

---

# Conference on Disarmament

19 May 2009

Original: English

---

## Final record of the one thousand one hundred and thirty-fifth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 19 May 2009, at 10.05 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Idriss Jazaïry ..... (Algeria)

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I call to order the 1135th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

As we begin the second part of the 2009 session of the Conference on Disarmament, I should like to extend a warm welcome to today's distinguished guests: His Excellency, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations; Her Excellency, Madame Calmy-Rey, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation; and His Excellency, Mr. Mourad Medelci, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria. Their presence with us today certainly bears witness to the importance that these distinguished persons attach to the Conference on Disarmament and to their firm commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation thus clearly giving a new dimension to our efforts to obtain concrete results within the Conference at this crucial stage.

Before I give them the floor, I should also like to extend a warm welcome to our new colleague from Hungary, Her Excellency, Ambassador Klara Akóts, who has taken up her functions as her Government's representative to the Conference. Allow me to take this opportunity to assure her of our cooperation and support as she carries out her new tasks.

I should now like to invite the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to address the Conference.

**Mr. Ban Ki-moon** (Secretary-General of the United Nations): Mr. President, Excellencies, thank you for this opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament, and thank you very much for your warm welcome.

Before I begin, I would like to say a special word to the distinguished foreign ministers who have graced us with their presence here today: H.E. Mr. Mourad Medelci, Foreign Minister of Algeria; and H.E. Madame Micheline Calmy-Rey, Foreign Minister of Switzerland. Thank you for your leadership and personal engagement in advancing the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

I am heartened that this meeting takes place in an improved international climate. Most recently, the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference concluded its third session in a refreshingly positive tone, marking a distinct shift from previous years.

I am also encouraged by recent announcements by United States President Obama and Russian President Medvedev to begin talks to replace a cold war-era nuclear arms control treaty and to work to reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the world. Let me extend my best wishes for the negotiations between the two countries taking place in Moscow.

There are now a number of initiatives from nuclear and non-nuclear States that together provide a new momentum for disarmament. They point the way forward, away from the divisions and paralysis of the past towards genuine dialogue and progress. These signs of greater political will represent an opportunity we cannot afford to miss.

As I speak to audiences around the world and talk to world leaders, one theme constantly recurs: we live in an age of interdependence. The past year of unfolding crises — food, energy, and now economic — have made this clear to all.

The answers to such crises and other important issues such as climate change — which I expect world leaders to forcefully address in December in Copenhagen — lie in a new multilateralism. A new multilateralism where cooperation replaces confrontation, where creativity replaces stalemate. Such a fresh multilateral approach is needed in disarmament and non-proliferation more than ever.

Last year, I presented my five-point proposal to revitalize the disarmament agenda. I am encouraged that my proposal has been widely recognized. I welcome the many recent developments, statements and initiatives that can help to translate my proposals into real

progress. However, let me stress that the bilateral efforts we are witnessing must feed into a broader multilateral framework. This is the only way to make the process sustainable and lasting.

The world looks to you, the Conference on Disarmament, to channel these positive agendas and signals into a coherent global strategy. You are the world's sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. You represent a global partnership that can weave these disparate threads into comprehensive political agreements.

Still, differences run deep. But they are not insurmountable. Nor are they an excuse for paralysis. The history of the Conference on Disarmament and its predecessors proves this beyond any doubt. Even at the height of the cold war, landmark agreements, in particular the NPT, were concluded. Subsequently, this Conference produced the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We should be inspired by these past achievements.

Strategic stability, trust among nations and the settlement of regional conflicts will, of course, determine the pace and extent of possible progress. Nonetheless, you have an opportunity to build on advances already made, leave behind entrenched positions and look instead to shared aims of peace and development.

At the recent session of the NPT Preparatory Committee, I called upon member States to embrace the spirit of compromise and flexibility, rather than taking an absolute position. This spirit is equally needed in the Conference on Disarmament. You have a special responsibility this year to demonstrate that the Conference on Disarmament has an essential role to play as the main pillar of disarmament and non-proliferation. Business as usual should not prevail. Now is the time to break more than 10 years of stalemate. You have before you a document that can achieve consensus and that addresses all substantive and procedural issues.

I am grateful to the current President, Ambassador Jazaïry, to the other 2009 Presidents and to all members of the Conference for their enhanced engagement and flexibility that has led to this point.

One important feature of this proposal is that it supplements the mandate for negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty with provisions for "international and effective verification". This is an important step forward. So is the creation of working groups to discuss effective negative security assurances, progressive and systematic efforts to reduce nuclear weapons and all issues related to the prevention of an arms race in space.

I would also like to emphasize that this Conference can contribute significantly to achieving the ultimate goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. However, this can only be achieved if all States, nuclear and non-nuclear alike, are prepared to abide by their disarmament and non-proliferation commitments and to nurture an international climate conducive to disarmament. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is therefore of crucial importance.

A renewed focus on disarmament and non-proliferation will benefit international security and stability. It can also produce considerable dividends for peace and development.

The world is enduring a deep economic and financial crisis. By accelerating disarmament, we can liberate resources that we need to combat climate change, address food insecurity and achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Let us unite behind a shared vision of a safer world. Let us find the courage for bold action to make it a reality.

Please accept my best wishes for success for the remainder of the 2009 session.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his important statement and for his kind words addressed to the President and my P-6 colleagues.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency, Madame Calmy-Rey, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation.

**Ms. Calmy-Rey** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President. Secretary-General, Director-General, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, today we are at a critical point in the history of the Conference on Disarmament. It is indeed a time of hope, for it would seem that we are at last getting close to the breakthrough for which we have been waiting for so many years. Your presence in Geneva, Mr. Secretary-General, testifies once again to your personal commitment to disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and your commitment to the work of the Conference itself. It is also a pleasure for me to greet my Algerian counterpart. In chairing the Conference and working with the five other Presidents for this year, Algeria has indeed played a key role in moving the work of the Conference forward.

Lastly, I echo the appeals made by the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and by Minister Medelci to the members of the Conference to adopt a programme of work without delay.

The international situation has evolved in a way that makes it possible for the Conference on Disarmament once again to be in a position to negotiate, which is its real task. In recent weeks we have seen some very encouraging signs. I am referring, *inter alia*, to the joint declaration on nuclear disarmament made by Presidents Obama and Medvedev and to the statement made on the same subject by President Obama in Prague in April. The stated will of the United States of America and the Russian Federation to resume bilateral negotiations on the reduction of their nuclear weapons has a direct impact on other disarmament forums, particularly those working in the multilateral sphere such as the Conference on Disarmament or the First Committee in New York.

A few days ago, several of you were in New York for the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Non-Proliferation Treaty. There you were witness to an atmosphere that marked an encouraging change from the atmosphere that had prevailed in previous meetings. At that session in New York we saw the beginnings of a shift in the emphasis placed on the three pillars of non-proliferation, namely non-proliferation itself, disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. At the same time, the debate on nuclear disarmament was clearly characterized by a new and promising tone. We must therefore grasp this new opportunity for ensuring that the impetus is maintained here in Geneva by taking advantage of the constructive atmosphere that has prevailed since the beginning of the year.

Ladies and gentlemen, the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world is again before us. It is fully consistent with the vision held by my country, Switzerland, which advocates the peaceful settlement of disputes and the development of international law, and for which non-proliferation and disarmament are priorities. My country therefore intends to do its utmost to ensure that this vision is realized. Naturally, this will have to be done in stages. To this end we must give our immediate support to the adoption of a programme of work for the Conference, for only by adopting such a programme will the Conference be able to strengthen its credibility. The project before us is undoubtedly an ambitious one. Yet it also reflects the balanced outcome of several years of intensive consultations. The Conference on Disarmament can not allow the opportunity it has today to slip away. It must be able to start negotiations as soon as possible on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for military purposes. It must also continue its substantive discussions on the other priority

topics of nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

As an active member of the Conference and as host country to the Conference, Switzerland is very proud of the results obtained in this forum. You know as well as I do that these results were preceded by long waiting periods. You are also well aware that each breakthrough arrives only when the geopolitical stars are properly aligned. I am convinced that that is the situation today. That is why Switzerland fully supports the programme of work now before us and why we hope that a consensus may be reached. I thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your commitment and for your attention.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs for her statement and for her kind words addressed to Algeria and to my P-6 colleagues.

I now give the floor to His Excellency, Mr. Mourad Medelci, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria.

**Mr. Medelci** (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms. Calmy-Rey, Head of the Federal Department for Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation, Mr. Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I should like to begin by saying how much we were encouraged by the remarks just made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations regarding the promising outlook for consultations on the relaunching of negotiations for general and complete disarmament. They are above all a clear reaffirmation of the objectives assigned to our Conference at the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament. They are also a powerful source of inspiration for bringing together the conditions conducive to the emergence of a consensus that can serve our ideals of peace, security and prosperity. They testify also to the fact that we have reached what analysts call a "tipping point" within the framework of the Conference.

In other words, it is now up to us to ensure that the progress we have made in our consultations leads to constructive engagement and, ultimately, to a common agreement that the work of the Conference on Disarmament should resume. This new impetus will clearly have a positive knock-on effect on the treatment of related or connected issues throughout the United Nations system.

I should also like to take this opportunity to convey our appreciation to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, and to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte, whose valuable support and skilful advice have been particularly useful during this crucial period of consultations.

Lastly, I cannot fail to pay a tribute to the flexibility and spirit of mutual accommodation displayed by all the representatives of the States members of the Conference on sensitive and delicate issues; I feel certain that this augurs well for a positive outcome in the near future.

Differences of national perception among member States with respect to security have no doubt impeded the Conference's progress along the path traced in Article 11 of the Charter of the United Nations and the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its special session devoted to disarmament, yet instead of losing hope, member States have persevered. Progress has finally crystallized over the last two years in the quest for a consensus within the Conference on its programme of work. This progress has accelerated in recent weeks, and it gives me great pleasure to associate myself with the Secretary-General of the United Nations in congratulating the President of the Conference, Ambassador Idriss Jazaïry, and all the ambassadors who are members of the P-6 for the

tangible results achieved. They did this through remarkable teamwork that bypassed traditional divisions, thereby making it possible to set the Conference on the right path.

Thanks to the efforts of all, the Conference will soon be in a position to resume its primary mission as the preferred forum for the promotion and preservation of international security.

In the statement which I delivered to the Conference on 17 March, I noted that in 1979 His Excellency, the President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, then Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, had chaired the opening session of the Committee on Disarmament. That marked the beginning of a great adventure in which the Committee — and later the Conference on Disarmament — adopted in turn the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty.

It is for me a source of great satisfaction, some 30 years later, that it should fall to Algeria to mark its presence at a time when the Conference is taking a new and promising step forward towards the laying the foundation for an international consensus and a safer world.

Today the international community realizes that security that lies behind bulwarks of dogmatic ideologies or shields of military supremacy is an illusion. It realizes that true international security can result only from a climate of trust between partners who are prepared to commit themselves to a multilateral approach and solidarity in the search for disarmament.

This was the message conveyed by the statement of Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom on nuclear energy and proliferation and the joint statement by President Medvedev of the Russian Federation and President Obama of the United States of America. This is also my understanding of the communication addressed to you, Mr. Secretary-General, by President Sarkozy, on behalf of the European Union.

These significant initiatives, together with others, have helped to create a climate of trust conducive to a resumption of the Conference's work. The same can also be said for the many regional statements made in support of the initiative put forward by the President of the Conference on 26 March, which is contained in an informal document on elements that might constitute a programme of work.

We would draw attention to the support expressed for this initiative at the recent Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in Havana, by the countries members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Jeddah and by the Group of Arab States at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference in New York, not to mention, of course, the many expressions of support from the member States comprising the four groups of countries within the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like to congratulate the six Presidents for 2009, who responded to these encouraging signs by endorsing that proposal and who formalized it as an official document of the Conference. We would hope that on this basis the six Presidents could begin a new round of negotiations with member States, for the current climate is favourable, and thus preserve and build on what has been achieved thus far, which nevertheless remains fragile. It is to be hoped that the Conference will not miss this opportunity for achieving an inclusive consensus. The conditions for doing so have never been so promising.

The adoption of the programme of work in these circumstances would appear to mark the conclusion of commendable effort on the part all member States. At the same time, however, it is no more than a starting point for the resumption of substantive work. It is to be hoped that the programme of work that is adopted, which will be for this year alone,

will also provide an appropriate framework for the continuation of negotiations and debate in the period ahead.

Urgent tasks and other tasks for the medium term lie ahead for the Conference: as soon as it adopts its programme of work, and pursuant to rule 28 of its rules of procedure, the Conference should appoint the Chairs of Working Groups and Special Coordinators; it should also agree on a timetable for its work. The real “fresh start” will happen when negotiations and substantive discussions and briefings on each of the seven agenda items actually get under way.

Through our resolute and constructive commitment to the substantive work that awaits us in the medium term we express our joint refusal to watch passively as the future happens and our determination to be the multilateral creators of a future that meets the hopes of all for a world characterized by peace and security.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria for his important statement and for his kind words addressed to the President and my P-6 colleagues.

On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament, I should like to extend sincere thanks to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to the Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation, and to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People’s Republic of Algeria for their valuable guidance and encouragement. We are most grateful to them for their support at this crucial phase in which we truly seem to hold in our hands all the necessary elements of agreement that will allow us to put an end to the paralysis that has afflicted the Conference for nearly 12 years.

To this end, I have the honour to formally submit to the Conference, on behalf of the P-6, document CD/1863, entitled “Draft decision for the establishment of a programme of work for the 2009 session”. Once consultations have concluded, the text as adopted will, I hope, provide us with something extending beyond the current year – a framework for future discussions, which will avoid the ups and downs of the recent past. Document CD/1863 is accompanied by an explanatory note on the pattern of the consultations, which I will submit for your consideration without comment in order to avoid detaining our distinguished guests any longer.

Before I close this meeting, I should like to invite the Conference to consider a new request received from a State that is not a member of the Conference but wishes to take part in our work as an observer at this session. This request is contained in document CD/WP.551/Add.6 and was submitted by Lebanon.

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite that State to take part in our work, in accordance with the rules of procedure?

I see no objection.

*It is so decided.*

This brings our work for today to an end. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Friday, 22 May, at 10 a.m.

*The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.*