

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand four hundred and twenty-first plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 8 June 2017, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Fedor Rosocha (Slovakia)

GE.17-21527 (E) 310118 010218



* 1 7 2 1 5 2 7 *

Please recycle 

The President: I call to order the 1421st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Excellencies, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, let me start this meeting by expressing condolences to the victims of the terrorist attack which happened yesterday in Tehran. Our sympathies are with the families who lost their loved ones. This attack has shown once again that terrorism is a global threat to the international community. Slovakia strongly condemns all acts of terrorism in all its forms.

Following the meeting of the working group on the way ahead last Tuesday, Ambassador Lynn and I continued our consultations. I am pleased to inform you that Ambassador Lynn has asked me to share with you his timetable for the working group in pursuance of the mandate received from the member States of the Conference through the adoption of the decision, contained in document CD/2090, on the establishment of the working group on the way ahead, namely, to take stock of the progress on all agenda items of the Conference, as contained in document CD/2085; identify issues for substantive work under the agenda, taking into account the efforts and priorities of the international community; identify common ground for a programme of work with a negotiating mandate; and consider steps for the way ahead.

The meetings of the working group are scheduled as follows. The working group will continue its stocktaking exercise today after this plenary meeting, as was announced by the Chair of the working group; previous meetings for taking stock took place on 1 and 6 June. On 14 June, in the afternoon, and on 15 and 16 June, in the morning, the working group will hold meetings on agenda item 3, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". On 20 June, in the afternoon, and on 22 and 23 June, in the morning, the working group will hold meetings on agenda item 4, entitled "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons". On 28 and 29 June, in the afternoon, and on 30 June, in the morning, the working group will hold meetings on agenda item 2, entitled "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters", with a general focus on the ban of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. On 2 August, in the afternoon, and on 3 and 4 August, in the morning, the working group will hold meetings on agenda items 5, 6 and 7, entitled "New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons, and radiological weapons"; "Comprehensive programme of disarmament"; and "Transparency in armaments". On 8 August, in the afternoon, and on 9 and 10 August, in the morning, the working group will hold meetings on agenda item 1, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". The working group will also meet on 16 August, in the afternoon, and on 17 August, in the morning. By 22 August, the Chair will submit the final report of the working group to the Conference through the President. All meetings of the working group will be chaired by Mr. Lynn, the Permanent Representative of Myanmar and Chair of the working group on the way ahead. In addition, the meetings on agenda item 2 with a general focus on the ban of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices will be co-facilitated by Mr. Biontino, the Permanent Representative of Germany, in his capacity as Friend of the Chair. The meetings on agenda item 3 will be co-facilitated by Mr. Lagos of Chile, in his capacity as Friend of the Chair. The meetings on agenda item 4 will be co-facilitated by Mr. Biontino, in his capacity as Friend of the Chair. The meetings on agenda items 5, 6 and 7 will be co-facilitated by Mr. Ambrazevich, the Permanent Representative of Belarus, in his capacity as Friend of the Chair.

May I take it that there are no objections and that the Conference is agreeable to the timetable proposed by the Chair of the working group? I recognize the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): Mr. President, through you we would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Myanmar, in his capacity as Chair of the working group on the way ahead, for all the efforts he has put in. He has indeed carried out very extensive and transparent consultations and has brought us to the point that we are at. So, we deeply appreciate his efforts.

My delegation welcomes this approach: the direction taken by him right from the beginning. We were appreciative of and supportive of the manner in which he was structuring the work in this working group. We think it is a very productive utilization of the time in the Conference on Disarmament in the absence of consensus on the commencement of negotiations. This offers the best prospect for exchanging views and for making some formal progress on the substantive agenda items. I have two points to make: the first is regarding the characterization of the discussions on the ban of the production of fissile material under agenda item 2; and the second is more of a request to change the timing for one of the discussions.

So, the first point first. Mr. President, as you and other colleagues in this chamber are aware, agenda item 2 relates only to the prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters, and not to nuclear disarmament. In the past, when we held informal discussions in the Conference under the schedule of activities in 2014 and 2015, we clubbed the discussions under agenda items 1 and 2 together, and not under agenda item 2. Before that, for example, the programme of work adopted in 2009 had also placed the subsidiary body, which was meant to negotiate a treaty banning production of fissile material, under agenda item 1, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". Also in the previous drafts circulated by the Chair, this discussion was envisaged clubbed together under agenda items 1 and 2. So, our question is why has it now been framed only under agenda item 2, which in any case is not appropriate for this treaty? It also implies, and it is not just a matter of following past practice, but it also implies that, somehow, this treaty or this particular effort to control fissile material is not geared towards nuclear disarmament. This is a very fundamental point. It is not only meant for preventing nuclear war but it is meant to contribute to nuclear disarmament. So, we would want some clarity on that and then we can discuss this further and see how to take this forward.

Our second point is, because of some internal issues, we would deeply appreciate if the discussions on fissile material were moved to the second week — in the week of 20 to 23 June — and switched with the discussions on negative security assurances. We appreciate Ambassador Biontino, the Permanent Representative of Germany, for taking on the task of chairing both the discussions on our behalf. We welcome his appointment and we would greatly appreciate if this can be accommodated.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement. I now recognize the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Atta (Egypt): Mr. President, since this is the first time we are taking the floor under your presidency, allow me to express my sincere appreciation for the way you are conducting the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of my full cooperation with all the efforts you will bring to the Conference.

I have two points as well to raise with regard to this proposal — actually, three points.

The first one is the same as the one raised by our colleague from Pakistan. Previously, when we had the schedule of activities in 2014 and 2015, we used to merge agenda item 1 and agenda item 2: one with a focus on nuclear disarmament and the other with a focus on the ban of the production of fissile material. I therefore have the same question for the Chair of the working group.

My second point is related to the fact that I take it from this proposal that we are not going to have subgroups according to the decision contained in document CD/2090. Our reading is that we do not have to have subgroups, because the language is pretty clear: it is optional, it gives us this option. I just want to make sure that these focused discussions are not going to be within subgroups.

The third point I would like to raise is a procedural issue: I do not know if we are supposed to adopt this proposal. Are we going to have some sort of formal decision issued by the Conference to adopt this proposal? Or is it going to be informally accepted or based on some sort of understanding among the members of the Conference?

The President: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of Syria.

Mr. Al Nuqari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, allow me once again to express our appreciation of your conduct of the proceedings of the Conference on Disarmament and to wish you every success. May I also extend our deepest condolences to the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and to my distinguished colleague from Iran, concerning the victims of the terrorist act perpetrated yesterday in Tehran. This event firmly underscores the need to adopt more serious and forthright action in the international community to combat terrorism, which constitutes a threat to international peace and security, and to eliminate all sources of terrorism, beginning with ideology and proceeding with the funding and hosting of terrorists and the use of terrorism as a means of achieving political ends. Allow me also to extend my condolences to the Ambassador of Myanmar on the victims of the plane that crashed, I believe it was yesterday. We hope in all these cases that the victims may rest in peace and we offer our condolences to their relatives, both in Iran and in Myanmar.

I will now turn to the draft decision. We first wish to express our sincere thanks to the Ambassador of Myanmar for his tireless efforts to reach consensus. We highly appreciate these efforts as well as his keenness to listen to all delegations and all opinions. We also commend the serious approach he has adopted for the management of his work. We note that the previous text has been improved, for example, the requirement to engage in consultations to take stock of progress. This new approach allows delegations to address the four points in paragraph 1 and to review progress made in discussions on the four agenda items.

We also note that there is a clearer approach to the situation of the coordinators, who are designated as Friends of the Chair. In our view, this designation or option does not conflict with the relevant decision, which is, I believe, the one contained in document CD/2090. Therefore, I feel that this option offers a sound and clear way forward. Of course, given that the coordinators are designated as Friends of the Chair, we expect that the Chair of the working group will assume personal responsibility for submission of the reports. Accordingly, the basic relationship will be between the Conference and the Chair and not between the Conference and the coordinators. This issue is a minor detail, but I think it simply requires clarification, and we believe that the wording should be interpreted in this manner.

The key point I wished to raise concerns agenda items 1 and 2. The reference to agenda item 2, entitled "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters, with a general focus on a fissile material cut-off treaty", gives the impression that nuclear war is to be prevented by means of such a treaty. It is basically unclear whether the treaty, when it is adopted, will be applicable to existing stockpiles. We believe that the current wording may not reflect the reality of the matter, inasmuch as the prevention of nuclear war cannot be achieved solely through such a treaty. This point was raised by our colleagues from Pakistan and Egypt. We believe that the standard language of the past, namely "with a special focus on a fissile material cut-off treaty", should be used with respect to item 1, concerning cessation of the nuclear arms race, and item 2. We should therefore revert, for items 1 and 2, to the language used earlier calling for a special focus on a fissile material cut-off treaty to achieve nuclear disarmament.

My delegation is willing, even at this stage, to be flexible. If there is consensus in this chamber on adopting the text as currently worded, my delegation is prepared to be flexible and to accept the current text. However, we felt it necessary to clarify this point from a technical perspective and for future reference.

The President: I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

With regard to the questions raised by the representative of Egypt concerning subgroups, there are no subgroups any more. That is the first answer. The second answer is that there will be no formal decision. We are just asking the plenary to adopt or to agree with the proposal.

With regard to the questions raised by the representative of Pakistan, I would like to ask the Ambassador of Myanmar to take the floor.

Mr. Lynn (Myanmar): Mr. President, in my first draft I had combined the two agenda items, as formulated in previous years on two previous occasions. However, there was one delegation that wanted to separate them — and that is what I was trying to accommodate. But today I sense that the majority of the membership wishes to revert back to the original formulation, and we can do so. Again, as I said, it is not my intention to separate them. My intention is to keep it the way it was in previous years. So, we can always go back to the original formulation, which I submitted to the President just now, so that he can have a look at it. This was not my own intention: I am just reflecting the views of all the membership as much as possible.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Myanmar. Now, I wish to ask Ambassador Biontino for his position with regard to the proposal made by certain delegations.

Mr. Biontino (Germany): Mr. President, we can accommodate Pakistan. That is no problem at all.

The President: I thank Ambassador Biontino. I now give the floor to Iran.

Mr. Heidari (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, first and foremost, I would like to thank you for all your efforts and, in particular, for expressing your sympathy for the victims of the latest heinous terrorist attack in Tehran. As well, I would like to thank those delegations that expressed their sympathy and condolences from the floor here and those delegations that came to me in person and expressed their condolences. Such heinous terrorist attacks — and this year we have witnessed them successively here and there — are evidence of the fact that terrorism has no borders and no society is secure from such heinous acts by terrorist groups like Daesh. Also, I would like to thank the Ambassador of Myanmar and, from the floor, I would like to express the condolences of my Government regarding the victims of the latest plane crash.

In particular, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for the consultation we had with you and the present timetable. In particular, the chapeau paragraph clearly indicates the extent to which the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament have been applied in this case. This delegation has indicated previously that paragraph 6, in particular, refers to the role of the President in this case. I am very pleased that the chapeau paragraph indicates that this timetable has been prepared in consultation with the President and that you have taken it to the plenary to require the prior informed consent of the member States; as far as we understand it, the President is the representative of member States.

As to the issue raised by our colleague from Pakistan and others on the matter of agenda items 1 and 2, this delegation has previously indicated that attention must be paid to the fact that nuclear disarmament is very dear to the Group of 21 and it was also the *raison d'être* for the establishment of the Conference. We have not discussed so far the issue of combining agenda items 1 and 2. Our focus of attention and emphasis was the fact that nuclear disarmament is an important issue, and I think it is important not only for Iran but also for all members of the Group of 21. Our understanding of the indication here is “the prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters”. I have checked the report of the Conference on Disarmament, in particular the one that I have, and it always says “prevention of an arms race” in the report, as well as referring to “all related matters”. In “all related matters”, discussion of the fissile material cut-off treaty has been focused on the matter of the report. We have the same understanding as the other delegations that these “all related matters” are not limited to a fissile material cut-off treaty: as we understand it, part of the discussion might be attributed to a focused discussion, as in previous years, on a fissile material cut-off treaty, but each and every delegation under this item would discuss and would focus on nuclear disarmament and “all related matters”. Therefore, our understanding is that it has been referred to under agenda item 2, but our emphasis was that nuclear disarmament is a very important issue and it requires clear, focused attention, as it is the *raison d'être* of the Conference.

The President: I thank the representative of Iran. I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Ju Yong-chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to express my delegation's deep condolences to the victims of the recent terrorist attack in Tehran. I would like also to take this opportunity to express deep appreciation to you and, especially to the Chair of the working group, for what you have done to move the Conference on Disarmament forward.

I have a very simple technical question, because I want to have a clear understanding of where we are heading with these thematic meetings. Could you be more specific about the final outcome of these meetings? Is it to propose a draft programme of work, or is it to come up with a recommendation on the next step to be taken, or is it to produce a summary report containing what has been discussed in the meetings?

The President: I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As the outcome, the Chair of the working group will produce a report and it will feed into the programme of work. That is our intention.

I now recognize the representative of Belarus.

Mr. Nikolaichik (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, allow me first to express our condolences to the Iranian delegation following the recent terrorist attack in that country.

We have a request relating to the proposed schedule of meetings. In view of Ambassador Ambrazevich's work schedule, we would very much appreciate it if the respective agenda items could be considered on 11, 14 and 15 August.

The President: I thank the representative of Belarus. I now give the floor to Egypt.

Mr. Atta (Egypt): Mr. President, I am sorry for taking the floor again. I just would like to follow up on a question that was raised by our colleague from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, because the answer provided was not really clear to me. We need to answer this question by looking into the language or the mandate of the decision contained in document CD/2090. I would like just to remind our colleagues here that the report of the Chair is going to be adopted by the Conference. So, I suppose that, based on paragraph 7 of the decision, this report is going to be discussed here and somehow negotiated by member States in order to get some sort of a consensus report to be adopted by the member States. I just would like to clarify this point.

The President: I thank the representative of Egypt. I will read out paragraph 7, which states: "The Chair shall submit the final report of the working group to the President as early as possible for consideration and adoption by the Conference in accordance with the Conference's rules of procedure."

Are there any further requests for the floor?

That does not seem to be the case. So, is my understanding correct that the Conference on Disarmament agrees with the merged agenda items 1 and 2 as explained by the Ambassador of Myanmar? I do not see any objections.

It was so decided.

The President: I will now ask if there is agreement on the overall timetable, with the changes proposed by Belarus.

I recognize the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Amil (Pakistan): And the changes we proposed, as well, Sir.

The President: Of course. Thank you.

May I take it that there are no additional requests, and that there is agreement on the proposal and changes?

It was so decided.

The President: I now give the floor to Ambassador Lynn.

Mr. Lynn (Myanmar): Mr. President, as we are now going to have the working group meeting, can the text be updated in the meantime so that at the end of the working

group meeting we can have a clear text and have no doubt whatsoever on the text? This could be done with the very efficient services of the secretariat.

The President: I thank the Ambassador and am agreed. This concludes our business today. As I mentioned, the next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday, 13 June, at 10 a.m., and it will be followed by an informal meeting of the Conference.

We will now have a meeting of the working group on the way ahead under the chairmanship of Ambassador Lynn of Myanmar. We will have a few minutes break to allow technicians and conference officers to prepare the Council Chamber.

This meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.