
Conference on Disarmament

6 July 2010

English

Final record of the one thousand one hundred and eighty-eighth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 6 July 2010, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares (Brazil)

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The President (*spoke in English*): I declare open the 1188th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all, I would like to extend our warm welcome to Ambassador Alicia Victoria Arango Olmos of Colombia, who has recently joined us.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Madam Ambassador, as a President from Brazil, it is a great pleasure to have among us a new representative of Colombia, a great and fraternal neighbour of Brazil and one which has recently joined the other Latin American nations represented in the Conference on Disarmament.

Welcome, and I now give you the floor.

Ms. Arango Olmos (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President. As I have just arrived in Geneva, this is my first opportunity to address this forum, which I do with great enthusiasm and hopefulness. I am sure that I will learn much from all of you, and am also ready to contribute and share the experiences we have had in my country.

Allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, and to express my delegation's full support for the work that you and your team are undertaking.

Moreover, my delegation supports the positions expressed last week by the distinguished Ambassador of India in his capacity as Coordinator of the Group of 21.

Allow me to wish the Ambassador of Turkey every success in his new duties as Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Although I have not had the opportunity to work directly with him, I am aware of his hard work, professionalism and broad diplomatic experience.

As we have noted on several occasions, the Conference must adopt a programme of work in order to carry forward its tasks and responsibilities as a forum for disarmament negotiations. In that regard, Colombia has stressed that nuclear disarmament must be given priority in the work of the Conference. The peoples of the world will only be at ease if not a single nuclear weapon is left in existence. For that to occur, we must make every effort to take the steps we need to achieve that goal and to ensure that the large resources currently invested in nuclear weapons can be redirected to reducing the poverty of millions of human beings in the world.

We have also supported the proposal to negotiate a treaty ending the production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons, comprising elements of disarmament and non-proliferation. Such an instrument would contribute significantly to international peace and security.

Additionally, we are of the view that the Conference must undertake negotiations on preventing an arms race in outer space, and must make progress towards adoption of a legally-binding instrument on negative security assurances, which would represent an important step for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. These national positions have been expressed by my country in this forum with the greatest flexibility and commitment each year.

I cannot neglect to mention the importance of civil society in our debates. Its participation must be supported forcefully. Its presence and contributions have been exemplary in other disarmament forums, and its viewpoints could contribute to the development of topics that are so complex and sensitive for us all.

For Columbia, the treatment of other issues in the sphere of disarmament and international security is of equal importance. That is how my country came to play an

important role in the development and implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eliminate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in All Its Aspects. For many years, Colombia has valiantly faced the terrorist menace of illegal armed groups that acquire large quantities of arms on the black market. The international community must therefore redouble its efforts to deal with the issue of armed non-State actors and avoid the grave effects their activities have on the civilian population and democratic institutions. The fourth biennial meeting of States in the framework of the Programme of Action was recently held in New York; its final document, arrived at by consensus, marked yet another victory for our disarmament and security community. We salute the outstanding work of Mexico in its presidency of the meeting, and are confident that we can count on the courage of the participants to continue strengthening the SALW process in coming years.

Colombia is one of the countries most affected by anti-personnel mines; because illegal armed groups have promoted the use of these devices, they affect the civilian population and delay the economic and social development of the communities affected. More than 8,400 Colombians have become victims of this scourge; in the past year alone, 677 people suffered the grave consequences of these devices, including 49 girls and boys and 21 women. We must all make progress in the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention so that the mines are removed and we have no more victims. To that end, I call on States that have yet to accede to this instrument to do so as soon as possible, so that we can join forces to save thousands of lives.

Mr. President, allow me to reiterate here in this forum that Colombia will continue constructively and flexibly to participate in the work, debates and decisions of the Conference on Disarmament.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the distinguished Ambassador Arango Olmos of Colombia and wish her great success in her work at this Conference, for which she can count on the friendship of all her colleagues and on the support of this presidency, and, since all presidencies are brief, of the presidencies to follow as well.

The President (*spoke in English*): I now turn from this happy event to a not-so-happy event. I am speaking of the forthcoming departure of the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the Conference, who is leaving us to assume the position of Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. This is, as I have said, a not-so-happy event, but it is nonetheless fortunate because you, Ambassador Üzümcü, are going to fulfil a mission very much related to this Conference. In fact, I think it was very appropriate to elect you to that post because of your qualities and because of your country.

It is appropriate that an ambassador from the Conference on Disarmament has been elected to, in this case, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons because that body and the Chemical Weapons Convention are a product of the Conference on Disarmament. It is a living and concrete demonstration of the importance of this Conference and of how the Conference can produce, and has produced, very important results in the field of disarmament, peace and international security.

I myself was at The Hague at the last General Conference, two years ago, and I could see that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is now a fully functioning institution, thus demonstrating how a good treaty leads to good and concrete results.

Ambassador Üzümcü, while reading the newspaper this morning before coming here, I saw an article about Turkey that referred to Turkey as a “youthful” nation. I thought about how a nation can have a long history and yet be youthful. You are a perfect representative of this youthful nation because you are experienced and you are youthful. All

of us will miss you in Geneva and, without any further words, I think that all of your colleagues would like to hear from you.

Mr. Üzümcü (Turkey): Mr. President, I thank you for your kind words, and I also want to express our sincere appreciation for all your efforts to take the work of the Conference further. I also wish to extend a warm welcome to our Colombian colleague, and I thank her for her kind words as well.

I am taking the floor for the last time in this chamber. As Ambassador Macedo Soares said, I am moving to The Hague as the new Director-General of OPCW. I wish to share a few thoughts with you before I leave, based on my experience in this august body during the past three and a half years.

We are living in a world where security is essential for political and economic stability as well as growth and prosperity. We all benefit from a secure environment and deeply suffer from its absence. During the cold war, our security was based on mutual deterrence. Nevertheless, States became increasingly aware that more arms would not bring more security and acknowledged the virtue of arms control and disarmament. Much was accomplished. In the post-cold war era, such initiatives have gained a new momentum.

In the current world of globalism and interdependence, a multitude of transnational and asymmetrical challenges have emerged. In order to address these challenges and enhance our security in such a volatile environment, multilateral efforts towards disarmament and non-proliferation have become indispensable. Allow me to stress that multilateralism is not a matter of choice, but rather a matter of necessity.

Especially at a time when the scourge of terrorism remains at the forefront and continues to plague many countries, including my own, we need to work even harder.

It is incumbent upon us to build consensus on measures to meet common threats. I believe it is not only a duty, but a responsibility, for us all to take stock of the positive developments in the sphere of multilateralism, in general, and disarmament, in particular. Our ability to respond effectively to the most pressing challenges to international peace and security depends heavily on how we make best use of multilateral forums, including the Conference on Disarmament. The Conference has a central role in our common efforts to ensure a safer world for future generations. Unfortunately, it has not been functioning effectively for years. In May 2009, when we adopted the Programme of Work, we thought that we had achieved a real breakthrough which, in our view, should have paved the way for real negotiations. To our regret, we could not move forward.

There is ample expertise in this Conference. The mere fact that this Conference has successfully negotiated and concluded the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention is testimony to the experience vested in this body. Therefore, we should strive to rekindle the Conference on Disarmament and take stock of its capacity. The international community has high expectations for this body to overcome its current impasse and to initiate substantive work. I sincerely hope for the success of the initiatives, be they bilateral or multilateral, aiming to engender the political will necessary to make a breakthrough and move the Conference ahead into negotiations.

To this end, I wish to underscore the importance of flexibility by all to carry the process forward and to bring the Conference back to its fundamental role of promoting global peace and security as an arms control negotiating forum.

Before concluding, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to each and every one of you in this chamber for your close cooperation and cordial relations. Indeed, the disarmament forums in general and this Conference in particular have provided me with an invaluable environment of intellectual interactions and friendship. I have enjoyed having known all of you and I will cherish the many fond memories which have

been fostered through countless official and social occasions. I am sure you will not deprive my successor, Ambassador Oğuz Demiralp, of the friendship and intellectual wisdom which you so kindly extended to me.

I am saying goodbye, not farewell. I am sure our paths will cross in many cases in the near future, since I am moving on to a road not very far from here. As the famous American writer Richard Bach once said, "Don't be dismayed at goodbyes. Farewell is necessary before you can meet again. And meeting again, after moments or a lifetime, is certain for those who are friends."

A big word of thanks goes to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, and to the secretariat of the Conference for their relentless efforts and their success in ensuring the smooth progression of our work.

It would be remiss of me if I did not praise civil society. Aware of the importance of the Conference and the issues discussed here, civil society remains engaged, even in times of inertia.

I also wish to thank the members of my delegation, Counsellor Volkan Öskiper and Adviser Selçuk Sancar, for their invaluable support.

Last but not least, I wish to extend my thanks to the interpreters for their dedication and efficiency. They have indeed helped us to speak with one language and to merge different thoughts and ideas.

I recently attended a graduation ceremony where I had a chance to meet many young minds. I realized that they have diverging ideas, but one common aspiration: to make a difference. I believe that this forum has made a difference in arms control and disarmament history and that, if given a chance, it will do so again.

I thank you once again and wish you all the best.

The President: I thank Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü of Turkey for his statement and, once again, on behalf of this Conference, I wish him the very best in his personal life and in his future functions.

I will now turn back to the list of speakers for today, the next of whom is the distinguished representative of Australia.

Mr. Wilson (Australia): Mr. President, I would like to join with others in thanking you for the transparent and consultative approach that you have taken during your presidency. I would also like to join others in welcoming the distinguished representative of Colombia and wishing the distinguished representative of Turkey well in his future endeavours.

I wish to note, for the benefit of the Conference, that the final meeting of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament took place in Vienna from 2 to 4 July. The Commission's final communiqué, which is available at www.icnnd.org and has also been placed in front of you, underlines the thoughtful and practical contribution that the Commission has made to the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation debate.

The Commission's establishment in September 2008, as a joint Australian/Japanese initiative, reflected our two countries' shared objectives and interest in international nuclear policy issues. Although the Commission was established and supported by the Australian and Japanese Governments, it was independent, indeed, staunchly so. The Co-Chairs and other Commissioners were appointed in their personal capacities, in recognition of their high-calibre credentials. The Commission's value and credibility had been founded on that independence.

Australia expected the Commission to make a substantial contribution to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons and to a positive outcome at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT Review Conference), held in New York in May of this year. In this regard, we have not been disappointed. The Commission's communiqué welcomes the successful conclusion of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The Commission takes a largely positive view of the Review Conference outcomes and notes, to its credit, that a majority of the relevant recommendations in its report, "Eliminating Nuclear Threats", which was launched in Tokyo on 15 December 2009, are reflected wholly or in part in the Review Conference's Action Plan.

Australia agrees with the Commissioners that the NPT Review Conference, the new strategic arms reduction treaty and President Obama's Nuclear Security Summit have together made very welcome and positive contributions to international peace and security. Australia also believes that the Commissioners have rightly identified major steps for further progress. These include ratification by key States of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the conclusion by all States of additional protocols to their safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Australia congratulates the Commission's Co-Chairs, Professor Gareth Evans and Ms. Yuriko Kawaguchi, and the other 13 Commissioners on their work. I might add that Professor Evans has been in Geneva today discussing plans for a global centre for non-proliferation and disarmament, which is mentioned in the communiqué. Australia believes that their report, "Eliminating Nuclear Threats", will continue to contribute to the advancement of both debate and action on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament objectives.

The President: I thank the distinguished representative of Australia for his statement, and I now give the floor to Ambassador Hamid Ali Rao of India, who will speak on behalf of the Group of 21.

Mr. Rao (India): Mr. President, before I deliver my statement on behalf of the Group of 21, allow me to join you in welcoming Ambassador Alicia Victoria Arango Olmos of Colombia. We look forward to working with her in the Conference. I should also like to join you in conveying our good wishes to Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü of Turkey as he leaves us to move on to his next assignment in The Hague. I believe all of us here will agree that his contribution to the work of the Conference has been praiseworthy, particularly during his presidency of the Conference last year. His diplomatic skills and personal charm are widely admired. We will miss him here, but the Conference's loss will be the gain of OPCW. And it is comforting to know that he will now have the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the Conference's "child" at OPCW in The Hague. I have no doubt that he will make his mark there, as well. My best wishes to him in his official as well as personal life.

I will now read the statement on behalf of the Group of 21 on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The role of space technology in our day-to-day life has become pervasive. Never before have information, communication, banking, economic transactions, navigation, and even political and strategic decision-making been so dependent on space-based technologies, which are themselves undergoing rapid growth.

The Group reiterates that outer space and celestial bodies are the common heritage of mankind and must be used, explored and utilized for the benefit and interest of all mankind in a spirit of cooperation. The Group reaffirms that the exploration and use of outer space and celestial bodies shall be for peaceful purposes

and shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development.

The Group stresses that the growing use of outer space increases the need for greater transparency, confidence-building measures and better information on the part of the international community. The Group believes that all States with major space capabilities have a special responsibility to contribute actively to the objectives of the peaceful use of outer space and of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and to refrain from actions contrary to those objectives or to the relevant treaties in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international cooperation.

The Group recognizes that the prevention of an arms race in outer space would avert a grave danger for international peace and security. The Group emphasizes the need for further measures, together with appropriate and effective provision for verification, to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

The Group emphasizes the importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space. In this regard, the Group is deeply concerned over the negative implications of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic-missile defence systems and the pursuit of advanced military technologies capable of being deployed in outer space, which have, *inter alia*, contributed to the further erosion of an international climate conducive to the promotion of disarmament and the strengthening of international security.

The Group of 21 stresses that all countries bear a responsibility to refrain from activities that could jeopardize the collective goal of ensuring that outer space remains free of weapons of mass destruction and all other forms of weaponization so as to ensure that its benefits are available to all.

The Group considers that the multilateral disarmament agreements provide a mechanism through which States parties may consult one another and cooperate in solving any problems that may arise in relation to the objective of, or in the application of, these agreements; such consultations and cooperation may also be undertaken through appropriate international procedures within the framework of the United Nations and in accordance with the Charter.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space has assumed greater urgency because of legitimate concerns that existing legal instruments are inadequate to deter further militarization of outer space or to prevent its weaponization. The Group further reaffirms its recognition that the legal regime applicable to outer space does not in and of itself guarantee the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The Group therefore stresses the need to consolidate and reinforce that regime and enhance its effectiveness.

In this regard, the Group reaffirms that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community and that it has been assigned the primary role in substantive negotiations on priority questions of disarmament. The Group considers that it is time to start negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on matters related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

In addition, the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 64/28 on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, made the following observations with regard to the Conference on Disarmament:

- The Conference on Disarmament should complete the examination and updating of the mandate contained in its decision of 13 February 1992 and establish a working group during its 2010 session
- The Conference on Disarmament has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects

The Group takes note of United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/49 on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities. The Group, while stressing the priority of the negotiation of legally binding instruments on strengthening the international legal regime on outer space, recognizes that global and inclusive transparency and confidence-building measures, arrived at through broad international consultations, could be important complementary measures.

In this regard the Group welcomes the joint Russian-Chinese initiative in formulating a draft treaty on prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects, which was presented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in the Conference on Disarmament on 12 February 2008. This initiative is a constructive contribution to the work of the Conference and is a good basis for further discussion towards adopting a binding international instrument.

The President: I thank Ambassador Hamid Ali Rao for the statement he has made on behalf of the Group of 21, and I now give the floor to Ambassador Wang Qun of China.

Mr. Wang Qun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China supports the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of India on behalf of the Group of 21.

Mr. President, we share your regret at the departure of the distinguished Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü of Turkey, not only because of his wisdom and experience, but more importantly because of his contributions to and hard work for the Conference. During his presidency of the Conference, he advanced the Conference's work. Some of the results he achieved are perhaps not immediately apparent, but over the course of time will prove to have been very useful, such as the important content of document CD/1840 introduced by Ambassador Üzümcü during his presidency. Now that his term of service with us is coming to a close, we sincerely wish him every success in the Hague as Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Also, as the President has pointed out, in the light of the connections and contacts between the Conference and the Chemical Weapons Convention, we hope that he will be able to continue to contribute to the advancement of the work of the Conference even after he is in The Hague. We wish him a smooth transition.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the distinguished new Ambassador of Colombia who is taking up her duties here in Geneva at this important time. I wish her every success. We stand ready to strengthen our close cooperation with her delegation to promote progress in the work of the Conference.

The President: I thank Ambassador Wang Qun of China for his statement, and I now give the floor to Ambassador Akio Suda of Japan.

Mr. Suda (Japan): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to join others in expressing best wishes to Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, who is assuming a very important post in The Hague. We must express our regret at his departure but, at the same time, we wish to express our best wishes for his future health and successful work at OPCW, which is one of the most important disarmament organizations. I would also like to join others in welcoming the new Ambassador of Colombia. We look forward to working with her in the Conference.

I would like to add just a few words to what my Australian colleague said in introducing the communiqué issued by the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament in Vienna. As everybody knows, the International Commission worked very hard to produce a very valuable report, which I must say contributed much to the success of the last NPT Review Conference, and we believe that the report will remain very valid in our future work.

I would like to draw your attention to some paragraphs of this communiqué, in which I believe the good evaluation of the last NPT Review Conference is well reflected, and also to the assessment of the present situation of multilateral efforts in nuclear disarmament. In particular, there are some paragraphs that provide certain information to direct our work. Although the Commission is independent, as you know, it consists of commissioners — academic, professional, political and diplomatic leaders — from 15 States. So it may be worthwhile to keep in mind what they came up with after two years of work.

In paragraph 22, the Commission expressed “its deep concern at the failure of the Conference on Disarmament to commence work on” a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). And in paragraph 26, it said that “... the failure to date, after more than a decade’s effort, to commence FMCT negotiations is a further setback”. The Commission also urged Governments to “... if necessary consider alternative means of advancing the negotiations”.

This is, as I have said, an independent and civil organization, but we should have in mind that some responsible Commissioners concluded their work by twice referring to the situation of the Conference on Disarmament in a very explicit way.

The President: I thank Ambassador Akio Suda of Japan for his statement.

I see that no other delegation would like to take the floor at this point in time. If that is the case, and I see it is, then this concludes our business for today.

The next formal plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 8 July, at 10 a.m. in this chamber.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.