

# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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## FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Tuesday, 17 February 2009, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Chitsaka CHIPAZIWA (Zimbabwe)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 1124th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to extend a warm welcome today to our distinguished guest, Mr. Espen Barth Eide, Deputy Minister of Defence of Norway.

We know the importance his country attaches to disarmament, including in particular the work of the Conference on Disarmament. I have the pleasure, therefore, and the honour to invite Mr. Barth Eide to take the floor to address us this morning.

Mr. BARTH EIDE (Norway): Mr. President, it is really a great pleasure for me to address the Conference on Disarmament today under the very first formal meeting under the presidency of Zimbabwe. I assure you of Norway's full support in your work.

This is a pivotal moment for disarmament. In the last weeks and months, we have seen a remarkable trend towards a renewed focus on international cooperation in general, and disarmament affairs in particular. Let me mention a few examples.

President Obama's expressed commitment to seek multilateral solutions to common threats and challenges sets the stage for substantial achievements in disarmament and non-proliferation. This was reconfirmed by the Vice-President of the United States, Joe Biden, at the Munich Security Conference 10 days ago, which I also had the pleasure of attending. It was truly a new spirit that comes out of the United States administration, but we also see this in many other quarters.

It is particularly encouraging to hear the new commitment to multilateral negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, the FMCT, including verification; the stated intention to seek ratification of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, the CTBT, and the will to negotiate with Russia on new reductions of strategic weapons. Furthermore, the willingness to look into the possibility of taking the remaining nuclear weapons off alert status, stopping the development of new nuclear weapons, and seeking agreements on satellite weapons. Likewise, President Medvedev's announcement to suspend the announced deployments of the Iskander missiles in Kaliningrad and First Deputy Prime Minister Ivanov's pledge at the Munich Conference that Russia stands ready to work with the Obama administration to strengthen the weapons of mass destruction non-proliferation regime and a successor treaty to START. Thirdly, in the United Kingdom and Germany and other European countries we see high officials speaking out in favour of a complete elimination of nuclear arsenals. We welcome United Kingdom Foreign Secretary Milliband's recently launched six-step programme to create the conditions to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

All these signals suggest that we have a new atmosphere of cooperation that we have not had for many years, and everyone here who is committed to the cause of international disarmament needs to take this opportunity very seriously. My main message today is that it is extremely important that the Conference on Disarmament makes full use of these possibilities while we have them, while this very benign moment is still there. The CD is unique in that all the de facto nuclear-weapon States are members of the Conference. The CD could have a great

(Mr. Barth Eide, Norway)

potential for advancing our disarmament and non-proliferation agenda if member States are willing to make use of its potential. We have an instrument, but we need to use it. We have to fill it with political content.

At the same time, we think it is due time to review the way the Conference on Disarmament works. To ensure rapid progress, I believe it is necessary to engage civil society, and I welcome the discussion that now seems to be gathering momentum in the CD on this issue. We need civil society to contribute with innovative approaches and to help mobilize the political will that is necessary to move forward and reap the political momentum.

A noteworthy event was the launching last December of Global Zero - an international campaign to build public awareness and political support for a nuclear-weapon treaty - by a high-level group of 129 political, military, business, faith and civic leaders from around the world.

We have experience in this kind of work in other parts of the disarmament agenda. Both the process leading up to the Mine Ban Convention and most recently, the process leading up to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Oslo are excellent examples of the potential that lies in the strong partnership between States and civil society. The invaluable input from civil society and their experience on the ground were of paramount importance to our being able to reach agreement on measures that are in fact able to effectively address the severe and long-term humanitarian and developmental problems caused by cluster munitions. We are of course very pleased to note that 95 States have already signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and that several others have declared their intention to sign in the near future. We urge all those States present that have not yet signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions to sign, and for those that have signed, but not yet ratified, to do so on an urgent basis in order to ensure the rapid entry into force and implementation of the Convention.

Nuclear weapons are indeed of a different category from cluster munitions and anti-personnel landmines. But I believe there are parallels and lessons to be learned from the humanitarian disarmament approach, which could benefit our work on disarmament and non-proliferation. We should recognize the NGOs as valuable and necessary partners in our endeavours. We need the impatience of the NGOs. We need the NGOs to remind us that we are starting at the wrong end when we make a benign security environment a precondition for negotiations.

Another important lesson from these two processes is that it was open to all nations. This is not the case of course for the CD. The Conference is mandated to negotiate global legally-binding obligations. Yet, the majority of States are excluded from taking part in these negotiations. This could undermine the legitimacy of future treaties.

We must take forceful action in order to ensure that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty steps up to the challenge and that the 2010 Review Conference becomes a success, strengthening all three pillars of the Treaty.

(Mr. Barth Eide, Norway)

Energy access and energy security will continue to be a critical part of the general development agenda. As demand for nuclear energy is certain to increase, it is therefore vital that the third pillar of the NPT - peaceful uses of nuclear energy - is strengthened. Renewed attention must be paid to developing a proliferation-proof system. Multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle must be strengthened.

Norway has pledged US\$ 5 million towards the establishment of a fuel bank under IAEA auspices. We welcome the various initiatives from Germany, Russia and others with regard to the establishment of a nuclear fuel bank. Norway also appreciates the cooperation with the IAEA and a number of countries on the conversion of civilian reactors from running on highly-enriched uranium to low-enriched uranium.

We must continue to work to improve the verification mechanisms of all aspects of nuclear activities, from the dismantling of warheads, fissile material or nuclear plants. We value our cooperation with the United Kingdom and VERTIC in this field.

The entry into force of the CTBT (Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty) is crucial. We urge those other signatories whose ratification is required for the Treaty to enter into force to ratify urgently, and urge other States to accede. Unilaterally-declared nuclear test moratoria can be no substitute for legal obligations under the CTBT.

The most efficient way to combat the spectre of nuclear terrorism would be the full implementation of an effectively verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty, combined with a CTBT with robust verification mechanisms, and irreversible, verifiable disarmament. A non-discriminatory, verifiable FMCT will bolster both the disarmament and non-proliferation pillars of the NPT. All members have already committed themselves to the negotiation of an FMCT. The recent discussions on an FMCT in the CD have shown that it is time to break the deadlock that has persisted for more than a decade, and to build on the common understanding developed prior to 2005. Questions concerning definitions and scope, including existing stocks, should be dealt with in the course of the negotiations and not be subject to preconditions for agreement on a negotiating mandate.

Henry Kissinger, again at the Security Conference in Munich 10 days ago, reminded us anew of the dilemma of the nuclear age that has been with us since Hiroshima when he talked about the eternal challenge of finding “how to bring the destructiveness of modern weapons into some moral or political relationship with the objectives that are being pursued. Any use of nuclear weapons is certain to involve a level of casualties and devastation out of proportion to foreseeable foreign-policy objectives. Efforts to develop a more nuanced application have never succeeded, from the doctrine of a geographically limited nuclear war of the 1950s and 1960s to the mutual-assured destruction theory of general nuclear war in the 1970s”.

As I see it, we now have a unique opportunity: either we work to put the nuclear genie back in the bottle and devise the control and verification mechanisms necessary to ensure its use for purely peaceful purposes or we can continue on the road to our own destruction.

(Mr. Barth Eide, Norway)

To date, nuclear weapons have largely been regarded in isolation from the larger agenda of international security policy and the other major challenges that we are facing. But there are major changes taking place in the geopolitical landscape, new Powers emerging, new power relations emerging. We also see that civil society, the NGO community, does not only come with expertise, but also creates an arena for political discussions about this outside the formal circles. It is the interplay between the formal and the informal which really gave these two processes the clout that they actually had and led to a successful outcome.

We must deal with regional conflicts that have effectively brought the multilateral disarmament machinery to a grinding halt. Lasting security cannot be achieved through the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

At a time when the international community must grapple with challenges ranging from adaptation to climate change, the spread of pandemic diseases, the fallout from the global financial crisis, civil strife, humanitarian and development challenges, the international community cannot afford the staggering costs that the nuclear weapons option entails.

Norway remains fully committed to any serious efforts in all these fields.

We should keep in mind that the CD is not an end in itself. The CD could have a crucial role to play in making the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons a reality if we, the Governments, want it to, but it will not happen by itself. The value and relevance of the CD lies in its ability to deliver credible results. If this body remains paralysed, there will be stronger calls for considering other avenues in order to move some of the most pressing issues on the disarmament agenda forward.

But I remain convinced that we will be able to use this unique opportunity to take the benign moment that we are in and use the instruments in order to move ahead in a serious way, and I look forward to cooperating with all of you in this work.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you very much, Minister Barth Eide, for your inspiring address to us. The Minister has kindly agreed to stay on and listen to any reactions any of you may have to his statement. Would any of you wish to take the floor in response to what the Minister has just said? I give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of New Zealand.

Mr. MACKAY (New Zealand): Mr. President, my compliments to you on assuming the presidency of the Conference.

I should like to express our appreciation to the Minister for his statement today, which I think has a number of elements that we need to take account of very carefully here in the Conference. One of the things that I think affects us as diplomats, whether we are serving in Geneva or elsewhere, is that we can often get very focused on the narrow prisms that we operate through. I think that that is true of all of us here in the Conference as well.

(Mr. Mackay, New Zealand)

What the Minister has done for us today is place what we are doing and what we have to do in the context of a much broader strategic situation, and I think it is very clear that what the Minister has done for us today, building on his experience and also his attendance at the recent security conference in Europe, sets out first in the broadest strategic context the issues that we are dealing with here. I think it is clear to all of us that we do actually now face a number of opportunities as well as challenges. It is very important in this situation that we move beyond the narrow issues that have prevented progress in the Conference and take up the challenges that the broader security situation presents us with today.

The Minister has also addressed some of the procedural issues that we face in the CD. One that I noted that he mentioned was the role of civil society, which I know has been an issue in the minds of many colleagues here in the Conference. One of the problems with the Conference obviously - and I think that we are all very much aware of it - is that we are, to some extent, hidebound by the past, and it is clear if one looks at other bodies that operate internationally, not only in the disarmament area, but also in other areas such as human rights, that civil society has a huge contribution to make to debate and to progress in this area as in others. So, certainly, we very much look forward to being able to reflect further on the Minister's statement, which we will certainly do, and again, I would like, on behalf of New Zealand, to express appreciation to him for not only addressing the narrow issues that we often find ourselves facing here in the CD, but placing everything very much in its broader context. I think the broader context, as he said, while it lays out many challenges, also presents, as he said, many opportunities. It is incumbent on all of us to rise to the occasion and take advantage of that.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador. Is there any other colleague who would like to take the floor? I give the floor to the United Kingdom.

Mr. DUNCAN (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, may I congratulate you on the assumption of your role. Our thanks go also to Norway and the Minister for coming today. It is by the presence of politicians that we will be able to move forward our agenda, not only by the presence of civil society, but by political engagement. What many of us are attempting to do, particularly the United Kingdom and Norway and others, as the Minister has mentioned, is to articulate a vision for the future, not only a political dimension to that, but the practical steps that will be required to achieve that vision, and that the Minister has so eloquently touched on in his presentation to us, that we are engaged, both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, in that process. But we also need to recognize that the world has changed, that the power politics described by Henry Kissinger have gradually started to evolve to a collective endeavour, not a world of haves and have-nots but rather a world of interconnected States, reflected by the communications revolution of the Internet, but also by the impact of the current financial crisis.

Norway has frequently played a determining role in moving forwards difficult dossiers and I will not allude to them, but there are many, and Norway has played a very key role in that. So we are doubly grateful to the Minister for coming to give support to the efforts in the Conference on Disarmament to take forward the work that is so urgently needed.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador Duncan. Any other colleague who would like to address us? I see no one. Once again, thank you very much, Mr. Barth Eide.

I will suspend this meeting briefly while I escort our distinguished guest out of the hall.

The meeting was suspended at 10.35 a.m. and resumed at 10.40 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: I resume the 1124th plenary meeting. I have Egypt inscribed to speak today, but before I give them the floor, I will make a short statement myself.

Allow me to thank all the distinguished delegations gathered here for their valuable cooperation and wisdom which have allowed this year's P-6 to guide our work so far this year. I would be remiss indeed if I did not, at the outset, pay tribute to our first President this year, His Excellency Ambassador Le Hoai Trung of Viet Nam. He shouldered the heavy responsibility of preparing us for the first plenary meetings of this year's session. What's more, he showed great skill and understanding of the complex issues. I know I speak for all of us when I say he did us all proud and indeed, his excellent work was a particular tribute to his great country, Viet Nam. We trust that his colleagues will convey to him our huge debt of gratitude. In the same vein, let me commend the outstanding work of the 2008 P-6 members. Their experience inspires us today.

Zimbabwe is greatly honoured to assume the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations body which is mandated by the entire membership of our world body to serve as the only multilateral disarmament forum, a body which has delivered significant results. Zimbabwe became a member of the Conference on Disarmament soon after her independence in 1980. My country takes its membership in this forum seriously as a principled Member State of the United Nations, which values its own independence, peace, cooperation and the territorial integrity of all members irrespective of their size. Zimbabwe has made contributions to international peace and security under the United Nations banner when members of her uniformed services have served with distinction in several multilateral and multinational United Nations peacekeeping operations around the world. On our continent, Africa, we have been, and are, at peace with all our neighbours. Equally, we have willingly taken part in peace-assuring operations in several countries, at their request. The Southern African Development Community and the African Union (the OAU before it) all bear testimony to our good character.

In the CD, with its esteemed goal of nuclear disarmament, Zimbabwe undertakes to be a peaceful interlocutor and actor. We are pleased to come from a nuclear-free continent, Africa. It is our cherished goal that Africa should remain a nuclear-free zone for all time. That posture, however, does not preclude our welcoming the civilian use of nuclear energy for power generation and for uses in the medical field.

It is a fact that the CD has not produced any notable negotiated result over the last decade. Only we, the members, can change this status quo. I believe that the organization of work we have adopted is useful for our purposes. The informal debates on the seven thematic issues are

(The President)

well under way. It is my intention to follow the organization of work we have adopted. At the same time, I stand ready to engage with members and others who may desire consultations on any relevant issues. Our more immediate common cherished goal remains, of course, to agree on a programme of work. Allow me to say how much I look forward to your cooperation in this endeavour. I am indebted to the Secretariat which ensures that our work proceeds smoothly.

Now may I give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Egypt, Ambassador Hisham Badr.

Mr. BADR (Egypt): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the CD and express our commitment to you and to everyone for full cooperation to achieve our common goals. Also allow me to express our appreciation and to commend Viet Nam for its presidency of the CD and its smooth functioning, and also to thank the Deputy Minister of Norway for his initiative to come here to address us and for Norway's efforts in disarmament.

I have two statements today, on agenda item 1 and on agenda item 2. I would first like to address agenda item 1, cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. In that regard, Egypt fully associates itself with the comprehensive statement delivered by H.E. the Ambassador of Algeria on behalf of the G-21 on this matter.

Indeed, nuclear disarmament must remain the top priority of the Conference, in accordance with the special status allocated to it in the final document of the 1978 first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament - SSOD 1. Furthermore, the International Court of Justice in its 1996 Advisory Opinion concluded that there is an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Our commitment, as Member States of the United Nations, towards eliminating nuclear weapons was also reaffirmed in the 2000 Millennium Declaration. With that in mind, Egypt emphasizes that complete nuclear disarmament is our highest priority. The devastating destructive nature of such weapons makes their complete and total elimination a necessity for the very survival of our entire human race and reaffirms that in our view their continued existence remains a source of threat to international peace and security. Egypt underscores that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are interrelated, and that effective efforts to address one must necessarily include the other.

Egypt recalls the UNGA 2008 resolutions 63/41 on Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems, and 63/47 on Reducing nuclear danger as important steps forward that could practically enhance confidence and transparency measures while working towards realizing our ultimate goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Egypt reaffirms its support for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones as important steps towards the elimination of nuclear weapons and highlights the necessity of implementing the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution on the Middle East as a pivotal element in that regard. In that context Egypt recalls Security Council resolutions 487 of 1981 and 687 of 1991.



(Mr. Badr, Egypt)

Furthermore, article VI of the NPT, the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, to which all of the nuclear-weapon States are party, lays out our obligations in clear and unambiguous language: “Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.” The Conference on Disarmament, with its primary role as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, is without a doubt the appropriate forum in which to negotiate and conclude such a treaty. It is imperative that the Conference promptly heed the voices of the overwhelming majority of States, international organizations, and civil society, and work towards fulfilling its role ... a role to which Egypt attaches particular importance, from both a global and a regional perspective.

I thank you, Mr. President, and that is the end of the first statement on agenda item 1, and with your permission, I would like to give a short statement on agenda item 2, relating to the prevention of nuclear war, particularly with reference to the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty.

Perhaps more than any other matter before our esteemed body, the FMCT is the one that is most ripe for negotiations. This is supported by the fact that two of the more prominent proposals to revitalize the CD through adopting a programme of work in the past few years, CD/1693 of 2003 and CD/1840 of 2008, have both contained a negotiating mandate for an FMCT. It is interesting thus to note that the overwhelming majority of member States of the CD have at one stage or another, and in one formula or another, supported negotiating an FMCT. It would be wise not to waste such a rare convergence of opinions and what constitutes a tangible opportunity to bring this august body out of its present quagmire.

Egypt believes that the most pragmatic way forward and the path of least resistance would be to foster consensus around previously agreed-upon outcomes, and in that regard reiterates the call for negotiations of an FMCT to adhere to progress already achieved more than a decade ago, as contained in the Shannon mandate CD/1299 of 1995. This mandate indicates that such a treaty must be non-discriminatory, multilateral, and internationally and effectively verifiable. At the same time negotiations must not preclude any delegation from raising for consideration the issue of existing stockpiles. Egypt stands ready to fully and immediately support a programme of work that takes such matters effectively into consideration, and calls upon member States to consider the merits of supporting a similar approach.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador for his statement. I have no other delegation inscribed to speak. Would anyone wish to take the floor at this juncture?

I adjourn our meeting.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.