

# Conference on Disarmament

English

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**Final record of the one thousand five hundred and ninety-fourth plenary meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 1 September 2021, at 3.10 p.m.

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

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Dear delegates, I call to order the 1594th meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. As we decided this morning, now, this afternoon we will resume our discussion of the draft annual report. The idea is to finish with all comments today. Again, we do not have much time. For the moment, we have managed to reserve rooms for plenary meetings only tomorrow and on Tuesday, 7 September. There are no other days for plenary meetings. If we do not get a room for next Friday, the report has to be agreed on by Tuesday afternoon.

As I said, my idea is to hold bilateral consultations tomorrow morning with the countries that are most interested in these issues so that we can come up with wording that can be agreed on and then to put it to you in the room tomorrow afternoon. We now turn to paragraph 24, the new paragraph 24. Does any delegation wish to take the floor to comment on paragraph 24?

The delegation of Australia has the floor.

**Ms. Hill** (Australia): Mr. President, my delegation did have a comment on paragraph 24. We have no difficulty with the move of this language to its new location, but we note that the reference to the working document CD/2197 has been removed and without that reference the meaning of the sentence is difficult to discern. I think we may need to assist the readers of the report a little on this by giving them a reference to what the meeting that was held on that day was actually about, so I would suggest putting that reference back in.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Australia. In view of my lack of experience in this body, I, too, asked about the removal of that reference and was told that it was removed because it concerned a national document, mentions of which are not usually made in the annual reports of the Conference on Disarmament. That was the explanation I was given. For that reason, the specific reference to that working document was removed. However, the last line says that “discussions are duly reflected in the plenary records”, and I imagine that in those records there is a reference to what was discussed, including that national document. That is the explanation I can give you for now.

In any case, I am willing to follow the Conference’s lead in this respect.

The delegation of France has the floor.

**Ms. Delaroche** (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, my delegation had a similar question, and I thank you for the explanation that you have just given. However, our preference would have been to retain this reference to document CD/PV.2197, since it was to discuss this document that the Canadian presidency of the Conference on Disarmament convened a plenary meeting. Thank you.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. The Ambassador of the United States of America has the floor.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I, too, was surprised by the removal of the reference to document CD/2197 and I think it is important to put a reference to that back in for the benefit of the reader, at a minimum, so that the reader has somewhat of an understanding of what the paragraph is referring to. So I would certainly second what my Australian and French colleagues have said.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. The delegation of the United Kingdom has the floor.

**Mr. Cleobury** (United Kingdom): I will be quick because we have exactly the same comment that this sentence does not make sense really without saying what the meeting was convened to discuss. And, of course, the simplest way to do that is to refer to document CD/2197. So we would support the reinsertion of that reference.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. The delegation of Pakistan has the floor.

**Mr. Omar** (Pakistan): Mr. President, as my delegation stated earlier today, we see your revised draft as an attempt to take on board views from all members, even though we may not be there yet. We can see your efforts in paragraph 24 also as trying to strike a balance between positions. The proposal comes across as having taken cognizance of views expressed

on the notion of calling for formal plenary meetings on national working papers by a group of Conference on Disarmament member States, while at the same time it keeps a reference to the particular plenary meeting in question – in our view, appropriately so – under the relevant heading – that is, “Improved and effective functioning of the Conference”.

We state this view as one of the delegations that held informal bilateral consultations with the President of the Conference in 2020. Our view remains that the core intent of the consultations conducted by the President last year was to try and gather thoughts, views and ideas from members of the Conference on various matters of relevance to our work, with a view towards exploring the potential for improving the functioning of the Conference. We thank the former President for her efforts last year and recognize that her own recollection of various views expressed by member States of the Conference is already a part of last year’s record as a national document.

The discussions in the plenary meeting on the subject this year, as you will recall, Mr. President, were equally broad, and, certainly, delegations expressed their positions on how to advance the work of the Conference and on the areas that they considered relevant to focus on.

Mr. President, your current draft therefore, in our view, does strike that balance. It remains objective and takes into account expressly stated positions. In that sense, my delegation is of the view that it remains the most suitable approach to the matter in our report. Delegations which were not supportive of the consideration of national working papers as subject matter of formal meetings are unlikely to support such references in the report either.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Sir. The Ambassador of the Netherlands has the floor.

**Mr. Gabriëlse** (Netherlands): Mr. President, I think we should place on record that the Chinese delegation rescued the secretariat today. So maybe we can find a consensus on this. I just want to echo the proposal by the representative of Australia and support it. I think every official document, whether it is a national document or one prepared by the presidency, is an official document. It is not written anywhere that the document in question is a national document, so there can be a reference made to it; the sense of the whole meeting was echoed in that document, so I think it should be included.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Ambassador. The representative of Spain has the floor.

**Mr. Manglano Aboín** (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Ambassador. I would like to add my voice to what has already been noted by some delegations about the advisability of reflecting in paragraph 24, the former paragraph 50, the content or at least the topic of the discussions that took place on 10 August. My delegation is of the view that this paragraph, as currently worded, has no added value because it does not help readers or potential readers of the report understand what we discussed on the 10 August meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Thank you.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Sir. The representative of Mexico has the floor.

**Mr. Martínez Ruiz** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. Briefly, although it is taking the floor in its national capacity, the delegation of Mexico, in line with what has already been stated by the delegation of Pakistan, stresses that the Group of 21 has had a clear position since the regional groups held a coordination meeting with the group of the six Presidents of the 2021 session, together with the last President of the 2020 session and the first of the 2022 session, the initial convocation of which was changed to 10 August. We later expressed our views at the informal meeting and then at the formal meeting. The Group of 21’s position on this meeting is thus very clear. We certainly do not agree that the issue remains unclear.

It seems to us that the new location of the paragraph in section G of the report, on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament, makes it clear what the objective was. This location suggests the purpose of the discussions that took place at the

meeting of August 10, and in this sense we would be in full agreement with the wording proposed for paragraph 24. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Elsayed** (Egypt) (*via video link*): Mr. President, I will be very brief as well, along the same lines as my colleagues from Mexico and Pakistan. I believe your proposal puts forward a very eloquent formulation for this paragraph, and all views and positions have been expressed clearly. I think this paragraph is very well balanced in the manner in which you have formulated it, and we wish to keep it in this form.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic has the floor.

**Mr. Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*via video link, spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President. Also very briefly, regarding paragraph 24, we support the text that you have proposed in which the name of the President has been removed, as long as the names of all the Presidents are mentioned in annex 1 of the report.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Sir. There are no further requests to comment on this paragraph. It seems to me that the wording of the paragraph must still be improved. Tomorrow afternoon, then, once we have held bilateral consultations, we will present new wording. I now turn to paragraphs 30, 33, 36, 39, 42, 45 and 48 of section H, which was also amended. The amendments are similar. Are there any delegations that wish to take the floor to comment on these amendments?

If there are no further comments, we can move on to the last paragraph, paragraph 56, which contains a change to the wording that, as I explained, was made after consultations with different delegations.

Basically, it states that the next session of the Conference on Disarmament will begin, in accordance with the rules of procedure, on the established date, 24 January, and then continue again from 8 February to 15 April.

The delegation of Australia has the floor.

**Ms. Hill** (Australia): Mr. President, I am sorry, but I think I am one step behind. I do have a comment on part III, section H, and I think we have skipped ahead. Could I give my comment on that before we proceed to paragraph 56?

This is a section that my delegation suggested, including language essentially to make section H consistent with language that occurs in every other section in part III, and that language simply refers to the fact that, during the general debate of the Conference on Disarmament, delegations expressed their respective positions on the following topics and these positions are duly recorded in the plenary records of the session. We suggested in our written submission that this language should be included, and it isn't clear to me why this language has not been included. It would be helpful if any other positions expressed on that could be either put in writing or expressed during a plenary, because we do think it is important that that language is mapped in this section of the report. The topics discussed that are referred to in section H are very important topics on which many delegations took the time to express their positions, and I think it would be useful for the report to accurately reflect that.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Australia. Do I understand that you are proposing to add a paragraph stating that the discussions are reflected such and such a verbatim record? Have I understood you correctly?

**Ms. Hill** (Australia): Could you repeat your question?

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I just wanted to know whether your exact proposal is to add a paragraph in each of these sections stating that the discussion was reflected in the relevant verbatim record.

**Ms. Hill** (Australia): The suggestion was – as we expressed it in our written submission – simply to include in section H the two sentences which are already included in

every other section in part III of the report, and which simply reflect that delegations expressed their positions and those positions are recorded in the plenary records.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. We have taken note of your proposal. The delegation of the Russian Federation has the floor.

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation): (*spoke in Russian*) Mr. President, like my colleague from Australia, I would like to go back a little bit before we move on to the discussion of paragraph 56.

I would like to touch on paragraphs 52 and 53. In general, we have no objection to the way in which they are worded. They are generally acceptable to us. We are also prepared to consider the suggestion from Australia that these paragraphs be supplemented by language to the effect that the discussions on these topics were appropriately reflected in the verbatim records of the meetings.

However, I would like to make a suggestion that our delegation believes is consistent with the work that we are doing now.

I would like first of all to say that our proposals were sent in writing to the secretariat 15 minutes ago. I hope that the secretariat will circulate them to delegations. However, I would like to voice them right now.

On page 7, after section H, we suggest adding a new section I, entitled “Other issues considered at the Conference on Disarmament”, and moving the current paragraphs 23, 52 and 53 to that section. I will explain the reasoning behind our proposal.

With regard to paragraph 23, we believe that this paragraph does not correspond to the theme stated in the title of the section – namely, improved and effective functioning of the Conference – especially since those States that support the initiative to amend the rules of procedure themselves insist that this is merely a technical change. It is therefore quite clear that it will in no way improve the work of the Conference, much less make it function more effectively. And if we take into account the past discussions, we doubt that they have in any way improved the atmosphere in our Conference or strengthened trust in the forum. That is why we propose that paragraph 23 should be moved to the new section I – which, I repeat, should be added to page 7 after section H – and that paragraphs 52 and 53 should be moved to the same new section I, renumbering them accordingly, of course.

With regard to paragraphs 52 and 53, we believe that the issue of women’s participation in international security issues, and especially arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, and the participation of young people in these issues are certainly important for international relations in general. But we cannot consider these issues to be measures for cessation of the arms race and disarmament, which the Conference on Disarmament is empowered to tackle under its mandate. That is why we propose that these two items should be moved to the new section I.

I hope for understanding from delegations on this issue, and we are ready to discuss this proposal both bilaterally and multilaterally.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation. The Ambassador of the United States of America has the floor.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I was prepared to weigh in on paragraph 56, but given the nature of this proposal from the Russian delegation, I think it is important that I take the floor to make very clear my delegation’s views. I know exactly what our Russian colleague is trying to do here, and my delegation opposes the idea of trying to create a new category, which I see as trying to undermine the substance of the plenary that we had on youth and disarmament and of the plenary that you, Mr. President, hosted on women’s participation and role in international security. I see no fundamental reason why we should make such a change – in essence, put a new heading in there and move these particular two paragraphs as well as the other paragraph that was mentioned into the new section. I do not see the sound justification for doing that. And so, at this point, my delegation cannot support the Russian proposal. I appreciate their effort, but I do see what they are trying to do here, and my delegation cannot support that.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Ambassador. I give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

**Ms. Porta** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to take the floor on paragraph 56, so if other delegations wish to comment on preceding paragraphs, we can come back to paragraph 56 later. Thank you.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Let us try to finish with the proposal made by the Russian Federation. I do not know whether any other delegation would like to comment on it before we move on to paragraph 56. The delegation of France has the floor.

**Ms. Delaroche** (France) (*spoke in French*): I would also like to express a reservation to the proposal that the delegate of the Russian Federation has just made, simply because we believe that the present structure of the report is appropriate, that paragraph 23 belongs in the section relating to the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament, that it is perfectly appropriate for paragraph 23 to be included in this section. I would also like to point out that the wording for section H is very open: "other relevant measures". Involving young persons and women in our work and in negotiations and discussions on international security and disarmament makes sense, and for this reason we would like to keep the structure of the report as it is. Thank you.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. The Ambassador of the Netherlands has the floor.

**Mr. Gabriëlse** (Netherlands): Mr. President, I thought we were on paragraph 56, but it looks like we are going back to paragraph 23, and I hear that a proposal has just been made 15 minutes ago. It complicates our work a little bit, but every delegation has the right to come up with proposals.

My first reaction would be that the proposal is introducing a kind of hierarchy in the subjects we have on the table. For my delegation, women and development and women and peace and development and security issues, and also youth, are very important subjects, so my first reaction is that I do not want to place a hierarchy on subjects in the Conference on Disarmament. If that is the intention of this proposal, we still have to further study it. Of course, we have to see it in writing, but, like the representative of France, we would also like to reserve our position on this proposal.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. We will ask the secretariat to circulate the proposal so that you have time to consider it. Would any other delegation like to take the floor to comment on this topic? The representative of Mexico has the floor, to be followed by the representative of Germany.

**Mr. Martínez Ruiz** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. Briefly, and subject, as other delegations have noted, to seeing it in writing, my delegation would not agree in principle with the proposal made by the delegation of the Russian Federation. It is clear to my delegation that the mention of the discussion we had, which is reflected in paragraph 23, is made in the right place, in section G. It seems to us that that section, on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament, is the right section for a reference to the consideration of a possible technical amendment to the rules of procedure.

And in relation to the discussions mentioned in paragraphs 52 and 53, my delegation, obviously, as well as the large majority of the delegations, made statements in which the importance of involving young people in disarmament matters and incorporating women's perspectives was described as key to progress. The discussions thus seem to us to have centred on issues within the Conference's mandate, so section H strikes us as the right section to mention them in, though we are willing to continue the discussion. Thank you.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. The secretariat has informed me that the proposal has already been circulated and is also being printed to be taken home as homework. Germany has the floor.

**Ms. Mikeska** (Germany): Just a first reaction, because of course we have not seen that proposal – I would say that it seems that all three paragraphs are in the right place actually, and opening up an additional category might complicate things. In any case, I do not see

paragraph 23 and the other topics in paragraph 23 and the other two topics as being in one and the same category. So if we open up a new category, we might have to open up two new ones, which might not be that easy.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. Would any other delegation like to take the floor to comment on this topic? The delegation of Australia has the floor.

**Ms. Hill** (Australia): I can be very brief: it is the view of my delegation that paragraphs 23, 52 and 53 are currently in the appropriate position within the report.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. The delegation of the Russian Federation has the floor.

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, I would like to respond to some of the comments that have been made about our proposal.

First, there is actually a hierarchy among the issues that are addressed in the Conference on Disarmament, and we have to recognize that. At the top of this hierarchy are the issues that we put on the agenda and approve every year as the agenda of our forum. All other questions are additional, optional and not directly related to the mandate of our Conference.

Second, we are not changing the structure of the report; on the contrary, we are retaining the structure of the report, suggesting an additional section. If anyone has difficulty with our proposal, as my American colleague has said here, we have not yet heard sound arguments as to why we cannot create this section and have our proposal considered, especially since, as we all know, the report is not something permanently agreed upon and settled in terms of structure. Its structure has been amended and supplemented many times, and some sections and paragraphs have been dropped. And we see nothing wrong with having to consider an additional section.

Lastly, we do not question the importance of gender balance in the Conference or the participation of women and youth in international security, arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation issues. We do not question the importance of these issues. Once again, however, we believe that these issues are not directly related to the work of the Conference, which is defined by its mandate. In agreeing to discuss these issues, which were proposed by the presidencies, the delegation of the Russian Federation was flexible and cooperative and went along with the presidencies that had proposed discussing these issues, at a time when the Conference had essentially stopped discussing substantive issues and it was necessary to fill the discussion vacuum at the Conference. But that does not mean we have to put these issues on the same footing as the agenda items, the substantive issues that we all have to discuss here every year. So we propose making a new section and moving to it three questions that are not directly related to the issues being discussed by the Conference. Our argument, in our opinion, is a sufficiently strong one, and I would ask all delegations to take our proposal very seriously.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. The Ambassador of the United States of America has the floor.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): I apologize for taking the floor again, but I need to respond to my Russian colleague since he made the point that he did not see any strong arguments for opposition to his proposal. I would just say that, on the contrary, I have seen no sound argument by the Russian delegation in support of its own proposal. Again, creating an additional section in which to put some of these issues that are relevant to the work of the Conference on Disarmament is not acceptable to my delegation. I have looked at his proposal and examined it, and I do not see why we need to move these paragraphs. I have not seen a sound logic for trying to move these paragraphs under a new heading or title, or whatever you want to call it.

So, again, I see an effort to try to further downgrade these issues of women in disarmament, youth and disarmament, and gender equity. My delegation is not going to sit here and accept those kinds of proposals. So, with all due respect, I cannot accept the Russian proposal. I do accept the fact that this is a difficult issue for some delegations here, but,

frankly, as my delegation sees it, we cannot allow this report to be made any weaker than it already is on the subjects that I have raised.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Ambassador. It seems to me that the delegation of the Russian Federation wishes to take the floor again.

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation): (*spoke in Russian*) Mr. President, I apologize for taking the floor again, but I would like to draw attention to the wording of paragraphs 52 and 53. They talk about youth and disarmament, women and disarmament and international security. These issues are being discussed everywhere, not only in the Conference on Disarmament but also, for example, in the First Committee and in other venues, including the treaty regimes. The issue of women's participation, for instance, was recently discussed in the context of the Inhumane Weapons Convention. It will also be raised, I am sure, in the framework of the Biological Weapons Convention, especially since a corresponding provision on women's participation in the work of that Convention is included in the relevant General Assembly resolution.

Does this mean that these are issues that directly concern the work of these conventions and the strengthening of their regimes? Absolutely not. The same applies to the Conference on Disarmament. We have nothing against discussing these issues, we have agreed to do so. We agree that these issues are certainly important for future generations and for working on such tracks as international security, arms control and disarmament. But to equate these issues with items on our agenda, and all the more so to place them, for example, under the heading of consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race and disarmament or, as in the case of paragraph 23, under the heading of improved and effective functioning of the Conference is, we think, illogical, irrational and unhelpful.

That is why we propose, as a compromise solution, creating an additional section and moving these items into that section, all the more so since, in terms of language, paragraphs 52 and 53 are quite acceptable to us, while we have made written suggestions concerning paragraph 23.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. I will say again that the secretariat has told me that the proposal is on the table in writing. Delegations' views are clear. I do not see how we are going to reconcile these opposing views. I will thus try to broker an agreement on this point at tomorrow's bilateral meetings. The Ambassador of China has the floor.

**Mr. Li Song** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Thank you, Mr. President. You just now stated precisely what I wanted to say. I think the proposal from our colleague from the Russian Federation is well intentioned. He is hoping to structure our report more rationally. I can see nothing in his proposal that would denigrate this year's work at the Conference on Disarmament. I agree with your suggestion, and I hope that in the upcoming informal consultations we will be able to make progress in the discussion of the relevant issues.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. Now, if there are no further comments, we will proceed to paragraph 56. The representative of Argentina has the floor.

**Ms. Porta** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, as this is the first time that my delegation has taken the floor, I would like to welcome the new Ambassador of Germany and wish him all the best in his work. My delegation would like to thank the President for his tireless efforts to find new wording for paragraph 56.

While my delegation could also support the original wording of this paragraph, we note that the current wording of paragraph 56 is the result of long and arduous consultations with several States members of the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation would thus like to thank you and your team, Mr. President, for your efforts to come up with this new paragraph, which we believe reflects a tenuous compromise, and in this respect we encourage other Conference members to show flexibility and support the paragraph, especially in view of the exceptional circumstances that have led to the systematic postponement of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We believe that the mention in the draft of the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, as a possible cause for a change in the dates of the session of the Conference on Disarmament, makes it clear that only exceptional circumstances such as a pandemic can lead to a change of this nature, which is in accordance with rule 7 of the rules of procedure. Thank you very much.



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

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): Mr. President, with regard to paragraph 56, at this point I am not prepared to accept the amendments you have proposed, and, frankly, we will consider this paragraph in the context of the progress, or lack thereof, we make on reaching agreement on the final report.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. The representative of the Russian Federation has the floor.

**Mr. Belousov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, I would like to comment on paragraph 56. We were quite satisfied with the original wording of this paragraph. Nor do we object to the second version, which was presented in CD/WP.636/Rev.1. I would like to point out that in any case we need to reach a compromise on this point before we conclude our session, because surely the situation with the overlap between the Conference on Disarmament and the work of other important multilateral arms control and disarmament forums compels us to seek such a solution. And here we ask you and our Chinese colleagues to continue to work with delegations to find a solution that is acceptable to all. I say again: here we are ready to agree both with the first formulation of this paragraph and with the compromise wording now proposed. But I repeat: in order not to be held hostage to the situation in January 2022, we must find a solution to this issue here and now, before the end of our session.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation. I would be delighted to be able to adopt the paragraphs as we go along, but from what I have been told the rule here is that nothing is adopted until everything is adopted. What is most likely is that we will be able to adopt the document as a whole in the next few days. In any case, I see that although there is not, to be sure, an agreement, there are at least no objections to the substance or wording of the new version of the paragraph. That impression will inform what we do as we move through the other paragraphs. The delegation of Japan has the floor.

**Mr. Matsui** (Japan): We deem that the text, as it stands, nicely resolves the problem or issues in light of the rules of procedure, so we can support it. Actually we are very flexible, but we can support this text as it is.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. The representative of Pakistan has the floor.

**Mr. Omar** (Pakistan): Once again, Mr. President, and for the third time today, my delegation reiterates that we see your approach as trying to bring us to consensus and listening to the views of all members. My delegation has stated its clear position on this paragraph previously, and of course we had no issue with the previous language. We also appreciate your redrafting. It takes on board the views expressed during the meeting by members of the Conference on Disarmament, including on the matter of the status of the Conference as a unique body, and we completely share that view.

So we believe the reference to the COVID-19 pandemic – a reality which has disrupted the calendar of not only disarmament meetings, but meetings throughout the multilateral forums – is an elegant way out in trying to find a solution without touching on issues on which we have differences. So we continue to support your efforts; we supported your previous draft and we also support this text and hope that it is able to command consensus of the membership.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Sir. The Ambassador of China has the floor.

**Mr. Li Song** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to thank my colleagues who just now took the floor for their efforts to make appropriate arrangements for the meeting timetable for the next year, addressing the problems encountered, including by my delegation.

I would like in particular to thank all delegations for their support of China. I should like to emphasize that paragraph 56 relates to the meeting arrangements for 2022. This does not concern only China; it concerns the entire membership of the Conference on

Disarmament, and it will have a bearing on the smooth progress of the Conference's work next year.

Similarly, your work, leading the efforts of everyone on the annual report, is a concern not only for Chile. As the Conference's President, you work in the service of the entire membership. Sometimes, it is much easier to adhere to a national position than it is, as the President of the Conference, to coordinate the positions of all the parties in order to move the Conference's work forward.

I would like to emphasize once again that paragraph 56 concerns the Conference's work in 2022. The content of this paragraph should have nothing to do with any other parts of the report, and it should not be linked to them. This year's work is this year's work, and next year's work is next year's work. I think all the member States hope that the Conference will continue to exist and will perform its work smoothly next year. Therefore, I hope that paragraph 56 will be accepted by all of us, in a spirit of understanding and cooperation, so that we can successfully conclude this year's annual report through our continued efforts. Thank you.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much for your words, Ambassador. Indeed, sometimes it is not easy being President. Not being able to ensure that documents reflect the views of one's country, one tries to bring competing visions to the table in an attempt to reach middle ground.

Going through the report has made it clear to me where there is still more work to be done. Starting tomorrow at 9.30 a.m., then, I will request bilateral meetings with the delegations that have the greatest interest in certain topics so that we can sit down together with a pencil and a piece of paper and try to come up with the wording that works best for all of us. I appreciate your efforts. I understand the objections of some of the delegations, the points they are making, but we are trying to build consensus. The delegation of Brazil is asking for the floor.

**Mr. De Barros Carvalho e Mello Mourão** (Brazil): Mr. President, before we finish, I would just like to make two points. I am not an expert on the English language, but I would like to refer to the titles of sections H and A of part III. When I read the title of section H, I read "Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race and disarmament and other relevant measures". Perhaps we should say "Consideration of other areas dealing with the cessation of the arms race and with disarmament and other relevant measures", so as not to look like we are talking about a cessation of disarmament. And then in the title of section A, perhaps we should say "Nuclear disarmament and cessation of the nuclear arms race", again so as not to look like we are talking about the cessation of nuclear disarmament.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. My memory could be better, so if you send us your proposal in writing, it will be possible to consider it. If there are no further requests for the floor, then we will finish for today. Tomorrow, we will begin bilateral consultations with the countries that are particularly interested in some points in a bid to come up with satisfactory wording and be in a position tomorrow afternoon – we will try to have the meeting at 3 p.m. or 4 p.m., depending on how the drafting goes – to present a revised version of the draft, under the symbol CD/WP.636/Rev.2, and try to move through it, since for the moment we have not found a room to meet in on Friday and the next meeting will not be until Tuesday, 7 September. And next Tuesday's meeting would be the last, because there are no rooms available on any other day next week. I understand that Brazil would like to take the floor again.

**Mr. De Barros Carvalho e Mello Mourão** (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. You touched on this issue at the beginning of the meeting, but I did not quite understand it. It would be good to know exactly what room limitations we are facing so that we have some idea of what meetings we can actually hold between now and the end of your presidency.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me ask the secretariat, which is making arrangements for the rooms, to provide an explanation.

**Ms. Day** (Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament): As you all know, there are refurbishments going on in the Palais and the number of rooms with the capacity to host at least one delegate per Conference on Disarmament member and observer is limited. The

United Nations Office at Geneva informs us that, as of now, a room is available tomorrow morning and afternoon and Tuesday morning and afternoon next week. In addition, 9 September is an official holiday, so the Palais is closed for business. There are other meetings going on at the same time, as you know. I am sure you know about the Biological Weapons Convention meetings. These are some of the constraints that conference services are facing in satisfying the requirements not only of this body but also of others. So unless and until other bodies or their office-holders call off certain meetings, this is the response we got from the United Nations Office at Geneva; it is about the availability not just of rooms but also of interpreters and moderators and so forth. So it is a little bit more complex than just room availability. But we are doing our level best to get a few more dates. They are aware that this is crunch time for the Conference on Disarmament.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. Indeed, I am aware that the secretariat is constantly making efforts to keep the request for more days on the table. But the reality today is that we have a room for tomorrow and next Tuesday. There is no point in having a formal or informal plenary meeting again tomorrow morning. We have to consult with the delegations of a number of countries to come up with wording more in line with their interests. The plenary meeting will thus be in the afternoon, and we are trying to get other days in addition to next Tuesday.

There are three or four paragraphs that are posing more problems than others, but if, in the time available to us, we are unable to reach an agreement on those short paragraphs, to come up with wording acceptable to all, I doubt we will be able to in, shall we say, more days or weeks of meeting time. I ask you to show the greatest flexibility, the greatest willingness to compromise, as I know you all can, so that we can find wording we can agree on. Tomorrow at 9.30 a.m., then – my secretary is making contact with those delegations that have been a little more insistent on some paragraphs – we will meet bilaterally in a room back here with a pencil and a piece of paper and see if we can come up with wording acceptable to all. I thank you all and wish you a nice evening. The meeting is adjourned.

*The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.*