

Conference on Disarmament

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 29 August 2019, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Mushayavanhu.....(Zimbabwe)

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The President: Good morning, colleagues, I call to order the 1521st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Distinguished delegates, as previously announced, the plenary meeting today will be devoted to the second consultation on the draft annual report of the Conference. In this meeting, I will briefly open the floor for any delegation that wishes to speak in a formal setting and then move to an informal setting. In the informal setting, I would like to go through the draft report and test the various proposals. Once our informal discussion concludes, I will resume the formal setting and open the floor for any other matter that the delegates would like to raise.

I now open the floor. I recognize the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Baghaei Hamaneh (Islamic Republic of Iran): Good morning, colleagues. Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, thank you for all your efforts to conclude the 2019 report of the Conference on Disarmament. We appreciate your professional and transparent approach. Based on what you said earlier, in the plenary meeting last week, our understanding is that this exercise of reviewing the draft report paragraph by paragraph is aimed at assessing each delegation's level of comfort with every paragraph of the report. Therefore, it is well understood that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. This means that we will produce a clean text of the report with all amendments and suggestions included and that delegations will then have the chance to secure the necessary approval from their capitals.

Having said that, I would like to reiterate the following points again. The report needs to be reflective of the Conference's true mandate and presumed function as the single multilateral negotiating forum, a consensus-based institution which is tasked with negotiating legally binding instruments on four core substantive issues, in particular on disarmament. The report should include a fair reflection of the United Nations Secretary-General's concern over the lack of progress on disarmament. We therefore propose that paragraph 5 be amended by inserting a relevant excerpt from the Secretary-General's statement before the high-level segment of the Conference. Yesterday, my delegation proposed language to that effect to the secretariat.

Any attempt to politicize the Conference is unacceptable. We need to restore the long-established reporting tradition in the Conference, which was interrupted only last year due to the obsessive and unconstructive approach of one delegation. We should not let a single precedent repeat itself this year. We deplore any attempt to debase rule 9 of the rules of procedure regarding the rotation by alphabetical order of the presidency of the Conference. We commend the 2019 Presidents who conducted their work in a professional manner by trying to come up with a consensual programme of work and believe that all presidencies should be named in the report.

I thank you, Mr. President.

The President: I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement and now recognize the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Delgado Sánchez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the commendable efforts you have made. Our delegation has witnessed your intensive bilateral consultations, your efforts and your professionalism in the pursuit of a draft report that could be adopted by consensus.

Our delegation certainly hopes that this draft report is comprehensive, detailed and reflects everything that occurs or does not occur in the Conference on Disarmament. However, it is our understanding that not everyone is equally politically willing either in this respect or even in respect of fulfilling the Conference's mandate to negotiate legally binding instruments on disarmament.

In the interests of transparency, it should be pointed out that, last year, our delegation accepted the language on paragraph 4 on the pragmatic understanding that to do so was necessary in order to arrive at a consensus in the light of the unconstructive efforts of one delegation. We are of the view, however, that such a concession should not set a precedent and we will not accept and – and let us make this very clear – an approach through which a delegation can be held hostage to the report of the Conference owing to the political whims of the day. In other words, our delegation will never accept an approach

whereby, when we like certain presidencies, we mention them and when, for political reasons, we do not like them, we omit them.

Our delegation vehemently rejects any and all politicization of this disarmament forum, and we wish to make patently clear that our position is for the full respect of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the principle of sovereign equality in particular. Our approach to the draft you have presented to us will of course be as constructive as possible, which is why we have made this declaration about paragraph 4. In relation to paragraph 5, we would like the record of this meeting to show that we believe that any reference to the positions of the Secretary-General of the United Nations must be balanced and must be focused on the fundamental objective of this Conference – namely, to negotiate legally binding instruments, something we have not achieved for the past twenty years, and to contribute decisively to disarmament and in particular, as far as our delegation is concerned, to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

I also wish to say that, with regard to paragraph 6, our delegation notes that it contains some technical details. On reflection, we would like to review this paragraph after the negotiations on the other paragraphs of the report have come to an end and then take a position that will depend on the results of those negotiations.

I wish to thank you once again for all your efforts, which should certainly help to maintain a spirit of compromise in this Conference. We reiterate that you, as a member of the Group of 21 and a representative of a sister African country, can rely on the support of the Cuban delegation. Thank you.

The President: I thank the representative of Cuba for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Baissuanov (Kazakhstan): Thank you, Mr. President. My Ambassador is on her way to the Council Chamber. She intended to speak, under the item “any other business”, after the discussion of this item. Thank you.

The President: I have no more speakers on my list in the formal setting. I will now suspend the meeting and move to an informal setting.

The meeting was suspended at 10.20 a.m. and resumed at 12.25 p.m.

The President: The meeting is resumed. We are now in a formal setting. Would any delegation like to take the floor on any other matter? I recognize the Ambassador of Kazakhstan.

Ms. Aitzhanova (Kazakhstan): Mr. President, as this is the first time for our delegation to take the floor during your presidency, let me congratulate you on your assumption of this important role and assure you of our delegation’s full support.

In my statement, I would like to draw the attention of delegations to the resolution adopted, on the initiative of Kazakhstan, in December 2009 at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly and under which today, 29 August, was declared the International Day against Nuclear Tests. This day is highly symbolic for Kazakhstan and the international community. Exactly 70 years ago, the first nuclear explosion took place in the former Semipalatinsk test site in Kazakhstan. More than 450 nuclear tests took place in the Semipalatinsk site, the consequences of which on human health and the environment are still being dealt with by my country. Forty-two years later, on 29 August 1991, the first President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, in response to the massive anti-nuclear grass-roots movement, made a historic decision to shut down the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. This decisive and bold move was made even stronger when Kazakhstan voluntarily gave up 1,400 nuclear warheads, the world’s fourth largest nuclear arsenal, which it had inherited on the break-up of the Soviet Union. These steps have been followed by a series of multilateral measures to end nuclear testing.

Kazakhstan has been one of the most tireless supporters of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In 2006, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia was agreed on by the five countries of the region. More recently, Kazakhstan became the host to the International Atomic Energy Agency’s low enriched uranium bank. Still more efforts are needed to constantly remind ourselves of the hard lessons of the past

and bring us closer to a world free of nuclear weapons. An obvious lack of progress in nuclear disarmament in recent decades led to the initiative of 122 United Nations Member States to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Kazakhstan ratified the Treaty last month, and the instrument of ratification will be deposited with the United Nations Secretariat in New York today.

In addition, the Nazarbayev Prize for a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World and Global Security was awarded today in Nur-Sultan to the late Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Yukiya Amano, and the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, Lassina Zerbo.

During the ceremony, the first President Nursultan Nazarbayev called on the global community to abandon nuclear weapons and nuclear testing. My country is also continuing its efforts to create a permanent mechanism of cooperation among all existing nuclear-weapon-free zones. A meeting on fostering cooperation and enhancing consultation mechanisms among such zones started in Nur-Sultan yesterday.

Against this backdrop, I would like to invite you all to join us for a panel discussion on cooperation among nuclear-weapon-free zones on Monday, 2 September, from 1 to 2.30 p.m. in room XXVII. The invitations have been sent to your delegations. The event is organized by our Mission, together with the Basel Peace Office and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. We are also grateful to Director-General Tatiana Valovaya for her support and personal involvement in the event on Monday. We look forward to seeing you all on Monday there.

Thank you very much for your attention.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Kazakhstan for her statement. I recognize the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Baghaei Hamaneh (Islamic Republic of Iran): Thank you Mr. President. As regards paragraph 9 (b), on participants in the work of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like just to emphasize and highlight the point that inclusion and adoption of this paragraph in the report shall not in any way imply or be interpreted as recognition of Israel. Thank you.

The President: I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

Dear colleagues, I would now like to thank you very much for sharing your comments today. All your valuable comments and all the amendments will of course be taken into account, and on the basis of our consultation today it is my intention to ask the secretariat to circulate a clean copy, a second revision, of the draft report before our next plenary meeting, which will take place on Tuesday, 3 September, at 10 a.m.

I thank you very much. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.