

PRESIDENTIAL REPORT TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT ON PART II OF THE 2008 SESSION

1. At the end of Part I of the 2008 Session of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), a Presidential Draft Decision CD/1840 was on the table. The Presidential Report on Part I of the 2008 Session is contained in document CD/1841.
2. During the inter-sessional period between Parts I and II, the 2008 Presidents continued consultations to advance consensus on CD/1840 for the purpose of commencing substantive work.
3. On 15 May 2008, the incumbent President, Ambassador Yevhen Bersheda of Ukraine, opened the first plenary session of Part II. He noted that CD/1840 enjoyed strong support as a compromise proposal and reiterated the commitment of the 2008 Presidents of the Conference to consensus-building through open consultations. The European Union and the Eastern European Group, represented by Slovenia and Belarus respectively, affirmed their support for CD/1840.
4. On 26 May 2008, Ms. Fiona Paterson of the United Kingdom in her capacity as the President of the Conference, delivered an inaugural address calling for a spirit of compromise in an effort to find a solution on the basis of CD/1840 which represented the culmination of over two years of discussion. She underscored the importance of a commitment to negotiations on a fissile materials cut-off treaty (FMCT) without preconditions, noting that preconditions would limit the avenues available to CD members to reach an effective, realistic, and universally acceptable agreement.
5. On 17 June 2008, the Draft Presidential Decision CD/1840 was discussed in plenary. As in Part I of the 2008 Session of the CD, while a range of views were expressed on the four core issues, the FMCT was the only agenda item generally agreed upon as ready for negotiation.
6. The following High-level dignitaries addressed the Conference on Disarmament during Part II of the 2008 Session: on 10 June 2008, the Under-Secretary for Multilateral Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Integration, Ambassador Emilio Izquierdo Miño of Ecuador spoke on small arms; on 25 June 2008, the High Representative for the Common Foreign and

Security Policy and Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union, Mr. Javier Solana spoke on disarmament and non-proliferation and pressed the CD to get back to work.

7. During the course of Part II, the 2008 Presidents of the Conference continued to interact closely with the CD membership through plenaries, regular meetings with Regional Group Coordinators, and bilateral consultations (in Geneva and in capitals) with the objective of building a consensus. Their conclusion is that CD/1840 remains the most realistic compromise to facilitate substantive work in the CD.

8. The seven Coordinators on agenda items 1 to 7, appointed by the Presidents of the Conference in Part I and listed in CD/1840, did not conduct discussions during Part II of the 2008 session. However, they remained on stand by to work under the authority of the Conference or the 2008 Presidents, if so decided.

9. The following assessments may be made of Part II of the 2008 Session of the CD:

- (a) A substantial number of members consider that the Conference on Disarmament is the closest it has been since 1998 to reaching a consensus on a programme of work;
- (b) A wide range of delegations support the draft decision, CD/1840; some delegations, though they have some concerns about certain elements in the proposal, would not oppose consensus on it; others need more time for their capitals to decide whether they could go along with a consensus along these lines;
- (c) There is still time available for the implementation of CD/1840, if agreed upon, during Part III of the 2008 CD session and no effort should be spared to adopt a programme of work by consensus.

10. In view of the above assessments, the incumbent President, Ambassador Christina Rocca of the United States, proposed to the CD on 24 June 2008 the convocation of seven informal sessions on each of the seven agenda items, to be led by the agenda item Coordinators, for the purpose of refreshing the CD membership's understanding of the issues before it to prepare for the Conference's annual report to the UNGA First Committee. It is also hoped that this renewed activity will enable the membership to reach consensus and engage in substantive work early in Part III. In closing, she reminded the Conference that CD/1840 is not an expression of any member's national position, but is a functional compromise for the CD to engage in substantive work to advance global security as the world's sole multilateral disarmament body.

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