

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand five hundred and eighty-ninth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 17 August 2021, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Frank Tressler..... (Chile)

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The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call to order the 1589th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. It is an honour for Chile to assume the presidency of the Conference. I propose that the first item on this morning's agenda should be my remarks as President of the Conference, during which I will give an overview of our plans for this presidency and present the draft annual report of the Conference, a first version of which was circulated yesterday under the symbol CD/WP.636. After that, I will give the floor to any delegation that wishes to speak.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to begin my remarks by reiterating my delegation's gratitude for, and recognition of, the excellent work done and leadership demonstrated by the preceding presidencies, held by Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon and Canada. Each of them faced specific challenges and addressed them with rigorous and sincere commitment. We hope that we, too, will be able to face up to these challenges.

I am honoured to once again assume the position of President of the Conference, ten years after Chile last held the presidency. Allow me to share with you our view of this body's work and challenges over that period.

The Conference provokes mixed feelings. On one hand, we recognize its mandate as the foremost negotiating forum on multilateral disarmament as reflected by the principal outcomes of its work, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Its potential is enormous.

However, precisely because we recognize the importance of this body, we cannot hide our frustration at the stagnation of our work and at that persistent inertia, well into the third decade of the twenty-first century.

As a number of delegations have warned repeatedly, this forum has become a talking shop and its main task, namely the negotiation of international legal instruments on disarmament, has yet to be undertaken. Chile cannot, therefore, deny the facts: we are not fulfilling our mandate. In that connection, Chile has previously expressed its concern in relation to the core items of the agenda, namely that, with regard to nuclear disarmament in particular, the stalemate in this forum obliged us to take part in a special process outside of this body to negotiate a legally binding international instrument banning nuclear weapons. This reflects the belief held by the vast majority of States and citizens of the international community that there cannot be lasting and stable peace while some countries insist on entrusting their security to a system based on the threat of using the most dangerous weapons of mass destruction ever created.

Although we welcome proposals to combat the proliferation of nuclear weapons, it is our view that, in order for these initiatives to be successful, they should be accompanied by concrete measures towards the elimination of such weapons. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has impacted our agenda, for example postponing the tenth NPT Review Conference. Undoubtedly, we must recognize its fundamental role as the backbone of the international legal system in the field of nuclear non-proliferation. However, we have not made sufficient progress in implementing article VI on nuclear disarmament. Similarly, some very worrying situations persist, such as some States' resistance to acceding to the Treaty and the ongoing challenges related to its regulations.

Another matter is the pressing need to reach an agreement to ensure that nuclear-weapon States do not threaten to use their weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. Chile considers that such negative security assurances are a fundamental step towards reducing the threat posed by nuclear weapons with a view to their total elimination. It is also concerning that the major nuclear powers have kept their operational systems on high alert, thereby increasing considerably the risk that nuclear arms will be used and that an irreversible nuclear confrontation will take place with catastrophic consequences for humanity and our entire planet.

There is also the risk of a possible arms race in outer space. We have expressed our support for the negotiation of a treaty banning the weaponization of outer space. Despite the fact that the Group of Governmental Experts on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, in which Chile has also participated, was unable to reach a consensus, we have continued to participate in diplomatic discussions. For my country this is an issue of central

importance for the future of global security. In view of this, we must continue to support it and support initiatives that call for international dialogue, as exemplified by our participation in the Secretary-General's call based on General Assembly resolution 75/36 on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours, sponsored by the United Kingdom.

We have an urgent duty to resume the substantive work of the Conference, since the emergence of new technologies and their impact on the items on its agenda will mean that new challenges are added to the issues yet to be resolved. Likewise, attacks on the disarmament machinery have led to the dismantling of agreements and of the international treaties that underpin it.

We have a moral and humanitarian obligation to future generations to seek agreements that guarantee international peace and security. We must build a better world with selflessness and cooperation. Working in this way means being aware of the need to compromise, and any consensus means being flexible and open to others' positions. It is a moral imperative, and our society and citizens are observing our behaviour in relation to this obligation.

Consensus has been seen as a barrier. However, I believe that it is also what has lent our previous agreements strength and sustainability. What we must bear in mind is that "consensus" and "veto" are separate concepts; we must learn that to seek consensus is to seek common agreements that allow us to uphold our national interests while preserving international peace and security.

Colleagues, despite these feelings of frustration and discouragement, in truth, reality prevails. The Conference is an enduring tool, and it is the tool that we have available to us. For that reason we cannot fall into complacency; on the contrary, we must strengthen our commitment to our work. This year has borne witness to that. The first three presidencies did their utmost to negotiate a programme of work acceptable to all member States. However, the divisions and deep mistrust proved stronger. The lack of a programme of work is merely a symptom of a situation that prevents us from making progress towards our common goal, working collaboratively while defending national interests and, at the same time, achieving a solid and lasting peace.

Today, Chile assumes the presidency of the Conference with the responsibility of negotiating its final report and the resolution to be submitted to the General Assembly. Our approach will be pragmatic and endeavour to reflect the views of this Conference honestly and transparently. To that effect, we have seen merit in the initial approach to the final report, which will seek to provide an unqualified reflection of the facts. In any case, this draft report is a joint creation by all the members of the Conference; we must all, therefore, contribute and work to find a text that represents each and every one of us. This cannot be a text by a single group. That is our desired result. Nevertheless, this approach will only be useful with the cooperation and flexibility of all member States.

The final report is not the place to reopen debates with which we are all familiar, nor to revive disagreements that have not been resolved over the years. The final report will not aim to satisfy everyone, but, through a minimalist approach, to leave everyone equally dissatisfied. Thus, we will avoid deepening the differences that we have witnessed, including those that are of particular interest to my delegation.

With this in mind, and as I announced last Thursday, the plan of work for the next four weeks will be as follows: formal plenary meetings will be held on Tuesdays, 17, 24, 31 August and 7 September, subject to confirmation by the secretariat. To these formal meetings we will add an as yet undetermined number of informal meetings and bilateral consultations, depending on the progress made in the negotiations. My delegation will always keep the doors open to respectful and constructive dialogue. My delegation has also organized a formal plenary thematic discussion meeting on women's participation in international security from 3 to 5 p.m. on 26 August. The concept note for that event will be circulated in the coming days by the secretariat.

We reiterate our call to all members of this central body for multilateral diplomacy on disarmament to demonstrate our political will and to conclude our 2021 session in the best

possible way. We hope that during the 2022 session we will be able to make real progress on the urgent common tasks in the field of disarmament and that we will be able, together, to preserve the relevance and credibility of this Conference. Thank you very much.

I conclude these remarks as President, and now give the floor to any delegations that wish to participate. The Ambassador of China has the floor.

Mr. Li Song (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, the Chinese delegation would like to extend its warm congratulations to you on assuming the rotating presidency of the Conference. We will give you our full support in your work.

China will assume the first rotating presidency of the Conference next year, and I believe that our support for your work during this year's last rotating presidency will give us ample sustenance with which to fully prepare ourselves for our work in next year's initial stage of the Conference. We are prepared to actively support all aspects of your work, including leading the Conference's membership to agree on this year's annual report, thus laying a solid foundation for the Conference's work to begin smoothly next year. We are also willing to take an active part in all the plenary meetings that you might organize.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of China for his words. The floor is open to any delegations that wish to comment on the draft report that was circulated yesterday. I understand that these may still be preliminary observations, but nevertheless I call on you to express your initial thoughts on this report. I give the floor to the Ambassador of Argentina.

Mr. Villegas (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, as this is the first time that my delegation has taken the floor under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of your role in this Conference on Disarmament. My delegation is certain that, under your effective leadership, the Conference will succeed in adopting its report to the First Committee, as well as in holding the discussions that you have organized, such as the formal plenary meeting to be held next Thursday, 26 August, on the participation and role of women in international security, a subject that my delegation considers extremely timely, especially after the regrettable failure of this Conference to adopt the draft decision submitted by the Ambassador of Canada to amend the rules of procedure to reflect parity between women and men in assuming different functions and positions in the Conference.

My delegation would like to thank you and the secretariat for your efforts in preparing the first version of the Conference's draft report to the First Committee, contained in document CD/WP.636. As a general comment, my delegation considers the draft to be a very good basis for beginning our discussions on the final report, and we would also like to thank you for including a reference to the presentation that my delegation gave on 9 March together with the delegation of Brazil under its presidency on the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Agency's creation.

Lastly, allow me, as a representative of Argentina, to express my pleasure at seeing a representative of a brother country presiding over this Conference. Together with the Republic of Chile, we have succeeded in consolidating in South America an area of peace and cooperation free from weapons of mass destruction, overcoming the conflict that had divided us in the past. We look forward to an excellent presidency, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Many thanks to the Ambassador of Argentina for his kind words. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Before beginning my comments, Mr. President, let me congratulate you on assuming the role of President of the Conference on Disarmament. I wish to pledge my delegation's support as you go about conducting your duties.

Mr. President, with regard to the draft of the final report, I think it is a very good basis for negotiation. However, there are some missing factual elements that I believe need to be inserted into the document. I can send them to you in writing, if you so wish. Thank you for producing this report – it is never an easy task to come up with a report that can garner consensus. My delegation is flexible, but we do have some important principles we think

need to be adhered to in this text. We look forward to working with you and your team. If you would like me to elaborate further, I am more than happy to do that now, or I can do that at some subsequent point.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of the United States. Please let us know what you would like to incorporate in the report, so that we can discuss it at a later meeting. I now give the floor to the delegate of Germany.

Ms. Mikesha (Germany) (*spoke in Spanish*): Firstly, Mr. President, congratulations to Chile on its assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament.

(*spoke in English*)

You can count on our support. We thank you for providing a draft of the annual report. We consider your approach, of preparing a rather short, concise report, to be very good and pragmatic. We consider the annual report to be a routine task and it should contain no more and no less than the necessary elements. We hope that we can accomplish this task all together, in an efficient manner. This draft seems a good basis to us for this task, so we thank you for it.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much to the delegate of Germany for her kind words. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Nigeria.

Mr. Adejola (Nigeria) (*via video link*): Mr. President, let me echo the warm sentiments expressed by my colleagues and congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We know that it is a hard task, but a task that must be accomplished. In this regard, I assure you of my team's support for your presidency and I also wish to let you know that we will be respectful and constructive in our dialogue.

On that note, I would also like to speak a little to the report submitted yesterday. All the sections of the report are very concise and factual. That said, we would also welcome inputs that would enrich what we have, going forward.

The draft represents a good basis for further consideration. I want to thank you, the team and the secretariat for having prepared this – it is not an easy task. Going forward, we promise to engage constructively and to support your presidency.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much to the Ambassador of Nigeria for his kind words. I give the floor to the delegate of Mexico.

Mr. Martínez Ruiz (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and, of course, to express the willingness of Mexico to work closely with you and to support you to ensure that your leadership is a success.

My delegation is extremely pleased that a Latin American country, and a country that is also a member of the Group of 21, has taken on this task, and we believe that we should follow the approach that you have proposed, a pragmatic approach, an approach that seeks consensus to conclude the work of this Conference with as few surprises as possible.

I thank you, your team and the secretariat for the presentation of the Conference's draft final report. It seems to us that, as others have said, it provides a very good basis for achieving consensus and concluding our work, and we are open to working in a constructive spirit to adopt it. I also want to express our support for the formal plenary meeting to be held next week on the role of women in international security. We believe that this is an extremely relevant issue. Mexico has adopted a feminist foreign policy and has promoted this issue in the various international security forums; we will participate substantively to ensure a rich debate during that meeting. I would like to emphasize our support for your leadership.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much to the delegate of Mexico. I give the floor to the Ambassador of Ecuador.

Mr. Izquierdo (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to express the great satisfaction felt by my delegation and me personally at seeing you preside over the Conference on Disarmament at this particularly delicate and important stage. Rest assured that you have our full backing and support in the responsibility that you have taken on.

I congratulate you on the content of your remarks this morning which summarized the central issues on the disarmament agenda, as well as your positive attitude in encouraging consensus-seeking. We recognize the value of the draft report that you have presented to us, and my delegation offers you its full support in the process of negotiating that document. In principle, the report contains elements that enjoy the full support of my delegation. I therefore wish you every success with that task.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of Ecuador and now give the floor to the delegate of Australia.

Ms. Hill (Australia): Let me begin, Mr. President, by congratulating you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of the full support of my delegation. I would also like to thank you for outlining your plans for your presidency, which we welcome. In particular, we welcome the meeting that you have planned for the discussion on women's participation and role in international security. My delegation thinks this is a very important topic and we very much look forward to that meeting.

I would also like to thank you for your work on the draft report and for circulating it. We think that it provides a good start for our discussion and we look forward to engaging on that constructively. My delegation does have a few specific points that we would like to raise in that context. I will not go into all the details now; I am happy to provide some suggestions directly to you in writing. Nevertheless, I would like to flag that these do include the drafting of section II.G, paragraph 23, which discusses the draft decision on the technical update to the Conference's rules of procedure to reflect the equality of men and women. This was a very important conversation that the Conference had, and I think that the outcome of the Conference's consideration of that draft decision should be reflected as a factual matter in the report – we will be happy to provide specific suggestions in writing. I would like to reassure you of the full support and constructive engagement of my delegation in the drafting of the report.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank to the delegate of Australia and look forward to receiving any suggestions that you wish to communicate to us in writing. I give the floor to the delegate of Canada.

Mr. Fetz (Canada): Mr. President, let me congratulate you on taking on the presidency. Canada is very grateful for the support we received from you during our presidency, as one of the six member States that have occupied the presidency this session.

Like other delegations, we think that your report represents a very good basis for achieving a consensus report. We would have liked to see a few more details in the report, but we can accept your request for a factual, bare-bones report, as that is most likely to achieve consensus.

Like some other delegations, we also welcome the plenary meeting you have planned for next week on the role of women in international security. We thank you again for your draft report and pledge our full support to you during these deliberations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much to the delegate of Canada. I give the floor to the delegate of Japan.

Mr. Matsui (Japan): Since this is the first time I have taken the floor in this meeting, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency. You can rest assured that Japan fully supports you and will contribute positively to the activities of the Conference on Disarmament in the coming months.

With regard to the draft final report, since it is a good and pragmatic basis for reaching consensus, Japan supports it and will participate in the discussion on it.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you for your statement. I give the floor to the delegate of Spain.

Mr. Manglano Aboín (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I would like to join other delegations in congratulating you on your appointment, and I would also like to thank you for the information that you have provided today on your plans for the coming weeks, particularly the calendar of plenaries that you presented and also the formal thematic plenary

meeting on the role of women in international security; as you know, this is a subject to which my delegation pays special attention, and we are therefore particularly grateful to you.

Regarding the draft annual report, we believe the draft that you have presented to us is an excellent starting point. We believe that it is, as they say in United Nations parlance, fit for purpose; it fits very well with the needs of this forum. My delegation, like some others, feels that some references are missing, but we believe that we will be able to work on it in the coming weeks, and we are looking forward to cooperating with you to that end. I reiterate that my delegation and I are at your disposal to facilitate the continuation of your work.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. I give the floor to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): Mr. President, let me begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency and, of course, you can be assured of my delegation's full support. Thank you also for setting out so clearly your intentions for your tenure as President, which we strongly welcome and endorse. We look forward to working with you on everything you have set out.

As far as the report is concerned, I am waiting for full instructions from my capital, but we can certainly support the general approach that you have set out for a factual report which, as you said, reflects in an honest and transparent way what transpired in this room over the year. Other delegations have mentioned some of the issues, which I am sure we will discuss further in the coming weeks. Like others, we will have some suggestions on how best to reflect what happened in the room but, broadly speaking, we can certainly support your approach and you can depend on our support.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Ambassador. I give the floor to the delegate of Bulgaria.

Mr. Tomov (Bulgaria): Mr. President, allow me, on behalf of the Bulgarian delegation, to congratulate you and your team wholeheartedly on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We support the transparent, concise, pragmatic and comprehensive approach that you announced and are ready to support you in all your future endeavours.

We thank you for scheduling the thematic discussion on women's participation and role in international security, which we think will be very valuable. We wish you every success for the accomplishment of your duties.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. I give the floor to the delegate of Egypt.

Mr. Elsayed (Egypt): Mr. President, allow me to start by congratulating you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at this final, critical phase. My delegation is very glad to see Chile assuming this important responsibility and we are confident that you will lead our work in the best possible manner.

As you rightly said, the report is usually not completely satisfactory to all delegations. However, I believe that our work on the report this year should not take up much of our time or effort, for obvious reasons.

Mr. President, I would like to thank you for the draft report that you disseminated yesterday. We believe it is quite straightforward and it provides us with an excellent basis and a solid foundation to garner consensus. We have some remarks that we believe is important to reflect, and we will share them with your delegation in writing.

I would also like to thank you for announcing your plan to organize a plenary meeting dedicated to discussing the role of women in international security and disarmament. It is an excellent way to end our work this year. Lastly, I want to assure you of my delegation's full support. We look forward to working with you to finalize this report professionally and swiftly.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Lim Sang-beom (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, at the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. I would like to convey my sincere thanks to the outgoing presidency of Canada, especially Ambassador Norton for her professionalism during her presidency.

We welcome and support your plan to have a thematic discussion on the role of women in international security. South Korea has been a very strong supporter of this issue.

We consider that the draft report is a very good basis for further consultations and negotiations. We will cooperate with you fully and will be very constructive.

Lastly, in paragraph 7, we want to slightly amend the title of our Vice-Minister who attended the high-level segment, but we will communicate on that in written form with the secretariat.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Ambassador, and we will take note of that small correction to the name. I give the floor to the Ambassador of India.

Mr. Sharma (India): Mr. President, India congratulates you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and is pleased to see you as representative of Chile, a country with which India has warm and close bilateral relations. I also wish to acknowledge the presence of Ms. Tatiana Valovaya, Secretary-General of the Conference, among us today.

My delegation would like to thank you for sharing the draft report. It is a matter of regret that one more year has passed by without us having agreed to a programme of work. However, that does not mean that the distinguished presidencies before you did not make genuine efforts to that end. It is just that the Conference, as a collective body, was unable to achieve consensus.

Mr. President, you refer to consensus as a rule of procedure of the Conference and its importance in the context of our work. For India, consensus is the most important principle, which allows all members of the Conference to adopt decisions that have a universal and binding effect. Any derogation from the rule of consensus would not be acceptable to India.

While the Conference has not been able to agree on a programme of work, that does not mean that it has not been active. All the presidencies have tried to move our agenda forward in various ways, including through thematic debates, as is reflected in the draft report.

My delegation has one small comment regarding the language of paragraph 54. It gives an impression, albeit false, that the Conference on Disarmament is not a major disarmament body and that its dates are being adjusted to take account of another major disarmament and non-proliferation meeting. Let me clarify that India does not object to the adjustment of the schedule and fully supports any adjustment that might have to be made. However, that must be reflected in a way that is not prejudicial to the importance and primacy of the Conference on Disarmament. Also, while the report does mention that this is being done exceptionally, we would like to include a sentence indicating that this does not create a precedent for the future.

Our detailed comments will be shared with you once we receive feedback from the capital. My delegation assures you of our full support and cooperation as you guide our work as the final and concluding presidency this year.

In cricket, the opening player gets the maximum credit and is named, but in a relay race, it is the last player who gets the credit. We believe that you are that player. You have our best wishes for success.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Ambassador, for your kind words, and we look forward to receiving those suggestions in writing so that we can incorporate them into the draft. I give the floor to the delegate of South Africa.

Mr. September (South Africa): Mr. President, like the delegations who have taken the floor before me and on behalf of my delegation, I would like to congratulate Chile on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to assure you of our constructive engagement and our support during your presidency. We share the

sentiments that you have expressed this morning and welcome the workplan that you have presented.

We would like to thank you for the draft report. We believe that it is a good point of departure. It is concise and factual and provides a sound basis for our work. We will work with you to ensure consensus on the report. We wish you every success.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. I give the floor to the delegate of France.

Ms. Delaroche (France) (*spoke in French*): I will begin, Mr. President, by welcoming your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. You can, of course, count on my delegation's full support, including in your task of negotiating the Conference's annual report, and I am sure that we can count on your skill in that regard. We support the approach that you have adopted for your presidency, in particular next week's plenary meeting on the subject of women and international security, as well as the approach that you have adopted for the Conference's annual report, favouring, as in previous years, a report of a purely technical nature. Like other speakers, we have a few minor comments to make in relation to sections II.C, II.G and II.I to ensure that they are as specific and factual as possible; we will send those comments to you in writing. We also encourage you to provide specific references for the documents cited in section II.C, in conjunction with the secretariat – I am thinking in particular of the records and annexes. That will provide a more concrete basis for instructions from our capitals.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. I give the floor to the Ambassador of the Netherlands.

Mr. Gabriëlse (Netherlands): Mr. President, let me start by congratulating you on assuming the presidency; you can count on the support of my delegation. I would also like to thank the outgoing President, Ambassador Norton, for all her hard work. We have very much appreciated her hard work and her presidency.

Thank you very much for your programme of work. We fully support it, particularly next week's item on women and international security.

With respect to the annual report, we support your approach to have a factual report. As we have not yet received instructions from our capital, we might come back to some issues, particularly in section II.G, but also concerning the discussion we had on working methods and all the substantive discussions we had within the Conference on Disarmament, for instance, on the issue of subsidiary groups, which has yet not been mentioned in the report.

I wish you every success during your presidency.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Ambassador. I give the floor to the delegate of Austria.

Mr. Sternat (Austria): Mr. President, let me start by congratulating you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of my country's full support in your endeavours.

We also want to thank you for sharing the draft report yesterday and for outlining your approach this morning. Like other delegations, Austria warmly welcomes the formal plenary meeting planned for next week on women's participation and their role in international security.

Austria wishes to make a formal correction to the title of Mr. Alexander Schallenberg, and has already submitted the correct title in writing to the secretariat.

We wish you all the best for the coming weeks.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, and we look forward to receiving that correction from you. I give the floor to the delegate of Algeria.

Mr. Berkat (Algeria) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, on behalf of the Algerian delegation, allow me to extend our warm congratulations to you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Rest assured of my delegation's full support for the success of your presidency.

My delegation would like to thank you for the draft report that you have circulated and that we have transmitted to our capital. As a preliminary remark, we, like other delegations, consider this a good basis for our work. We are willing to contribute constructively to collective efforts to finalize this draft.

Lastly, my delegation would like to thank you for the programme and the pragmatic approach that you have presented.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, and I congratulate you on your Spanish. I give the floor to the delegate of Pakistan.

Mr. Omar (Pakistan): Mr. President, on behalf of delegation of Pakistan, I congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of our full cooperation and support.

We thank you for sharing your plans for the organization of our work in the coming weeks. We also thank you and your team for the early circulation of the first draft of the Conference report and remain confident that, under your able guidance, we will be able to reach agreement on the annual report in a timely manner.

My delegation also wishes to share some preliminary comments regarding the draft. We see your draft as a good basis to start negotiations. However, in our view, there are a few paragraphs that may need some amendments to align them with the factual manner of reporting and our previous practice in preparing reports of the Conference.

As you stated, Mr. President, this report is a joint endeavour and we also see it as such. We also agree that we should avoid revisiting differences that have not found solutions. Our advice would be to approach matters with a view to including solutions that already exist in previous reports. We would be happy to discuss specific aspects when we engage on the text in earnest in due course. I assure you of my delegation's constructive engagement in the process to arrive at consensus.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, and I thank you for demonstrating a constructive spirit. I now give the floor to the delegate of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Ju Yong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, my delegation joins with the previous speakers in congratulating you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at this critical time. You have my delegation's full support in carrying out your duties.

My delegation expresses its thanks to you for circulating the draft report, which seems to be a good basis for negotiation. I hope that, under your leadership, the Conference will successfully conclude its work this year by agreeing on a report that is acceptable to every member. I would like to conclude by underlining the importance of consensus in the work of the Conference.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. I give the floor to the delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran) (*via video link*): Mr. President, let me join other delegations in congratulating you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Rest assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Let me also thank you, your team and the secretariat for the work that has gone into providing this draft report. My delegation has sent this draft to the capital and we are awaiting instructions. We will share those comments later with you and the secretariat.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. I give the floor to the delegate of Iraq.

Mr. Al-Haidari (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. You can count on the full support of the delegation of Iraq in carrying out your tasks. I would also like to express appreciation for the efforts made by Canada during its presidency of the Conference.

With regard to the draft final report that has been presented, I believe that it is a factual and balanced report that can form the basis for our discussions with a view to adopting it by consensus.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, I would like to begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency. We are well aware of the responsibility that falls on Chile, of achieving agreement on the final report of the Conference, and we understand the complexity of that task. We are confident that, with your professional experience and the support of your highly professional team and the Conference secretariat, you will be able to bring us to the consensus that is so needed and expected by all delegations. In this regard, you can count on the constructive assistance of our delegation in all your efforts.

We support the pragmatic approach you have proposed for achieving agreement on the report and believe that the draft you have presented is a good basis for our work at the end of this session of the Conference.

Our delegation also finds the work plan you presented for your presidency to be acceptable. We consider the topic you have proposed for the plenary meeting to be very important, not only for the Conference, but in general towards an appropriate and comprehensive consideration of the important issue of the equal participation of men and women in international multilateral forums dealing with international security, arms control and disarmament. The Russian Federation does not simply support United Nations efforts in that area, but is taking real steps to ensure that women's participation in the work of the bodies I have mentioned is increased, that any aspects which impose certain restrictions on women's participation in their work are considered and that some practical steps are taken.

As for the report itself, we, like other delegations, have comments on the text. Naturally, we will submit them to you in writing, but in that regard I would like to say that I think it is very important, if we are to reach consensus, that we maintain transparency in our work, so I would ask you and the secretariat to circulate the suggestions you receive for improvements to the text, so that all delegations are aware of the changes made or proposed by States. I think that will make your job easier and be very helpful to the delegations, as it may allow us to avoid excessive discussion here in the room and come to an agreement more quickly on points that we may have doubts about.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much for your support. As you requested, the secretariat will circulate all those proposed amendments and additions to the report. I give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States of America.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, my apologies for taking the floor once again, but since the issue of paragraph 54 was raised by the distinguished Ambassador of India, I thought it important to put forward an observation. This paragraph calls for the Conference to be exceptionally postponed for two weeks. Were the Conference to agree to this, it would in essence be agreeing to altering the rules of procedure. My point is, how can we do that in this particular case, despite having been unable to alter, very technically, a simple update of the rules of procedure to reflect the need to maintain gender neutrality? It seems to me that if we are going to adopt a different approach to altering the rules of procedure in this particular paragraph, then we need to do the same in other cases. That is just an observation. I also take note of the absence in section II.G of a factual reference to the outcome of the debate on gender neutrality – the draft decision.

Mr. President, I look forward to working with you and your team and other colleagues to produce a very factual report that can garner consensus.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Ambassador. The delegate of the Syrian Arab Republic has requested the floor.

Mr. Ali (Syrian Arab Republic) (*via video link, spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, I congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament

and I wish you well in conducting the work of this last part of the 2021 session of the Conference.

Mr. President, my delegation has read the draft annual report with interest and sees it as a starting point for our work and towards arriving at a consensus. We will make specific comments on it in due course. By way of general remarks, we support the adoption of a concise and factual document that reflects the outcome of consultations with member States and accurately reflects what has happened during this year's session. While we appreciate the initiatives and working methods adopted by the successive presidencies in 2021, we advise caution when it comes to including in the report any positions put forward by individual States on which specific decisions have not been adopted by the Conference.

For the sake of transparency, the document presented for negotiation at the Conference must contain all relevant information, including the list of official documents to be annexed to the report, so as to ensure that the annual report and its annexes do not contain anything that has been added subsequent to its adoption by the Conference, as has happened previously.

In conclusion, let me assure you that my delegation stands ready to work with you and the rest of the member States to reach a consensus on the draft annual report and on the draft resolution to be submitted to the General Assembly.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. I give the floor to the Ambassador of India.

Mr. Sharma (India): Mr. President, I merely wish to clarify that my delegation did not wish to create any obstructions or any problems for any delegation.

When I mentioned paragraph 54, I just made a brief point because it refers to a major disarmament and non-proliferation meeting. In India's view, there are other major disarmament and non-proliferation meetings and I do not recall any precedent where we have postponed the Conference on Disarmament because of other major disarmament and non-proliferation meetings, such as the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention or the Chemical Weapons Convention. Rest assured that I had no intention of creating any issues for the Conference or for you.

Now this point has been raised, we should find a way to handle this part, but my delegation fully supports the adjustment of dates and we are very respectful of all meetings on disarmament and non-proliferation.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Ambassador, for your flexibility. I give the floor to the delegate of Turkey.

Mr. Aslanargun (Turkey): Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the final presidency of the Conference on Disarmament of 2021. I assure you of Turkey's full support and cooperation in your endeavours to advance the work of the Conference. I would also like to thank the Canadian presidency for the work they have carried out.

Mr. President, we appreciate your efforts in preparing the draft annual report for this year. While I have not yet received instructions from the capital, as paragraphs 12 and 13 reflect our common understanding reached on last year's report, I can say that we agree on that. I also want to thank Ms. Homolková from the European Union delegation for her constructive approach.

These are hectic days for disarmament in Geneva, so we hope to reach a consensus on this draft, without politicization of the meetings, as soon as possible, to then be able deal with other issues in the disarmament arena.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. It appears that we have come to the end of this round of statements. I would just like to share with you a small reflection before we finish. The success or failure of this presidency, or the achievement of consensus, does not depend on us, on this presidency; it is the work of us all. The presidency is merely a facilitator. I therefore call on each and every one of you to demonstrate generosity

and flexibility, since the success or failure of this work will belong to each and every one of us.

In that sense, we are in the early stages. I know that many delegations are consulting their capitals on the text and awaiting instructions. This week we will focus on receiving suggestions on language and any amendments that you may wish to make. I would particularly like to I reiterate that, if we want a document that enjoys consensus, we must leave to one side our national positions, our national interests, and strive for factual, simple and direct language. Much of the draft document that you have today simply replicates the document that was agreed upon last year. I therefore hope that we can work on only those points that are new, while seeking consensus at all times. I thank you all for the flexibility that you have shown. We look forward to receiving from you any suggestions from your capitals with regard to amendments or improvements to the language in the text.

It seems that the representative of the Russian Federation wishes to take the floor before we finish. You have the floor.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to make a small announcement: tomorrow at 1.15 p.m. in room XXVI, we will present the Russian draft resolutions that we intend to present to the First Committee at the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly. I would like to invite all my colleagues to attend this event.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Russian Federation for this invitation. As I announced previously, the next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place on Tuesday, 24 August, at 10 a.m. The secretariat will forward to you copies of any amendments or suggestions submitted by other delegations in relation to the text. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.