

Conference on Disarmament

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 6 February 2020, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Rachid Belbaki (Algeria)

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The President (*spoke in French*): I call to order the 1527th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Ladies and gentlemen, at this meeting, I would first like to give the floor to those speakers who wish to make statements to the plenary. Once everybody on the list of speakers has spoken, I intend to move to an informal setting to allow an exchange of views on part of a set of documents – namely, the revised version of the non-paper on the draft proposal for the Conference's 2020 programme of work, which was the subject of the email sent yesterday by the secretariat. A hard copy of the draft will be made available to you for the meeting in the informal setting.

Delegations may take the opportunity of the informal setting to exchange views on the appointment of the coordinators of the subsidiary bodies and the special coordinator, as well as on the timetable. I will then close the informal meeting to return to the formal plenary meeting and give the floor to delegations that request it. Distinguished colleagues, I would now like to turn to the list of speakers for today and give the floor to the Ambassador of France.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, everyone.

Mr. President, I would like to say a few words about the exercise in transparency engaged in by my country on 4 and 5 February in the lead-up to the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

At a seminar organized jointly with the Fondation pour la recherche stratégique, the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, France presented its draft national report on the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The purpose of the seminar, which was attended by representatives of over 70 States parties from various regional groups, research centres and non-governmental organizations, was to collect comments and criticisms with a view to improving the report. France is aware of its special responsibilities as a nuclear-weapon State. As such, it attaches particular importance to transparency, which it sees as a means of building confidence. Transparency should lead to a process of dialogue between all parties concerned that can help clear up misunderstandings and that gives my country a chance to lay out in detail its vision and its record of implementing the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. France decided to produce an extensive and substantial national report. This shows the efforts it made to achieve transparency, which made it possible in the end to establish predictability, avoid misunderstandings and strengthen strategic stability. The comments made by participants in the course of the daylong seminar were rich, detailed and constructive. They all welcomed this initiative by France just a few months before the Review Conference. Our aim now is to incorporate as far as possible the contributions received into the final version, which, we hope, will satisfy not only the States parties to the Treaty but also members of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President, transparency and the confidence it inspires can go hand in hand with concrete action. Yesterday, immediately after the seminar, ambassadors to the Conference were invited to visit the facilities, in Pierrelatte and Marcoule, where fissile materials were formerly produced for military purposes. The visit was organized jointly by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission (CEA), with the support of the Ministry of the Armed Forces, which provided a Strategic Air Command plane to transport the delegation from Geneva to Istres. The idea was to show what my country's commitment to transparency in matters of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation looks like in practice: after a day of discussions on transparency and on the draft report on the implementation by France of its obligations under the Treaty, our partners were able to see for themselves a practical example of France's commitment, as the only State in the world to have irreversibly dismantled its facilities for the enrichment of uranium and plutonium for military purposes. A wide range of high-level participants – with representatives of 36 countries – took part in the visit. At the Pierrelatte facility (Orano Tricastin), the Director of the CEA Materials and Non-Proliferation Programme and the Orano teams explained the different stages of the operation to dismantle the former

uranium-enrichment plant. The gaseous diffusion plant consisted of four units of decreasing size, corresponding to four levels of increasing uranium enrichment, spread over 12 hectares. Delegations were able to see that the low-enrichment plant had been completely and irreversibly dismantled; the dismantling process had been completed in 2010, while the removal of radioactive waste and its transfer to the final storage sites is due to be completed in 2020. During the afternoon visit to the Marcoule CEA facility, the progress made in cleaning up and dismantling the former UP1 reprocessing plant was on show. This plant reprocessed the radioactive fuel produced by the nuclear reactors, extracting plutonium and recovering unused uranium. The CEA presented several examples of the state-of-the-art technologies developed to meet the needs of this exceptional work-in-progress, which should be completed, at a cost of €10 billion, by 2040.

That, Mr President, is what we wanted to say. We wanted to stress that France's commitment to transparency is not just lip service. It takes practical form in a spirit of cooperation and constructive dialogue. Thank you.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador of France for his statement. Are there any other delegations wishing to take the floor? That does not appear to be the case. I will now suspend the meeting and move to an informal setting. As you know, for technical reasons, the secretariat will need a few moments, for which I ask for your indulgence.

The meeting was suspended at 10.20 a.m. and resumed at 11.30 a.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): Is there any delegation that would like to take the floor in this formal meeting? That does not appear to be the case. Dear colleagues, I would like to thank you once again for the comments and suggestions you have made and to assure you once again that, together with the five other Presidents of the session, I will endeavour to take them into consideration. I invite the delegations that wish to do so to contact me bilaterally if they still have issues they would like to discuss with the presidency. The next plenary meeting will be held on Thursday, 12 February, at 10 a.m., in this chamber. Thank you.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.