

# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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## Report of the Chairman of the Open-ended Consultations on the Improved and Effective Functioning of the Conference on Disarmament

1. In accordance with the decision reflected in paragraph 20 of the 1993 report to the General Assembly of the United Nations (CD/1222), the Conference continued consideration of its improved and effective functioning during the 1994 session, in the same format and under the same chairmanship as in previous years.

2. Four informal open-ended consultations on improved and effective functioning of the Conference were conducted under the Chairmanship of Ambassador Ahmad Kamal of Pakistan. As in 1992 and 1993, the informal open-ended consultations were open to non-member States participating in the work of the Conference.

3. Discussions focussed on the following issues:

- Review of past decisions on procedures: (sessions; structure of debate; report writing; Presidency during intersessional periods);

- Matters being dealt with in other frameworks: (agenda; expansion of membership of the Conference);

- Unresolved matters (groupings of States within the Conference; NGO participation);

- Other matters (possible fourth part of annual session; computerization and coordination; coordination with the Centre for Disarmament Affairs).

4. Review of past decisions on procedure

(a) Annual sessions of the Conference

In view of the increasingly heavy calendar of important disarmament meetings, delegations pointed to the need for greater flexibility in the implementation of Rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure, whereby the Conference "shall have an annual session divided into three parts of 10, 7 and 7 weeks respectively and the first part shall begin the penultimate week of the month of January". While there was no agreement to revise Rule 7 at this point, delegations agreed that the dates for the three parts of the 1995 session would be as follows:

30 January-7 April  
29 May-7 July  
31 July-22 September

(b) Structure of debate

It was agreed that the procedure already in force, whereby increasing use would be made of informal open-ended consultations, was satisfactory and would continue.

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(c) Report writing

It was agreed that the guidelines outlined in paragraph 19(a) of the Conference's 1993 report (CD/1222) were adequate and did not require any review.

(d) Presidency of the Conference during intersessional periods

While it was felt that the procedures developed during 1993 (as contained in CD/1222, paragraph 19(b)), whereby the President would associate the outgoing President as well as the incoming President in all consultations, had proved to be most valuable in the smooth functioning of the Conference, it was nevertheless felt that the first President of each annual session should assume his duties on 1 January. Consequently, it was agreed to amend Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure as follows:

"During the period when the Conference is not in session, the functions of the President shall be carried out by the representative of the member State which presided over the last plenary meeting of the Conference, except that between the annual sessions of the Conference the intersessional functions of the Presidency shall pass, at the beginning of the calendar year, to the representative of the member State assuming the Presidency next in order of rotation."

5. Matters being dealt with in other frameworks

It was recognized that, since the issues of the review of the agenda of the Conference as well as expansion of its membership were being addressed by a Special Coordinator and Friend of the Chair respectively, there was no need to consider them in the context of improved and effective functioning of the Conference.

6. Unresolved matters

With respect to the issues of groupings of States within the Conference and the participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of the Conference, discussions revealed that it was premature to envisage any change in existing practices.

7. Other matters

(a) Computerization and coordination

Members of the Conference, as internal users of the United Nations Disarmament Affairs Information System (UNDAIS), again underlined the importance they attach to improved and easy access to the information contained in this system. To this end, delegations urged that the procurement and installation of the necessary hardware and software should be undertaken and completed in the Geneva Branch of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs within a specific and early timeframe, so that members of the Conference may benefit fully from this facility. Delegations also stressed the need for integration between the Optical Disk System and UNDAIS in an effort to avoid duplication and to ensure better utilization of existing systems. It was also suggested that, in order to achieve a better appreciation of the information access requirements of members of the Conference, a system of structured periodic consultations be instituted in this field between the Conference and the Centre for Disarmament Affairs.

(b) Coordination with the Centre for Disarmament Affairs

It was pointed out that the existing synergy between the Conference, which is an autonomous body, and the Centre for Disarmament Affairs should be enhanced by constant consultation at the appropriate level.

Conclusions

8. All members continued to consider the informal, open-ended consultations as positive and constructive and as evidence of the desire of the Conference to improve its effective functioning and to keep it under constant review.

9. The Conference on Disarmament will continue consideration of its improved and effective functioning at its next annual session, in the same format and under the same Chairman.