

Conference on Disarmament

13 May 2014

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 13 May 2014, at 11 a.m.

President: Mr. Toshio Sano..... (Japan)

The President: I call to order the 1315th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

The second part of the Conference's 2014 session has started this week, and I am grateful to see you all in this chamber again. At the outset, let me reiterate my commitment as the President of the Conference to continue to serve you with my utmost effort so that we may attain the best achievements possible.

Before we proceed, I would like to turn to the request received from Costa Rica, a State not a member of the Conference, to participate as an observer in our work during the 2014 session. This request is before you in document CD/WP.577/Add.3. No other requests had been received by the secretariat as of yesterday, 12 May 2014, at 4 p.m. May I take it that the Conference decides to invite Costa Rica to participate in our work in accordance with the rules of procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: Prior to opening the floor to the speakers for today, I would like to mention a couple of points. Earlier in this session, the Conference agreed on two initial steps for this year: the re-establishment of the informal working group on a programme of work and an agreement on the schedule of activities. Although these were positive results for the Conference, they are not the goal themselves. Whether the Conference can respond to the expectations from outside depends on us making the best use of these instruments. I therefore ask for your continuous support and cooperation for the work at the Conference.

To update you on the informal working group, I held consultations with Ambassador Luis Gallegos Chiriboga of Ecuador, the Co-Chair of the informal working group, and Ambassador Peter Woolcott of Australia, the Vice-Co-Chair, during the intersessional period. This session's six Presidents also met them yesterday.

As a consequence of the consultations yesterday, the Co-Chair and Vice-Co-Chair circulated their ideas for your consideration in the search for a compromise regarding the programme of work. These ideas will be discussed at the open-ended meeting of the informal working group which will be held next Monday, 19 May, at 3 p.m.

I would like to thank the two Ambassadors for the work they have done, and I hope all the delegations will reflect on these ideas beforehand in order to have a constructive exchange of views next week.

As for the schedule of activities, the informal substantive meetings on various topics will start next week. To guarantee an environment for delegates to speak with maximum frankness, the discussion will be conducted among the member States and observers in a closed meeting. They will take place in this chamber and will be chaired directly by the respective coordinators.

The discussion on the first topic, which is nuclear disarmament, will commence next Wednesday afternoon, 21 May, and will be coordinated by Ambassador Abdelnasser of Egypt. I believe you will soon receive a workplan from him for the upcoming discussion. I myself look forward to having an interactive discussion on every topic, and I encourage all delegations to actively participate in the discussion.

Are there any comments on these two issues? I give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that the Algerian delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, allow me to extend our warm congratulations and assure you of my delegation's full support. We would have liked to see the Conference on Disarmament be able to agree on a more ambitious schedule of activities but, failing that, we welcome the decisions adopted on re-establishing the informal working group and the informal schedule of activities. In that connection, we wish to express our appreciation to the Ambassadors who agreed to serve as Co-Chair and Vice-Co-Chair of the working group and those who took on the responsibility to coordinate the schedule of activities.

We have asked for the floor simply to make a suggestion, or rather to request some clarification. You indicated that the informal meetings will be held solely with the member States and the observers. As these will be informal meetings and, accordingly, will not have verbatim records or official Conference documents, might it not be useful for civil society and non-governmental organizations active in the relevant areas to attend the meetings, or be authorized to participate? We could thus benefit from their wisdom, expertise and knowledge in nuclear disarmament matters.

The President: I thank the representative of Algeria for his comment. Let me respond to your question. In principle, I would like to respect each coordinator's view regarding how to structure the respective topics, since they have volunteered to take on this important role. I am not yet aware of the coordinators' workplan, so at this moment I do not have a full picture of which coordinators will invite representatives from civil society to the discussion. Therefore, at this point in time I do not feel it necessary to make a general rule regarding the participation of civil society, but my sense is that that it might be useful or helpful to stimulate the discussion. I will thus rely on the decision of each coordinator on that matter.

Are there any other comments? I see none.

I will now turn to the list of speakers for today. There is one speaker. I now give the floor to the representative of Kyrgyzstan, Ambassador Gulnara Iskakova, speaking on behalf of the five States parties to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia.

Ms. Iskakova (Kyrgyzstan): Mr. President, since I am taking the floor for the first time, I would like to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament; and I assure you of the full support and cooperation of Kyrgyzstan throughout your presidency. I also would like to congratulate Mr. Møller on his appointment as Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

On 6 May 2014 a historic event took place on the margins of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. On that day, France, China, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America signed the legally binding Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, thus providing security assurances not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the five Central Asian countries that are parties to the Treaty: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

As the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Kane, put it on that day, the signing of the Protocol marked an important milestone for reinforcing both regional security in central Asia and the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. I cannot agree more. It will also serve the purpose of fostering the nuclear disarmament process and promoting global security.

The Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia complements the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and enhances the international non-proliferation regime by prohibiting, among other things, the development and testing of nuclear weapons within Central Asia. Under the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, the five Central Asian States may not allow the stationing of nuclear weapons within their territories. The Central Asian States are also required to adopt the International Atomic Energy Agency Additional Protocol, which provides the Agency with expanded access and authority to ensure that all nuclear activities are used only for peaceful purposes.

In this connection, I wish to congratulate all of us here today on another landmark accomplishment in the global non-proliferation regime and disarmament.

Availing itself of this opportunity, my delegation commends the five permanent members of the Security Council, both individually and collectively, for the constructive approach shown during negotiations with the Central Asian States ever since the Treaty entered into force in 2009. It is worth noting that the Protocol to the Treaty was, for the first time in history, signed simultaneously by all the nuclear-weapon States. I do hope that those States will ratify the Protocol to the Treaty in the very near future.

My delegation also wishes to commend our neighbour country, Kazakhstan, for its laudable work as Treaty coordinator from 2012 to 2014, during which time it represented the Central Asian countries in negotiations with the five permanent members of the Security Council.

Kyrgyzstan was one of the co-founders of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia and is the Treaty's depositary. I am pleased to inform all delegations that Kyrgyzstan will serve as the depositary for the Protocol as well. We are honoured by the unconditional trust of the five permanent Security Council members in Kyrgyzstan, and we perceive that as a recognition of our role in the establishment and functioning of the nuclear weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate that Kyrgyzstan regards the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime, and it fully shares the responsibility to maintain the Treaty through meeting all non-proliferation obligations, including those under the framework of the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone.

The President: I thank the representative of Kyrgyzstan for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held next Tuesday, 20 May 2014, at 10 a.m. For your information, we will hear remarks by five persons on that occasion: first, the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Michael Møller; second, Ambassador Golberg of Canada, on the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on possible aspects that could contribute to, but not negotiate, a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; third, Ambassador Dengo of Costa Rica, on the work of the Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons; fourth, Ambassador Simon-Michel of France, on the work of the informal meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems held within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons; and fifth, Mr. Vasiliev of the Russian Federation, on the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.