
Conference on Disarmament

4 August 2009

English

Final record of the one thousand one hundred and forty-seventh plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 4 August 2009, at 10.25 a.m.

President: Ms. Caroline Millar.....(Australia)

The President: I declare open the 1147th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like to take this opportunity to bid farewell to our distinguished colleague, Ambassador Dayan Jayatilaka of Sri Lanka, who will shortly be leaving Geneva. His tenure in Geneva has been marked by an impressive record of activities, both here in the Conference and in other intergovernmental bodies, where he has represented his country with great vigour and distinction. On a personal note, I should add that I see Ambassador Jayatilaka very much as an “Aussie”, as he has spent so much time in my country and we regard him as one of us. So it is a double blow to lose him. On behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, I would like to convey to our dear colleague and his family our very best wishes for his success and happiness.

I also would like to extend a very warm welcome to our new colleague, Ambassador Dell Higgie from New Zealand, another country with which Australia has warm and close relations. I take this opportunity to assure her of our fullest cooperation and support in the assumption of her duties.

I have the following members at the moment on the list of speakers for today’s plenary meeting: the United Kingdom, Colombia, Brazil, New Zealand and the Russian Federation. I give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Duncan (United Kingdom): Madam President, as this is the first time that I have taken the floor under your presidency, please allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the chair. I can assure you and your P-6 colleagues of my delegation’s full support in your determined efforts to forge a solid and mutually acceptable foundation to allow us to begin substantive work at the earliest possible opportunity.

I would also like to take this opportunity to share with colleagues a recent initiative by the Government of the United Kingdom relating to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). On 16 July, the Prime Minister, Mr. Gordon Brown, announced the Government’s “Road to 2010” plan. This paper brings together — for the first time — the Government’s detailed vision for a renewed nuclear global bargain on the key strategic challenges of the modern nuclear era. These are: the safe expansion of civil nuclear power; nuclear security; non-proliferation; and the reduction and eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons.

It is a coherent strategy that we believe will lead us into the 2010 NPT Review Conference and beyond. The Review Conference will be an opportunity to renew the bargain at the heart of the NPT. For non-nuclear-weapon States, this is about the right to access civil nuclear power in return for continuing to forgo nuclear weapons; while for nuclear-weapon States this involves tough responsibilities to show leadership on the question of disarmament and to be at the forefront of developing global solutions that allow wider and secure access to civil nuclear power.

Our “Road to 2010” plan sets out a phased approach that will enable progress on non-proliferation and multilateral disarmament. In our view, the first stage is improving the transparency of current weapons capabilities as we seek greater control to prevent expansion; the second stage is verifiable multilateral reductions in arsenals; and the final stage is to create the security conditions and overcome the technical and political challenges of a world free from all nuclear weapons.

Speaking in this forum in February last year, the United Kingdom’s then Defence Minister, Mr. Des Browne, offered to host a technical conference of nuclear laboratories of the five permanent members of the Security Council on the verification of nuclear disarmament before the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Since then, the United Kingdom has worked closely with the other recognized nuclear-weapon States to develop this

proposal. We are pleased to confirm that the United Kingdom will host a conference on “confidence-building measures towards nuclear disarmament” in London, on 3–4 September 2009, bringing together both policy officials and technical experts from the five recognized nuclear-weapon States.

The “Road to 2010” plan underlines the United Kingdom’s commitment to ensuring that all nations can access nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. To make a reality of the right to all countries to access civil nuclear power, we are establishing a new Nuclear Centre of Excellence. This Centre will promote the development of cost-effective civil nuclear power that is much harder for terrorists and States with hostile intent to divert for use in weapons programmes, will receive £20 million in funding from the Government over the first five years and will be developed in partnership with academia, industry and international partners.

We are calling on international partners to work with us to establish nuclear security as a fourth pillar of the international nuclear framework – alongside non-proliferation, disarmament and access to civil nuclear power. This does not mean reopening the NPT itself, but ensuring that nuclear security issues are placed firmly on the international agenda.

Finally, there is growing momentum across the globe to tackle these challenges – which is why the “Road to 2010” plan also sets out steps to strengthen international governance, particularly the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Accordingly, we will work with the incoming Director General and international partners to develop robust plans for organizational reform. The United Kingdom also plans to host a meeting of the main financial donors of the Agency to drive progress on future funding and staffing issues.

The “Road to 2010” plan sets out what we can do in the run-up to the NPT Review Conference and beyond, to ensure a safe and secure future. We will be circulating electronic copies of the text to delegations to the Conference on Disarmament following this meeting. Colleagues can also access the document via our website, which is well known to you all.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka, and I apologize for inadvertently leaving him off my list of speakers a moment ago.

Mr. Jayatilleka (Sri Lanka): This is a bittersweet occasion, as most valedictories tend to be. I was posted to Geneva from outside the Sri Lankan foreign service in a very specific historical period in the contemporary history of my country. As you know, that period has drawn somewhat dramatically to a close. As an almost inevitable corollary, my own role here is now at an end.

I must apologize for not having spent quite as much time and energy in this distinguished and unique forum as I might have because of the challenges and the dynamics of the “other place”, so to speak, the Human Rights Council, but it has been my privilege to participate at what I think is a very crucial time in the history of the efforts of the Conference on Disarmament.

My colleagues here have been a constituency characterized by its high intellect, analytical capabilities and civility. They have provided a model which shows that it is perfectly possible to be principled and firm in the defence of one’s national security interests but still be open-minded, flexible and civil in the exchange of views. This is a good example, and it is an example of conduct that has actually paid off because, as we know, we were able to keep working, keep arguing and keep debating until it was possible to see a faint pinpoint of light at the end of what was a decades-long tunnel.

I was privileged to help modestly in the deliberations on one or two items, and particularly in conjunction with the group that Sri Lanka belongs to, the Group of 21 here in the Conference on Disarmament, and I think we have been fortunate in that two circumstances, two factors, external and internal, have coincided in recent months. On the one hand, we have the external game-changing development of the new Administration in the United States. This is not completely fortuitous. As we know, it is the choice of the American people, which we salute. But it also proves that the American people registered the impossibility of going on in a certain way or on a certain path and with a certain set of ideas. Now that lesson has unfortunately not been learned in other parts of the world, but it did support the critique that was being made in the Conference on Disarmament of certain strategic outlooks and frameworks. And now we have a change in the external environment, a thaw.

But this coincides with another change from within, where after much intense debate and deliberation, one of our number, Ambassador Jazairy, was able, working on the basis of the efforts of his predecessors, to come up with an architecture which reduced the perceived or actual asymmetries within the various items and problems that were to be wrestled with. And by making it a somewhat more even playing field he has made it acceptable.

Now this coincidence of the macro and the micro have provided the Conference on Disarmament with the opportunity to make a real leap forward, and I am sorry that I will not be present to watch it happen. But these are the challenges that the Conference will now face, and the rest of us in the world outside will be watching to see how, on the one hand, the potentialities of this positive change in the United States and the world arena are pushed to the maximum, while of course defending the vital national security interests of each of us.

I think we must avoid the situation that ensued in the aftermath of another possible breakthrough, at Reykjavik in 1986, where some people came back and were actually happy that the breakthrough had not been made. So while it is obvious that our institutions and our systems will make sure that long-term national and State interests remain guaranteed, I think our generation must also seize the potentialities that have opened up at this moment with these political changes.

The second and final thought that I would like to share with you concerns the other error that we must avoid, the error of repeating in one form or another the negative experiences of the early years of the twenty-first century, in which one or another State is singled out as holding an existential track, and this time it is obviously the turn of a State other than the one that was targeted in the early twenty-first century, when a kind of a bandwagon mentality, if not a lynch mob mentality, started rolling. That kind of approach will vitiate the positive potentialities that we now spot in the arena of disarmament, and therefore we have to be on the one hand very idealistic in seizing the potentialities, and on the other hand quite prudent and realistic in calibrating our positions and the combination of incentives and disincentives that we come up with in order to influence the conduct of any State. And at all times we must avoid the errors of unilateralism and imposition, even if that imposition is seemingly multilateral.

So once again, I will be sorry not to be here enjoying a ringside seat as these changes unroll, but I am happy to have had the privilege of the company of the delegations to this Conference, having been educated by that company, and to have been present at the moment of the unfreezing of the work that this Conference is dedicated to.

The President: Thank you, Ambassador Jayatilleka, for your statement and your reflections and, again, very warm wishes to you in your next steps. I now give the floor to the next speaker on my list, the representative of Colombia.

Mr. Avila Comancho (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): As the delegation of Colombia is taking the floor for the first time under your stewardship, allow me to begin by congratulating you on taking up this important post and assure you that you and the platform of the six Presidents enjoy our full support.

The group wishes to acknowledge the work accomplished by the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, Mr. Dayan Jayatilleka, who during his time in this forum made an outstanding contribution with important ideas in conducting the work as the coordinator of item 6 on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament on the Comprehensive programme of disarmament.

Mr. Ambassador, today we wish to acknowledge your ideas and your conceptual contributions which, along with your diplomatic abilities, very much enriched the content of the discussions we held in this forum.

We also wish you and your family the very best in your future tasks.

Finally, we would like to welcome the Ambassador of New Zealand, who is taking up her post, and also to extend a very warm welcome to the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, Ambassador Abdul Hannan, who is taking up his new duties, and to reiterate that you have the Group's full support in beginning the work you will be taking up shortly.

The President: I thank the representative of Colombia for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Macedo Soares (Brazil): Madam President, after the recess it is with renewed hope that we take up the last part of the 2009 session of the Conference on Disarmament. This feeling is enhanced by the fact that we have you, with your wisdom and knowledge, at the helm of this body. First, a word of admiration and farewell to Ambassador Jayatilleka. He comes from an old country that is important in many aspects, a country where we find people with names from Portugal, from the Netherlands and from the United Kingdom, a country that merged all the contributions of these people. Ambassador Jayatilleka shows this in his knowledge. I was especially impressed by his knowledge of outstanding Brazilian and Latin American social scientists. This is an example of South-South education that many of us lack sometimes. I would also like to say a word of welcome to Ambassador Higginson and Ambassador Hannan.

Two months have elapsed since all the States members of the Conference on Disarmament concurred with the adoption, in accordance with rule 28 of our rules of procedure, of document CD/1864, which contains the programme of work of the Conference. That decision was saluted throughout the world as a very significant event in international multilateral relations. The fact that it could be taken after so many years of stalemate showed that a new atmosphere is beginning to prevail in the international community in the central domain of peace and security.

The Conference on Disarmament is the pivotal point that will ensure that winds of change are indeed blowing. The disappearance of nuclear weapons is the ultimate condition for preventing the destruction of humankind. Notwithstanding the importance of bilateral negotiations, it is in this multilateral forum that negotiations are supposed to generate the wide political and legal basis for general and complete disarmament. If we hesitate in going forward it is because we are paralysed by fear, and that sentiment will continue to pervade international relations with widespread consequences.

Current international conditions are especially favourable to discussions on the question of nuclear disarmament. This climate provides a new impulse to the Conference and, at the same time, it can be reinforced by our discussions in this, the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament.

If we do not succeed in taking decisions during the present session, there is a clear risk of losing momentum in the current process of the revitalization of disarmament in the international agenda.

The practical bearing of the adopted programme of work is that the Conference can start negotiations on one specific item of the agenda and undertake substantive discussions on the others. The result of the negotiations and how far the discussions will go will obviously depend on the political will of all States and on the ability and dedication of their agents. This is not entirely under our control. However, what is indeed in our hands is to commence the implementation of the programme of work. A few measures have to be agreed upon which may or may not require much or even lengthy discussion.

In the view of the delegation of Brazil, the arrangements necessary for putting into practice the programme of work should be completed in the course of the current month of August in order to be reflected in the report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly. Failure to do so would be incomprehensible to the world at large, as well as being somewhat incongruous.

Hesitation over the contents of a programme of work and the opportunity to adopt it is understandable. However, now that States have decided to cross that point, it is impossible to perceive valid reasons for not proceeding to implementation.

I expect that these considerations are in fact unnecessary and that the normal scenario will unfold, that is, we will go forward according to the decision taken last May.

My delegation is well aware that, in accordance with the rules of procedure, the Conference has to adopt every year, at the beginning of its session, an agenda and a programme of work. I am also sure that we shall not waste the great efforts deployed this year and will make an early start in our actual substantive work.

Rules 27 and 28 of the Conference's rules of procedure determine that, at the beginning of each annual session, the Conference shall adopt its agenda and, on that basis, establish its programme of work. However, no one can deduce from those rules that every year the Conference must go back to square one, making a tabula rasa of everything accomplished in the previous year. The work of the Conference on Disarmament is a continuous process, and the closing of an annual session does not extinguish or annul progress made, like the progress we made last May.

That is the reason why my delegation thinks that, in some way, we must have an understanding about the continuity of the achievements we made during 2009.

As far as the beginning of our substantive work during the remaining weeks of the present session is concerned, Brazil commends your efforts, Madam President, in undertaking broad consultations in order to satisfy all concerns and sensibilities, thus allowing us to take the decisions necessary to at last implement the programme of work.

The President: I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement, and I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Ms. Higgie (New Zealand): Madam President, may I say at the outset how pleasant it is to have a colleague from across the Tasman Sea presiding over this meeting – one which will stay in my memory, since it is the first time I have attended the Conference on Disarmament? I would also like to extend greetings to the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze. I look forward to working with him and his team during my time in Geneva. I also take this opportunity to thank all colleagues here for the kind words of welcome which have been expressed to me as I take up my new position. I look forward

to working with all of them to make progress on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

When I presented my credentials last week to the Secretary-General of the Conference, he remarked that he believed that optimism was virtually a professional precondition for multilateral diplomats. Looking back on the last decade, however, I wonder how it is that colleagues here, and other disarmament and non-proliferation advocates, have been able to sustain much of a sense of optimism. New Zealanders have shared the frustration of many at the stalemate in the discussions in the Conference on Disarmament and the lack of progress on the important issues on our agenda.

But statements by world leaders in recent months have heralded a new level of engagement. On the nuclear front, the recent positive commitments to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world have been music to every New Zealander's ears. We are following with interest the ongoing bilateral discussions between the United States and the Russian Federation on a successor to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). The joint understanding reached last month on a framework for this new agreement is an important step; we count on both sides being bold and ambitious as they go forward.

The establishment last year by the Governments of Australia and Japan of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament is a significant contribution to efforts to envision the way ahead for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The 2010 NPT Review Conference will soon be upon us. New Zealand will be working for a successful and meaningful outcome that results in a strengthened treaty and brings us closer to a world without nuclear weapons.

In support of the NPT, New Zealand is active on a range of related issues, including promoting the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and improved transparency and confidence-building measures in regard to nuclear weapons, and advocating the lower operational readiness of nuclear weapon systems.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards are a fundamental pillar of the non-proliferation regime, and play an essential role in the implementation of the treaty. We are currently a member of the IAEA Board of Governors and we take this responsibility seriously. Our regional group, the South-East Asia and Pacific Far East Group, has asked New Zealand to take its turn to chair the IAEA General Conference this year. We stand ready to do this.

New Zealand's national non-proliferation capacity-building efforts have been focused in the main on our own region, the Pacific, in order, in particular, to promote compliance with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We have been a strong supporter, as well, of counter-proliferation initiatives – and may I say what a pleasure it has been for me personally to have led New Zealand's delegation over the past four years to the meetings of the Proliferation Security Initiative?

Of course, our desire to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction must not displace efforts to minimize the humanitarian harm from conventional weapons. Later this year, the Second Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention will be held in Colombia. The Review Conference represents an important milestone in the life of the Convention, and New Zealand will be working for a robust, action-oriented outcome. We are particularly pleased that the Review Conference will have victim assistance as a central theme.

Another important milestone in the disarmament calendar will be reached this year if, as is likely, we attain the number of ratifications necessary for the Convention on Cluster Munitions to enter into force. For New Zealand's part, our Parliament had its first reading

of the necessary implementing legislation last week, and the Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control is hopeful that New Zealand will be able to join the 30 ratifiers who bring the treaty into force. I am sure I have your support, Madam President, in reminding colleagues here of the important humanitarian gains secured by this Convention and in inviting those that have not yet done so to consider signing it.

There would also be very significant humanitarian benefits from an arms trade treaty. New Zealand continues to believe that a comprehensive and legally binding agreement which establishes universal standards for the export, import and transfer of conventional arms is well overdue. We hope that this year's General Assembly will authorize the initiation of such negotiations.

That is a snapshot of New Zealand's current priorities on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation matters. I turn now to the issues more strictly on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Conference responded to the reinvigorated disarmament environment that has been evident in recent months with its historic agreement in May on a programme of work. This decision has been universally welcomed by governments and civil society; we must ensure that we meet their expectations that we are about to begin substantive work.

Living up to Secretary-General Ordzhonikidze's injunction that multilateral diplomacy requires optimism, I might also comment that I draw comfort from the fact that the Conference's watershed decision of 29 May is numbered "1864". May I remind Geneva colleagues that 1864 was the year in which the very first Geneva Convention was adopted? Just as that particular treaty in 1864 was the precursor to so much important international humanitarian law and laid the basis for the highly important 1949 Geneva Conventions, we are hopeful that CD/1864 can have similarly ground-breaking, substantive results.

We urge all delegations now to show flexibility and to support the framework to implement CD/1864. The P-6 are to be commended for the extensive consultations undertaken during the summer recess to bring us to this point. The framework under discussion provides for a balanced and equitable treatment of the issues on the Conference's agenda under the guidance of a group of well-qualified colleagues.

For New Zealand, the negotiations on a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons will be a key focus in the Conference's agenda. We have long supported the commencement of these negotiations. But we will also engage substantively on the other issues contained in CD/1864 and which are also significant for global security. We will be actively engaged in the working group on nuclear disarmament. We look forward to fruitful and productive exchanges on negative security assurances and remain interested in the discussions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as well as on other items on the Conference's agenda.

Madam President, it goes without saying that you can rely on New Zealand's strong support and cooperation in your efforts to steer this body towards substantive work.

The President: I thank the representative of New Zealand for her statement. I now give the floor to the next speaker on my list, the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Loshchinin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all we would like to express our regret that the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, Dayan Jayatilleka, is completing his mission in Geneva. During two years of work in Geneva Ambassador Jayatilleka has gained a very good reputation, including at the Conference on Disarmament. He is a highly skilled and highly cultured diplomat with profound knowledge of international relations; he is very energetic and active and has his own personal point of view of events, including the very serious events in his own country. At the same time he has accomplished a great deal, both for his own country, of course, and also to strengthen international cooperation. We

will miss you, dear Dayan. We wish you every success and hope to see you again. We also welcome the new Ambassadors of Bangladesh and New Zealand and would like to assure you, dear colleagues, of our readiness to work together with you.

Madam President, the Russian delegation welcomes you to the post of President and wishes you success in your work in this very crucial moment in the work of the Conference. We would like to assure you of our cooperation and full support.

We note with particular satisfaction that, in contrast to many previous years, the Conference on Disarmament is entering the final part of its annual session with a programme of work. This is a significant and important achievement. We are grateful to all six Presidents, and especially the Ambassador of Algeria, who made such an important contribution to achieving consensus. We are certain that the small hitch in resolving the remaining procedural issues will be overcome and that we will be able to get down to substantive work before the end of this year's session.

Madam President, we would like to thank you and your colleagues in the P-6 for your unrelenting efforts to find a way out of the situation through consultations held by you during the intersessional period. The Russian delegation has an interest in renewing negotiating activity in our forum, the results of which will have a direct influence on strengthening international security.

We all need a working Conference, and of course it is important for its activities not to be made more complicated by various types of conflict, including armed conflicts, sometimes provoked by irresponsible politicians, as was the case in August last year.

In a few days it will be a year since the peaceful town of Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia, and Russian peacekeepers were subjected to a treacherous attack by Georgia. The events of those days represented a major upheaval, not only for Transcaucasia but for the entire world. A year ago at the Conference on Disarmament we placed particular stress on the danger of destabilizing shipments of weapons to regions of conflict. But what do we see today? Deliveries of weapons to a potential area of conflict in Transcaucasia are continuing. President Saakashvili of Georgia, after a brief period of confusion, has once again begun to make revanchist speeches. Most recent and most dangerous is what has been taking place in recent days. Almost every day towns and villages in South Ossetia come under fire from Georgian territory. We have information confirming Tbilisi's intention to mark the anniversary of its aggression — its failed aggression — with large-scale provocations, including with the use of weapons. Clearly the Saakashvili regime and those who are backing it have simply not been able to draw the proper conclusions from last year's adventure. As the saying goes, they have not learned their lesson. Yet it must be clear to everyone that there is no reasonable alternative to the peaceful political settlement of conflicts.

What is extremely important now is to have a joint and sincere search for ways to resolve such problems. In this context I should note the example of effective and pragmatic cooperation between Russia and the European Union under the presidency of France. That kind of cooperation has been an important stabilizing factor, and offers great possibilities for the entire Euro-Atlantic area. That example confirms that it is necessary and possible to conclude a new European security treaty, the idea of which has been put forward by President D.A. Medvedev.

We are recalling the events of last year for the simple reason that the situation is really disturbing, and the events of August last year must be assessed in an objective and dispassionate manner and the correct conclusions must be drawn. However, if this does not happen and the hotheads in Tbilisi attempt to mark the anniversary of the failure of their aggression against South Ossetia with sabre-rattling and at various types of provocation,

they will receive a decisive and robust rebuff. It is our hope that August 2009 will pass peacefully without provocations or incidents.

We also hope, Madam President, that your efforts to find solutions acceptable to all will be crowned with success and that the Conference will be able to begin its substantive work as early as August of this year.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement, and I now turn to the next speaker on my list, the representative of Bangladesh, but before I give you the floor, may I take this opportunity to send a very warm welcome to you, especially as there seems to be an Antipodean theme running through arrivals and departures today? You have a very close link with Australia, and indeed with the Australian foreign service, so I am delighted to see you here at the Conference, and I would like to take this opportunity also formally to assure you of our strong support and cooperation. Ambassador Hannan, you have the floor.

Mr. Hannan (Bangladesh): Madam President, let me express at the outset my regret at the departure of Ambassador Dayan Jayatilaka. I wish him all success in his future endeavours. I wish him and his family all the best. I also welcome the new Ambassador of New Zealand and look forward to working with her.

Since this is the first time I have addressed the Conference on Disarmament after assuming the responsibility of the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. Please be assured of our continued cooperation with you and other members of the Conference.

I would like to thank the representatives and colleagues who have welcomed me to this body. I am personally very happy and feel privileged to be in the midst of you all, and I look forward to receiving your kind cooperation and support in the course of our negotiations on disarmament.

My delegation appreciates the role played by you, Madam, in your capacity as President, as well as the efforts of other P-6 members, in ending the long impasse in the Conference. The Government of Bangladesh hopes that the Conference will begin substantive work soon. The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh addressed the Conference on Disarmament last February, and she clearly mentioned her disappointment at the lack of progress. It is encouraging, therefore, to note that we have made progress since February. We consider that the Conference on Disarmament is very close to reaching an agreement on how to implement the programme of work contained in CD/1864. My delegation is ready to move ahead. We are also realistic. The Conference needs to have everyone on board in order to make meaningful progress.

In this context, we are very appreciative of the efforts made by you and the other Presidents to come up with a proposal that will take on board the remaining concerns in a satisfactory manner. We look forward to an early consensus in this regard.

The President: I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his statement. The next speaker on my list is the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Puja (Indonesia): Madam President, as this is the first time I have taken the floor under your presidency, let me join other colleagues in extending to you our heartfelt congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and your good efforts in advancing the work of the Conference. We feel confident that under your able leadership the Conference will be successful in achieving more constructive results within the scope of the disarmament efforts.

The Conference on Disarmament adopted its programme of work in May 2009 and proved to the world that the work of previous years has yielded positive results. This is the

clear outcome of common efforts in which discussions, consultations and flexibility emerged as the only way to overcome problems. It is our fervent hope that we can keep this momentum and agree on the way forward to implement CD/1864, and I wish to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in assisting you in the discharge of your duties.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to associate myself with the statement made by the representative of Colombia in bidding farewell to our distinguished colleague Ambassador Jayatilleka of Sri Lanka. I would like to thank Ambassador Jayatilleka for his compassion and for his efforts in this august forum as coordinator for agenda item 6, on a comprehensive programme of disarmament, last year. Last but not least, I would like to thank him for his cordial friendship. I wish him all success in his future endeavours and hope that our paths cross again in the years to come.

I would also like briefly to take this opportunity to warmly welcome the representatives of New Zealand and Bangladesh to our club.

The President: I thank the representative of Indonesia for his statement, and I now give the floor to the last speaker on my list, the representative of China.

Mr. Wan Qun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China joins our colleagues in expressing great regret at the departure of the distinguished Ambassador Jayatilleka. This is not only because of his wisdom, his experience, his insight and his eloquence, but mostly importantly because of his contributions to the work of the Conference on Disarmament and to the Group of 21. We will remember these contributions, and we wish him all the best in his new life and post.

We would also like to briefly announce that Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi of China will address the Conference at 10.00 a.m. on the twelfth of August, to set forth China's positions on the issues of arms control and non-proliferation.

The President: I thank the distinguished representative of China for his statement, and I am delighted to hear that the Foreign Minister of China will be addressing the Conference on Disarmament.

I have no more speakers on my list. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this time? That does not seem to be the case.

The Conference adopted its programme of work, CD/1864, on 29 May under the able leadership of my P-6 colleague and friend Ambassador Jazairy of Algeria. Since then, successive Presidents have been consulting extensively with a wide range of delegations on the implementation of that decision, that is, on the appointment of working group chairs and special coordinators, as reflected in document CD/1867, and on the timetable of activities, as reflected in document CD/1866/Rev.1. A number of delegations have proposed that the two documents be merged. This seems to have broad agreement, so I would propose to proceed on that basis.

Other delegations have drawn attention to some principles they would like to see considered in the implementation of the decision, related to clarifying the modalities of getting down to work. As President, and with the help of my P-6 colleagues, we have had extensive consultations with a very wide range of delegations on these matters. I am delighted to report that these consultations have been useful and productive and that we would now seem to have a high degree of convergence. These principles include, first, the application of the consensus rule to the work of the working groups and special coordinators, which is consistent with the rules of procedure; second, the notion that rotation and equitable geographical distribution would apply to working group chairs and special coordinators, which would be consistent with past practice in the Conference; and, third, the need to maintain balance in the treatment of agenda items in accordance with

CD/1864, as reflected in the draft timetable of activities. These principles, which appear to be uncontroversial and to enjoy general support, will be included in a very short chapeau to the draft decision, which I will ask the secretariat to circulate to all delegations at the end of this meeting.

In addition, I will circulate a short draft Presidential statement that seeks to reflect some other issues raised by delegations. These again have been the subject of very broad consultations. One issue concerns how to ensure continuity between 2009 and 2010 without pre-empting the decisions the Conference on Disarmament will need to take in 2010 in accordance with the rules of procedure. This is reflected in the statement, with language drawn from the rules of procedure and from successive annual reports of the Conference to the General Assembly, on the role of the incoming and outgoing Presidents. The other substantive issue reflected in the statement is a reference to the national security concerns of States, and again I have drawn directly from the rules of procedure in this paragraph.

CD/1866/Rev.1, on the timetable of activities, was drawn up on the basis that we would start work yesterday. It provided for four weeks of substantive deliberations and three weeks for consideration of the report. As we will have lost a week, the revised timetable is identical to the first with respect to the four weeks provided for substantive work. It simply starts one week later and finishes one week later. The timetable itself has not changed except for one minor scheduling amendment proposed by the incoming Austrian presidency to move the final session of working group 4 from the afternoon of 4 September to the morning of that day to allow for a possible plenary meeting in the afternoon to distribute the draft report for the 2009 session. This means that we now have two weeks for consideration of the report. The rules of procedure provide for the report to be made available to all member States of the Conference for consideration at least two weeks before the date scheduled for its adoption. My Austrian colleague, who will be President at that time, has assured me that he will distribute the draft report in accordance with the rules of procedure to ensure that delegations have sufficient time to consult their capitals. Again, this is an issue on which we have consulted widely and it seems that, while delegations have expressed a range of views, most are comfortable with providing more time for substantive work, bearing in mind that the working group chairs and special coordinators will need time both for substantive discussion and to produce their own reports in accordance with CD/1864.

Before closing the meeting, I will ask the secretariat to distribute draft decision CD/1870, on the implementation of CD/1864, and the draft Presidential statement I have just mentioned. Given that much of the content will be familiar to you from the earlier drafts, in documents CD/1867 and CD/1866/Rev.1, and given the extensive consultations undertaken with many of you in the intersessional period, I would hope that the Conference will be in a position to adopt the draft decision later this week so that we can — as so many delegations have urged — finally get down to work. Rather than open up the floor for discussion on the documents at this stage, I think it more productive to close the meeting so that delegations have sufficient time to study these documents. As President, I am of course at the disposal of any member State that would like to discuss these documents with me.

That concludes our business for today. The plenary meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.