

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND AND FIFTY-THIRD PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 20 February 2007, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Juan Antonio MARCH (Spain)

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Spanish): I declare open the 1053rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, allow me to make an introductory statement as Spain's term in the Chair begins. As Spain embarks on its first term in the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like first of all to devote some words to the fine work accomplished by my predecessor in the Chair. While it is true that the six Presidents for this year, despite the fact that we have different priorities or preferences, have from the outset cooperated very easily and smoothly in our efforts to confer continuity and structure on the work of the Conference, it is equally true that this has been largely due to the good offices of Ambassador Glaudine Mtshali, her patient and careful work in gathering information and opinions from all the delegations, and her own personal style, her kindness and courtesy, thanks to which all difficulties have been ironed out, producing the plan of work we have adopted. We are very much indebted to the work of Ambassador Mtshali.

I am also pleased to have beside me the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, who is honouring us today with his presence. His long experience in these matters and his achievements over all these years in Geneva deserve special recognition.

I also wish to express appreciation for the constructive attitude of all the delegations present here who have demonstrated - and this is perhaps most promising - a new preparedness to embark on a full and committed dialogue on the items on the agenda of the Conference.

It is also appropriate to mention last year's six Presidents, who, with the leadership of Poland under Ambassador Rapacki, laid down a structure for their work for the first time, giving the task of planning the Conference an annual dimension, on which we have built the effective vertical programme to be pursued throughout this year 2007.

Thanks to all of this, I find myself in the fortunate situation that these brief words do not need to consist of a list of tasks that must be performed but an exercise which is close to being merely administrative, one whose principal purpose is to bring to the attention of the plenary the timetable of meetings which are to be held during our term in the Chair, thus placing officially on record the intensive work on which the CD is currently engaged as it resumes its proceedings.

All of this, in terms of both substance and form, is in line with Spain's aims in this distinguished forum. Spain decided some time ago to maintain a highly constructive profile in the Conference, seeking like other delegations to be part of the solution and not part of the problem. We have always believed that disarmament called for a realistic approach designed to build bridges in order to settle specific differences and facilitate the opening of negotiations. In this context my country hopes that one of the results of this year's work will be the start of negotiations on an effective treaty to halt the production of fissile material (FMCT).

The work during Spain's term begins today with the informal meeting which will follow this plenary to be devoted to agenda item 5, "New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: radiological weapons"; this will be chaired by the coordinator for this topic, the Ambassador of Bulgaria, Mr. Petko Draganov. The same topic will be addressed at two

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further afternoon meetings tomorrow, Tuesday, and Wednesday the 21st between 3 and 6 p.m. Subsequently, on Thursday the 22nd, at two meetings in the morning (from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.) and the afternoon (from 3 to 6 p.m.) and on Friday the 23rd at the morning meeting, the Conference will take up item 6 of the agenda, "Comprehensive programme of disarmament", in an informal session under the coordination of the Ambassador of Indonesia, Makarim Wibisono.

Next week the informal afternoon meetings on Monday the 26th, Tuesday the 27th and Wednesday the 28th, following the customary time slot of 3 to 6 p.m., under the chairmanship of the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, Mr. John Duncan, will address agenda item 7, "Transparency in armaments", thus concluding the first round of discussion of all the items scheduled on our timetable for this year, and passing immediately to the first informal meeting of the second round of this first phase on item 1, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", coordinated by the Ambassador of Norway, Mr. Wegger Strømmen, which will take place on Thursday 1 March at morning and afternoon meetings and at a morning meeting on Friday the 2nd.

During the week of 5-9 March at our first three informal meetings in the afternoons of Monday the 5th, Tuesday the 6th and Wednesday the 7th, we will take up item 2, "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters", under the expert guidance of the Ambassador of Italy, Mr. Carlo Trezza, followed on Thursday the 8th at the morning and afternoon meetings and in the morning meeting on Friday the 9th by analysis of section 3, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", guided by the coordinator, the Ambassador of Canada, Mr. Paul Meyer.

Lastly, the final week of Spain's term will be devoted to items 4 and 5 of the agenda, "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons" and "New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: radiological weapons", coordinated respectively by the Ambassador of Brazil, Mr. Carlos da Rocha Paranhos, and by Ambassador Draganov, whom I have already mentioned.

Before concluding I would like to appeal once again for senior political figures to address the Conference, whether they are members of their respective governments, parliamentarians or holders of other high offices. Their participation would certainly help to enhance our discussions and raise the level of focus which is always needed for the sensitive issues we discuss here. In this context I am happy to announce that on the 22nd of this month at 10 a.m. a plenary will be held on the occasion of a visit by the Minister for Disarmament of the United Kingdom, who will address the Conference.

The week of 12 March should also be particularly favourable, owing to the simultaneous holding of the high-level segment of the Human Rights Council, for other Ministers for Foreign Affairs to take the opportunity to make a political input to the Conference. I urge all of you to try to arrange for participation by your Ministers for Foreign Affairs, on the understanding that, while ideally they would address the Conference at the Tuesday plenary meetings, the Chair will do all it can to organize ad hoc plenary meetings for any senior dignitaries who may wish to contribute to our work. To that end I appeal for the understanding and support of the delegations and coordinators, as well as the full attendance which such presentations deserve.

(The President)

(spoke in French)

I wish the coordinators the best of luck in their respective tasks, and I invite the delegates present here to provide them with all possible support, without which any efforts made would be in vain.

(spoke in English)

As I take the Chair, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to thank you precisely for granting me such support, for which I also thank the secretariat which always contributes so effectively to our proceedings.

(spoke in Spanish)

I now inform the plenary that I have the following speakers on the list for today's plenary meeting: Ambassador Bernhard Brasack of Germany, on behalf of the European Union, on the use of radiological materials by terrorists; Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü of Turkey, who will be making a general statement; and Ambassador Bernhard Brasack of Germany, on behalf of the European Union, on the subject of the comprehensive programme of disarmament. Ambassador Brasack of Germany has the floor.

Mr. BRASACK (Germany): Mr. President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union on the use of radiological materials by terrorists.

First of all, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament. It is a pleasure and an honour to assure you of the European Union's full support in your efforts to guide the work of this Conference. I would also like to echo what you said about your predecessor. So say all of us in this room.

Allow me also to congratulate Ambassador Draganov of Bulgaria and Ambassador Wibisono of Indonesia on the assumption of their posts of coordinator. The EU would like to assure you, Mr. President, as well as all coordinators, of our full support in your efforts to guide and lead our work under the different agenda items.

Since the first establishment of our traditional agenda in the CD, the security environment has changed substantially and so have the global challenges to international security. One of the new challenges that has emerged is the risk of terrorists setting off a so-called "dirty bomb". This risk is real. The tragedy of 11 September 2001 demonstrated that terrorists are ready to use any means to commit their criminal acts and to spread fear. These devices do not constitute real weapons of mass destruction, but due to their mainly psychological effect, work as "weapons of mass disruption", creating terror particularly in densely populated areas. The dominant effect would be the moral and economic damage due to the massive fear and panic and disruption that such incidents would spur, causing possibly the evacuation or relocation of the affected population.

In this context, the EU welcomes the adoption in September 2006 of the United Nations General Assembly's Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which reiterated the need to strengthen coordination and cooperation among States in combating the smuggling of nuclear, chemical,

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biological, radiological and other potentially deadly materials. The EU would like to call for renewed efforts to address the dangers posed by the uncontrolled release of radioactive materials.

Radioactive substances or nuclear waste not under full national control might be acquired by terrorists and used in dirty bombs. Indeed, dirty bombs could be the weapon of choice of terrorists.

The EU welcomes the revised Code of conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources approved by IAEA in September 2003 and resolution 60/73, entitled "Preventing the risk of radiological terrorism", in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly in October 2005. Already in 2004 the EU member States adopted a Council directive on the control of high-activity sealed radioactive sources that covers most parts of the IAEA Code of Conduct.

We welcome the amendments made to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and urge all countries to sign, ratify and implement this new version as soon as possible.

Other international answers to the problem might, inter alia, come from the Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and United Nations Security Council resolution 1540.

The EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction of 12 December 2003 stated that the risk that terrorists would acquire - among others - radiological materials added a new critical dimension to the terrorist threat. It further stated that non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control could make an essential contribution to the global fight against terrorism by reducing the risk of non-State actors gaining access to - among others - radioactive materials. It is an integral part of that EU strategy to enhance the security of proliferation-sensitive materials, equipment and expertise in the European Union against unauthorized access and risks of diversion through - among others - improving the control of high-activity radioactive sources. Furthermore, in third countries outside the EU, the EU shall promote the adoption of similar measures.

The EU urges all States to work together in the framework of existing international instruments to effectively prevent terrorists from acquiring radiological materials, and underlines the importance of national measures in this regard.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Spanish): I thank Ambassador Brasack for his statement. Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü of Turkey has the floor.

Mr. ÜZÜMCÜ (Turkey): Mr. President, since this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of this high office and assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support. I am confident that under your able leadership, we will lose no momentum from the implementation of the organizational framework that has been put together by you and the other five Presidents.

(Mr. Üzümcü, Turkey)

Allow me also to thank, through you, Ambassador Glaudine Mtshali of South Africa and her staff for the excellent start that they provided to the 2007 deliberations. It is our sincere hope that this start will pave the way to substantive work and tangible results this year.

Since the last time that I took the floor in a formal plenary, the CD has completed the first round of informal consultations under the first four CD agenda items. We also began our informal deliberations yesterday on new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons, as well as radiological weapons, which is agenda item 5.

While our views on these issues were summarized in a general statement before the Conference on 30 January 2007, and despite the fact they were elaborated during the informal meetings, my delegation feels the need to highlight some of the key points of our contributions, for the benefit of those delegations who were not able to follow all of the meetings, as well as for the wider audience.

Our deliberations on agenda item 1 demonstrated the importance attached by all delegations to the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament. These deliberations also demonstrated that confidence-building through information-sharing and transparency is vital to achieve this goal. This is evidenced by several entries in the compilation of the coordinator for item 1, Ambassador Strømme of Norway, entitled “Clustering of the concrete proposals for substantive issues that require more focused attention during the second part of the annual session, with a view to commencing negotiations”.

This compilation gathers many ideas put forward by delegations, ideas ranging from information-sharing to full-fledged legally binding multilateral treaties on nuclear disarmament. In our view, a realistic assessment would point us in the direction of an incremental approach starting from the least common denominator. In this context, a good starting block would seem to be confidence-building through increased information-sharing and transparency, as pointed out by several delegations throughout the week.

We believe that this would help build confidence between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, which in turn would help build an atmosphere conducive to nuclear disarmament. This would also have a positive impact on the other two pillars of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, namely, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

Such information-sharing and transparency would also increase confidence between nuclear-weapon States, leading hopefully to less vertical proliferation and more nuclear disarmament. In short, increasing confidence-building through information-sharing and transparency would be beneficial for ending the nuclear arms race and bringing about more nuclear disarmament in more ways than one.

We realize that several nuclear-weapon States already share information with each other on a bilateral basis, as well as on a wider scale with the rest of the world. We have seen good examples of this during the last three weeks here in the CD. We encourage all States possessing nuclear weapons to engage in such an exchange. Furthermore, if the Conference can identify

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information-sharing and transparency as an issue that can be taken forward, and if the CD can put together a way in which this can be done in a more regular and institutionalized way, we believe that the CD will, indeed, have accomplished a tangible result and will have taken a valuable step in the direction of the lofty goal of nuclear disarmament.

Regarding agenda item 2, coordinated by Ambassador Carlo Trezza of Italy, my delegation underscored the particular importance Turkey attaches to the negotiation of a non-discriminatory and universal treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. As several delegations have expressed over the last three weeks, we are also of the view that an FMCT would place a quantitative cap on fissile material that is designed for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Thus, we share the belief that banning the production of such material would strengthen both nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. A comprehensive and non-discriminatory approach, of course, should include the issue of existing stocks and verification.

The CD should make best use of the momentum gained on this issue over the past year or so and try its utmost to achieve progress on an FMCT, an issue that we believe is ripe for negotiation.

During the deliberations on agenda item 3, under the guidance of Ambassador Paul Meyer of Canada, my delegation pointed out that Turkey's use of outer space has grown significantly over the years. A Turkish company, Türksat Joint Stock Company, currently owns and operates three satellites. While the number of Turkey's space-based assets may seem modest, they are no less valuable than those of others. This is because Turkey relies on these space-based assets for, among other things, data and voice communication, navigation, broadcasting and the Internet. This reliance, in the future, will no doubt only grow as new satellite launches are planned. In short, Turkey has space-based assets, relies on them in day-to-day life, and will continue to make increased use of outer space.

It is for these reasons that Turkey attaches growing importance to the peaceful use of outer space. In this regard, we support the views and proposals on strengthening the existing international legal framework directed at preventing an arms race in outer space. For Turkey, protecting the right of unrestricted access to and use of outer space for peaceful purposes is more important than the venue or the modalities of the discussion. That is why Turkey, bearing in mind recent developments, sees merit in discussing PAROS also here at the CD.

During the discussions on agenda item 4, coordinated by Ambassador Paranhos of Brazil, my delegation reminded distinguished colleagues that Turkey supports the views and proposals for establishing political mechanisms, followed by legally binding international instruments, which will assure the non-use of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States against non-nuclear-weapon States.

During these discussions, we made a point that as we gear up for the next review cycle of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which will commence with the 2007 Preparatory

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Committee meeting in Vienna this spring, it is inevitable that we make references to the NPT during our deliberations at the CD. We underlined however, that the relationship between negative security assurances and the NPT was not solely one of proximity.

Indeed, the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT, in decision 2, noted the unanimously adopted United Nations Security Council resolution 984 (1995), as well as the declarations of the nuclear-weapons States concerning both negative and positive security assurances. In addition, it was decided that further steps should be considered to assure non-nuclear-weapons States party to the NPT against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and that these steps could take the form of an international legally binding instrument.

The 2000 NPT Review Conference Final Document also made specific references to negative security assurances. In this regard, the Conference, among other things, agreed that legally binding security assurances by the five nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapons States parties to the NPT strengthened the non-proliferation regime.

As was recognized by the 2000 NPT RevCon, we are also cognizant of the fact that the establishment of nuclear-weapons-free zones plays an important role in the extension of negative security assurances. Our views on this issue were also laid out in our general statement of 30 January 2007. In addition to these remarks, however, let me congratulate the Latin America and Caribbean nuclear-weapons-free-zone countries on the 40th anniversary of the Tlatelolco Treaty.

We pointed out during the informal discussions on NSAs that, along with the current situation, it was also worth bearing in mind that the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change recommended that the nuclear-weapon States should reaffirm their previous commitments not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. As a matter of fact, the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, headed by Dr. Hans Blix, also recommended that nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT should provide legally binding NSAs to non-nuclear States parties. It also recommended that States not party to the NPT that possess nuclear weapons should separately provide such assurances.

Overall, we believe that there is sufficient ground, beyond the mere fact that it is a CD agenda item, to adequately discuss at the Conference on Disarmament the issue of negative security assurances.

Let me briefly turn to the informal discussions on agenda item 5, coordinated by Ambassador Draganov of Bulgaria. The discussions have just started and much still remains to be said. Nonetheless, we would like to point out that the debate on preventing so-called "non-State actors", some of which are terrorist organizations, from acquiring WMDs should be conducted in line with the letter and spirit of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540. Moreover, they should be carried out in a way that reflects global efforts to combat international terrorism and should not run the risk of granting any sort of recognition to terrorist organizations.

(Mr. Üzümcü, Turkey)

In connection with the above-mentioned discussions on the first five agenda items, special thanks go to the coordinators, who have demonstrated able leadership and wise guidance. I am confident that the rest of the first round as well as the second round of discussions in phase one will be just as stimulating and forward-looking.

On a separate note, my statement would not be complete without making reference to the good news from Beijing regarding the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Turkey welcomes the agreement reached among the six parties in Beijing, concerning the initial steps aimed at implementing the 2005 joint statement on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We wish to see the continuation of the momentum gained during the talks and the attainment of concrete results, which will reinforce the global non-proliferation regime and help bring lasting peace, security and prosperity to the region.

Reiterating my delegation's full cooperation and support, I thank you for your attention.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Spanish): I thank the representative of Turkey, Ambassador Üzümcü, for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

(spoke in English)

I will now give the floor to Ambassador Bernhard Brasack of Germany, on behalf of the European Union, for his statement on a comprehensive programme of disarmament.

Mr. BRASACK (Germany): Thank you, Mr. President, for your indulgence in giving Germany, on behalf of the European Union, the floor for the second time in this meeting.

I have again the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

First of all, I would like to congratulate you again, Mr. President, on your assumption of the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you again of the European Union's full support in your efforts to guide the work of this Conference.

Allow me also again to congratulate Ambassador Draganov of Bulgaria and Ambassador Wibisono of Indonesia on their assumption of the posts of coordinators for item 5 and item 6 of our agenda, respectively. The EU would like again to assure you, Mr. President, as well as the coordinators, of our full support in your efforts to guide and lead our work under the different agenda items.

The question of a comprehensive programme of disarmament has been discussed for a long time in the CD and its predecessor organizations. It was included on the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament in 1980, and several subsidiary bodies - first of the Committee on Disarmament and subsequently the Conference on Disarmament - have dealt with the issue and presented reports, the last time in 1989. Annexed to these reports was the text of the programme

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as negotiated up to that point. After that, the issue was only discussed directly in the CD up to 1992, so that paragraphs 83 to 90 of the Conference's 1992 report form the last comprehensive record of consideration of the question of a comprehensive programme of disarmament.

In 1997, this item became a platform for considering a new issue, namely, a comprehensive global ban on anti-personnel landmines, by appointing a Special Coordinator with the task of undertaking consultations on a possible mandate on the question of anti-personnel landmines. His task was enlarged in 1998 by seeking the views of the members of the Conference on the most appropriate way to deal with the questions related to anti-personnel landmines, taking into account, inter alia, developments outside the Conference, which was, of course, the signing in Ottawa in December 1997 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

At this juncture, I would like to reiterate the EU's full support for this Convention. We welcome progress achieved in universalizing the Convention, destroying stockpiled anti-personnel mines, clearing mined areas and assisting the victims. We consider the First Review Conference in Nairobi in 2004 as a landmark success that provided the international community with an opportunity both to assess and reflect on the progress that has been made on the path to an anti-personnel-mine-free world. In order to overcome the remaining challenges for the full implementation of the Convention, the Nairobi Conference agreed on an ambitious Action Plan for the next five years, to which the EU is fully committed. We welcome and support the subsequently adopted Final Documents of the Sixth and Seventh Meetings of States Parties held in Zagreb 2005 and in Geneva 2006, respectively.

Building on this success, the EU welcomes the appeal of the World Summit to the parties of the Convention to fully implement their commitments, as well as to all States in a position to do so to provide greater technical assistance to mine-affected States. We call upon all States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention as soon as possible. The universalization of the Convention is a necessary condition to achieve the goal of an anti-personnel-mine-free world.

The EU has provided assistance to affected countries and communities and will continue to do so. For the years 2003 to 2005, the EU member States and the European Community allocated over 530 million euros for mine action. Speaking on behalf of the EU, we would like to point to the European Community's strategy, in particular its strategy for the years 2005-2007, which, in the light of our goal of ensuring that there are no more anti-personnel mine victims, seeks to reduce the threat of landmines on the ground and in stockpiles by offering social, economic and medical assistance to the local populations affected and to the victims of landmines. The EU as a whole will continue to support humanitarian mine action focused on the poorest mine-affected countries. We will continue to work to improve the effectiveness of the international mine action system.

It was one of my predecessors as Permanent Representative of Germany to this Conference, Ambassador Günter Seibert, then Special Coordinator on the review of the agenda, who noted in 2001 that the flexibility of the CD, gained by the regular statement by the President that it was his understanding that if there was a consensus in the Conference to deal with any issues they could be dealt with within this agenda, also pertained to agenda item 6 of the

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traditional CD agenda. This has led to the apparent general understanding that any disarmament issue could be subsumed under this item, if the Conference so decided. And it is in this way that the EU perceives the remarks by the coordinator for this agenda item with regard to his proposed work plan.

In this spirit I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the EU's position on the pressing issue of an arms trade treaty.

At the sixty-first United Nations General Assembly the EU through co-sponsorship gave its unequivocal support to resolution 61/89, entitled "Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms".

The EU maintains that it is high time to establish this kind of standards: every day and everywhere, people are affected by the effects of irresponsible arms transfers. The negative impact on peace, reconstruction, security, stability, human rights and sustainable development is especially damaging to developing countries, in particular in Africa. In addition, irresponsible arms transfers divert scarce resources from vital poverty alleviation and other developmental work. The EU has noted that there is a strong call from a number of the world's political as well as spiritual leaders, States and civil society for the establishment of a new treaty to better regulate the trade in arms.

As there is currently no comprehensive internationally binding instrument available to provide an agreed regulatory framework for this activity, the EU welcomes the growing support, in all parts of the world, for an ATT, which is well documented by the overwhelming majority in the United Nations General Assembly for the adoption of the resolution mentioned above. Binding standards, consistent with the existing responsibilities of States under relevant international law, would be critical in dealing with the issue of the irresponsible trade in conventional arms, which has particularly dire consequences in some of the most vulnerable parts of the world.

The EU considers that starting a comprehensive formal process to this end within the United Nations framework at the earliest opportunity is called for and views the resolution as providing the basis for this. The EU and its member States will therefore positively respond to the inquiry of the Secretary-General seeking the views of member States on the feasibility, scope and draft parameters for a comprehensive legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms, as foreseen in operative paragraph 1 of the resolution. We encourage all CD partners to do the same before the end of April this year.

The EU is interested in hearing the views of other CD members on this issue and on other issues falling under this agenda item. We are ready to contribute constructively to the discussion and we call on all members of the CD to enter the discussions in the same spirit. We should come to the discussions with an open mind, ready to listen.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Spanish): I thank the representative of Germany, Ambassador Bernhard Brasack, for his statement on behalf of the European Union and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I have no more speakers on my list for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? It seems not.

Before concluding this plenary meeting I would like to inform you that on Thursday, 22 February 2007, Mr. Kim Howells, United Kingdom Minister responsible for arms control and disarmament issues, will visit Geneva to address the Conference. To accommodate this address, the Conference will hold a formal plenary meeting on that day, starting promptly at 10 a.m. The scheduled informal plenary meeting on agenda item 6 will take place immediately thereafter.

If there are no other members wishing to ask for the floor, I shall take it that our business for today at this plenary meeting has been completed. As I announced, our next plenary meeting will be held on Thursday, 22 February 2007 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.