

Conference on Disarmament

11 March 2014

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 11 March 2014, at 10.05 a.m.

President: Mr. Vinicio Mati(Italy)

The President: I call to order the 1312th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Before we proceed, allow me to wish a warm welcome to two colleagues who have recently assumed their duties as Permanent Representative of their countries to the Conference on Disarmament: Mr. Ahn Young-jip, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, and Mr. Juan José Quintana Aranguren, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Colombia. On behalf of the Conference and on behalf of my country, I would like to extend to our new colleagues our very best wishes.

As you all know, the past Saturday, 8 March 2014, was the observance of International Women's Day. In this connection, last week I sought your views and received no objection to having a representative of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom address the Conference this morning, as in previous years. It is my pleasure at this time to give the floor to Ms. Mia Gandenberger to make a statement to the Conference on the occasion of International Women's Day.

Ms. Gandenberger (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom): Mr. President, thank you for giving us the floor on the occasion of International Women's Day. Last year here at the Conference on Disarmament, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom called on all Governments to ensure that the second negotiating conference for the Arms Trade Treaty would include a legally binding provision on preventing armed gender-based violence. We called for a provision that would not undermine existing international law and that would place gender-based violence on the same footing as other criteria for refusing arms transfers, such as violations of human rights and international law. The final text adopted by the General Assembly, now signed by 116 States and on its way towards entry into force, achieved this.

It is the first treaty ever to explicitly link gender-based violence with the international arms trade. The Arms Trade Treaty is one of the most significant achievements of our disarmament community in the last few years. We are now focusing our efforts at ensuring that the Treaty will be efficiently implemented in order to help to prevent human suffering and armed violence.

This should be the goal of all the treaties we negotiate. This is not about action plans, programmes of work or informal working groups. Disarmament treaties should prevent civilian casualties, prevent humanitarian catastrophes and prevent armed violence and escalation of armed conflicts.

There is no lack of international problems that need solving today. Unfortunately, the Conference on Disarmament does not contribute to preventing civilian casualties. It does not reduce the risk of any humanitarian catastrophe. It does not prevent armed violence.

Progress is being made on disarmament everywhere else but here. The Arms Trade Treaty will hopefully hold its first meeting of States parties soon. The conferences in Oslo and Nayarit, and the coming meeting in Vienna, have created a unique momentum on nuclear weapons that will have an impact beyond the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The issue of fully autonomous weapons is rapidly taking its place on the international agenda and will be discussed extensively in Geneva this year. More and more States and other actors are calling for an end to the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

Some say that the Conference on Disarmament risks losing its relevance. Civil society has certainly turned elsewhere in the interest of achieving progress on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation issues. This is a serious challenge for all Governments that want to move forward. Civil society engagement is not only important for progress on multilateral negotiations: it is essential. Without campaigns, media, experts and other elements that civil society brings to these forums, Governments struggle with making progress on difficult issues that require compromise and negotiations.

Beyond civil society engagement, there is also the question of scarce resources: where should your taxpayers' money go? To negotiating treaties or to holding plenary meetings in a body that has not adopted a programme of work in years?

There is the question of making a difference in the world, strengthening international law and doing what each of us can from our different perspectives to advance human security for the betterment of our shared security and well-being.

These are questions to think about as the Conference continues its work this year. Achieving change requires creativity and courage.

Nearly 100 years ago, women from all over the world gathered in The Hague to protest against the slaughter of the First World War. Next year, we will celebrate the event by marking the 100th anniversary of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom: 100 years of working towards sustainable peace through disarmament and demilitarization.

We urge you to take the creativity and courage of the women and men then and now working for peace, seize the momentum created in other forums and break the deadlock — or move forward productively elsewhere. Either way, the goal should be preventing armed violence and advancing human security.

The President: I thank the representative of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom for that statement.

(spoke in French)

I now give the floor to Ambassador Boudjemâa Delmi, the Permanent Representative of Algeria, so that he may deliver, as has been done in the past, a statement on the issue of anti-personnel mines.

Mr. Delmi (Algeria) *(spoke in French)*: Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I address the Conference on Disarmament today in my capacity as the President of the Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

As this is the first time that I take the floor during your presidency, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to that office and thank you for all your efforts to further our work. You may rest assured of the full support of the Algerian delegation in the fulfilment of your mandate. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Acting Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Michael Møller, and his team for their commitment to our goals and their invaluable support.

On 1 March 2014, the international community celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. Fifteen years of intensive and extraordinary efforts in implementing this instrument have enabled the international community to make significant progress towards meeting its objectives of raising awareness, promoting universal accession, clearing mines, destroying stockpiles and, most importantly of all, providing humanitarian assistance to victims.

Much has been done to raise awareness of the Convention and promote universal accession. To date, 161 States have, by acceding to that instrument, made a commitment to participate in the effective realization of the Convention's objectives. Thus, all States in sub-Saharan Africa, all but two States in the Americas, all the member States of the European Union and several countries in the Arab world and in Asia have, through their accession to the Convention, definitively renounced the use of anti-personnel mines, which — because of the pain and destruction they cause — are both unacceptable and inhumane.

At the Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties, I was among the many people who were delighted to learn from a member of the United States delegation that the United States was planning to review its position on anti-personnel mines, and to hear that this great country might soon make a statement to that effect. I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to the United States, on behalf of us all, to join the 161 States parties to the Convention.

Indeed, the accession of the United States would bring us one step closer to the objective of universal accession.

In the area of mine clearance and destruction of stockpiles, it must be recognized that significant progress has been made since the Convention entered into force. At the Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties, four States — Venezuela, Bhutan, Hungary and Germany — declared that they had fulfilled their obligation to clear all mined areas under their jurisdiction or control. Thus, 27 States parties have now complied with this obligation. In addition, Burundi and Mozambique have indicated that they intend to achieve their mine clearance goals within the agreed time frame, namely during 2014. It is worth noting as well that, since the entry into force of the Convention, the States parties have destroyed more than 44.5 million stockpiled mines.

With regard to humanitarian assistance, which I think is the most important aspect of our approach, it bears mentioning that the increased focus on human rights has helped to strengthen States parties' commitment to assisting survivors. While there is still much to be done to meet the expectations of all victims, including those in developing countries, the situation of the majority of the victims of anti-personnel mines is without a doubt much better today than it was a few years ago. The time has come to appeal to all countries, in particular those with available financial, material and technical resources, to assist developing countries that still need to provide adequate humanitarian assistance to victims of anti-personnel mines.

Finally, I would like to ask all States parties to the Convention to redouble their efforts to effectively implement the Convention. I would also like to appeal to all the members of the Conference on Disarmament that have yet to accede to the Convention to take that step. Indeed, I would encourage them to do so prior to the Third Review Conference which, as you know, will be held in Maputo in June 2014.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ambassador Delmi for his statement on an issue that remains pertinent to the work of the Conference on Disarmament and for his kind words addressed to the Chair.

(*spoke in English*)

It is now my pleasure to update you on the status of my consultations with regard to the dual-track approach following the adoption last week of the decision on the re-establishment of the informal working group.

This is the last plenary meeting that I will have the privilege of chairing as President of the Conference. In my opening remarks, I had stated that I would found the exercise of my presidency on the principles of transparency, effectiveness and continuity among the session's six Presidents. My intention was to confirm an innovative approach in finding possible ways to put the Conference in a position to overcome its current difficulties in a pragmatic, realistic and constructive way.

In line with my country's traditional engagement with disarmament and non-proliferation issues, my main objective remains to preserve and revitalize the credibility of this forum. In this vein, I warmly welcomed and shared the message addressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference, inviting us to find inspiration and make 2014 a year of creativity and action. We need to give signs of this forum's vitality; otherwise, it will be definitively marginalized and overcome by events, losing its credibility in the international arena. In order to avoid such a negative development, I think that a certain amount of flexibility is required from all of us. I am convinced that flexibility and the protection of national interests are not contradictory; on the contrary, they are mutually reinforcing and both can be exercised at the same time. Keeping this in mind, as recommended by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, I tried to work in a constructive spirit and to build on the progress, albeit modest, made last year.

As you know, our approach was based on the re-establishment of an informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work and, in parallel, on the adoption of a schedule of activities that includes structured discussions on the various items on our agenda. In this spirit, I sought to build on the constructive work carried out by the previous President, and I hope to leave for my successors a situation characterized by

further progress on the same path. In this respect, the renewal of the informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work has to be seen as a positive step towards the resumption of the Conference's role. I think that these two processes — the work of the informal working group and the schedule of activities — should be conducted in a parallel way even though they are operationally and conceptually different.

These two exercises have been conceived separately, but in our view they need to be implemented in a mutually reinforcing way, with the aim of achieving our main objective, that is, to have a 2014 session that is more fruitful and productive than in previous years.

Now, we need to work in order to speed up the decision on the second track as well. During the last few days, I have strongly intensified my consultations, both with the regional groups and at the bilateral level. From these consultations, I have perceived a general expectation to put forward a proposal on a schedule of activities. Therefore, in agreement with the other five Presidents, we have decided to circulate as soon as we can a draft proposal. In this regard, I would like to remind you that we are still waiting for the names of the coordinators and the preferences for the allocation of the various topics from the regional groups. We do not have much time in order to complete our task, given the fact that this decision has to be taken by the end of this month, if we want to conduct the structured discussions envisaged by the end of the current session. That is why I would like to urge a decision concerning the nomination of the coordinators. I am confident that we will be able to make the necessary progress on the second track within a time frame which allows us to conduct a fruitful structured dialogue on the priority issues of our agenda.

Allow me now to turn to the list of speakers for today. I give the floor to the representative of Austria, Ambassador Thomas Hajnoczi.

Mr. Hajnoczi (Austria): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to commend you and your team for your leadership, your efforts and your successful work. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Michael Møller on his appointment as the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, and I thank all six presidencies of 2014 for joining efforts to overcome the deadlock in the Conference.

We share the strong belief in multilateralism that the Secretary-General of the United Nations expressed when he addressed the Conference in January, stating that a functional machinery can and must contribute substantially to international peace and security.

The Conference on Disarmament was established with a concrete mandate to negotiate multilateral treaties in the area of disarmament, which are of crucial importance for global security. In this regard, the continued deadlock in the Conference should be of the greatest concern to us. We have supported all efforts aimed at facilitating agreement among member States of the Conference to overcome the impasse. We hope that the discussions in the re-established informal working group will be conducive to efforts in this regard. I thank Ambassador Gallegos and Ambassador Woolcott for their continued leadership in this process.

We are pleased to see that the discourse on nuclear weapons has developed significantly during recent years. A twenty-first-century discourse on nuclear weapons must be comprehensive and take all aspects of nuclear weapons into account and include all communities and stakeholders that can contribute to this fundamental issue of human security.

The two international conferences on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, in Oslo and Nayarit, were pivotal for addressing the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear-weapon explosion and the risk that this horrific scenario could become a reality. Austria has offered to host the third international conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons later this year. We are convinced that this debate plays a crucial role in underscoring the urgency of making progress towards the irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons. We are furthermore convinced that there is strong and growing momentum to firmly anchor the humanitarian imperative in discussions about nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament. The information gathered and the experience shared during the humanitarian conferences provide an important input into the work of the

relevant multilateral forums mandated to advance nuclear disarmament for the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is crucial in this regard.

As the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sebastian Kurz, stated in his announcement of the Vienna conference to be held later this year: “Nuclear disarmament is a global task and a collective responsibility. As a State party committed to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Austria wants to do its share to achieve the goals of this Treaty”.

Austria looks forward to working together with all interested partners, and we listened to their suggestions during the preparations for the conference. We deem it essential that the conference should demonstrate the shared commitment of the international community to advance the nuclear weapons discourse, regardless of the approach individual States follow on the question of how to achieve and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons. We look forward to active participation in the discussions at the Vienna conference later this year on a level that is commensurate with the urgency of achieving that shared objective.

During the past year, a number of important initiatives were launched that have contributed to building momentum for multilateral nuclear disarmament. The Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations has clearly demonstrated that cleavages can be overcome through transparent, credible and trustful dialogue and a focus on shared objectives. The Open-ended Working Group produced a substantive consensus report which offers a range of options and suggestions on how to move forward by addressing various building blocks for a world free of nuclear weapons. The Group’s report, which has been transmitted to the Conference on Disarmament, provides a full range of ideas and suggestions on how to advance in the area of multilateral nuclear disarmament. We urge this body to consider these ideas and suggestions seriously.

The high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament held in September 2013 demonstrated that the urgency of this issue has gained political support and awareness. Austria was pleased to underscore the importance it attaches to this matter through the participation of our President, Heinz Fischer.

The Group of Governmental Experts established to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices will commence its work shortly.

All these initiatives within the United Nations framework pursue the same objective, and they are mutually reinforcing and fully complementary with the goals and objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, with the conclusions and recommendations of the 2010 Review Conference for follow-on actions, as well as with the mandate of the Conference on Disarmament.

We cannot see any benefit in limiting the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. Looking at the last 16 years of stalemate, it has clearly not been a formula for success. Why not try something different and follow the successful formula of many other multilateral decision-making processes that are based on inclusiveness and partnership? We support the call made by the informal group of observer States to the Conference. We strongly believe that a multilateral forum that negotiates treaties on vital human security issues should be open to all United Nations Member States and provide for active civil society involvement.

A few minutes ago, we heard a statement by the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, a non-governmental organization that conducts important work on the links between disarmament, development and human rights, including the equal representation and participation of women and men. The League offers relevant contributions for the discussions in this forum. However, we cannot benefit from their input except for once a year, given that the Conference keeps the voices of civil society out of its discussions. This should be corrected before civil society representatives themselves turn away from this forum altogether.

Effective multilateralism also equals a participatory approach, and security for the people will never be achieved without the people. All options for reforming the structures and working methods of the Conference on Disarmament should be explored.

The President: I thank the representative of Austria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Ahn Young-jip.

Mr. Ahn Young-jip (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, as this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor under your presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to take a brief moment to congratulate you on your dedication and leadership over the past three weeks. This is also the first time I have had the honour to speak before this august body. In that connection, I feel privileged to take up my post in conjunction with the arrival of spring in Geneva and hope that renewed energy may be brought forward for the following two reasons.

First, the Conference has adopted a decision to re-establish the informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation. We welcome the decision on the informal working group and would like to assure the Co-Chair and the Vice-Co-Chair of our full support in their future effort. As the President mentioned, we too hope that the informal working group will open up a new phase in the Conference that might lead to the adoption of a programme of work. In the meantime, on the other side of the dual-track approach, the Conference should agree on a schedule of activities for the 2014 session to ensure a structured debate and thereby avoid repetition of previous discussions and lay solid foundations for future work in the Conference.

Second, during the annual high-level segment last week, more than a dozen dignitaries, including the President of the United Nations General Assembly, addressed the Conference. From them, we heard concern over the prolonged stalemate of the Conference, confidence in the Conference's still valid potential and, finally, commitment to revitalization of the Conference. Indeed, it is time to galvanize the Conference and revive this potential, which produced the Chemical Weapons Convention and other major disarmament treaties. This capacity for positive change was, of course, recognized when the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize last year for its extensive effort to eliminate chemical weapons.

Allow me to briefly elaborate on my delegation's thoughts regarding the core issues of the Conference on Disarmament. The Conference should begin discussions on practical measures for its next step in the field of disarmament, instead of what has been a continual cycle of confrontation and all-or-nothing approaches. As a matter of priority, the Republic of Korea believes the next logical step towards a world free of nuclear weapons is the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, and we support substantial engagement between relevant member States in this regard. The Republic of Korea, by participating in the Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty, will put forward its due effort.

Recently, the destruction of nuclear weapons has received growing attention within the international community, and the Republic of Korea is working together with other stakeholders to diminish the nuclear threat by faithfully implementing the action plan under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and, in particular, making an effort to contribute to the prevention of nuclear proliferation to non-State actors in an evolving global security environment. As the previous host, the Republic of Korea fully supports the upcoming Nuclear Security Summit to be held in The Hague at the end of this month. Also, as the country chairing the 1540 Committee of the United Nations Security Council, whose underlying resolution was adopted 10 years ago this year, the Republic of Korea continues its efforts in support of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

With various approaches to nuclear disarmament being discussed, it is our hope that this will lead to substantial discussions and move those discussions forward with the participation of the relevant States. In this regard, the Republic of Korea will be an attentive observer and participant.

The Republic of Korea shares the belief in the need to build confidence among States in the area of outer space activities. As a spacefaring country, we would like to see further development by building on the results of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-building Measures in Outer Space Activities.

I would like to conclude my remarks by quoting from the address by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, in this chamber last January: “We must face the realities of the twenty-first century. The Conference on Disarmament can be a driving force for building a safer world and a better future. That is its very mission.” Confident in the potential of the Conference, I look forward to working closely with the session’s six Presidents and all other colleagues in this esteemed forum as we look to move the Conference from a state of continued deadlock to one of constructive dialogue.

The President: I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. McConville (Australia): Mr. President, as your presidency concludes this week, we would like to underline our appreciation for your tireless efforts to progress the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. This is no easy task, as we all know, but you can be justifiably proud of your work and the outcomes you have achieved in the past month. We also welcome the important message delivered this morning by the representative of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.

As you will recall, Australia welcomed the adoption by the Conference on Disarmament on 3 March, under your presidency, of the decision contained in document CD/WP.570: that decision re-established the informal working group with a mandate to adopt and implement a programme of work at the earliest possible date in the 2014 session.

We have pledged to work constructively — with Ambassador Woolcott as Co-Vice-Chair and our distinguished colleague Ambassador Gallegos of Ecuador as Co-Chair, along with the Conference presidency — in the quest to find consensus on a programme of work and hence a negotiating mandate. Such a mandate is, of course, the *raison d’être* of the Conference on Disarmament.

Australia now would like to underline the importance of the Conference working on the second track of the approach, otherwise known as the schedule of activities. We agree with several delegations who have underlined in this forum that this is no programme of work. It certainly is not, but it does offer the opportunity for us to discuss issues relating to the core issues of concern to the Conference and perhaps provide us with a key to unblocking the paralysis which has gripped the Conference for too many years. A schedule of activities that is focused, well organized by experienced coordinators selected from diverse geographical groups within the Conference and infused with contributions from outside experts has promise to it, and we remain confident in its value.

There will be challenges in finalizing the schedule of activities, of course, but Australia extends its support to you and to the incoming Japanese presidency in your collective efforts to iron out any remaining issues and thereby to have us all focused on the main game of ultimately creating a negotiating mandate.

We look forward to receiving the draft proposal, as you, Mr. President, have referred to this morning.

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

(spoke in French)

That was the last speaker on the list. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I recognized Turkey.

Ms. Kasnakli (Turkey): Mr. President, let me join others in commending you and your team for your leadership to advance the work of the Conference on Disarmament in the previous weeks.

I have taken the floor to put on record once again our views with regard to the work of the Conference. Indeed, it is a principled approach, but let me repeat it in a brief way.

Turkey wishes to see the immediate resumption of substantive work in the Conference with its present membership. We see the need to urgently come up with a consensual programme of work. We believe the re-establishment of the informal working group in this regard is a good start. We would like to thank Ambassador Gallegos and Ambassador Woolcott for their continued leadership in this process. We look forward to working with them.

We would like to emphasize again that the problems faced by the Conference are not created by its procedures, its membership or its internal dynamics.

We would like to state that at this stage there is no consensus regarding enlargement of the Conference or appointing a special coordinator on expansion of the Conference membership. I would like to emphasize at this stage: the time for considering the issue of enlargement will come following the adoption of a programme of work and starting negotiations, which is a priority for us. We should not dilute our focus on the main substantive issue by introducing into our deliberations additional points of contention.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Turkey for her comments and her kind words addressed to the Chair. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

Before I adjourn this plenary meeting, let me once again state that it has been a great honour to preside over the Conference on Disarmament during the past four weeks. My aim was to continue the constructive work undertaken by my predecessor, and I hope to leave for my successor a framework for future progress.

I would like to thank you all for your cooperation and your constructive attitude during my presidency. I also wish to express my appreciation to the Acting Secretary-General, Mr. Michael Møller, the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jarmo Sareva, the Secretary of the Conference, Mr. Ivor Fung, the secretariat staff and the interpreters, and to thank them all for their outstanding support, which has enabled me to carry out my duties as President of the Conference.

I would like also to thank the regional coordinators for their constructive support. Sincere thanks must go as well to the other five Presidents of the session for their close cooperation with my presidency and the particularly positive atmosphere they helped to create in our group. Special thanks must go to the Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy, Brigadier General Mario Amadei, for the enormous amount of work achieved during this presidency and his high-calibre contribution to furthering the work of the Conference.

I would now like to congratulate my successor, Ambassador Toshio Sano, and wish him every success. I am sure that, during the Japanese presidency, the work of the Conference on Disarmament will benefit from his competence, experience and highest professional standards.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place on Wednesday, 18 March 2014, at 10 a.m., under the presidency of Japan. This meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.