
Conference on Disarmament

7 September 2010

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 7 September 2010, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Fabien-Marie Nkou(Cameroon)

The President (*spoke in French*): I declare open the 1196th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. I would first like to express to all of you our sincere gratitude for the warm welcome that you gave to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cameroon last week. The Minister has warm memories of his time here, and I am pleased to inform you that his mission was a success. He is very happy with the results. I would now like to suspend this formal plenary meeting so that we may hold an informal plenary for the purpose of considering the draft report on the 2010 session of the Conference on Disarmament as contained in document CD/WP.561. You are all aware of the time constraints to which we are subject. We have virtually no more than one week, until 14 September, since some of you will be travelling to New York the following week, while others have other assignments elsewhere. I therefore feel that it is important for us to begin to examine the draft report. When we have finished with that task, we can resume our formal meeting so that those delegations that wish to do so may express their views regarding the high-level meeting to be convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in New York on 24 September 2010.

In five minutes' time, in an informal meeting, we will begin to consider the draft report of the Conference. I thank you for your understanding. The meeting is suspended.

The meeting was suspended at 10.20 a.m. and resumed at 16.40 p.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): The 1196th formal plenary meeting is reconvened. I have before me the list of delegations that would like to address the Conference: the delegation of Iran, on behalf of the Group of 21, and the delegation of Malaysia. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Sajjadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, I have the honour to deliver a statement on behalf of the Group of 21.

One. The Group notes with appreciation the opportunity presented by the High-Level Meeting to be convened by the United Nations Secretary-General on 24 September 2010 entitled "Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations" to demonstrate political support for the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the multilateral disarmament agenda and other United Nations disarmament bodies.

Two. The Group recognizes the fact that responsibility for the chair's summary of this meeting, which should reflect the views of Member States, rests solely with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Three. The Group reaffirms the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and it wishes to express its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in these areas. In this regard, the Group strongly supports the objectives of General Assembly resolution 64/34 of 2009 on the promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Four. While reaffirming the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, as mandated by the first special session on disarmament, the Group expresses its disappointment that the Conference has not been able to undertake substantive work on its agenda. The Group, therefore, reiterates its appeal to the members of the Conference to adopt and implement a balanced and comprehensive programme of work on the basis of its agenda in order to deal, inter alia, with the core issues in accordance with the rules of procedure while taking into consideration the security concerns of all States. The Group also calls upon all members of the Conference on Disarmament to demonstrate flexibility in order to enable the Conference to resume its work.

Five. The Group reaffirms that nuclear disarmament remains its highest priority and reiterates its call on the Conference on Disarmament to agree to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament as soon as possible. In this regard, while stressing its strong commitment to nuclear disarmament, the Group reaffirms its full readiness to begin negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame by means of, inter alia, a nuclear weapons convention. The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Six. The Group believes in the importance of examining the possibility of an expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament.

Seven. The Group supports the strengthening of the Conference's interaction with civil society in the field of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, in keeping with the nature of the Conference as a negotiating-forum.

Eight. The Group recalls the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly — the first special session on disarmament — and the 2009 Sharm El Sheikh Summit Declaration and Final Document of the Non-Aligned Movement, and it reiterates its positions as conveyed in its previous statements to the Conference on Disarmament.

Nine. The Group recognizes that the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament put into place a disarmament machinery and that there is a need to address challenges to its effectiveness. At the same time, it is important to recall the achievements made by the international community through the United Nations disarmament machinery. It thus remains important to preserve the nature, role and purpose of each part of this machinery.

Ten. The Group supports the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in order, inter alia, to discuss and consider issues and machinery related to disarmament and, in this regard, expresses deep concern over the persistent lack of consensus to date.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in French*): Thank you very much for your statement. The second speaker on my list is the representative of Malaysia. I give you the floor, Sir.

Mr. Azril (Malaysia): Mr. President, as this is the first time my delegation takes the floor, I would like to extend our heartiest congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We are confident that, with your leadership qualities, vast experience and diplomatic skills, in addition to your country's long-standing commitment to issues relating to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, you will be able to guide the Conference towards a successful outcome, particularly at this end stage. Rest assured of my delegation's full cooperation and assistance. My delegation also wishes to associate itself with the statement just delivered by the delegation of Iran on behalf of the G-21.

It is disappointing that the Conference on Disarmament cannot agree on a programme of work in the light of last year's accomplishments. Indeed, we are extremely disappointed by the fact that another year will pass and the Conference will have yet again failed to have started its crucial substantive work. While we have seen some positive steps forward this year with the signing of the new START Treaty, the Global Nuclear Security Summit and the successful outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the Conference remains static or, more worryingly, seems to be moving backwards. The current impasse in the Conference is slowly eroding the credibility of this august body.

It is not my intention today to reiterate Malaysia's position on disarmament, non-proliferation and work relating to the Conference on Disarmament. Our positions on these issues are well known and require no further elaboration at this juncture. As we are not sure whether the Conference will discuss the issue of the Secretary-General's high-level meeting in an informal or informal-informal setting, I wish to briefly elaborate and formally put on record Malaysia's position concerning the high-level meeting.

Malaysia welcomes the convening of the high-level meeting that is to be held on the 24th of this month. My delegation believes that the high-level meeting will provide a forum in which members of the Conference on Disarmament and other Governments will be able to engage in a meaningful dialogue pertaining to the work of the Conference. The high-level meeting should look into advancing the agenda of the Conference with regard to all of its core issues in a balanced and comprehensive manner. The high-level meeting should also consider new ways to move forward and make substantive progress on disarmament. In this regard, Malaysia reaffirms its support for an early convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Malaysia believes that the summary of this meeting should duly reflect the views of all member States regarding ways of strengthening the multilateral disarmament agenda and the disarmament machinery of the United Nations. While the high-level meeting may not be able to produce a miracle prescription for solving the myriad issues surrounding the Conference on Disarmament, it is to be hoped that the political attention that it generates will translate into actions and political will that will help revitalize and strengthen the Conference.

On the other hand, at this point in time, we are rather dismayed by the fact that the Conference has yet to agree on elements to be forwarded to the high-level meeting. While we understand that agreement on some core issues among the membership of the Conference may be difficult to achieve, it is hard to comprehend that we, members of the Conference on Disarmament, are not able to seize this opportunity to proclaim to the world, in unity, basic shared principles, inter alia, a reaffirmation of our commitment to the work of the Conference, the relevance of the Conference and its viability as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament and arms control – particularly at a time where the relevance of the Conference on Disarmament is being questioned by many. Instead, we are allowing ourselves to lapse into the same procedural quagmire that has beleaguered the Conference on Disarmament for the past 12 years: debating on issues of procedures, format and approach towards the high-level meeting and demonstrating to the world, once again, that the status of work in the Conference remains “no business as usual”.

Given the limited amount of time remaining, we hope that the Conference will be able to move forward under your leadership, Mr. President, and agree to some basic principles to be submitted to the high-level meeting. The Conference is the world's sole multilateral disarmament-treaty negotiating body. As members of the Conference, we need to provide effective leadership, sound and pragmatic ideas, fresh initiatives and approaches, as well as new strategies, in order to ensure that the Conference serves its purpose.

Malaysia is encouraged that the high-level meeting will be open to all Member States of the United Nations, in line with the principles of transparency and inclusiveness. We hope that the high-level meeting will also look into the issue of the possible expansion of the membership of the Conference, as well as enhanced engagement with non-governmental organizations and civil society. Fresh ideas from outside may provide the impetus that the Conference needs to move forward and fulfil the role for which it was created.

The high-level meeting presents an opportunity to strengthen and confirm the role of the Conference. We must not miss such an opportunity. Rather than allow the Conference on Disarmament to unravel, we must remain engaged and demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that the Conference remains relevant. I assure you that Malaysia will not let such

an opportunity go by. We will be constructive, as we expect others will be as well. We hope that this revitalization effort will help the Conference to evolve, to be more creative and innovative and to adapt to a dynamic and ever-changing global security environment.

In conclusion, I hope we will find the political will to move forward and advance much more towards the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. Hopefully, our endeavours here at the Conference on Disarmament and the high-level meeting will help chart the course for a better and safer world for generations to come. As Horace would say, "carpe diem"!

I thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in French*): Thank you for your kind words and for the quality and completeness of your statement.

(*continued in English*)

I would now like to give the floor to Ms. Kennedy, Ambassador of the United States of America. You have the floor.

Ms. Kennedy (United States of America): Mr. President, we very much welcome the exchanges of views concerning the upcoming high-level meeting, and, as we have noted many times previously, we very much thank the Secretary-General for his personal leadership on these vital issues.

We believe that the Conference on Disarmament can be a valuable institution that can make an important difference in advancing broad disarmament goals. The Conference's previous incarnation produced some of the international community's landmark treaties. Its work covers the full range of topics and, in view of the role that consensus plays in shaping its work, the formulation of balanced work programmes is the way to set it in motion.

We welcome the spirit of compromise reflected in the decision for the establishment of a programme of work for the 2009 session (CD/1864), which represented the best opportunity in many years for this group to get back to work and actively lead international multilateral disarmament initiatives, just as it and its predecessors have done so notably in the past.

My Government still considers the programme of work set forth in document CD/1864, which was so ably assembled by Algeria, to be the best way forward. It covers negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty along the lines of the carefully crafted Shannon Mandate and substantive work to be undertaken across the range of the core areas in a balanced manner.

We are also highly aware that there is a spotlight within the international community on our work here in Geneva. Our continuing stalemate here does not go unnoticed and does not reflect well on the credibility of this valuable institution. I presume that none of our leaders will go to New York with the intention of threatening or undermining the Conference on Disarmament. That is certainly contrary to the position of my Government. But we must not discount the possibility that, without a concerted dose of political will, this institution will atrophy into irrelevance.

Given the importance of effective, verifiable, step-by-step disarmament, however, my Government will actively explore promising avenues to make progress in this area.

As I mentioned previously, we should have realistic expectations as to what a single meeting can achieve. That said, we should see the high-level meeting as an opportunity to reinvest in the Conference and portray it as a can-do institution which can again realize its potential.

I also wanted to say that I have listened with great interest to today's interventions, whether made in a formal, informal or informal-informal setting. I would just like to offer one comment, however, and that concerns the fact that we feel some measure of disappointment about the fact that, for example, the G-21 statement addressed only one of the main issues, that is, a nuclear weapons convention. My question is simply this: How, will we be able to deal with a nuclear weapons convention if we cannot even talk about fissile materials, which are, indeed, the essential building block of any nuclear weapon?

Thank you very much, Mr. President, for all your work during your presidency and today.

The President: Thank you very much, Ms. Ambassador. I would now like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Chile. You have the floor.

Mr. Parodi (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Mr. President. As this is the first time that I take the floor during your presidency, I would like to express my delegation's gratitude and assure you of our support. Mr. President, we support the statement made by the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 21. We would have preferred to see the Conference on Disarmament as such present those views, but we are open to participating constructively in the Secretary-General's initiative to convene a high-level meeting.

Clearly, all efforts in this direction should reaffirm the negotiating powers of this Conference. We are not a deliberative body, and it is our duty to comply with the political agreement reached at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. This exercise should pave the way for the Conference to take up its duties as it is expected to. Let us also review the architecture of disarmament and non-proliferation as we look to the future.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the distinguished representative of Chile. I see that no other delegation wishes to address the Conference at this time. Before adjourning this meeting, I should perhaps ask the representative of the secretariat if he would please inform us of the important dates that are coming up. If that is not possible, then the information can be conveyed through the normal channels, such as telephone, fax or e-mail. I would be grateful if you could tell us when, how and where we should meet. It would also be appreciated if you could inform the various delegations that will be meeting to draft changes for insertion into our report about the facilities that will be made available to them for that purpose. I give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference.

Mr. Sareva (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): Thank you Mr. President. Due to the fact that this is a short work week, as Thursday and Friday are United Nations holidays, we have tomorrow afternoon available for the informal meeting of interested States that you are convening. Next week there will be an opportunity to hold a plenary meeting on Tuesday morning. The secretariat stands ready to provide services to the Conference on an "as required" basis, which means that there would be an opportunity on Monday afternoon for interested delegations to continue with informal consultations if, and I repeat, if they are unable to conclude those consultations tomorrow afternoon. If this can be accomplished, then next week will be, in all other respects, a normal work week for the Conference, with presidential consultations on Monday, a plenary meeting on Tuesday and meetings of regional groups, as is normally the case, on Wednesday. The bottom line, however, is that the Conference has an entitlement to conference services, and we stand ready to provide those services to the member States. Thank you.

The President (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. Secretary-General. Before adjourning this meeting, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to each and every one

of you for your efforts to ensure that we were able to agree upon the core contents of our draft report. While there are a few points that remain to be clarified, I think that we have made good progress, especially in light of the time constraints to which we are subject. This plenary meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.