum, and we must start by agreeing on the programme of work. We stand ready to help ensure a fruitful outcome to the discussions on renewing the mandate of the informal working group to present specific proposals for a programme of work that will enable us finally to move towards negotiations.

The objective of our efforts should be general and complete nuclear disarmament, in accordance with a multilaterally agreed programme that is transparent, irreversible and verifiable and that will ensure that we achieve the ultimate goal of totally eliminating nuclear weapons as the only effective guarantee against the use and threat of use of such weapons.

Mr. President, in this context we wish to highlight the formal declaration adopted during the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held last January in the city of Havana, Cuba, on the establishment of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace. For the first time, we member countries affirmed our unwavering commitment to settle disputes peacefully and to eliminate forever the threat and use of force in our region. We are mindful that peace is a supreme asset and a legitimate aspiration of all peoples, and we are also cognizant of the catastrophic humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons.

For our region, the adoption of new instruments on disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a matter of critical priority.

We believe that disarmament must be a factor in improving the quality of life of our communities and the foundation for solidarity among peoples. Mutual knowledge that fosters trust is the basis for respect and cooperation, which are the means of overcoming inequalities.

Let us not miss the opportunity that this forum affords us. We have a collective responsibility for the negotiation of instruments to regulate and eliminate weapons of mass destruction. We cannot remain indifferent to the risks of this common threat.

The Conference on Disarmament, whose birth and development were events of crucial importance, should find a way to take its place in the international arena.

The President: I thank the representative of Venezuela for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Walid Mahmoud Abdelnasser.

Mr. Abdelnasser (Egypt): Mr. President, allow me first to thank you for the kind words you addressed to me in your introductory remarks at the beginning of this meeting. I would equally like to thank the Ambassador of Cuba for the kind words she addressed to me.

Mr. President, let me start by congratulating you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. With developments both inside and outside the Conference, we are sure of your ability to guide the work of the Conference forward and to overcome the impasse that has been preventing this prestigious body from undertaking its functions as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

We look forward to the timely adoption of a programme of work that would allow us an early start of negotiating legally binding instruments. I would like to assure you, Mr. President, of my delegation's full support for your efforts aiming at taking our work forward.

I would equally like to express my appreciation for the inspiring message of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to the Conference on Disarmament delivered last January, in which he expressed hope that the Conference on Disarmament — as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum — will take inspiration and make 2014 a year of creativity and action, a “year of the blue horse”. My delegation's full support equally goes to the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Michael Møller, and his team.

Egypt, as one of the original members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament established back in 1961, continues to attach the utmost importance to the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

We are very concerned that, for the past 18 years, the Conference on Disarmament has failed to adopt and operationalize a programme of work to commence its substantive negotiations.

We are even more concerned that instead of negotiating legal instruments on disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament has been preoccupied with the lack of a programme of work and now with re-establishing an informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work.

We trust that in order to overcome this stalemate, we ultimately have to demonstrate the political will needed to take forward the negotiating mandate of the Conference on Disarmament.

Since we believe that priority should always be given to the adoption by consensus of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work to start negotiations, let me reiterate the position of Egypt on the elements of such a programme.

First, Egypt considers nuclear disarmament to be the top priority, as clearly underlined through the very first resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, resolution 1 (I) of 1946, and later reiterated at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Furthermore, the General Assembly recently adopted resolution 68/32, in which it called for the urgent commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

We therefore expect any proposed programme of work to include the establishment of a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament.

Second, Egypt had always been supportive of the idea of concluding a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices, as long as such a treaty — in the words of the “13 practical steps” adopted at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (2000 NPT Review Conference) — would serve the objectives of both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

We have joined the consensus on negotiating a treaty banning the production of this material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices on such a basis. It is for that reason that we seek that any proposed programme of work would contain a mandate on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices and would clearly indicate that it would be dealing with stocks of already existing production of this material as well as future production.

Third, Egypt is also interested in promoting and maintaining outer space as a peaceful environment that should serve as a common heritage of humankind. It is therefore essential that we further develop the legal regime governing outer space and prevent the arms race in outer space.

In this context, I would like to remind the Conference that every year the General Assembly adopts by near-consensus, with only two countries abstaining, a resolution, alternately presented by both Egypt and Sri Lanka, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, recognizing the Conference on Disarmament as the forum to negotiate legally binding instruments to this effect and calling for the establishment of a subsidiary body of the Conference to undertake such work.

The Conference has to live up to both its mandate and expectations in this field and to commence negotiations on a legally binding instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space.

The timing cannot be more crucial, as history repeatedly shows that it is much easier to prevent the development of weapons systems before they are deployed rather than trying to get the proverbial genie back in the bottle.

Fourth, Egypt looks forward to the Conference on Disarmament dealing with effective international arrangements for the five nuclear-weapon States to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Such an assurance is a legitimate demand of the non-nuclear-weapon States and is long overdue.

With those elements in mind, we look forward to any discussion on a draft programme of work submitted by you, Mr. President.

We are also ready to conduct such discussions within a re-established informal working group on a programme of work. However, given the comments made both in writing and orally during the last session of the Conference, we look forward to see the exact text suggested before commenting on the proposed decision of the Conference.

In the meantime, and until a consensus programme of work is arrived at, we are in favour of conducting structured discussions in the Conference on the items of the agenda with the aim of facilitating any future negotiations on these items in the Conference. We are studying the non-paper circulated through the regional coordinators on the subject and we will provide our comments at a later stage.

There is a growing movement to promote understanding of the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and of the need to keep these consequences at the centre of any future nuclear disarmament efforts.

The first Conference on the Humanitarian Consequences of the Use of Nuclear Weapons, held in Oslo in March 2013, the Open-ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament and the high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on nuclear disarmament last September are all helping to maintain the focus on what these weapons truly mean for the future of humanity.

Just a few days ago, Egypt participated actively in the second Conference on the Humanitarian Consequences of the Use of Nuclear Weapons, held in Mexico on 13 and 14 February 2014.

We would like on this occasion to thank the Government of Mexico for the hospitality and excellent organization of the conference. This conference yet again aimed to raise awareness as to the dangers posed by the mere presence of nuclear weapons anywhere and with any State to international peace and security.

In this context, the Mexico conference demonstrated clearly that we have been living through a history of near-misses, while all it takes is one nuclear explosion to have a devastating result and cause a long-term effect on the world as a whole.

We further welcome the declaration by Austria to host the third Conference on the Humanitarian Consequences of the Use of Nuclear Weapons before the end of this year, and we look forward to the participation of all countries, including the nuclear-weapon States, in this important upcoming conference.

Our disappointment on the failure to hold the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction is no secret. We walked out of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference to send a strong message as to our dismay at the continued failure to implement what was agreed upon in 2010, that is, to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, on which basis the NPT was indefinitely extended without a vote.

This delay in convening the postponed conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction raises serious concerns regarding the undertakings we assume in multilateral disarmament forums and the commitment of the parties to fulfil those undertakings.

Mr. Nabil Fahmy, the Foreign Minister of Egypt, launched an initiative on 29 September 2013 wherein he asked the States of the region, as well as the five permanent members of the Security Council, to submit their commitment to the establishment of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in letters to the United Nations Secretary-General. All the members of the League of Arab States have already presented such letters to the United Nations Secretary-General reiterating their support for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in accordance with the first step of that initiative.

Iran has also sent a letter to the United Nations Secretary-General on the subject. This could be an opportunity to encourage other designated States to take the same step, as

a sign of their commitment to strengthening the regional security architecture in the Middle East, and to move on to the second step of the initiative, wherein the three States in the region that are not a party to any of the three treaties and conventions on weapons of mass destruction would concurrently commit to sign and ratify them while working in parallel on convening the postponed 2012 conference without any further delay.

The importance of the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction does not only extend to the credibility and sustainability of the NPT regime, but it is also recognized as an important end in itself shared by the world community at large and it is reflected in numerous resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency General Council.

Mr. President, we wish you a successful presidency and we remain ready to assist you in your efforts to reach consensus on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work.

The President: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico, Ambassador Jorge Lomónaco.

Mr. Lomónaco (Mexico): Mr. President, before anything else, let me pledge my delegation's support to your presidency. I also join previous speakers in welcoming the Ambassador of Egypt, and I thank him for his kind words towards my Government.

I am extremely pleased to report that the second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons that took place in Nayarit, Mexico, last week, was a great success on many counts: a great success in attendance — 146 governmental delegations, plus representatives of eight United Nations agencies and other international organizations, a strong contingent of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and dozens of civil society organizations; a great success in bringing the question of risk to humanity to the forefront; and a great success in laying down conclusive scientific evidence of the catastrophic consequences that a single nuclear detonation, be it by mistake or by design, would have on public health, humanitarian assistance, the economy, development and environmental issues, climate change and food security.

Perhaps a victim of its own success, the Conference's closing ceremony was delayed by more than three hours as 72 delegations requested the floor to make statements overwhelmingly urging action for a world without nuclear weapons (the now much-tweeted #NayaritSpirit).

Over the past months it has been tempting to dismiss a conference on the subject as an occurrence, and even a second one as a mere coincidence, but a third conference definitely sets a trend. So it is no wonder that the decision by Austria to host a conference before the end of this year was welcomed with a resounding ovation in Nayarit.

Since we believe this, in its relevance to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, we have distributed among delegates copies of the Chair's summary. I request that the Chair's summary just distributed be considered as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

The President: I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Tunisia, Ambassador Abderrazak Kilani.

Mr. Kilani (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, dear colleagues, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor in this august assembly, I would first like to thank you for your warm welcome and to extend my own welcome to all the newly accredited representatives to the Conference on Disarmament. Allow me also, Mr. President, to convey my most sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. I am confident that, under your leadership and thanks to your skills and your extensive diplomatic experience, our work will be crowned with the success we are all

hoping for. Let me assure you, Mr. President, of the full cooperation of my delegation and our willingness to help you in carrying out your difficult task.

Before my arrival in Geneva, I was surprised to learn of the state of affairs with regard to the Conference's work. It became clear that the Conference is in an unenviable position, having been paralysed for over 15 years by lack of consensus on its programme of work. Yet its beginnings were so inspiring and promising. As the sole multilateral body established by the United Nations to negotiate disarmament issues and to conclude legally binding instruments in this area, it shouldered its responsibilities and oversaw the conclusion of numerous crucially important agreements.

We are thus justified in asking ourselves where the problem lies. Why have the worthy activities entrusted to this body come to a standstill? Is it really because of procedural issues? Personally, I doubt it. The lawyer in me finds it difficult to accept that a negotiating body could have reached an impasse even before any text had been submitted for discussion. Notwithstanding its importance, the programme of work, which is merely a road map setting out the issues for negotiation, should not, in my humble opinion, become a stumbling block for diplomats and expert negotiators.

The inertia that has characterized the Conference seems to me to be due to reasons that have nothing to do with our natural inclination as diplomats to negotiate. There is therefore a greater need than ever for our respective States to demonstrate both political and moral responsibility in the face of the countless disarmament challenges confronting our world.

It is obvious that the Conference is the focus of special attention by the international community, which is looking to us to fulfil the hopes placed in this body. This is a crucial year for the Conference, and it is our duty to work together to promote consensus and give hope to all those who believe in the values of peace, security and development for all.

My delegation welcomes the expressions of willingness to renew the mandate of the informal working group and is hopeful that by doing so we will generate the momentum needed to resume the substantive work of the Conference, once trust among us has been restored.

We recognize that everyone has priorities, which are not necessarily shared by other parties to the Conference, but the general interests of all should prevail; we have a responsibility to unite around a common goal: that of revitalizing the Conference and enabling it to play its role.

The world is watching us. It is our duty to act and to move forward, and we cannot do that unless we work together.

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

Before we proceed, I would like to extend a warm welcome to Ambassador Kilani, who has assumed responsibilities as the representative of his Government to the Conference. On behalf of the Conference and on behalf of my own Government, I would like to take this opportunity to assure you, Mr. Ambassador, of our full cooperation and support and in your new assignments.

I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya, Ambassador Anthony Andanje.

Mr. Andanje (Kenya): Mr. President, let me begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Since the 2014 session began last month, your contributions in the deliberations of the session's six Presidents have been invaluable. I would like to take this opportunity to assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation. Kenya welcomes your overview of how you intend to proceed for the duration of your presidency.

We are particularly pleased to learn that you are fully committed to continuing from where your predecessor left. As one of this session's six Presidents, Kenya believes that coordination among successive presidencies will be key to unlocking some of the challenges we face while ensuring that our deliberations progress gradually.

Your commitment to pursue the dual approach is pragmatic, and we are convinced it is important to build momentum on the positive steps that have been made. Above all, we believe that with the support of the Conference on Disarmament membership, it could lead to a programme of work.

Finally, I would like once again to reiterate my delegation's commitment to continue working closely with you. We look forward to fruitful deliberations.

The President: I thank the representative of Kenya for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I see that the list of the speakers is exhausted. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

I have taken due note of the views expressed during this plenary meeting, and I am grateful for the comments received. I consider them a positive contribution for our future deliberations.

The secretariat have an announcement. I give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General.

Mr. Sareva (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference): Mr. President, before proceeding, let me just congratulate you and your Government upon having assumed the presidency of the Conference and again pledge to you the support of the secretariat team here. I also want to extend my appreciation to the outgoing President, Ambassador Eviatar Manor of Israel, for a very professional job done.

The reason I wanted to take the floor is just to remind both delegates and civil society representatives that the pigeonholes that are available on this floor are meant solely for the purpose of distributing official documents of the Conference. I need to do this because just in the past few days, material was put into the boxes which in my view and in the view of the secretariat was unbecoming of the community that we constitute. So this is just a gentle reminder that the pigeonholes are meant only for official documents of the Conference on Disarmament, and on an exceptional basis, we have made them available for disarmament-related material for use by other members of the Conference.

The President: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Secretary-General. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held next Tuesday, 25 February 2014, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.