

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND AND TWELFTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 14 March 2006, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. PARK In-kook (Republic of Korea)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 1012th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

This morning I have the following speakers on my list: Chile, China and the Russian Federation.

Before giving them the floor, I would like to make a brief statement. Today the Conference on Disarmament begins the last week of deliberations under my presidency. As I informed you last week, I would like to introduce to you a non-paper entitled "Compilation of proposals and observations on agenda items 1 and 2", which is an attempt to capture the main subjects discussed at the plenary meetings during the presidency of the Republic of Korea.

The intensive discussion on agenda items 1 and 2 inspired us to make a compilation of different suggestions and proposals made during the plenary meetings. In this compilation I have attempted to pick up key points or arguments on the main theme related to the agenda items, using the quotations from the 81 statements that had been made as of 9 March, our last session.

You may notice that for statements made in languages other than English, excerpts in the compilation are only unofficial translations. You may also see that I have grouped excerpts related to similar subjects under separate subheadings, which are merely for your convenience, in accordance with the guidelines which I suggested during our last meetings.

I hope that this non-paper will be useful for the continuation of the debates on agenda items 1 and 2, as well as for future reference. Also please be advised that the current compilation is subject to correction and might be added to if there is any development up to the last meeting under my presidency.

At the conclusion of the last plenary meeting, on Thursday, 9 March, I made a statement concerning the practice of delivering the addresses of women participating in the yearly International Women's Day seminars. In the statement, I requested the Friends of the Presidents to explore the best applicable practice for more constructive involvement by civil society in the CD process by the end of this year's session. Since the issue of the verbatim records of this meeting will take some time, I will now distribute, for your convenience, the relevant excerpt from my statement concerning the proposal.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Juan Martabit of Chile.

Mr. MARTABIT (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, the delegation of Chile wishes to reiterate its congratulations to you on the excellent job that you have been doing. Today, I shall comment briefly on the Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines and their destruction, as unfortunately last week I was unable to do so. Chile is a State party to this fundamental instrument in the sphere of disarmament law and humanitarian law. In this capacity we have assessed the progress made since its entry into force seven years ago. We believe that the Ottawa initiative has been a success and that the way in which it has been carried out should serve as a lesson for the Conference on Disarmament. The links that exist among the 149 States parties and civil society constitute an example that should be emulated.

(Mr. Martabit, Chile)

In my delegation's opinion, the Conference cannot continue with a repetition of situations such as that which occurred last week on the commemoration of International Women's Day. We cannot prevent civil society from expressing itself. The member States of this forum have the right to benefit from the contributions and skills of NGOs, and of course we welcome the announcement that you have just made regarding the document that you introduced a short while ago.

The response of my region, Latin America, to the Convention has been forceful. As early as 1998, Mercosur, together with Chile and Bolivia, declared the region a zone free of anti-personnel mines. The Organization of American States (OAS) has continued in the same direction, promoting the extension of this initiative to the entire hemisphere. On 15 February we marked the ratification of the instrument by Haiti. Currently, my country, together with Guatemala and Argentina, is working actively in the Standing Committees of the Convention. Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru have done so in the past. As regards cooperation and international assistance, Chile and Argentina have established a working group to educate the population living in the border region on the risks of mine accidents. In the context of multilateral transparency, both countries have raised the possibility of including in their national reports an account of plans for making use of mines retained for training purposes. Lastly, I wish to inform you that on 28 February last a further humanitarian mine clearance operation was carried out in the Chilean altiplano in the border region with Argentina, in the presence of national authorities from Chile, Argentina and Bolivia.

Despite the progress made by the Convention, a great deal remains to be done. The instrument must continue its path towards complete universalization, and there must be continued clearing of mines from affected areas as well as assistance to the victims of this scourge. The fact that deadlines are drawing near for some member States from 2009 makes the situation even more urgent. We are convinced that the readiness of affected States to deal with this, the ongoing, I must say, and generous contributions of donor countries, the tireless work of the United Nations and bodies such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, ICBL and Geneva Call, will facilitate the accomplishment of this challenging task.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Martabit of Chile for his statement. The next speaker will be Ambassador Cheng Jingye of China.

Mr. CHENG (China) (translated from Chinese): Yesterday we were very glad to receive the book entitled Safeguarding Space Security: Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space distributed by UNIDIR to all delegations. As we all know, in March last year China, Russia, UNIDIR and the Canadian Simons Foundation jointly organized an international conference entitled "Safeguarding Space Security: Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space", which included extensive discussions on issues related to outer space. Many participants expressed original, incisive views and ideas which were certainly beneficial to further in-depth exploration of the issue of outer space.

The book contains an extensive compilation of delegations' statements and the report of the conference, thus supplementing the international community's knowledge of the conference and promoting research on the issue of outer space. Its publication was very timely. We are sure

(Mr. Cheng, China)

that this book, together with the second version of the compilation of comments and suggestions on the PAROS working paper (CD/1679) recently submitted by China and Russia, will serve as an important reference for the CD's discussion of the issue of outer space this year.

On behalf of the Chinese Government, I would like to express our gratitude to UNIDIR for its great efforts to compile and publish this book, and our appreciation for its contributions during the process of promoting the issue of outer space.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Cheng of China for his statement. I now give the floor to Ambassador Valery Loshchinin of the Russian Federation.

Mr. LOSHCHININ (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): First of all, Mr. President, I should like to congratulate you on the compilation that has been published. We see that you and your assistants have accomplished a major and very important task. It is important and useful for all of us to take on the task of collating the statements and taking the most valuable statements made by many delegations. This was a bold step. And we would like to congratulate you on your success, since we are deeply convinced that this document will be in demand. It is most necessary and will serve as a kind of manual for all of us, and at any time we will be able to consult this document, synchronize our watches, so to speak, particularly from the viewpoint of the upcoming work of the Conference on Disarmament. This is also a good example in the consideration of other issues on the agenda - not the agenda, but what we are actually discussing.

Secondly, I would like to commend UNIDIR and our friend the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China for his statement on the publication of this most interesting and useful book. Exactly one year ago UNIDIR, together with the People's Republic of China, with support from the Simons Foundation of Canada, organized this event, this large and important international conference. Russia was most actively involved in it. As you know, a summary of the conference has already been published as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament. Here it is noted that the UNIDIR conference gathered together a large number of participants: over 100 official representatives of member States, along with scholars, specialists and experts. And this book is in a way an outcome of the work of the conference.

The question of how to ensure the stable and safe use of outer space and space technology in the interests of all mankind in present-day circumstances was the subject of discussion. Of particular importance for us as members of the Conference on Disarmament are the ideas put forward on the specific role that our Conference could play in ensuring space security. In our opinion, these ideas are of major practical significance for the activities of the CD's ad hoc committee on PAROS, which we hope will shortly be re-established as part of a balanced work programme for the Conference. This is urgently needed. The UNIDIR conference has once again shown the important role of the problem of PAROS among States' priorities in the field of international security. We consider that the material in this book, the reports published in it, will be in demand during the thematic discussions on PAROS issues which will be held during the session of the Conference on Disarmament this year.

(Mr. Loshchinin, Russian Federation)

I agree with the Chinese Ambassador that the book has been published really at the right time, specifically on the eve of the regular international conference in Geneva on questions of space security, which will be held here in two weeks on 30 and 31 March. The book will certainly help to focus the work of the upcoming conference, and the conference, we believe, will prove most useful in the subsequent discussion of PAROS-related topics in the CD. Once again let me commend UNIDIR for this most excellent book, which will be useful to all of us.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Loschinin of the Russian Federation for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair and to my colleagues.

This concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria, Mr. Hamza Khelif.

Mr. KHELIF (Algeria) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, I should like to thank you for preparing the non-paper on the discussions held on items 1 and 2 of the agenda. I should like to know whether we can make some preliminary observations on this document.

Firstly, regarding the structure of the document, it deals with the issues as follows: general observations; operations to eliminate or reduce nuclear weapons; the principles of transparency, irreversibility, and verification; military doctrines; nuclear terrorism; and, finally, a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in the production of nuclear weapons.

In the discussions, our meetings concentrated on two sub-items, namely, the efforts by nuclear-weapon States to reduce their nuclear arsenals, and, secondly, what we must do in future to achieve disarmament. I would have liked to see these two sub-items reflected in this document.

We note that the main item, i.e. nuclear disarmament, was included under the heading of general observations, where reference is made to the statement delivered by Iraq on behalf of the Group of 21, regarding the establishment of a subcommittee to negotiate on nuclear disarmament. We would like to have seen these matters presented under a separate heading and to know the position of other States on this point.

There are many issues that were raised by different delegations on what needs to be done in the future to achieve nuclear disarmament. I will mention, for example, the entry into force of the CTBT, negative security assurances, the non-use of nuclear weapons as a first strike option, the Convention Prohibiting the Use of Nuclear Weapons, and eliminating the role of nuclear weapons in security policies. These are just some preliminary remarks. We will provide you with fuller comments on the content of the document after examining it in greater depth.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Mr. Khelif of Algeria for his comments. Is there any other delegation that wishes to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

This concludes our plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting will be held on Thursday, 16 March 2006, at 10 a.m. in this conference room.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.