
Conference on Disarmament

9 March 2010

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 9 March 2010, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Mikhail Khvostov..... (Belarus)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I call to order the 1177th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

On behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, I should like to express our sympathy to the Turkish Government in connection with the earthquake in Turkey, which has resulted in much loss of life and devastation, and I would ask the Ambassador of Turkey to convey our condolences and sorrow to the families of those who have died.

I have the pleasure to inform you that the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte, will be attending today's meeting.

I should now like to introduce Ms. Beatrice Fihn, who will deliver a statement on behalf of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to mark International Women's Day.

Ms. Fihn, you have the floor.

Ms. Fihn (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom): Mr. President, I would like to start off by thanking all members and participants of the Conference on Disarmament for letting us speak here today. We, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, represent women from many parts of the world. We have taken this opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament on International Women's Day, a day that has highlighted women's engagement in political processes for peace and justice since 1984. We appreciate the opportunity to speak directly to the Conference in a plenary meeting for the first time.

The year 2010 is an important year in many ways. In this room, we all know about the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in May and other significant events, but we would like to remind you that 2010 is also the tenth anniversary of the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. By placing gender within the mandate of the United Nations for maintaining international peace and security, resolution 1325 (2000) provides an important framework and context for raising gender awareness in all aspects of security and defence. Such work around gender, peace and security can affect and deepen arguments for disarmament. The resolution brings into light a focus on the contribution of women as stakeholders in peace and disarmament, and the role of women in decision-making as a necessary element for promoting the prevention of conflicts. As one of the most important decision-making bodies in multilateral disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament has taken a small step towards implementing resolution 1325 (2000) by allowing us to read out our statement today.

The linkages between nuclear weapons and women run deep. Women's organizations have protested against nuclear weapons since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and have campaigned for the cessation of nuclear testing. Women anti-nuclear activists have successfully closed nuclear-weapon bases, as they did at the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp in the United Kingdom, and engaged in concerted efforts that forced Governments to change policies or create nuclear-weapon-free zones at the municipal level throughout the world. They have also monitored and lobbied international meetings on disarmament.

Furthermore, issues related to cultural associations of what it is to be women and men — that is, notions of gender — affect efforts to abolish nuclear weapons and halt their proliferation. For this reason, it is important that Governments and NGOs consider gender issues in their deliberations and use the tools of gender analysis to reform traditional behaviours and values expressed in negotiations and discussions on nuclear weapons. The role of a certain kind of masculinity in the dominating political structures that organize wars and oversee security matters is beginning to be questioned.

The Conference on Disarmament is an excellent place to continue questioning and reforming assumptions about weapons and security. The Conference is still the only body that all the nuclear-armed States belong to, both those within the NPT and those outside. Its members need to seize the opportunities afforded by this unique construction. The Conference on Disarmament provides a forum for these nuclear-armed States to engage with others that do not possess nuclear weapons in order to reach agreements that enhance global collective security. The Conference has a central role to play in establishing international law that will help prevent conflict, war and increases in military expenditure. This Conference can help fulfil Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations, which calls for plans “to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world’s human and economic resources” through a “system for the regulation of armaments”. Security must reflect the true needs of all people – economic and welfare needs alongside social, environmental and political justice. True security of human beings is in fact undermined by the creation, existence and potential use of nuclear weapons.

Despite this, the political and military elites that are tied to nuclear-weapon laboratories and industries in nuclear-armed States continue to emphasize the importance of maintaining an “effective nuclear deterrent” in order to protect “national security”. But there is wide recognition among civil society and military strategists alike that nuclear deterrence is irrelevant to the perceived threats facing the world today – such as climate change, terrorism, food, water, and energy shortages, and increasing global economic disparity. Indeed, nuclear weapons are adverse to mitigating these converging threats, as their development, deployment and proliferation increases global tensions, disparities, polarizations, and environmental degradation, and squanders the economic, political and human resources that could otherwise be used to confront and solve these crises. In fact, the only thing that nuclear weapons seem to deter is disarmament.

We need to make progress towards nuclear disarmament in order to even stand a chance of tackling other global threats. The Conference on Disarmament has a crucial role to play in this. In the permanent agenda of the Conference, you are tasked to work on the reduction of military budgets and armed forces, the linkages between disarmament and development, nuclear disarmament, conventional weapons and disarmament as a confidence-building measure. We support and encourage the Conference on Disarmament to find innovative ways to make progress on these issues. We are here, engaging in the work of the Conference, because we still believe that it has a vital role to play. We believe that all of you sitting in this chamber today have an opportunity to improve global security and to make the world a little bit safer. Take this opportunity.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ms. Fihn for her statement. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this time? I recognize Croatia.

Ms. Žunec Brandt (Croatia): Mr. President, it is indeed with great pleasure that I would like to thank the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom for their statement today, as well as their perseverance in achieving this symbolic day. My thanks, and compliments, go also to the member States of the Conference on Disarmament for figuring out a way to allow this to happen. Wonderful!

Since this is the first time that I have taken the floor in this chamber, and not only under your distinguished presidency, Ambassador Khvostov, let me use this opportunity to assure you and all the members of the Conference on Disarmament of Croatia’s continuous interest in the work of this unique body and of our utmost cooperation should the need arise. Croatia has been an applicant for membership to the Conference since 1994, which is one of the longest-standing applications. But, it is not my intention to steal this great occasion today from our civil society partner and friends. We hope this has been just the first small step towards the greater, continuous and meaningful engagement of civil society

in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Croatia would like to welcome and join the strong statements made during this first part of the session by a large number of delegations in that respect, as well as the recent proposal made here to form a working group on the rules of procedure for achieving and formalizing this goal.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom today, however, has not just advanced the role of civil society in the Conference on Disarmament but also the role of women in the area of disarmament, and more widely, in the area of peace and security, as mandated by United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

In that spirit, I would like to finish by wishing everyone a happy International Women's Day for yesterday, to be widely celebrated by women and seriously reflected upon by men.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Croatia for that statement and give the floor to the Russian Federation.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, as I already had cause to mention at a previous meeting, the Russian Federation is one of the few countries in which International Women's Day continues to be celebrated on 8 March. We have, of course, dispensed with a number of dated political slogans and no longer associate this celebration with the names of Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg. Rather, it is a celebration of love, family and, of course, peace. I should like to wish this for all of us and congratulate all of our charming ladies on yesterday's 8 March celebration, and I would ask all my colleagues to circulate this "annex" to my statement.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his very timely statement and in particular for his timely "annex". I am being reminded that there are women in the presidency.

I should like to ask whether any delegation wishes to take the floor. As I see none, we will now turn to the document that I wish to introduce.

Today I should like to acquaint the Conference with the draft programme of work for 2010. I would recall that rule 28 of the Conference's rules of procedure requires the Conference at the beginning — I repeat: at the beginning — of its session to establish its programme of work, taking into account: (a) the recommendations made to it by the General Assembly; (b) the proposals presented by States members of the Conference; and (c) the decisions of the Conference. The Conference has at its disposal all the elements it needs to establish its programme of work. Further, rule 29 of the rules of procedure stipulates that the programme of work shall be drawn up by the President with the assistance of the Secretary-General and presented to the Conference for consideration and adoption. Thus the President has complied with this provision of rule 29 as regards presenting the programme to the Conference for consideration.

This draft programme is not a new document unfamiliar to the Conference on Disarmament. Two weeks ago, the President prepared an informal paper based on last year's decision of the Conference, namely document CD/1864, and on the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolutions 64/29 and 64/64, which were circulated through the regional coordinators. The current President closely coordinated preparation of this document with the other Presidents of the Conference for 2010. I held many bilateral meetings and also consulted with the Group of Eastern European States, the Group of Western European and other States, the Group of 21 and the Group of One. I would point out that the President's proposal is not a flawless document, but it is a proposal, and it is for that very reason that we have submitted the draft programme of work in the form of a working paper. In our view, as things are shaping up, this is the most

constructive means of revitalizing the Conference and giving it a breath of fresh air. In the draft programme of work of the Conference before you, we have tried to take account of the proposals we received during our many consultations – proposals that, as submitted, should not undermine efforts to build a consensus.

We also received several proposals from both individual delegations and groups of States that, in my opinion, do not at this stage enjoy the level of support required for establishing a programme of work. In particular, a significant number of Conference participants referred to the issue of nuclear disarmament as a priority direction for our forum's work, while several delegations pointed to the need to agree on a negotiation mandate on this issue.

In preparing the draft programme of work for the Conference, we proceeded from the assumption that a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons was one of the steps towards achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Support for this position is evidenced by statements made by a significant number of delegations who would in fact like to see the new treaty as a universal instrument for disarmament.

With regard to a fissile materials cut-off treaty (FMCT), several delegations would have liked to receive guarantees that the scope of the future treaty would extend to existing stockpiles. Several other delegations would prefer to refrain from too unequivocal a reflection of this issue in the negotiation mandate. My feeling here is that the common denominator we have on this issue is document CD/1299, which states that any issue may be submitted for the consideration of a subsidiary body established to deal with that issue. I am aware that this issue could become a stumbling block in the way of the adoption of our programme of work, but that is also why our negotiating — and I stress the word negotiating — forum was established: to debate, identify compromises and move forward. We cannot claim that the document does not reflect our interests before negotiations have even started.

Further, by adopting General Assembly resolution 64/29 without a vote, we agreed that the FMCT must be, first, non-discriminatory; secondly, multilateral; and, thirdly, internationally and effectively viable.

As several delegations rightly noted, we now have at least three main issues on which we must continue to focus, issues that are now ready to be negotiated: an end to the arms race and nuclear disarmament; an end to the arms race in outer space; and effective international agreements providing assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States.

Yet as I see it, it is precisely those agreements that the Conference reached by consensus in 2009 — which, as I noted earlier, have been reflected in the two consensus resolutions adopted by the General Assembly — that currently enjoy the greatest support. Now I understand perfectly that individual delegations have concerns that must be taken into account and discussed, and not merely within these walls, so that these delegations can reiterate their support for the delicate compromise achieved at the Conference last year.

I would invite you to acquaint yourself with the document which is both literally and figuratively now in your hands. I should also like to draw your attention to the fact that the document is now available in all official languages and that copies are to be found on the table to my left. Please lend your support to this document, whether tacit or public, so long as it is positive.

I should like to end here and thank you for your attention; I also wish to say that I do not want to open debate on the document today. I would prefer to do that on Thursday, 11 March, in order to give delegations more time to acquaint themselves with and study the document, and also to consult with their capitals. It goes without saying, however, that if any delegation wishes to take the floor after me, I cannot refuse.

I recognize the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan, who wishes to make a statement. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. President, before I comment on the working paper distributed by you, I would like to join you first in expressing our condolences to the delegation of Turkey for the recent earthquake in that country.

I would also like to welcome the representative of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and welcome the statement made by them today. Pakistan has always been in favour of the participation of civil society in the work of the Conference on Disarmament, and this is a very good beginning. We will continue to support such interaction in the future.

May I also take this opportunity to convey belated congratulations to all our lady colleagues for International Women's Day.

Mr. President, I note that in your remarks you have stated that you would want comments on your working paper to be made at a later time, and that you would like us to examine your proposal. I believe that if we were to do so, then the course of action that ought to have been followed was to have shared this working paper informally, and not in the formal plenary. But since it has been presented in the formal plenary, it is incumbent upon me, under my directions from my headquarters, to make the following statement.

Your working paper, WP.559, on the proposed programme of work of the Conference for the 2010 session contains elements with regard to which we wish to make the following comments.

First, the working paper, like the one circulated by you earlier, is mainly a copy of CD/1864, which does not enjoy consensus any more and therefore cannot serve as a starting point. You, as well as your predecessor, after consultations, concluded that CD/1864 and the non-paper do not command consensus. While presenting the working paper today, you again acknowledged that there is no consensus on the text, due to the divergent positions. Therefore, the question to our mind is, what purpose has been served by putting forward this working paper?

Second, the working paper is not balanced. It does not reflect the proposal by the Group of 21 to establish an ad hoc committee for negotiations on nuclear disarmament, which is the *raison d'être* of the Conference on Disarmament. We therefore urge you to put forward a working paper on this proposal by the Group of 21. Your working paper has also ignored a number of ideas and proposals presented by Conference members, including Pakistan, during the plenary sessions, informal meetings and bilateral consultations. It therefore does not provide a level playing field and equal treatment to Conference members to enable any useful end-result-oriented discussions.

Third, the working paper is not comprehensive. It does not propose any work under item 2, "Prevention of nuclear war", on the agenda of the Conference. This agenda item is equally important. As proposed to you at your meeting with the Group of 21 last Wednesday, we once again suggested that the Conference on Disarmament should undertake substantive work on measures to reduce the risks of unintentional and accidental use of nuclear weapons, including through the de-alerting and de-targeting of nuclear weapons. We also urge you to explore the possibilities on how to address the two issues which Pakistan proposed during the debate on the agenda of the Conference in the programme of work of the Conference.

Fourth, the working paper mixes the issues of the programme of work and its implementation. The first and foremost priority of the Conference on Disarmament should be to seek consensus on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. The issues relating to the implementation of the programme of work, including decisions on the

appointment of chairs and special coordinators and their rotation, should be handled separately, but expeditiously, after full consultations with Conference members.

We shared our position on the issue of the fissile material cut-off treaty in a frank, candid and honest manner on 18 February. Some Conference members appreciated our stance and expressed their understanding. The future fissile material cut-off treaty, as envisaged by some nuclear-weapon States, will be inherently flawed and contrary to the objectives of nuclear disarmament. The nuclear cooperation agreements signed by the nuclear-weapon States have rendered such a treaty ineffective, even before the commencement of its negotiations. The Conference on Disarmament must address this fundamental question before embarking upon the negotiating track. The Conference on Disarmament cannot and should not be hijacked by the issue of a fissile material cut-off treaty. The Conference on Disarmament cannot be kept hostage to this issue.

There are other important issues on the agenda of the Conference which must be addressed in order to strengthen international peace and stability: the issues of nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and prevention of an arms race in outer space, which must be taken up for negotiating legally binding treaties.

In conclusion, I would like to say that we encourage you and your successor to continue consultations with a view to reaching a consensus on the Conference's programme of work. These consultations would be meaningful if the ideas by the Conference members were taken on board for building consensus.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the distinguished Ambassador, Mr. Akram, for his insightful statement. Once again, I would like to note that the President has made his proposal and that the document has been circulated as a working paper. Elements of the document are based on our understanding of the state of affairs in the Conference, precisely those elements that enjoy the greatest support. And I should like to repeat: any delegation can make a contribution to the drafting and adoption of the document to ensure that it secures general support.

As far as the presidency is concerned, the rules of procedure of our Conference stipulate that the President should proceed on the basis of a document that has been or may be proposed for consideration.

I should like to stop here today, but I ought to put my question once again: does any delegation wish to make a statement? I see none, but before adjourning our meeting, I would like to announce that an event to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will be held on Wednesday at 1 p.m. in this room. I also wish to draw your attention to the organization of an event on multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle, to be held on 11 March at 1 p.m. in Room XI.

Our next formal plenary meeting will be held on Thursday, 11 March, at 10 a.m. in this room. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.