
Conference on Disarmament

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 7 September 2021, at 3.30 p.m.

President: Mr. Frank Tressler Zamorano (Chile)

* Reissued for technical reasons on 24 November 2022.



The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call to order the 1596th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. We shall commence in a formal setting so that a proposal for paragraph 23 of the revised draft report of the Conference to the General Assembly (document CD/WP.636/Rev.2) can be presented.

I wish to thank all delegations for the flexibility they have demonstrated. It has not been an easy task, but we have demonstrated our ability to engage in dialogue with everyone despite our differences and find language that was acceptable to all.

I will read out the proposal – we will give the secretariat time to circulate a written version and then we can continue. The proposal, which I will read out slowly, in English, is as follows:

(*spoke in English*)

The fifth President presented a draft decision for a technical/linguistic update of the Conference on Disarmament rules of procedure to reflect the equality of men and women. The Conference considered the possibility of that update. Delegations expressed their views on the issue, which are duly reflected in the plenary record (CD/PV.1586). However, the Conference did not succeed in reaching agreement.

The secretariat is going to hand round a printed version of that proposal.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

This reflects a comprehensive agreement on other parts of the document, which we will address later, once we have a provisional agreement on this text. If you wait a few minutes for the hard copies to be circulated for you to take a look, and if there is a provisional agreement, we can move on to the subsequent paragraphs.

We will suspend the meeting until this version is printed.

The meeting was suspended at 3.45 p.m. and resumed at 3.50 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We are going to resume the formal meeting to read again to you what you have before you, which is the result of long conversations, of concessions made by everyone. I thus ask you for the greatest possible understanding, the greatest possible flexibility. The text is as follows:

(*spoke in English*)

The fifth President presented a draft decision for a technical/linguistic update of the Conference on Disarmament rules of procedure to reflect the equality of men and women. The Conference considered the possibility of that update. Delegations expressed their views on the issue, which are duly reflected in the plenary record (CD/PV.1586). However, the Conference did not succeed in reaching agreement.

If everybody feels he or she can live with this – I know that we all have something to say, but maybe we prefer at this moment not to say it, because the important thing is not to open this for further discussion, or we will never end. So now, the next step is probably to proceed on the understanding that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed, in order to try to see how we are doing, if there is nothing else.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

Sorry, I was speaking in English. If there is no delegation that wishes to refer to any other paragraph, we could perhaps consider going paragraph by paragraph and see how we are dealing with this on a provisional basis. If you agree, then we can move on to paragraph 1. I take it we all agree with paragraph 1.

It was so decided.

If no one has anything to say, I will take it that the Conference on Disarmament wishes to provisionally adopt paragraph 2.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I take it that the Conference on Disarmament wishes to provisionally adopt paragraphs 3 to 6.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Paragraph 7 is rather long; there were a few changes to correct some names. I take it that the Conference on Disarmament wishes to provisionally adopt paragraph 7, as amended.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Paragraph 8 is shorter, so I imagine that we all agree to adopt it provisionally.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I take it that the Conference on Disarmament wishes to provisionally adopt paragraphs 9 to 11.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Apologies, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran has the floor.

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, let me express my appreciation for all your tireless efforts, your team's and those of the Conference on Disarmament secretariat to find a compromise and a formula which is agreeable to all delegations for the final report. On paragraph 12, I have to consult and seek clarification from our authorities. We will come back to you.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. As I said, this is only provisional, and nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. I take it that the Conference on Disarmament wishes to leave the provisional adoption of paragraph 12 for later but that it is ready to provisionally adopt paragraphs 13 to 16.

It was so decided.

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

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, I would like to comment on paragraph 17. Once again, I would like to make the point that, during the numerous discussions that have taken place on the approval of the document, important questions have been raised which have given our delegation pause and led it to take another look at the contents of the rules of procedure. In this context, at this morning's meeting, we suggested that the last sentence of this paragraph be amended by replacing the phrase "reaching consensus on" with "adopting". But in order to reach consensus, we are prepared to withdraw our proposal this year so as not to create any more problems for you, Mr. President, and for our esteemed colleagues.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I am very grateful to the delegation of the Russian Federation for showing flexibility, so we agree in principle. I take it that we can provisionally adopt paragraph 17 and paragraphs 18 to 22.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Paragraph 23 will be replaced by the one I will read out, which is the one I read out at the beginning of this meeting.

(*spoke in English*)

"The fifth President presented a draft decision for a technical/linguistic update of the Conference on Disarmament rules of procedure to reflect the equality of men and women. The Conference considered the possibility of that update. Delegations expressed their views on the issue, which are duly reflected in the plenary record (CD/PV.1586). However, the Conference did not succeed in reaching agreement."

(*spoke in Spanish*)

This is a formula that came out of intense deliberations. I am grateful to everyone for their flexibility in this regard. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran has the floor.

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, sorry for taking the floor again. On this paragraph and the new wording, we had a lengthy discussion on the phrase “draft decision” or “proposal”. Since this is a proposal by the Canadian delegation, I think it is much more factual to say something like this: “The fifth President presented a proposal in the form of a draft decision, as contained ...” and we have no problem with mentioning the number and the symbol of that document. As I said, here we are in the Conference on Disarmament, not in the Human Rights Council.

On “to reflect the equality of men and women”, to our understanding, when we say “the Conference did not succeed in reaching agreement”, it implies that the Conference did not reach agreement on the equality between men and women. So I think it is appropriate to capture what was proposed in Rev.2 – to say something like this: “To expressly reflect therein the existing practice”. I will repeat the last part. To capture what you proposed in your draft Rev.2: “Expressly reflect therein the existing practice that both men and women ...” then continue until “the Secretary-General of the Conference”. And the rest would be the same.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Could you please repeat the first part of your proposal?

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, the first part would be: “The fifth President presented a proposal in the form of a draft decision, as contained in ...”. We can include the name of the document. And for the second point, instead of saying “to reflect the equality of men and women”, we just copy your proposal in Rev.2 “to expressly reflect therein the existing practice that both women and men can occupy the roles of representative of the Conference on Disarmament, head of a Conference on Disarmament delegation, President of the Conference on Disarmament and Secretary-General of the Conference”. Then the rest would be the same.

The President: The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic has the floor.

Mr. Ali (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Mr. President. With regard to paragraph 23, I need to contact the capital on the wording that has been presented and circulated in the meeting room. I also wish to support the proposal made by the representative of Iran regarding the first sentence – namely, that it be amended to read “a proposal in the form of a draft decision”.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. The Russian Federation has the floor, followed by the United States of America.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, at this point, on behalf of our delegation, I can say that, on the whole, your new proposal, which seems to be the outcome of serious compromises, is acceptable in our view. However, like our Syrian colleagues, we will report to our capital on this proposal and wait for its reaction.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. I think that we should move on and not delay things at this stage, although I appreciate all the efforts of some delegations wishing to add something to the text.

I would ask you to bear in mind that we are at a very difficult juncture. Consult with your capitals and let them know that any change to the paragraph that some delegations that were here agreed on very informally – the text that I read out to you – will be very delicate.

And I would beg you, before making new proposals, to seek instructions from your capitals regarding the possibility of accepting this compromise, which required concessions on everyone’s part in one way or another.

I thank you in advance for all your efforts and, at the same time, ask you to go the extra mile and consult again with your capitals so we can reach an agreement on paragraph 23 as submitted in writing and circulated in the room.

I know that everyone is eager to add things and remove things, including my own delegation, but we refrain from doing so, because if we do not, we will not have a final report. And I think the worst possible outcome would be for us to get to New York without a final report, because this would reflect the situation, the quagmire in which the Conference on Disarmament finds itself. I believe nobody wants this. I therefore ask – and I am grateful to

those countries that have shown flexibility – other countries that wish to include additional elements to please consult with their capitals to see whether they can refrain from doing so in order for us to move forward.

We propose setting this paragraph aside, pending consultation with the capitals, and proceed with the other paragraphs if everyone agrees.

Does the delegation of the United States of America wish to take the floor?

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, I apologize for taking the floor. There was a lot of very difficult negotiation on this paragraph, so the way I plan to proceed with regard to engaging my capital on this proposal that was carefully crafted is that I am not considering other elements to this at all. I assume we are going to wait for those countries that need instructions from their capital and we will move from there. Is my understanding correct?

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): This is indeed what I am asking from delegations: the greatest understanding, the greatest possible consideration; we are at a critical juncture. I know that no one is entirely satisfied with this wording, but it is the best we could do. We do not have time to keep trying, to add new sentences or remove words, because doing so would undo all our work not only with regard to this paragraph but also to others.

I appeal to you, then, to show the utmost understanding and flexibility. You are witness to what has been done here, you can go to your capitals and try to make them understand that this is as good as it gets.

The Ambassador of the United Kingdom has the floor.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): Mr. President, I have listened carefully to your appeal and to the new language that has been proposed. It does not contain all of the elements that were important to my delegation, but listening to what you have just said, I am prepared to recommend to my capital that we consider this proposal favourably. I would echo what my colleague from the United States said, which is that we need to know what we are consulting on. I will be consulting on the language that you have suggested now, and I think probably the time for further tinkering is past.

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

Mr. Gabriëlse (Netherlands): I hesitated to speak up, Mr. President, since I could agree and propose paragraph 23, as drafted, to my capital. I did not react to paragraph 6 or paragraph 17, which have some issues which I am not satisfied with. You said nothing is agreed until everything is agreed, so my intention was not to react and to keep it as you proposed, and that is how I will propose it to my capital.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. So, we have an understanding that we will consult our capitals about this paragraph, which was proposed by this presidency following long and involved discussions, try to do our best to convey how sensitive, how delicate the situation that we are in is. I thank you in advance for your understanding. I suggest that we move on and leave this paragraph for consultation with our capitals. I suggest, to, that we provisionally adopt paragraph 24.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Here, on paragraph 25, I would like to offer a clarification after speaking with delegations. I take it that the delegation of Canada, showing great flexibility, has agreed to move, or rather remove, the reference to document CD/2218. It will be mentioned in any case in the appendix, which will also clarify that the proposal it contained was put forward by Canada.

The delegation of the Russian Federation has the floor.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, I would like to comment on paragraph 25. We have no problems with a reference to document CD/2221 in this paragraph, especially as, if we agree on the most recent version of paragraph 23, we will not have to mention the symbol of the document prepared by the Canadians on a technical

update to the rules of procedure. Nevertheless, we still have serious doubts about the desirability of referring in this paragraph to document CD/2218. Before the meeting started, we participated in consultations regarding that document, and it was suggested that no mention should be made of the document in this particular paragraph, but to put this document in an appropriate appendix to the report.

Unfortunately, I cannot now definitely say whether or not this proposal works for us, but we are prepared to consider it, provided that, in the omnibus document CD/2218 listed in appendix II, it is clearly stated that these are not the rules of procedure but, say, a suggested update of the rules, or a possible version of the rules, drafted by the Canadians on their own initiative. I think that this solution will satisfy the Canadians and will give us the possibility of agreeing on the inclusion of this document in the appendix, where all official documents of the Conference on Disarmament which have been received from delegations will be listed.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the delegation of the Russian Federation. Indeed, what you pointed out is what I tried to explain briefly at the outset. All of this is very delicately balanced. I propose that once delegations have consulted their capitals, we keep the reference to document CD/2221 in paragraph 25, while the other document will be mentioned only in the appendices, with an express reference to the fact that it is a document submitted by Canada. The Conference on Disarmament will then look at the document as a whole at that point.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I take it that the Conference on Disarmament wishes to provisionally adopt paragraphs 26 to 55.

It was so decided.

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

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, I understand that there is provisional agreement on paragraphs 12, 23 and 25. So for now, I am certainly willing to give my provisional approval of paragraph 56, but I do want to wait to see where we are in terms of agreement on the overall text before giving final agreement to that paragraph. For now, you have my provisional agreement.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the delegation of the United States of America for its flexibility – we are sure that we will have a final report, as we all wish. I take it we can provisionally adopt paragraphs 56 and 57.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As regards the appendices, we take it that appendix I is provisionally adopted. Apologies, the delegation of the Russian Federation has the floor.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, excuse me for interrupting a process which seems to me to be moving in a useful direction, but I would like to recall the proposal put forward by the Ambassador of Brazil at an earlier meeting and concerning the headings of sections A, on page 9, and H, on page 11. English is not our mother tongue and therefore to us, for example, heading A, on page 9, sounds ambiguous; it can be read as cessation of both “the arms race” and “nuclear disarmament”. It may be read differently, in other words, by separating “the arms race” and “nuclear disarmament”. It is the same with the heading to section H on page 11. I think that the proposal made by our Brazilian colleague enables us to render these headings more clearly in English, in order to avoid misinterpretation of the meaning we give to these headings.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before giving the floor to the United States of America, I just want to point out to the representative of the Russian Federation that we were indeed aware of the amendment proposed by the delegation of Brazil. However, I was told that these titles have been around for a long time – they are part of the official agenda of the Conference on Disarmament – and that any change would mean entering into a discussion that we neither desire nor have the time for.

And, in a way, this is also the reason we prefer not to enter into this detail right now. I thank you for your explanation, but it might mean that we have to amend the agenda afterwards, which would lead to even more ado and more problems.

Just for clarification, the delegation of the Russian Federation has the floor, to be followed by those of the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, I am not insisting. I was just calling this proposal to mind. I understand that these headings are taken from the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. But here, on the sidelines, it was thought that the document that we are preparing should be understandable even to a schoolchild. That is why I asked the question. I am not insisting on an amendment of the headings. I was just recalling that the idea was expressed by our Brazilian colleagues.

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

Mr. Wood (United States of America): Mr. President, I know you and some of my colleagues will find this hard to believe, but I actually do agree with my colleague from the Russian Federation on this. I think the two paragraphs or headings that have been cited in English can lead you to draw a different conclusion potentially. I am not insisting either, but I would note that, frankly, just because that is the way it has always been done does not mean it should not be changed. That is the only thing I wanted to say.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, I am truly grateful to the delegations of the Russian Federation and the United States of America for their flexibility. I wholeheartedly agree that these issues could perhaps be considered on a future occasion.

The Ambassador of the United Kingdom has the floor.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): Mr. President, a great man once said that the United Kingdom and the United States were two nations divided by a common language, and I have to depart from my colleague from the United States here. I think a plain reading of the agenda items – of the titles – is fairly clear. I think, more to the point, that these are the exact titles, as we adopted them in our agenda, and I think tinkering with them now would be very unwise. If we want to open the agenda when we come to the opening of the next session, perhaps we can have that conversation then, but I think now is not the time.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. This will no longer be the problem of this presidency. I know that it will be in very good hands with the next presidency.

The delegation of Brazil has the floor.

Mr. De Barros Carvalho e Mello Mourão (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. I do not wish to delay our work – I just wanted to thank the delegations that have mentioned the proposal by Brazil. And, of course, we would not be discussing the cessation of nuclear disarmament here. My proposal is clearly a result of my poor command of the English language.

Could you please tell me how the heading of section A, for example, would read in Spanish?

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have only the English version myself. The secretariat will try to find it, and in the meantime, I give the floor to the delegation of Pakistan and then we get back to the question by Brazil.

Mr. Omar (Pakistan): Mr. President, not to hold us back from progress, I just wanted to echo the comments of the Ambassador of the United Kingdom regarding the agenda items. I also wanted to make a clarification as a matter of record: that section A is from our agenda, while section H is not. In fact, we sometimes do not even have section H in our reports. We have it when required; we do not have it when not required. But I wanted to fully echo the point regarding not tinkering with the agenda item titles at this stage. And if I may venture to make a suggestion – while I do not believe I have the correct answer to the question of the Ambassador of Brazil – my guess would be that the title of A would be whatever the agenda item is in Spanish. That would be my understanding.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In Spanish, it would read: “*Cesación de la carrera de armamentos nucleares y desarme nuclear*”. I know that this will be a very interesting issue to discuss during the next presidency. Perhaps we can move on.

The representative of Algeria has the floor.

Mr. Berkat (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I asked for the floor to save time because the document before me was in Spanish, but the secretariat has now provided the draft wording of the first paragraph. As I have taken the floor, I should like to say that, on a personal basis, this was one of the first points that came to my attention when I took up this position in 2018. In an attempt to understand the matter, I began to compare the different language versions of the document and I found that the French wording is clearer. We are talking not about the cessation of nuclear disarmament but about two different things, a fact that I noted as a novice in the past. I understand why the issue is currently being raised in this manner. However, as the draft forms part of the officially approved agenda, the discussion on the topic should be deferred with a view to reaching a consensus on the final report. Thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much for this clarification. To conclude, I propose, if we all agree, to provisionally adopt appendix I, which is linked to paragraph 4.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Appendix II is pending consultations with your capitals, and I know that delegates will conduct compelling consultations so we can adopt this paragraph. I thank you in advance for all your efforts. I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I apologize to colleagues. I somehow seem to have become the frontman of today’s meeting, but, alas, I have to follow the instructions I receive from my capital.

We have no objection to appendix II as such – in other words, to accompanying the report of the Conference on Disarmament with extracts from meeting records. However, as I have already said at previous meetings, these excerpts do not reflect the discussions held on this matter. We understand how difficult it is to draw up records to provide an objective picture of what happened during the consideration of the issue of inviting certain States as observers.

However, if the wording of paragraph 12 of the report is agreed without amendment, we are prepared to agree to the adoption of appendix II, with the reservation that this would not therefore constitute a precedent for the preparation of further final reports of the Conference. Again, if we want the report to objectively reflect the proceedings and their outcome, we will have to append practically the entire record of the meetings at which this or that subject was discussed.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the delegation of the Russian Federation for this clarification. Appendix II, then, is pending adoption subject to the adoption of paragraph 12.

Appendix III is adopted, in principle, except for the change to document CD/2218 – the new title or the new wording that will go on the top of the document, which will be provided by Canada.

Apologies, the delegation of Cuba has the floor.

Mr. Delgado Sánchez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President, I have not given up hope that this may be the last time I take the floor. We are grateful for your leadership in guiding our efforts to adopt a report at this meeting. I also wish to thank delegations for their willingness to facilitate the adoption of this report. Obviously, like all delegations, we will have to consult our capital on this version adopted *ad referendum*. For the sake of transparency, it would be very beneficial to have a clean copy of document CD/WP.636/Rev.3 that we can send to our capital to avoid any kind of misunderstanding.

Since this may be the last plenary meeting of the session, my delegation wishes to put a few issues on record. Firstly, although we have provisionally accepted appendix II as a

formula to reach consensus, we do not believe this to be good practice. It is therefore not something we would feel bound to consider in future.

Secondly, document CD/2218 can under no circumstances be considered an English version of the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament, regardless of the way it is described in the text – we do not have the final version of appendix III before us. In fact, may I venture to suggest to Canada, and I leave it in your hands, that the best way to get to a final agreement would probably be to use, when referring to documents CD/2218 and CD/2221, part of the wording proposed by the delegation of Iran and say: “transmitting a proposal in the form of” – that is to say, “a proposal in the form of a draft decision”. This would be a good way to get all delegations to accept the version of the report that you will circulate and help us move forward.

And a third and last issue, which we would also like to see reflected in the record of this meeting, is that the delegation of Cuba believes that the wording of paragraph 23, which we have accepted *ad referendum*, must never be interpreted as implying that any member of the Conference on Disarmament opposes gender equality, as observing gender equality is an accepted and irrevocable practice of the Conference.

I thank you for giving me the floor to put these three clarifications on the record.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Do not trouble yourself, Sir – it is most likely that we will reconvene once again to adopt the final document as a whole. I take it that some delegations need to see the document as a whole, so we obviously need another meeting.

The representative of Pakistan has the floor.

Mr. Omar (Pakistan): Mr. President, apologies for taking time. Two quick points on appendix II. Of course, the intention of my delegation is not to hold us back from agreement on paragraph 12; we are very mindful of the positions of members on this paragraph. We also have expressed our position on this matter quite clearly on a number of occasions and on formal record, so I will not delve into those areas.

There is just one point I would like to recall, which my delegation mentioned the last time we discussed this: that we should approach this paragraph as we should approach the whole report, in an objective and balanced manner. The point that was mentioned by my colleague from the Russian Federation has some merit. While I am not suggesting at all that we disregard what we have in front of us, a thought for consideration is that, while it would be impractical to reproduce the whole *procès-verbal* as an annex – we used to do that a long time ago at the Conference on Disarmament, but we do not do it any longer – but what we could think of is not getting into the practice of pulling out extracts, because that makes it very difficult to reach the objective of a balanced approach.

So it is a thoughtful consideration; I understand that there are very strong positions on this paragraph, and we would not object to those positions at this point, but a thought for the membership is whether we should delve into this practice of pulling out extracts or not, because I am sure we all have our own preferences from extracts as well. If we are to run into some further discussions on this paragraph, then maybe this is something to look at, but at this stage this is just something that my delegation wished to put on record and also to share with other colleagues for their consideration.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Pakistan very much for this clarification. Unfortunately, I do not think we have time to look at this in more detail, but his position is duly noted.

The delegation of the Russian Federation has the floor.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, I will not repeat our position on document CD/2221. In order to agree to this appendix, we will first have to look at how our comments on this document are addressed.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran has the floor, and then a five-minute break, please.

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, let me express appreciation once again for your approach and your leadership in guiding our efforts to finalize the report.

On appendix II, regarding paragraph 12, as we said, we have some concerns and we need instructions from capitals. Later, we will be in direct contact with you.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much and, indeed, we will keep this in mind.

Apparently, the delegation of the Russian Federation wishes to take the floor again. After that, please give me five minutes to see how we proceed.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I am sorry, Mr. President, I made a mistake. I was talking about document CD/2218. We have no objections to document CD/2221. I meant that we will look at how our comments and concerns regarding document CD/2218 are taken into account.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. Apologies. For form's sake, I suspend the meeting for five minutes.

The meeting was suspended at 4.45 p.m. and resumed at 4.50 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We will propose a course of action so we can finish today.

Let me ask those delegates who need to seek instructions to see whether they can do so by 5.45 p.m. at the latest. We also request those delegations wishing to introduce amendments to make them available so that we might be able to conclude today.

The secretariat will start to work on a clean version. It should be ready in 20 minutes, and we can finish today. If not, we will have to wait, look for a room. There are no rooms available tomorrow – Thursday is a holiday, and the Palais is closed. We are trying to see whether there are any rooms on Friday. This consultation is pending, but I believe the wisest course of action would be to try to wrap this up today, if possible.

I know that some delegations need to go to their capitals for consultations and I would ask you to do this as soon as possible so we can finish today. The secretariat can get a clean text ready within 20 minutes, and we can try to come to an agreement. If everyone agrees, we can try this approach, which would be ideal, and if not, we will try to find a room or other space on Friday to finish this report.

I will suspend the meeting, then, to leave you to your consultations and let the secretariat get the clarifications regarding the numbers, with the names you asked for, and prepare a clean draft. Do you agree? This way, we may be able to finish today.

The representative of Cuba has the floor.

Mr. Delgado Sánchez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We do not mean to drag this out – quite the contrary, we would like to make the most of our time, but you suspended the meeting for five minutes, the colleagues from the Russian delegation left and I am afraid that when we come back in 20 minutes, we will have to leave it until Friday, anyway. Leave it until Friday because the Russian delegation is not in the room, not because they might or might not agree to consult within the next 20 minutes.

Perhaps it would be more prudent to ask the members of the Russian delegation quickly, since they are one of the interested parties, because I fear that when you come back with the clean version, the Russian colleagues might say that they have to wait until Friday, which means that we would just be waiting around for nothing for 30 minutes.

Apologies if I what I have said is out of order, I have no problem with moving on to adopting it right now, but –

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In the meantime, let us get going, there is a text to be cleaned up, consultations to be seen to, and if the delegation of the Russian Federation needs more time, well, so be it, then we will look for a room for Friday, against the wishes of some.

The Ambassador of the Netherlands has the floor.

Mr. Gabriëls (Netherlands): Mr. President, just to say that I am in agreement with your proposal that we work on the clean text now. I take it there will be no more amendments

because we agreed *ad referendum* on this text, as we just discussed. The normal practice is that you table it as a silence procedure for Friday. That means we have time to reflect with our capitals whether this is acceptable or not to them.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much for your suggestion, Ambassador. I am told that it is not the practice of the Conference on Disarmament to use a silence procedure, especially with regard to matters relating to reports.

I would love to proceed in the manner you suggest but, in the end, as it is not the practice, we may encounter, shall we say, certain problems.

We will give the secretariat 20 minutes to clean up the text and circulate it – we shall consult with the capitals, see if we can do this. If not, we will meet at some stage on Friday. Does everyone agree?

We will suspend the meeting for 20 minutes and come back with a clean draft. Thank you.

The meeting was suspended at 4.55 p.m. and resumed at 5.35 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The secretariat has circulated the Rev.3 electronically, taking up some of the suggestions.

We are also trying to print a few copies. Unfortunately, this takes time because there are several pages. In any case, you have the electronic version on your phones and iPads.

For the sake of time, let us get started. First, the delegation of Brazil has the floor.

Mr. De Barros Carvalho e Mello Mourão (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. I just wanted to point out that I have not received this on my phone.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): It will be sent to your personal email. Maybe it was sent to the Brazilian Mission, which would be why you have not received it yet.

In any event, the secretariat will circulate a few hard copies shortly. In order to move on, we need to find out whether those delegations that needed to consult with their capitals on paragraphs 12, 23, 25 and appendix III have been able to do so, so we can proceed and finish today. Was any delegation unable to get confirmation from its capital? I see that all delegations have at least been able to consult their capitals. I know it is very often a lot to ask of you, given the time difference. So, we can get going with the provisional adoption of the paragraphs left pending.

I am killing a bit of time, speaking more slowly to see whether at least a few of the hard copies are ready. As soon as we have a few copies, 10 or 15, we can go ahead. I am told we have 20 so far; a few hard copies will be circulated now. About 20 hard copies will be left here on the table. Those of you who have the electronic version, please try to follow it electronically. There are only 20 hard copies.

The adoption of paragraph 12 was left pending some instructions from capitals. May I take it that the Conference on Disarmament wishes to adopt paragraph 12 provisionally?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The provisional adoption of paragraph 23 was left pending. Does the Conference on Disarmament wish to adopt it provisionally?

The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran has the floor.

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, let me once again express appreciation for all your efforts. We commend your leadership in guiding our efforts to reach consensus. We have been trying to be as constructive as possible to help you to reach agreement on this report.

Mr. President, I have been in a telephone conversation with our authority for the past 20 minutes. We are not happy with the wording in paragraph 12, but we can live with it, to show our flexibility and constructive engagement with you and with other delegations. We can live with it, but we have to be clear that this is unprecedented. A guiding practice is

exactly what is guiding our efforts in drafting the report – to stick to that guiding principle. The wording in paragraph 12 is not consistent with that principle and practice.

Regarding paragraph 23, we made some suggestions. We have some proposals. For the sake of flexibility, we can agree with the proposed language in the first sentences and we can live with that. We can withdraw our first suggestions and we do not insist on them. But on “to reflect the equality of men and women”, Mr. President, our humble understanding is that this is contradictory. During the course of our discussions – I do not want to go through them in detail – no delegation challenged or questioned the principle of the equality of women and men. So, when we say “the equality of men and women” and at the end of this paragraph, we say that the Conference on Disarmament did not succeed in reaching agreement, to our understanding, it is a little bit confusing and contradictory. So instead of “to reflect the equality of men and women”, we propose using the phrase that you proposed in your version 2 instead of this phrase. I would like to repeat it:

The fifth President presented a draft decision for a technical/linguistic update to the Conference on Disarmament rules of procedure to expressly reflect therein the existing practice that both women and men can occupy the roles of representative of the Conference on Disarmament, head of a Conference on Disarmament delegation, President of the Conference on Disarmament and Secretary-General of the Conference. The Conference considered the possibility of that update ...

The President: (*spoke in Spanish*) To be honest, I cannot see the problem. Does any delegation object to this sentence? The Russian Federation has the floor.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to thank our Iranian colleague for the proposal that he has put forward and for the flexibility that the Iranian delegation is prepared to show, but it seems to me that the argument advanced by our Iranian colleague in support of his second proposal does not dispel his concern and might even exacerbate it, because if we include in the existing paragraph additional text from your previous proposal it will look as if the Conference on Disarmament did not succeed in reaching agreement on the issue of whether men and women can hold posts at the Conference.

In our view, such an addition merely complicates our task of reaching agreement on this paragraph. We see no problems with the first proposal where it is noted that a draft decision was proposed to update the rules of procedure in order to reflect the equality of men and women – in other words, in that proposal, we practically say that we have no problem with equality between men and women and that, generally speaking, no such problem exists at the Conference. Therefore, in our view, any additional clarifications of this fundamental understanding will only make this proposal doubly complicated. I would therefore ask our Iranian colleagues once again to seriously consider the possibility of supporting paragraph 23 as it now stands in the new draft final report Rev. 3.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. I would ask the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to consult again with his authorities in the light of the arguments put forward by the delegation of the Russian Federation. This is a package that also links up to the next one I will talk about. In the meantime, we will leave paragraph 23 pending to give the representative of Iran time to consult the authorities in Tehran.

Let us finish. In the meantime, he can consult Tehran, and I will conclude by explaining the package, because there is also paragraph 25, which is important for understanding the flexibility demonstrated by different delegations.

The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran has floor.

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, let me, through you, also express appreciation for the goodwill of our colleague from the Russian delegation.

I will consult with my authorities on this particular issue, but it is already late in Tehran and it is really difficult to get instructions right now on this issue.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In any event, we would appreciate it if you tried. In the meantime, we will finish the reading and take it from there. The provisional adoption of paragraph 23 is pending consultations by the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Then we have paragraph 25. As you know, the reference to document CD/2218 was deleted here but will be retained in appendix III with new wording that was sent by note verbale by the delegation of Canada. The note reads:

(spoke in English)

Note verbale dated 17 August 2021 from the Permanent Mission of Canada, transmitting the draft decision on updating the rules of procedure, circulated as CD/WP.635, and the English version of the rules of procedure amended by the Canadian delegation to the Conference on Disarmament on its own initiative as per the draft decision.

(spoke in Spanish)

This way, you can see that there is a very delicate balance between paragraph 25 and this. I would therefore be grateful if we also considered appendix III once the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran has made the necessary enquiries.

The delegation of the Russian Federation has the floor.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: I would like to express our appreciation to our Canadian colleagues for their close attention to our comments here in the meeting room and their prompt approval of our participation in finding wording which might clearly bring out whose documents these were that were submitted under symbol CD/2218.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: Thank you very much. This is where we are, then. We will wait five minutes or so to see whether the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran has any luck with his capital so we can wrap this up today.

The meeting was suspended at 5.55 p.m. and resumed at 6 p.m.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: We have been given 10 more minutes, and I want to take this opportunity to thank the interpreters, who have done a great job and have been very patient with us.

May I ask whether we have provisional agreement on paragraph 23, whether the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran was able to speak to his capital and whether we can make progress on this paragraph?

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, we have demonstrated our flexibility and constructive approach to you and to other delegations during the course of negotiating this draft report. On paragraph 12, we showed our extreme flexibility; on paragraph 23, we showed our flexibility and we said we can agree on the draft wording for the first sentences. I have contacted our capital, although it is already 10.30 p.m., and I talked to them. I have been told to show our flexibility, so we are ready to propose other wording. We have two options here: either to use the wording that I proposed to you previously or, if that makes it complicated for some delegations, we could delete that phrase and instead, we would include the name of the working paper or the Conference on Disarmament document that referred to that specific proposal.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: Just for clarification. An alternative option to join the consensus would be to refer to the exact title of the document and leave the rest as it is. Could you read out this latest proposal?

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, let me clarify. Our proposal is to drop our first proposal that I shared with you, if it is not acceptable to some delegations. We could delete "to reflect the equality of men and women" and instead of that, we would include the name of the document. So it would read like this: "The fifth President presented a draft decision for a technical/linguistic update of the Conference on Disarmament rules of procedure as contained in document ...".

The President: The delegation of Australia has the floor.

Ms. Hill (Australia): Mr. President, my delegation will need some reference in that paragraph, as we had there in your version, to the topic of that decision. The number does not assist us with that. I will need a reference and I am flexible on that. I am very happy with the

language that you had put in there, and am happy to look at other language, but I will need the topic in there.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Spain has the floor.

Mr. Manglano Aboín (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Mr. President. I fully coincide with the position expressed by Australia. It has been a long and difficult journey to get this far, and we cannot drop the reference to the topic of our discussions at this stage.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran surely sees, it is difficult to reach consensus. I believe we have done our best. We cannot introduce additional amendments to this text without reopening it.

If we omit the reference to the document numbers, we will have to put in the title, which makes the paragraph even lengthier and more cumbersome.

The delegation of the Russian Federation has the floor.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, I understand my Iranian colleague's proposal, but, unfortunately, I do not think that it can be considered acceptable because, as we agreed some time ago, we will not insert references to working papers in the text of the final document. A reference to document CD/2221 is inappropriate in paragraph 23, because the document did not exist when this issue was discussed. We are therefore facing somewhat of a stalemate. However, I think that the suggestion to refer to document CD/2221 in paragraph 25 was a fairly neat solution. It seems to me that this reference is enough to reflect the idea already expressed in paragraph 23. I do not know whether this helps or not. We could perhaps slightly change the wording of the initial proposal. We do not insist on this idea, but perhaps it will help us to find a way out of the situation in which we now find ourselves. We suggest adding the phrase "to reflect the existing practice of equality of men and women" at the end of the first sentence after the words "rules of procedure". Perhaps this will help us to find a way out. I will say once again that we do not insist on this proposal. In general, we are prepared to support the existing wording of paragraph 23 of the draft report.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Could the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran accept the proposal ("the existing practice of equality") put forward by the Russian Federation? Then I will give the floor to the delegation of India. We have to finish because we will lose interpretation, so please let us try to refer only to this.

Mr. Azadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, I will be brief. I appreciate our distinguished colleague from Russia and the goodwill effort to find a compromise on this issue, but I have to consult with my capital on that.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Ambassador of India has the floor, and then we have to finish because time is up.

Mr. Sharma (India): Mr. President, I also wish to thank our colleague from the Russian Federation. But if there were an existing practice of the equality of men and women, we would not have needed this linguistic update to the rules of procedure. So, I do not think that proposal will fly with us, no matter how much flexibility we show because the existing practice is not correct. That is the reason we went for this update.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much. Unfortunately, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates, we have been unable to reach an agreement today. We are very close. We will circulate the original version and we kindly ask delegations to return to their capitals and insist – or show, rather – that every possible effort has been made. Try to convince your authorities by Friday morning, when we will try to reconvene – I take it a meeting room has been found – and work towards final consensus on this document.

Be flexible. Try to talk to your capitals to facilitate an agreement on Friday morning on Rev.3, the final version of which will be circulated tomorrow. We have no time. Be very clear with your capitals. There is no more time to add or remove anything. It will be Rev.3 or no report at all.

I am afraid that this is all I can offer. I leave it to you to get there by Friday.

With this, we close today's meeting and will reconvene on Friday, at a time to be confirmed. Rev.3 will be officially circulated tomorrow. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.