

# Conference on Disarmament

English

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## Final record of the one thousand four hundredth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 6 September 2016, at 10.10 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Kim In-chul .....(Republic of Korea)

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**The President:** The 1400th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is called to order.

I would like to start today by warmly welcoming our two new colleagues: Her Excellency Ms. Terhi Hakala, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Finland, and Her Excellency Ms. Aviva Raz-Shechter, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Israel. I welcome you to Geneva and, especially, to the Conference on Disarmament. We look forward to working closely with you.

The revised draft of the 2016 annual report of the Conference to the General Assembly was made available on Friday; the secretariat had informally circulated an advance copy of document CD/WP.596/Rev.1 on Thursday. Document CD/WP.596/Rev.1 incorporates the suggestions made by members at the last plenary meeting. We have also addressed minor clerical errors and ensured consistency in the text, including in punctuation, use of upper and lower cases, typographical errors etc.

The documents that member States submitted to the Conference between 19 August and 1 September have been reflected in the draft. These are documents CD/2072, CD/2073, CD/2074, CD/2075 and CD/2076. In this regard, I would like to remind delegations that only documents submitted by 16 September 2016, which will be Friday next week, will be issued as official documents of the 2016 session of the Conference. The report will be updated to that date as we receive more documents.

As mentioned at last week's plenary meeting, our aim will be to adopt the report today. Therefore, if there are no objections, may I take it that we can now formally adopt the report in its entirety as reflected in document CD/WP.596/Rev.1? I see no objections. The report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly of the United Nations as reflected in document CD/WP.596/Rev.1 is hereby adopted.

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** I will now turn to the list of speakers. I would like to invite first the new Ambassador of Israel, Her Excellency Ms. Aviva Raz-Shechter, to take the floor.

**Ms. Raz-Shechter (Israel):** Mr. President, at the outset allow me to thank you for the kind words of welcome addressed to me. As this is the first time I take the floor under your presidency, please allow me also to congratulate you and express our sincere confidence in your able leadership to make this last session of the Conference on Disarmament for 2016 a success. Let me assure you, Mr. President, of my delegation's full cooperation and support throughout your presidency.

The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, delineated the architecture of the multilateral disarmament machinery and identified the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiation forum. The primacy accorded to the Conference over other arms control and disarmament forums — which were designated a deliberative role — was based on the desire to address these issues in the most effective but realistic manner. This was also the motivation for basing the Conference's work on the principle of consensus. Some today criticize the adjective "single" attached to the Conference's role. This has largely stemmed from impatience with the multilateral arena and the desire for more rapid progress in disarmament, in addition to the emergence of independent negotiating processes outside the aforementioned disarmament architecture.

While there is no dispute that the 20-year-long stalemate in the Conference is indeed a long period and every effort should be made to bring the Conference back to the path of negotiations, one should at the same time consider seriously the implications and the disadvantages stemming from the usage of independent processes, and in particular the diversion of international attention from the underlying issues towards solutions of lesser or weakened efficacy. The most probable price would be the lack of participation by those who must be part of such negotiations. While a non-inclusive process might forge agreements more quickly, it runs the risk of its outcome being depleted or hollow. Such negotiations create a more divisive atmosphere rather than adding to the promotion of agreements on disarmament matters.

Israel holds firm to the view that the Conference remains a singular forum which includes all those member States that must participate in non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control negotiations in order to make the outcome meaningful and firmly linked to reality. The Conference's rules of procedure — most importantly, the rule of consensus — emanate from the recognition that, in order to seriously and effectively address national security challenges, individual security interests of States cannot be cast aside.

We share the desire of many other members of the Conference to bring the Conference back to negotiations and fulfil its role in a wholesome manner. This goal has become even more significant in view of the fundamental security challenges facing the international community, and more so, given what our own regional neighbourhood is confronting. Serving as Deputy Director-General for Middle Eastern Affairs during the last five years, I am closely familiar with the unique regional characteristics that undermine stability in our area. The reality in the Middle East requires significant and consistent efforts in order to transform the fundamental elements plaguing the region into meaningful engagement aimed at achieving confidence, trust and security for all. This approach must be based on a comprehensive peace between Israel and its neighbours stemming from mutual recognition and reconciliation between peoples. Direct engagement between all of the States of the region on the broad range of security challenges grounded in the internationally recognized principle of consensus is necessary for a meaningful engagement and the eventual establishment of a mutually verifiable zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and means of delivery. These are the necessary staples for a process emanating from the region and arrangements freely arrived at.

Mr. President, in recent years, Israel has sought to lay the ground for the much needed trust and confidence by entering a process of direct regional consultations under the facilitation of the former Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Security Policy of Finland, Jaakko Laajava. Unfortunately, after five rounds of multilateral consultations undertaken in 2013 and 2014, our Arab neighbours declined to further participate in this process and the necessary progress towards a consensual agreement on a regional conference stopped.

In conclusion, Israel hopes that members of the Conference will be able to bridge the differences and soon embark on constructive and effective work. The number of initiatives we have witnessed the past year at the Conference is a sign of the importance States continue to attach to this forum, and we hope that these initiatives will help us to revive our important work.

My delegation will continue to assess constructively, and with an open mind, suggestions that will be brought forward. The Conference on Disarmament has served the international community well in the past and we are confident that it has much to contribute in the future. Even though the achievements of the Conference in the past two decades have fallen short of what we would have liked, let us not take a path which might prevent this institution from going forward. In the light of the increasing pressure over the Conference's lengthy deadlock, we have to work together and try to find an appropriate balance between the desirable and the possible. This, we believe, is achievable.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Israel for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the presidency. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Finland, Her Excellency Ms. Terhi Hakala.

**Ms. Hakala (Finland):** Mr. President, let me first congratulate the presidency of the Republic of Korea and wish it all the best. You can rely on the continued support of my delegation and we fully endorse the report of the Conference on Disarmament drafted under your skilful chairmanship. I also want to thank you for the warm welcome wishes.

This is my first plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. As is customary, I would like to use the occasion for some reflections on the work of the Conference. Thirteen months ago, my predecessor, Ambassador Päivi Kairamo, attempted to find a solution to the stalemate in the Conference by co-chairing a working group on a programme of work for the Conference. Her report found some important elements that could provide common points for departure to alleviate the deadlock of the Conference.

While a fissile material cut-off treaty remains an unequivocal priority for Finland, we are fully prepared to proceed on all four main issues in a balanced and equitable manner. This must not mean, however, that progress on one item would be held hostage to non-agreement on another. Many ideas and interesting proposals have been presented also in the course of this year and Finland is giving them due consideration, as we want to be part of the solution in breaking the deadlock in the Conference.

Mr. President, what could and should be done is to increase the Conference's transparency and its accessibility. It is important to review and update the working methods of the Conference. Expanding the membership of the Conference would contribute to the inclusiveness of this body, as would recognition of the beneficial contribution of civil society and academia in its work.

In a nutshell, simple, small practical steps could be taken to improve the institution and improve the Conference's capacity. But in the end, it is the political will that is needed to make the Conference do what it is mandated to do: that is, to negotiate. I will do my best to contribute to this work together with all of you.

**The President:** I thank the Ambassador of Finland for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the presidency. The next speaker on the list is the representative of Japan. I give the floor to Ambassador Sano.

**Mr. Sano (Japan):** Mr. President, yesterday 5 September, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea once again launched three ballistic missiles without prior notification, all of which, according to our estimation, flew a distance of around 1,000 km and fell in my country's exclusive economic zone. This poses a grave threat not only to the national security of Japan but also to that of the region and the international community.

This launch using ballistic missile technology is in clear violation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, including the recently adopted resolution 2270 (2016). The series of launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is unacceptable to Japan. We strongly condemn the provocative actions and urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with relevant Security Council resolutions and other international commitments.

Mr. President, with regard to the Conference report, I would like to commend your effort to make a balanced and factual report. Our delegation is pleased that your revised draft was adopted by consensus today.

**The President:** I thank you, Ambassador. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States, Ambassador Wood.

**Mr. Wood (United States of America):** Mr. President, I requested the floor to strongly condemn yesterday's launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of three ballistic missiles. These latest provocations followed last week's resounding repudiation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by a significant number of States in the Conference on Disarmament. North Korea has once again showed its blatant disregard for the deep concerns of the international community about its nuclear and missile programmes. Once again, I call on the North to cease its dangerous behaviour on the Korean Peninsula and to come into compliance with United Nations Security Council resolutions. Defiance will only lead to further isolation. Allow me to remind the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of what I said last Tuesday, Mr. President: the United States commitment to the defence of our allies is ironclad.

**The President:** I thank you, Ambassador. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? I give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

**Mr. Mohamed (Egypt):** Mr. President, allow me at the outset to congratulate you on assuming the role of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Since this is the first time I am speaking under your presidency, I wish to assure you of my delegation's full support.

I would like to react to the statement that was made just now by the Ambassador of Israel, which included a few points that need to be addressed in detail.

Indeed, our region is a unique region and one of the unique characteristics of our region is that we have one country that runs unsafeguarded nuclear facilities. This is one of the most unique characteristics of our region.

As for the rounds of consultations that were held in preparation for the Middle East conference that was supposed to be held in 2012 and was never held, that same country exerted endeavours — which were unfortunately supported by others — to empty the process of its subject and render it non-effective. In one flagrant case, the flag of the United Nations was ousted outside of the meeting room to satisfy this country.

As for the Open-ended Working Group, and I know it was not explicitly referred to in the statement, I would like to assert only one fact: that the process of the Open-ended Working Group was an inclusive process. All States were invited to participate but some decided to decline. This is a very clear fact that we should assert.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Egypt. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

**Ms. Pérez Álvarez (Cuba)** (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I wish to take the floor briefly to acknowledge the efforts made, including the technical amendments, to produce the report that has just been adopted; as a rule, the draft report does not entail complicated negotiations. We regret that this year there has been no consensus on a programme of work and note that the report reflects the various proposals that were presented by different delegations. At the appropriate time, the Ambassador of Cuba had stated the position of Cuba with regard to the issue of nuclear disarmament; I will not repeat it now. We reiterate our support for the proposed programme of work submitted by the delegation of the Russian Federation and wish to stress again that the Conference urgently needs to move forward and take up its negotiating mandate so that it can fulfil the functions with which it has been entrusted. Again, the Cuban delegation deeply regrets that this year, despite the various proposals made, we have not reached a consensus. We hope that it will be possible next year, with priority given to the topic of nuclear disarmament.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Cuba. I now give the floor to the representative of China.

**Mr. Li Chunjie (China)** (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for all your work in securing the adoption of the annual report by the Conference on Disarmament.

We wish also to welcome the two new Ambassadors — of Israel and Finland — to the Conference, and we stand ready to continue cooperating closely with the Finnish and Israeli delegations to take forward the work of the Conference.

**The President:** I thank the representative of China, and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of India. I am sorry for having missed you.

**Mr. Varma (India):** Mr. President, we have requested the floor to express our appreciation for the very efficient manner in which you have been conducting our work and, in particular, leading the Conference on Disarmament to a smooth adoption of its annual report for the year 2016. The smooth adoption, of course, does not overshadow the fact and our disappointment that the Conference has not conducted substantive work this year. In fact, it has been prevented from doing so by objections to a programme of work that would have allowed the Conference to go forward with its mandate, which is the commencement of substantive negotiations. India, for its part, and without prejudice to its commitment to nuclear disarmament and its support for the Group of 21 proposals for the commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive convention on nuclear disarmament, remains prepared for the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty on the basis of an agreed mandate.

Having said that, we recognize that the Conference can, and should, focus on other issues as well, where substantive common ground can be built over a period of time. The proposal put forward by the Chair of the last informal working group — Finland — and approved by the Conference by consensus last year is a useful indicator of how we can proceed.

Mr. President, we have gone ahead with the adoption of the Conference's annual report, which includes references to certain Conference documents that have not yet been made public. They are still in the process of being put out and, of course, we reserve our position on these until we see them.

Lastly, Mr. President, let me extend our warm welcome to the Ambassadors of Israel and Finland who have just joined us; we wish them well. We agree with the very thoughtful comments that have been made on the useful role of the Conference. Although I myself personally may not have the pleasure to work with them for very much longer, I do wish them a very useful and successful stay with the Conference.

**The President:** I thank you, Ambassador. I give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Jo Chol-su** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I am taking the floor to respond to the remarks made by some delegations concerning the ballistic rocket missile launch carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea army as part of its routine military rehearsal.

The Conference on Disarmament has been unable to start negotiations on its core agenda items for two decades. Some delegations have persistently tried to prioritize their interests and deliberately create obstacles to the constructive proposals and ideas made by other delegations to get the Conference back to its work, without taking them into positive consideration. They are also clinging to turning the Conference into a forum where just measures for self-defence are called into question, echoing the voices from the United Nations Security Council. My delegation has already made clear that, as the United States military drills against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have become routine, the self-defensive measures of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have also become routine. Therefore, it is preposterous that the United States and its allies should be accusing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its legitimate countermeasures for self-defence as a provocation and threat.

The United States is the one that is threatening the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by force and aggravating the situation intentionally, steadily hurling into South Korea such strategic means as nuclear submarines and strategic bombers. It is a legitimate self-defensive step for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to secure the corresponding powerful defensive means, now that the United States is constantly posing threats to the sovereignty and vital rights of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As already declared by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, détente and stability in the Korean Peninsula cannot be realized by anyone's unilateral efforts, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will take in succession the self-defensive countermeasures of its style as long as the United States continues its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**The President:** I thank you. Would any other delegation like to take the floor? I recognize the representative of the United States.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): Mr. President, I apologize for taking the floor once again on this side. I just want to make very clear: the United States in no way poses a threat to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea knows that. It is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that has been making threats against countries in the region, against the United States and others, and it needs to stop those threats. It needs to stop its provocative behaviour; it needs to come into compliance with its international obligations. Until then, North Korea will remain a pariah to the international community and it will be extremely difficult for the North to ever get back into the good graces of the international community, until it takes steps to denuclearize.

**The President:** I thank you, Ambassador. Would any delegation like to take the floor? I recognize the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Jo Chol-su** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, let me briefly respond to the remarks made by the Ambassador of the United States. This is not the first time that the United States delegation has asserted that the United States does not pose

any threat to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, but that is very much contrary to the prevailing situation and the reality in the Korean Peninsula.

With respect to the military exercises that have been carried out by the United States and its allies, we have already called on them, if possible, to suspend those exercises if they really wish to turn the Korean Peninsula into a region where peace and stability are ensured. But that proposal has never been taken into consideration. Even as we speak, there is a huge military exercise going on in the Korean Peninsula, with the involvement of large-scale attack means and also military personnel. They always call this kind of military exercise a military drill that is routine and defensive in nature; however, that is not justifiable to anybody else. As was requested by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea side, if they really intend to have peace in the Korean Peninsula and if they are really concerned about stability on the Korean Peninsula, as they so say, they could give positive consideration to the proposal put forward by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea side and decide at least to suspend this kind of aggressive military drills. But that has not been accepted by the United States, and that kind of provocative and aggressive military exercises are now being carried by the United States and its allies.

**The President:** I thank you. Ambassador Wood, you have the floor.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): Mr. President, once again I apologize for taking the floor and I will be very brief on this. Whenever the United States is engaging in military exercises with its friends and allies in the region, it is very transparent. It poses no threat to any country in the region. To respond to the charges made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that poses the threat to the Peninsula. All one has to do is look at the various Security Council resolutions that have been passed with regard to the ballistic missile and nuclear activities of North Korea; all you have to do is look at last week's resounding repudiation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in this chamber. So, once again I would call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to stop listening to its own propaganda and to listen to the calls of the international community for it to cease its provocative actions and to restore stability to the Korean Peninsula.

**The President:** I thank you, Ambassador. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has the floor. I think that we should be brief by now.

**Mr. Jo Chol-su** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I will try to be as brief as possible. The United States joint military exercises on the Korean Peninsula are not attributable to the so-called provocative actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including its access to nuclear weapons. But given that the United States has steadily increased nuclear threats while ceaselessly holding war exercises for aggression, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was compelled to opt for having access to nuclear deterrence and bolstering it up.

The true aim sought by the United States is to shift the blame for the tension in the Korean Peninsula onto the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and secure a pretext for its arms build-up and joint military exercises pursuant to its rebalancing strategy in Asia-Pacific for aggression, and dodge the neighbouring countries' protest and criticism of its decision to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence and missile system in South Korea. As just mentioned, détente and stability of the Korean Peninsula cannot be realized by anyone's unilateral efforts. Therefore, I call upon the United States to stop all the provocative actions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as early as possible.

**The President:** I thank you. Does any delegation wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case. This concludes our business for today. Before adjourning today's meeting, I would like to say that I will have to work with you and other delegations of Member States of the United Nations on the draft resolution for its submission to the First Committee. Information on how we will proceed, including on the date and time of informal meetings, as needed, will be communicated through the secretariat in due course.

Our next formal plenary meeting will be on Tuesday, 13 September 2016, at 10 a.m., in the Council Chamber. This meeting is adjourned.

*The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.*