

# Conference on Disarmament

English

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**Final record of the one thousand three hundred and fifty-third plenary meeting**


Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 27 May 2015, at 11.20 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Mohamed Auajjar.....(Morocco)

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**The President** (*spoke in French*): I call to order the 1353rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like to welcome you all, especially those who have spent the past month in New York attending the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Unfortunately, as you know, the Review Conference concluded its work without succeeding in adopting the draft outcome document submitted for its consideration. The outcome of the Review Conference is therefore very disappointing and worrying for various reasons, given the prominence of nuclear disarmament on our agenda.

I would also like, on behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, to welcome the Ambassador of Colombia, Beatriz Londoño Soto, who is here with us today, and the Ambassador of Ethiopia, Nagash Kebret Botor.

Allow me now to inform you that we have received a request from the Plurinational State of Bolivia to participate in our work as an observer. This request is contained in document CD/WP.583/Add.6, which includes all requests received by the secretariat as of 4 p.m. yesterday, Tuesday, 26 May 2015. Are there any objections? I see none.

*It was so decided.*

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I would now like to give you an overview of the outcome of my consultations during the intersessional period. Today we resume our work in the wake of the failure of the ninth NPT Review Conference, held from 27 April to 22 May 2015 in New York. Our hope was to see the Review Conference yield encouraging results that could help to further dispel the international community's fears about nuclear weapons, and to strengthen the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, namely, nuclear disarmament, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

However, the tireless efforts from various quarters during the Review Conference did not suffice. We wish to express our great disappointment in that regard. I hope that this outcome will not affect the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

You will recall that I convened an informal meeting on 24 March 2015 for an exchange of views on three draft decisions that the secretariat had distributed to Conference members. The informal discussions were fruitful and enabled me to better understand the various positions. Following this interesting exchange of views, and to promote a spirit of consensus, I thought it best to submit the texts already adopted last year concerning the schedule of activities and the informal working group on a programme of work.

As for the draft decision on the establishment of an informal working group on working methods, I added a new paragraph to allow observer States to participate in the group's work. This new paragraph is taken from the decision contained in document CD/1974, dated 3 March 2014, on the re-establishment of the informal working group on a programme of work.

I intended to submit these draft decisions formally to today's plenary meeting. Unfortunately that will not be possible, as I do not have a comprehensive list of potential candidates to coordinate the themes set out in the schedule of activities or serve as co-chair or vice-chair of the informal working group on a programme of work.

During the intersession, most of the delegations I contacted about the co-chairship were in New York attending the NPT Review Conference. Since yesterday I have been in contact with some delegations about filling the remaining functions. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the delegations that have responded positively to my proposals and agreed to assume these functions. The three draft decisions, which will be presented as

a “package”, will be distributed to you once the list of coordinators, co-chairs and vice-chairs has been finalized.

I hope I can count on your understanding and your valuable cooperation in completing our work, and I thank you in advance.

I will now give the floor to anyone wishing to make a statement. I will start with Mr. Møller, to whom I give the floor.

**Mr. Møller** (Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, welcome back to the second part of the 2015 session of the Conference on Disarmament. Many of you have just returned from the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and will have seen the remarks by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, expressing disappointment at the inability of the States parties to the Treaty to reach consensus on a substantive outcome. In particular, he regretted that States parties had been unable to narrow their differences on the future of nuclear disarmament or to arrive at a new collective vision on how to achieve a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

I share this deep sense of disappointment. I, and I assume many of you, had hoped that the NPT Review Conference would provide impetus for the Conference on Disarmament’s agenda, in particular on nuclear disarmament and banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices as well as security assurances. The draft final document of the NPT Review Conference, as you know, had included language in this regard.

As we start the second part of this session of the Conference on Disarmament, it remains incumbent on the members to continue seeking agreement on a programme of work with a negotiating mandate. The disappointing outcome of the NPT Review Conference must not prevent the Conference on Disarmament from making substantive progress and moving forward on multilateral disarmament. Let me once again repeat Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s message to the Conference on Disarmament last January: the need for progress in multilateral disarmament is greater than ever.

Political will has to be found to allow the Conference on Disarmament to move beyond its long years of impasse. Through adherence to its mandate by negotiating and concluding disarmament treaties, the Conference has shown in the past that it can make progress in its work and contribute to a safer world. The Conference now needs to resume its rule of adding concrete value to the rule of law and disarmament. It was created for this purpose.

Allow me to take this opportunity to welcome the efforts by the Moroccan President of the Conference as embodied in his three proposals: the establishment of an informal working group to review the methods of work of the Conference; the renewal of the mandate of the informal working group to produce a programme of work; and the schedule of activities — all of which were submitted to you during the first part of the session. Time is running out and not many options are available to re-energize this forum, if you wish to do so in 2015.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank you for your kind words about my country, and for the recommendations contained in your statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Ethiopia.

**Mr. Botor** (Ethiopia): Distinguished ambassadors and delegates, it gives me great pleasure to be back at the Conference on Disarmament, where over three decades ago I started my multilateral diplomatic career by participating as an expert in various arms control negotiations. I take pride in the work of the Conference, which produced a number

of key multilateral disarmament agreements that have contributed immensely to the continued preservation of world peace and security. I look forward to working closely with all member States in the effort to have the Conference resume its role as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for the advancement of nuclear disarmament and the elimination of other weapons of mass destruction.

As this is the first time I am taking the floor, I wish to extend my congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and for the commitment you have demonstrated in preparing a structured schedule of activities by undertaking a series of consultations. I also wish to express our appreciation to your predecessor, the Mongolian Ambassador, who presided over the work of the Conference before you. Let me also seize this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Michael Møller, the Acting Secretary-General, and his team for their unreserved support to the work of the Conference.

Mr. President, it is indeed frustrating to witness that, despite the efforts made thus far, another year has elapsed without the Conference being able to reach consensus on a programme of work. The substantive discussions on the agenda items and the establishment of an informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work robust in substance and progressive over time have not yet produced the expected results. We believe that we need to continue to work hard and are hopeful that all members will demonstrate the necessary political will in order to ensure the commencement of the Conference's substantive work.

The commitment of Ethiopia to the maintenance of global peace and security is not only well known but dates back to the time of the League of Nations. Ethiopia has been the victim of naked aggression at different periods in its recent history, in particular the attack with mustard gas on its defenceless population and the denial of international protection: this is a constant reminder of the urgent need to ensure international peace and security through universally accepted solutions. It is in this context, and since that time, that we have been committed to global efforts to prevent the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction and have signed all core multilateral and regional disarmament treaties and conventions. These include the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba). As a non-nuclear-weapon State and a responsible member of the global community, we will continue to participate constructively in negotiations on all disarmament issues.

Today, peacekeepers, police and other civilian personnel of Ethiopia are deployed in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). It is indeed a source of great satisfaction to Ethiopia that it has set a new record in the history of United Nations peacekeeping operations by deploying almost the entire military component of UNISFA. As a result, the contribution of Ethiopia to maintaining global peace and security is not confined to strengthening or reinforcing the legal principles and framework needed in terms of guidance for collective disarmament efforts, but it is also concrete and visible in our active participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Besides our past active participation in peacekeeping missions in the Congo and Rwanda, Ethiopia ranks fourth globally and first in Africa on the list of troop-contributing countries to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Under the auspices of the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, Ethiopia has been playing a key role in regional peace, security and conflict-prevention efforts in Africa in general, and in the Horn of Africa in particular.

It is evident that disarmament is a prerequisite in the global effort to preserve world peace and security and make the world safe from the threat or use of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. This can only be achieved through an effective and meaningful mechanism that would prohibit the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons. We believe that such a mechanism must provide a specified time frame for total elimination.

As we all are well aware, the Conference finds itself at a very critical stage and in difficult times in which the risk of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction — which endangers international stability and security — is very high, in particular the possible risk of these weapons falling into the hands of non-State actors and terrorists, such as ISIS.

We fully share the widespread concern over the devastating humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. That is why we welcome and highly commend the series of conferences held in Oslo, Nayarit and, recently, Vienna on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. We are of the view that these conferences have vividly demonstrated the appalling and indiscriminate destructive capacity of nuclear weapons if they are not totally eliminated without pretext or further delay.

While Ethiopia advocates nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, it recognizes the right of all States parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. This should be done in compliance with article IV of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and unreserved cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure that all safeguard protection measures are fully respected.

Ethiopia firmly believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is critical to ensuring regional security, which would contribute to the collective efforts of the international community to achieve long-lasting world peace and stability. We support the strengthening of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and encourage efforts to establish new zones, including in the Middle East, despite the failure of the NPT conference last week in this regard.

We also support strengthening international efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons. In this context, a comprehensive fissile material cut-off treaty, a treaty on negative security assurances that would protect non-nuclear-weapon States against any threat and the prevention of an arms race in outer space are all noble goals that we strongly support.

Ethiopia welcomes the informal Conference on Disarmament/civil society forum — held at a time when the Conference is facing a stalemate in advancing its work — as a critical input to the efforts to raise awareness about the grave consequences of the existence and use of nuclear weapons. We appreciate the important initiative taken by the Acting Secretary-General to organize that forum.

It is indeed cause for great regret that international non-proliferation efforts have not yet succeeded in preventing nuclear proliferation. Obviously, this situation will have an adverse impact on global security unless it is addressed urgently and as a matter of priority. There is no doubt that, for global efforts to succeed, it is indispensable to have a universal and comprehensive mechanism that is linked to the goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons. Ethiopia remains committed to working towards this end and will continue to constructively engage with all member States to achieve sustainable global peace and security through the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear arsenals.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador of Ethiopia for his kind words. This concludes the list of speakers. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? That appears not to be the case.

As was announced at our most recent meeting, the Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Ivor Richard Fung, is leaving us at the end of this week to take up a new position in New York. Allow me to say a few words on this occasion.

Let me take this opportunity to tell you, Mr. Fung, on behalf of the members of the Conference, how deeply we are affected by your departure. For us you have been a wonderful, talented and respectful colleague, and for the members of the Conference, a pillar of strength and a valuable asset, an effective collaborator who is always ready to help out.

Since becoming Ambassador in Geneva, and throughout my presidency of this august body, I have observed that you are very much appreciated by your colleagues at the United Nations Office at Geneva, as well as by all diplomats, for your professional skills as well as your human attributes. Throughout my collaboration with you, I have found in you a self-effacing, competent, talented, organized, rigorous person with outstanding people and communication skills. Given your professional and human attributes, you will surely execute all your future assignments energetically and successfully. On behalf of the members of the Conference, I convey my heartfelt congratulations on your new position in New York and wish you all the best.

Finally, I would like to announce to all present that Mr. Møller and I are inviting you to a farewell reception in honour of our dear colleague Mr. Fung. It will take place in the hall in front of the Council Chamber immediately after this meeting.

**Mr. Møller** (Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament) (*spoke in French*): I was going to say a few words outside, Mr. President, but can very well do so now.

(*spoke in English*)

Excellencies and dear colleagues, I am happy to see you so numerous and I hope that you will join us for drinks afterwards for a farewell gathering for Ivor.

Dear Ivor, I would like to thank you in particular for the excellent work that you have been doing since your arrival at the Conference in October 2012 and, most particularly, since my own arrival in November 2013. Your support to the Conference as its Secretary in a complex time was motivated by a keen sense of the bigger picture of what the Conference is supposed to achieve and has been exemplary. The support you provided me over the past year and a half was crucial to my ability to understand the intricacies of what goes on in this august chamber and also in helping me to navigate and try to move forward the work of the Conference. You did so and have done so in a very pragmatic and realistic way. Throughout the work that we have done together, you always helped me steer in those two senses. I was particularly pleased by the way that we collaborated on the preparations for the recently held Conference on Disarmament/civil society forum, which turned out to be a success.

You came here from the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, and you are now going to the Office for Disarmament Affairs in New York. It is going to be nice to have an agent there to help us and to help the work of the Conference, together with our colleagues in that Office and at Headquarters in New York. I am particularly happy to know that. I am convinced that this will happen, because I found in you someone with unfailing faith in the ability of the Conference to actually get to where it is supposed to be getting in spite of evidence to the contrary over the past 19 years. That has been an inspiration to all of us and I hope it continues to be so as you move to your new work in New York. I look forward to us all continuing to work together for the purpose of getting the disarmament machinery of the United Nations back to where it is

supposed to be and to the work it is supposed to do. I wish you and your family all the best in New York as you move there in the next few days.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): That concludes our work. I give the floor to the Algerian delegation.

**Mr. Khelif** (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should first like to join the President and the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament in expressing deep gratitude to our colleague and friend Mr. Fung for the work he has accomplished during his period of service with the Conference here in Geneva. Thank you very much, Mr. Fung, for your assiduity. We wish you further success in your new position in New York. The Algerian delegation also wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for your report on the outcome of the consultations that you conducted during the intersessional period concerning the draft decisions to be considered at the forthcoming meetings of the Conference on Disarmament. In addition, Mr. President, the Algerian delegation wishes to share the regret expressed in your speech and in that of Mr. Møller concerning the failure of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference to achieve the positive results to which we aspire collectively and individually, namely to lay the foundations and to make tangible progress towards ridding the world of horrific nuclear weapons. Notwithstanding all the collective and individual efforts exerted, the expeditious action taken by the President of the Conference and the Chairs of the various committees, and the involvement of all delegations in the various consultations conducted during the four-week period, it unfortunately proved impossible to make the headway required to achieve consensual outcomes.

Mr. President, the NPT belongs to all States parties and the Conference belongs to all member and observer States. The successful performance of our tasks depends on our collective determination to produce an all-embracing vision of the prerequisites for security and stability in the world. We hope that the Conference will succeed, through its future work, in promoting nuclear disarmament. I also confirm the willingness of the Algerian delegation to collaborate with you, Mr. President, and with all member States in our joint efforts to achieve that objective.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): My sincere thanks go to the representative of our neighbour State, Algeria, for his fine statement and his determination to ensure the success of the Conference's work.

(*spoke in French*)

Would any other delegation like to take the floor? I give the floor to Mr. Fung.

**Mr. Fung** (Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament): You will have found on your tables an envelope containing the latest volume in the *Disarmament Yearbook* series. This is for the year 2014 and the Office for Disarmament Affairs graciously offers it to all the delegates of the Conference on Disarmament.

(*spoke in French*)

Mr. President, I am very touched by Mr. Møller's very kind words about me. As I said, we will see each other again when we collaborate on other topics. I am not forsaking disarmament; I am simply taking up new duties in a new location. So I take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. President, as well as Mr. Møller and all the delegations.

I have learned a great deal during my time in Geneva, at the Conference, and I have very good memories, which help to strengthen my belief in disarmament. I began to work on disarmament issues when I was at school, and continued to do so throughout my professional career. So I was really destined to work on disarmament, and before coming here I thought I knew everything about the subject.

During my time here, I learned two things: patience — and I am taking that patience with me when I leave — and moderation. I have learned that a certain degree of moderation is necessary because the Conference is not dealing with ordinary issues. It is dealing with crucial issues that affect the very foundations of the sovereign state, the foundations of the international system.

Those are the two lessons I have learned during my time here, and that I will apply assiduously in all my dealings with you and others. Thank you for having given me this opportunity.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): Thank you very much for having shared with us your thoughts about your long career in the service of disarmament. We need patience and we need moderation, as you say. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of India.

**Mr. Varma** (India): I do not wish to stand between the Conference and the drinks, Mr. President, but it would be remiss on our part not to acknowledge the continuing intersessional work that you have conducted. We are very heartened to learn that we are very close to taking a decision on how the Conference should move forward in the weeks ahead.

We remain committed to supporting your efforts. We would like the Conference to get down to work as soon as possible. Enough time has been lost in the first part of the Conference's annual session, and this second part should get off the ground as quickly as possible. You have our full support in taking that objective forward. We would also like to acknowledge the continuing interest and commitment of the Acting Secretary-General. We look forward later this evening to hearing his views on the informal Conference on Disarmament/civil society forum meeting.

Let me extend a very warm welcome to the Ambassador of Ethiopia. We have heard his very thoughtful statement, and we look forward to working with him, Ambassador Botora, as we take forward the work of this Conference.

Mr. President, let me say that, as far as India is concerned, it goes without saying that the success of any multilateral effort outside this Conference would, of course, add to the momentum of disarmament efforts within the Conference. In its absence, however, we should not feel disheartened, because the Conference does have its own mandate and its own responsibilities. In the absence of multilateral momentum from outside, it falls on us, on our shoulders, to assume the responsibility to take the Conference forward in accordance with its mandate — which is an independent mandate for all of us to work together. Towards this objective, we hope that the forthcoming decision that we will be taking on the Conference's work will enable us to move in that direction.

Lastly, let me add my words of gratitude and appreciation to our colleague and friend, Mr. Ivor Fung, who will be leaving us to take up new responsibilities in New York. We are gladdened to hear that he will be continuing in the disarmament field. We have benefited from his professionalism and we would like to thank him for all his contributions to the Conference as well as to the secretary of the Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which met not in the Conference but outside of the four corners of this room, in Geneva, and we clearly benefited there as well. So, good luck to him and we wish him well.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): Would any other delegation like to take the floor? That appears not to be the case. This concludes our morning's work.



The secretariat will inform you of the date of the next plenary meeting of the Conference. On behalf of Mr. Møller and myself, I invite you to the reception that will be held opposite the meeting room.

*The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.*