

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND AND SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 7 February 2006, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Zdzisław RAPACKI (Poland)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 1002nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset I would like to extend a cordial welcome to Ambassador Cheng Jingye of China, who has recently assumed the responsibilities as the representative of his country to the Conference on Disarmament . Ambassador Cheng presented his credentials 15 minutes ago to the President of the Conference. I wish to take this opportunity to assure him of our cooperation and support in his new assignment. Welcome.

We have all been deeply saddened to learn of the sinking of the Egyptian ferry, Al Salam Boccaccio 98, in the Red Sea early Friday last week. The ship, which was en route from Duba, Saudi Arabia, to Safaga, Egypt, was reportedly carrying approximately 1,400 people, of whom many have lost their lives. On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, I extend the most sincere condolences and deepest sympathy to the families of the victims and to the Government of Egypt. May I now invite you to join me in a minute of silence in memory of the victims of the sinking of the Egyptian ferry?

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The PRESIDENT: Today the Conference will continue its general debate on any subject related to the Conference on Disarmament. I have the following speakers for today's plenary meeting: the Ambassadors of France, Nigeria, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand and Norway.

I now give the floor to the Ambassador of France, Mr. François Rivasseau.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all, on behalf of the French delegation, I would like to extend my condolences to the Egyptian delegation and the Egyptian authorities as well as the Egyptian people concerning the tragedy they recently suffered in the Red Sea.

This delegation has the honour to table today as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament the text of the speech delivered by the President of the French Republic on 19 January at Ile Longue in Brittany. As in 2001, as in 1996, it is our custom to submit such speeches to the Conference to provide it with information and enable its members to become acquainted with them in a full and accurate manner.

Since the end of the cold war, the French doctrine of deterrence has gone through several stages in terms of formulation without any changes in its foundations - the White Book of 1994, the President's speech in August 1995, the 8 June 2001 speech at IHEDN, and lastly the 19 January 2006 speech.

Regarding the CD specifically, I consider it useful to make the following brief observations, on the basis of the most frequently asked questions.

The French head of State pointed out that the fundamental principles of nuclear deterrence have not changed. The purpose of the French deterrent is to secure France's vital

(Mr. Rivasseau, France)

interests against any threat, wherever it may arise and whatever its nature. In the framework of this concept of deterrence, French nuclear weapons are not battlefield weapons. Our approach remains the same. There will never be any question of using nuclear capabilities for military purposes during a conflict.

Reconfiguration, that is, the modernization and adaptation of the capabilities of the deterrent force to developments in the strategic context, is fully compatible with the commitments undertaken by France under article VI of the NPT. France continues to be very active in this area, in accordance with its commitments. Need I point out that France has withdrawn and eliminated all its ground-to-ground weapons (the plateau d'Albion and the Hades missiles), reduced the number of its nuclear submarines with a missile-launching capacity, reduced by two thirds the overall number of its nuclear delivery vehicles since 1985, dismantled the testing centre in the Pacific, shut down and dismantled the Pierrelatte and Marcoule fissile material production facilities for nuclear weapons, and reduced the nuclear share of France's defence investments from 50 per cent when the strategic nuclear force was created to 33 per cent at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall and an average of 19 per cent for the period 2003 to 2008 under our latest Military Planning Act? In 2008, this share will amount to only 18 per cent of our defence investment. Overall, the cost of the deterrent has been lowered to less than 10 per cent of the defence budget excluding pension commitments.

In this context, France abides by its commitments, as expressed in their most recent form at the national level, in a European framework, at the NPT Review Conference in May 2005, during the last session of the United Nations General Assembly First Committee, or here a year ago. This applies in particular to the treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. The President of the Republic has pointed out that we continue to support international efforts promoting general and complete disarmament, and in particular the negotiation of such a treaty. Need I also point out that in 1995 France reaffirmed and refined security assurances to non-nuclear States that are parties to the NPT? The French declaration, as well as that made by the other nuclear Powers, provides in particular negative security assurances to these States. As we said at that time, this of course in no way affects our natural right of self-defence, as set out in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

France has also provided legally binding negative security assurances to more than 100 countries by ratifying the protocols to treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones: Tlatelolco for South America in 1992, Pelindaba for Africa and Rarotonga for the South Pacific in 1996. Negotiations continue for Central Asia and South-East Asia. All these guarantees remain of course fully valid. As the President of the French Republic pointed out, the path to disarmament is a demanding one. We continue to support international efforts, but of course we will not be able to continue to move ahead unless the conditions for our overall security are maintained and the willingness to make progress is unanimously shared. This brings us back to our particular responsibility, here in this forum, and to the support that your efforts require, Mr. President, to bring together resolve on all sides to advance towards our common objectives.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Rivasseau of France for his statement, and I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria, Ambassador Joseph Ayalogu.

Mr. AYALOGU (Nigeria): Mr. President, as this is my first time to take the floor since your assumption of the presidency, let me congratulate you and assure you of my delegation's cooperation and support of your efforts in the search for consensus on our work programme.

I take the floor to commend you, Mr. President, and the other Presidents for 2006, for the initiative you have jointly committed to pursue this year. The collective decision of the P6 to work together in the search for consensus is new creativity that in my point of view, without prejudice to other benefits, has addressed the problem of the short tenure of the presidency. Several delegations, including mine, have in the past suggested that consideration be given to extending the term of the presidency, and Japan had informally initiated a move in that direction. Your creativity in finding a solution to this problem, without having to be bogged down by procedural concerns, is highly commended by my delegation.

On behalf of the P6, you appointed Friends of the Presidents for 2006 to assist the Presidents in the discharge of their responsibilities. You said that the focus of the work of the Presidents would be to search for consensus on a programme of work. In this regard, the Friends of the Presidents could concentrate on the agenda and the effectiveness of our method of work. Nigeria wholeheartedly supports the initiative of the P6 to appoint Friends to help them in their endeavours. As a delegation mentioned last week, we all consider ourselves as friends of the Presidents, and my delegation will surely work, support and cooperate with the Ambassadors appointed to lead all the friends in the search for a common goal.

With regard to the mandate of the Friends of the P6, my delegation has suggestions to make to the President. We have already adopted our agenda for 2006. This agenda is flexible and balanced. In your Presidential statement after the adoption of the agenda, you said that "if there is a consensus in the Conference to deal with any issues, they could be dealt with within this agenda ...". As far as my delegation is concerned, the four core issues which are still the most relevant to the international security environment are already on the agenda, and flexibility has been built into the agenda to deal with any other issues that gain consensus in the Conference. On the effectiveness of our working methods, this has been looked into in the past. The Conference on Disarmament is probably the only institution where decisions are taken only by consensus. Even the General Assembly and the Security Council strive to achieve consensus in taking decisions, but when that fails, voting becomes the option to reach decisions. Consensus was introduced in our rules of procedure during the cold war, probably to ensure inclusiveness in the decision-making process. It was intended to be a source of progress and multilateral strength, but it is unfortunately turning into a source of lack of progress and inertia. Can any creativity help us overcome this problem at this point? One cannot be so hopeful, largely because political will would be required to solve the problem, and it appears the lack of it has been the cause of the impasse in the CD.

I would therefore suggest that the Friends of the Presidents should rather focus their efforts on the search for a programme of work, which all delegations have said is their priority. The Friends of the P6 might try to understand the differences that exist with regard to the various

(Mr. Ayalogu, Nigeria)

proposals on the table, both formal and informal. From the interventions of delegations in the past year, the A5 enjoys overwhelming majority support, but not consensus. Nigeria suggests that the Friends of the P6 might focus their efforts in the search for a work programme based on the A5. They could try to identify the difficulties those delegations unable to join in consensus have with the A5 and try to reformulate the proposal to accommodate the concerns without creating new problems. It has been said over and over again that the A5 is not cast in stone. It is an evolutionary proposal.

Finally, I want to assure you that Nigeria has supported past proposals on the table, including the A5, and will remain flexible to help you in your efforts to get us out of the present impasse. I hope that the P6 will succeed in getting a balanced and comprehensive programme of work that will address the security concerns of all delegations. The CD has the responsibility, through negotiating disarmament agreements, to create a collective security architecture for all.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Ayalogu of Nigeria for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I will study all your proposals very carefully. I now give the floor to Ambassador Bernhard Brasack of Germany.

Mr. BRASACK (Germany): Mr. President, allow me firstly to join in the condolences expressed by you and all the delegations here to the delegation of Egypt concerning the horrible accident in the Red Sea.

Germany considers the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, based on the Decalogue, appropriate for dealing with current disarmament and security issues.

The four so-called "core issues" - the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances (NSA) and the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) - are still topical and essential on the international agenda also in the light of the changed international environment we face today.

A comprehensive approach, taking into account the differing priorities and security concerns, constitutes the most realistic, feasible way out of the stalemate of the CD.

We have always felt that the A5 proposal meets these requirements in full. Together with the overwhelming majority of the CD, we share the assessment that the A5 proposal in fact constitutes the one proposal since 1998 that has brought the CD nearest to consensus. Sadly, we have to realize that being near consensus is by no means the equivalent of having reached consensus. We continue to support the establishment of subsidiary bodies for all four core issues. Their mandates could be, and probably would be, different. The mandates should strike a balance between the differing priorities of the different groups and the necessity for overall consensus. They should be both pragmatic and substantial in order to be accepted by all. We look forward to cooperating with all States parties participating in the CD in exploring how to achieve consensus within the CD on a work programme and, consequently, get down to substantial negotiations, bearing in mind the demands of the NPT RevCon 2000.

(Mr. Brasack, Germany)

Germany does not believe that one core issue is inherently more or less important than the other three issues. This being said, in Germany's view, the "cut-off" issue in particular is ripe for the immediate commencement and early conclusion of a non-discriminatory, universally applicable and verifiable FMCT, bearing in mind the Special Coordinator's report and the mandate included therein. The immediate commencement of FMCT negotiations constitutes the next logical and essential step in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. At present, we do not have a coherent and comprehensive approach for dealing with fissile material. Several high-level initiatives during the last years related to fissile material and their production equipment are a clear indicator of the significant risks associated with these materials and the necessity of improved and comprehensive controls.

The establishment of an ad hoc committee to deal with the prevention of an arms race in outer space could serve to explore and discuss the issue of strengthening the international framework and rules governing the civil as well as the legitimate military use of outer space, in order to avoid outer space becoming an insecure area with incalculable risks not only to world security, but also to the commercial use of space as required by modern technology used in a broad variety of daily applications. Therefore, Germany welcomes all efforts to identify and examine specific topics or proposals which could include confidence-building or transparency measures, general principles, treaty commitments and the strengthening of the existing regime, with a view to making any future arms race or dangerous technical developments in space impossible.

Continued tangible progress towards irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament is indispensable and can only be achieved by an incremental approach. The 13 Practical Steps for the systematic and progressive implementation of the article VI obligations adopted by the 2000 NPT Review Conference serve as benchmarks on that road. Germany fully supports the establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body in the CD to deal with nuclear disarmament as called for in the 13 Practical Steps of the Final Document of the 2000 NPT RevCon.

In the EU strategy against proliferation of WMD adopted by the European Council in December 2003, Germany and its EU partners recognized that "positive and negative security assurances ... can serve both as an incentive to forgo the acquisition of WMD and as a deterrent". In the same vein, the NPT RevCon 2000 agreed that "legally binding security assurances ... strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime". Germany therefore strongly calls upon CD States to agree on a work programme that seriously pursues the issue of negative security assurances.

It is the task of every CD presidency to explore the feasibility of possible alternatives to bring the CD back to substantive work. That includes the possibility of exploring additional issues. However, this should be done as a possible addition to, not as a substitute for, dealing with the current issues on our agenda, and only if it increases the basis for consensus. It is understood that any suggestion for new issues to be dealt with in the CD should be taken at face value and examined without prejudice, and it is crucial that additional issues are not misused for adding to the unfortunate list of linkages that is blocking the CD already. Germany remains

(Mr. Brasack, Germany)

open, undogmatic and flexible to explore any new proposal that is presented with the aim of coming to a negotiated and internationally binding agreement in this body and that adds to international security, arms control or disarmament. That also includes for Germany conventional weapons issues like, e.g., MANPADS, provided that they add value to ongoing processes in other forums. But let me be quite clear: additional issues are to remain additional. They cannot become a substitute for getting the CD back to work on the priority issues.

Germany supports the desire of the CD presidencies of this year to coordinate their work as much as feasible to provide the maximum degree of coherence and continuity. Structured, focused and more interactive debates, with a balanced division of time allocated to the different issues, are the best approach.

The issues in front of us are not obsolete. They are of fundamental importance to the international agenda and remain so, even or in particular in the light of the changed international environment, in the light of globalization and of the increased threat by non-State actors and global terrorism. Multilateral approaches offer solutions that are generally seen as legitimate, transparent and impartial, and that are lasting.

To deal with them in an adequate and comprehensive manner requires, among other things, also a broader involvement of civil society and the global community. Unblocking the Conference on Disarmament would be a visible sign of the willingness to decisively continue global arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament efforts in a globalized manner.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Brasack of Germany for his statement, and I now give the floor to Ambassador Mary Whelan of Ireland.

Ms. WHELAN (Ireland): I wish to express my deepest sympathy to Egypt on the tragic loss of life at sea.

Mr. President, let me offer you my heartfelt good wishes for your tenure as the presiding officer of the Conference. Working with your co-Presidents for 2006, you have already challenged our inaction and have shown creativity in seeking to address our agenda.

I am taking the floor today to respond to your request to delegations to identify our priorities for work in this body in 2006. Ireland's priorities are as follows: (a) we believe that the CD should commence negotiations on a treaty dealing with fissile material; (b) we support the establishment of a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament; and (c) we see merit in embarking on a process which could eventually lead to agreement on the non-weaponization of outer space.

We are realistic. We appreciate that the CD cannot simultaneously begin serious negotiations on a range of topics. In this context, in 2006, we attach particular priority to commencing negotiations on a fissile material treaty, while establishing subsidiary bodies to consider the other areas to which we attach priority.

(Ms. Whelan, Ireland)

We would be ready to consider how to move forward on other items of our agenda to which our negotiating partners attach importance. Like others, we continue to believe that the A5 proposal has the potential to address the range of concerns in this room.

Since the opening of the session, a number of delegations have identified issues which are not specifically referred to on our agenda and on which they would wish the Conference to develop negotiating mandates. We will carefully consider all such proposals and will, in particular, be guided by the possibility of developing a shared understanding on the need to take action in this forum. While Ireland would not seek to oppose the consideration of any item likely to command consensus, the introduction of new topics for negotiation into the CD, which has failed for nine years to address any item on its agreed agenda, seems akin to trying to build an extension to a building whose foundations are in danger of collapsing.

I wish also to take the opportunity to restate my delegation's strong commitment to enhancing the role of civil society in our deliberations. Addressing this Conference in 2004, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland queried "how a body charged with a mandate of such relevance to humankind and drawing its [budget] from the United Nations can continue to effectively exclude civil society from a meaningful role in its deliberations". In this context, could I express my delegation's strong wish that we can take a further modest step forward in relation to civil society in 2006? At a minimum, my delegation wishes to have the annual statement of NGOs on International Women's Day delivered by its authors.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Whelan for her statement and for the kind words to the Chair. I now give the floor to Ambassador Tim Caughley of New Zealand.

Mr. CAUGHLEY (New Zealand): Mr. President, thank you for expressing on our behalf the deepest sympathy to our Egyptian colleague for the recent tragic events in the Red Sea.

I wish to make several comments arising out of developments since our successful beginning to the year under your presidency, the Polish presidency.

First, the mandate of this body quite clearly includes conventional weapons within our remit. My delegation is happy to engage in this body or any other on any disarmament issue that is regarded by the international community as requiring urgent attention.

Secondly, last Tuesday and Thursday a common theme in the debate was international security. It is perhaps a truism that there are quite a number of classes of weapons and weapon systems that must be the subject of international attention if global security is to be enhanced.

This Conference, which after all is the Conference on Disarmament, necessarily has to prioritize its approach to these issues. My delegation's concern has been and remains that the matters requiring the most urgent attention are those covered by the four core issues. Prime amongst them - that is, the sole one with which a negotiating mandate has been labelled - is the FMCT.

(Mr. Caughley, New Zealand)

The problem that arises is that that label is not unconditional. When an FMCT's negotiation is no longer conditional, work, we assume, will begin on that topic. But what are we to do in the meantime? Concentrate on other issues, or concentrate on securing a work programme that embraces the core issues, or some of them?

If we pursue this second course of action, which is my Government's preference, we could be faced with continuing frustration and unproductive sessions. Or, along the lines of a proposal made last year by the Ambassador of Sweden, we could have a debate on the backdrop to the core issues: to the international security environment and the hopes we all hold that this Conference can contribute to improving our collective security.

We sense that there is scope in such a debate to demonstrate why the four core issues remain pre-eminent in this regard, as well as scope to translate the respective priorities contained in existing proposals into a sequence or timetable for taking them up. There is also scope through the appointment of Friends of the Chair (who we congratulate) on sharpening up the procedural focus of the CD.

My delegation is flexible as to the course of action pursued, as long as the Conference's objective is more about the real issues of the day - ones that demonstrably contribute to the security of all - than about issues of lesser universal moment or, worse, talking for the sake of talking.

The current process both of close coordination of the presidencies developed under your leadership - which, like the Ambassador of Nigeria, we welcome - and of developing a coherent timetable for our forward work will contribute to this Conference's well-being. But we must guard against convincing ourselves that these steps alone will restore the credibility of the CD. The greatest contribution, in my delegation's view, will be the adoption of a programme of work that is geared to negotiating an FMCT as an essential step towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and which builds in scope for discussing other issues that are widely regarded as fundamental to enhancing international security.

As a Conference, we don't all agree on the relative importance that should be accorded those other core issues, but my delegation has not heard any proposals that call into question the pre-eminence of any of them.

On the other hand, we have no difficulty in testing - on any subject, for example, an important one such as MANPADS - whether there is a clamour in the CD to pursue an issue that is patently a matter of disarmament. But, as indeed recognized by the Ambassador of Australia in putting forward that topic, it will need to be treated in such a way as not to divert us from our efforts to achieve agreement on a programme of work. Addition, as needs be, but not, as the German Ambassador said, a substitute.

My delegation welcomes the importance attached in your statement last Thursday, Mr. President, to the task of agreeing the work programme. And we are pleased with the increased level of engagement and flexibility in the Conference this year so far. There seems

(Mr. Caughley, New Zealand)

to be a more widespread sense that the Conference has its future in its hands, as well as a growing awareness that gains in collective security logically translate into advances to each State's national security. We will support all efforts of the Presidents of this Conference that serve this overriding end.

Finally, we believe that it will be another demonstration of the sense of purpose and relevance of this Conference if, as Ireland's Ambassador has made clear, the CD can take a more enlightened approach to the delivery of the annual Women's Day statement next month in the manner she has proposed.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Tim Caughley of New Zealand for his statement and kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Norway, Mr. Kjetil Paulsen.

Mr. PAULSEN (Norway): I, too, would like to extend my delegation's condolences to the Egyptian delegation in relation to the terrible tragedy that took place in the Red Sea a few days ago.

The delegation of Australia proposed last week that the Conference on Disarmament consider the illicit transfer and unauthorized access to and use of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS), with a view to developing measures to combat this. On this occasion I would like to express my delegation's support for this proposal, for several reasons. Firstly, as pointed out by the Australian Ambassador, MANPADS is a weapon system which is highly attractive to terrorists. It has been used on a number of occasions against civilian aircraft and has cost hundreds of lives. Secondly, MANPADS is a defined weapon category which practically could be placed under agreed international restrictions. Thirdly, national and regional efforts are already being undertaken in order to regulate the production, transfer and use of MANPADS. Best practices and lessons learnt could be a basis for moving this agenda forward also in the CD. And finally, there is already an international consensus on MANPADS, in the United Nations General Assembly, which provides the CD with an opportunity to examine this issue and develop non-proliferation measures. This consensus should encourage all of us not to make MANPADS hostage to other extremely important, but non-consensual issues on the CD's agenda. MANPADS can and should be considered on their own merits.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Mr. Paulsen for his statement. This concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I recognize the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. ALI (Syrian Arab Republic) (translated from Arabic): Our delegation is taking the floor for the first time during your term of office, Sir, so may I offer you my congratulations on your assumption of the responsibilities of your post? In addition, I should like to offer the Egyptian delegation my sincere condolences in the matter of the sinking of the Egyptian ferry.

Our Conference adopted its agenda at the opening meeting of this year's session, and this is grounds for satisfaction. We feel that that is an achievement compared to earlier years.

(Mr. Ali, Syrian Arab Republic)

Following the adoption of the agenda, we heard a number of delegations proposing new or additional topics for consideration, although logic would suggest that those items ought to have been proposed prior to the formal adoption of the agenda. We have, of course, referred these various proposals to our capitals for appropriate instructions as to the positions we are to take on them. And, that being the case, we feel that no consensus exists within the CD for consideration of these new topics within the CD at the moment. We require instructions from our capitals and discussions within our regional groups before a consensus can be reached with respect to whether these topics should be addressed, and if so, how they should be addressed.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his statement, and I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. ABOUL-ENEIN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): I would like to express warm thanks to the Secretary-General of the Conference and the Ambassador of Poland, the President of the CD, as well as other heads of delegation for the sincere condolences they have conveyed to us and their words of sympathy for the relatives of the people who died in the sinking of the ferry Al Salam in the Red Sea a few days ago. I shall take steps to convey the condolences of the Conference on Disarmament to the Egyptian Government in that connection.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Mr. Aboul-Enein of Egypt for his statement. I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze.

Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): I would like to inform you that the Secretary-General has approved the selection of Mr. Timothy Caughley as the Director of the Conference on Disarmament Secretariat and Conference Support Branch, and that means he is Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament. Ambassador Caughley will assume his duties following the finalization of the necessary administrative procedures.

Let me first express my congratulations to Ambassador Caughley. We would like to welcome him to our team, and to those delegations that expressed particular concern over the issue of an understaffed secretariat, it will be especially heartening news, I suppose. I believe that this is a problem that has been solved for some time within the secretariat, and now the secretariat is anxiously looking at the member States to solve one of its many issues.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mr. Secretary-General. That is more encouraging information conveyed to the Conference. Ambassador Tim Caughley, on behalf of the Conference, I would like to congratulate you and wish you all success. It is of satisfaction that an Ambassador whom all of us know and respect for his knowledge, experience, is going to assume this post. I wish to assure you, Ambassador Caughley, of our support and assistance in fulfilling your new duties. Congratulations once more.

It seems that Ambassador Caughley would like to take the floor.

Mr. CAUGHLEY (New Zealand): Thank you very much, Mr. President, and thank you also, Mr. Secretary-General, for your very warm comments. I certainly look forward to, I guess, swapping sides of the room in more ways than one and joining your team, and I look forward also to serving the future Presidents of the Conference and the Conference itself.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you. Does anyone wish to take the floor at this stage? That does not seem to be the case. That concludes our business for today.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 9 February 2006, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.