
Conference on Disarmament

8 July 2010

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 8 July 2010, at 10.15 a.m.

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

The President: I declare open the 1189th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. In addition to the Secretary-General of the Conference, who is usually present at our meetings, today we are honoured by the presence of the High Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte, and, with the Brazilian delegation, the Director of the Department for International Organizations of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Carlos Duarte.

In my capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament, I have decided to table the draft programme of work that you now have before you (CD/1889), dated 6 July 2010.

As you know, rule 29 of the rules of procedure reads as follows: “The provisional agenda and the programme of work shall be drawn up by the President of the Conference with the assistance of the Secretary-General and presented to the Conference for consideration and adoption.”

In previous weeks I have conducted consultations with all delegations and regional groups on the basis of an informal proposal aimed at bringing positions closer so as to enable the Conference to resume substantive work. During those consultations, the Brazilian presidency heard every delegation’s point of view and attempted to test formulas that could encompass the concerns of the entire membership of the Conference. Taking as a basis the comments of the delegations during these consultations, I am submitting to you this draft programme of work, which builds upon document CD/WP.559, tabled by the presidency of Belarus on 9 March 2010.

I now open the floor to any delegation that wishes to make comments on the document under consideration before you.

I recognize the distinguished representative of Canada.

Mr. Grinius (Canada): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to thank you both personally and officially on behalf of Canada for all the work that you have done and are doing to try to get the Conference on Disarmament back to work. Certainly, Canada would support and accept your latest draft, as presented in document CD/1889, and my delegation would be prepared to work on the basis of that proposal.

The President: I thank the distinguished Ambassador Marius Grinius of Canada. I recognize the distinguished Ambassador Gómez Camacho of Mexico.

Mr. Gómez Camacho (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, following the same lines as the statement by my distinguished colleague, the Ambassador of Canada, my delegation also wishes to thank you for the enormous efforts you have made as President to get the Conference on Disarmament back to work after many years. We would like to convey to you our appreciation, gratitude and congratulations, and our full support for the proposal you have made today.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador Juan José Gómez Camacho of Mexico for his statement.

(*spoke in English*)

Does any other delegation wish to make any comments before I submit the document to the Conference for adoption? I recognize Ambassador Zamir Akram of Pakistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. President, I note that this is a new document, whereas the consultations that we have had with you were on a document which was somewhat different from this one. Therefore, I would submit that I would need the instructions of my

Government to state our position regarding it and consequently, at this point, I cannot say that we accept this document.

Having said that, I am conscious of the fact that you will soon be relinquishing your post as President and, therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation for the work you have done and the manner in which you have done it. You have conducted your presidency in a most constructive and transparent manner, and we genuinely appreciate the role that you have played.

The President: I thank Ambassador Zamir Akram of Pakistan for his kind words. I will now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Brazil, Mr. Carlos Duarte.

Mr. Duarte (Brazil): Mr. President, as a former member of the Brazilian delegation to the Conference on Disarmament, it is for me a matter of particular pleasure and honour to have this opportunity to speak this morning at the Conference under your presidency. Let me also express my satisfaction at the presence here of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

I was fortunate enough to participate in this Conference at a time when it was engaged in relevant negotiations, namely those that led to the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Since then, regrettably, this body has been gripped by paralysis, a state of affairs that is all the more worrisome given its centre-stage role in the international peace and security machinery.

As Brazil's Foreign Minister, Celso Amorim, stated here last month: "For too long, the Conference on Disarmament has experienced failure and frustration as part of its routine. Now the environment is favourable for the Conference on Disarmament to be instrumental in this crucial area of international security. ... The Conference must do its part by maintaining the momentum created by the NPT Review Conference. ... It must reaffirm, by practical, results-oriented activity, the utility of investing political capital in multilateral initiatives."

In the discharge of your functions as President, you have been inspired by these considerations, which I am also sure are shared by many, if not all those represented here.

With regard to the draft programme of work you have circulated, it is our hope that it will help in reaching agreement.

Brazil of course recognizes and respects the rules under which this body operates and does not question the legitimate security interests that they seek to uphold.

In the past, these same rules have not prevented this body from agreeing to launch negotiations, even when certain substantive divergences remained. Those were dealt with in the negotiations proper. Thus, despite its rigidity, consensus can be made to work in the interest of all, provided it is perceived as a means of ensuring inclusiveness, while protecting every State, big or small.

The difficulties confronting the Conference do not stem from the nature of this body, its structure, composition or regulations. If that were so, the problem would be solved through smart political engineering. What we are facing — and this is far more serious — is the blockage of international relations in their most vital dimensions, i.e. power and security.

Seen in this light, the protracted impasse in this body works to the detriment of genuine, rule-oriented multilateralism as the basis for international negotiations on all fronts. Such an impasse clearly works against the aim of adequately — and multilaterally — dealing with issues that, given their fundamental nature, are of interest to all nations, without exception. Besides the issue of fissile materials, I have in mind, just to name a few, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, negative security assurances and, of course,

nuclear disarmament. Paralysis ultimately serves the status quo – in which nuclear weapons continue to exist and, by their very existence, continue to pose a grave threat to all mankind.

As I mentioned earlier, the participation of Minister Celso Amorim in the Conference's deliberations at the beginning of your presidency attests to the importance that Brazil attaches to this body. It is essential for the international community to have a permanent multilateral body charged with negotiating disarmament and arms control. It has therefore been only natural that, under the Brazilian presidency, a renewed effort has been made to open the way for the Conference to start substantive work.

In this respect, it is proper to highlight the consultations that you engaged in with all Conference members. Observer countries, too, had an opportunity to exchange views with the presidency. Representations were also made to governments in order to support you and help inject political impetus.

In parallel with such efforts, Brazil presented a working paper (CD/1888) on a possible structure for the fissile material treaty. That short, conceptual working paper, presented on a national basis, could be an incentive towards the adoption of the programme of work. The general structure proposed in the Brazilian working paper would preserve each and every delegation's point of view and would be consistent with the Shannon report (CD/1299) of 1995 and the mandate contained therein. Such a structure could also help fulfil general interests and expectations, including those of Brazil, that the treaty should address interrelated nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament goals.

The general structure proposed comprises a framework or umbrella treaty and two protocols. The umbrella treaty would contain provisions on objectives, definitions and the usual final clauses, such as entry into force, depositary, amendments, as well as modalities for participation of States. The first protocol would prohibit future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices. The second protocol would deal with pre-existing fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The question of which materials and of how or to what extent such materials would be covered in the treaty would be subject to negotiations. In keeping with the Shannon mandate, which talks about an effectively verifiable treaty, both protocols should have verification mechanisms, albeit different ones.

As the Conference continues to search for agreement on its programme of work, more attention will focus on the forthcoming high-level meeting in New York next September. Let us underline here that the objective of that meeting is not to circumvent the Conference, but to support its work, particularly with regard to fissile materials and negative security assurances, as noted in the conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

One of the compelling arguments in favour of the initiative that you have put forward during your presidency is precisely that the political impetus expected to come out of the New York event would be more effective if the Conference had already agreed on a programme of work. To this end, Brazil stands ready, as of next week, to support the Bulgarian presidency of the Conference in following through on your efforts.

The President: I thank Mr. Duarte of Brazil for his intervention, and I now recognize Ambassador Hellmut Hoffmann of Germany.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): Mr. President, I do not wish to allow this opportunity to pass by without putting our view on record.

First of all, let me thank you for your outstanding efforts to move this difficult issue of the work programme forward. You have consulted very widely, and I think that you have done a tremendous job in that regard. I think that you have also added a few very useful

elements to the draft text which we have before us and on which we have been working for quite some time, as we all know.

Surely, I cannot speak for others, but I would venture to say — and I think I can do so without running an enormous risk — that the approach taken in the draft document which is before us commands very, very wide support in this chamber, and this is certainly the case for Germany.

Now I fully understand that delegations will want to have time to look at this and that they need instructions, but I believe that, in view of the high-level event that we have just heard about, it would indeed be very desirable if the Conference could deliver the positive message that we are in fact making progress and, hopefully, actually have adopted a work programme. If delegations, after consulting with their Governments, could help the Conference to send such a message, I think that would indeed be very positive.

The President: I thank Ambassador Hellmut Hoffmann of Germany, and I now give the floor to Ambassador Idriss Jazairy of Algeria.

Mr. Jazairy (Algeria): Mr. President, I had not intended to take the floor at this stage, but I now feel that I should do so, first to express to you personally our enormous appreciation for the work you have done in such a professional manner to advance the cause of the Conference by trying to move forward to the acceptance of a programme of work.

As the distinguished representative of Brazil has just said, the adoption of a programme of work is not a question related to whether we have a consensus rule or not. The adoption of the programme of work is related to the overall political balance of security interests in some particular regions of the world, and we need to achieve political progress on these issues in order for the Conference to reach a stage where it can translate this political agreement into legal language. That is the purpose of negotiating, within the context of the Conference, the different instruments that have been referred to in relation to the programme of work.

So while it is unfortunate that we cannot yet achieve consensus on a programme of work, I do not think that this should be seen as a weakness of the Conference itself. It is rather an inability on the part of the powers that be to reach agreement on issues which would provide adequate security for all countries concerned.

Once this is done, then we can move into a negotiating mode in order to find an appropriate expression of this political agreement. We cannot substitute for such a political agreement. This is not the forum in which that could be done.

As mentioned also by Mr. Duarte in his inspiring statement, it is the intention of the international community to convene a high-level meeting in September in support of the work of the Conference on Disarmament. It would be a useful opportunity, after we conclude this official meeting, if we could stay on in order to discuss the views of the different groups as to what would be the best way to leverage this event and achieve the proclaimed objective, which is to support our work. I think it would be helpful if we could have the possibility to consult on these questions in order to make the most of this opportunity.

One last point: when we talk about the programme of work, some of us have referred to this or that particular theme as being “ripe”. I think that such a view reflects the different sensitivities of different countries and groups of countries with regard to the components of the programme of work which are of priority and interest to them, and those priorities are not the same. So what may seem ripe to one group, which may be ready to engage in negotiations on a given issue, may be acceptable to another group only because it feels that it is achieving sufficient progress on another issue that is of priority to that

particular group. So to say that one issue is “more ripe” than another, is to say that we are giving priority to the concern of one group over the concerns of others. This is certainly not the way to achieve agreement. Any agreement will be the result of mutual accommodation with a view to finding a formulation on each of the four core issues which would provide satisfaction to the different groups themselves.

This being so, I look forward to seeing some interaction between different groups in order to find a way that we can make a positive contribution. I think that the Conference itself, benefiting from the support of the General Assembly, should try to articulate exactly what kind of support it would like to receive and what it can contribute to make sure that this very short meeting of half a day will be taken advantage of for the purpose of achieving agreement on a programme of work.

Once again, Mr. President, our warmest congratulations. We are very proud that you belong to a group in which we also participate, but you have acted as an independent President, and I think you have done the utmost that could be done under these circumstances. I would note that — document CD/1864 having been circulated during my presidency last year — I know whereof I speak.

The President: I thank Ambassador Idriss Jazairy of Algeria for his contribution and his kind words. I now recognize Ambassador Paul van den IJssel of the Netherlands.

Mr. van den IJssel (Netherlands): Mr. President, allow me to take advantage of this occasion to express our great appreciation for the way in which you have presided over the Conference, for your personal efforts and for the efforts of your country. You have made a tremendous effort to get the Conference back to work. We owe you and Brazil for that effort.

As to your proposal, we think it is a very balanced text which we can fully support, and we hope that we can start substantive work, the work for which the Conference was established, on the basis of this proposal as soon as possible.

The President: I thank Ambassador Paul van den IJssel of the Netherlands for his kind words. I now recognize Ambassador Gómez Camacho of Mexico.

Mr. Gómez Camacho (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr President, please forgive me for taking the floor again, but I have to state that the frustration of the Government of Mexico over the inability of this forum to fulfil its task of negotiating disarmament obliges me to request the floor once again to express my great regret at something that seems very clear: we will not manage to approve the programme of work that you have so kindly and intelligently tabled.

I would like to say that the commitment of Mexico to the Conference on Disarmament has been clearly demonstrated over many decades. At the same time, however, Mexico has always understood the Conference on Disarmament to be a means and not an end; a tool but not a final product. For several years, this tool and this means have been at a standstill; they have completely and utterly stalled. All we can aspire to do now is to begin exploring — with great openness and, I have to say, great breadth of vision — the different alternatives that the international community can offer us for achieving the objective we all want to achieve: effective disarmament. In this regard, my delegation was very pleased that the Secretary-General has convened a high-level meeting, a special session on disarmament in New York. We are very pleased not only because it will be a great opportunity to drive the Conference on Disarmament forward, but because it will also give us the opportunity to review the disarmament machinery.

I agree with some of my distinguished colleagues that the problem is not the Conference on Disarmament as such: at the end of the day it is we, the States, who decide whether the machinery works or not. It is absolutely clear to my delegation that this means,

this tool, this machinery is not responding to the current global environment or to the current requirements of disarmament and international peace. That is a fact. This machinery was created in another era, for other purposes, and its ineffectiveness has been clearly demonstrated today, confirming what has been happening for the last 12 or 13 years.

I would simply like to reiterate that my delegation is very pleased and optimistic about attending the meeting convened by the Secretary-General, in particular because we understand that at that session we will be able to review the entire machinery, and not only the Conference on Disarmament.

Thank you, Mr. President, and I would like to finish by congratulating you again on your excellent work at the head of this Conference.

The President: I thank Ambassador Gómez Camacho for his kind words and for his contribution to the debate. I now recognize Ambassador Djani of Indonesia.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Mr. President, I was quite reluctant to take the floor but, as in the case of other delegations, it would be remiss of me to fail to put our voice on record.

Mr. President, allow me first to commend you for the balanced, transparent and inclusive manner in which you have conducted your presidency. I greatly appreciate your dedication, wisdom and able guidance towards consensus and efforts to find solutions. I also extend my deepest appreciation to the Brazilian delegation for their excellent work in assisting you and in consulting with us and all the other delegations.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the fact that Indonesia has always attached great importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the sole disarmament negotiating forum for the international community. We are therefore of the view that the Conference's impasse is not acceptable, and all efforts must be exhausted in order to break this impasse.

In this regard, we welcome any relevant meeting or proposal that will provide an avenue for us to strengthen efforts towards consensus. We certainly support your relentless efforts in conducting bilateral consultations with all Conference member States, and I also congratulate you on having devised the proposal contained in document CD/1889.

We believe that the proposal has been given serious consideration with a view to reconciling diverging positions based on a number of past proposals and statements, as well as the input derived from intensive consultations.

My delegation considers the proposal to be a good starting point for moving forward. Although there may be some points that some of us, including my delegation, would like to see addressed, I do believe that we have to start our work.

With reference to the notion of a balanced and comprehensive programme of work, we, too, are to be counted among those delegations that believe that it is very important to work on all the items on the Conference agenda and that negotiations on any one item cannot preclude possible outcomes from discussions under other items.

In this vein, I would like to emphasize Indonesia's commitment and continued efforts to strive for achieving total nuclear disarmament as its highest priority, and I would note that our demand for security assurances from nuclear-weapon States is prevailing.

With regard to the fissile material treaty, we are of the view that the treaty should cover the issue of verification and go beyond prohibiting the production of new materials for weapons. The existing stocks of fissile materials in some nuclear-weapon States are so large that a cut-off would have no practical effect in terms of the restriction of the number of nuclear weapons that they could produce.

To conclude, Indonesia remains flexible and stands ready to go along with any consensus that may emerge in the Conference. As mentioned by my good friend the

Ambassador of Mexico, we are also frustrated to see the Conference make less progress than it could. I think it is high time for us to move forward. We were full of expectation that the Brazilian presidency could secure a milestone achievement here in the Conference but, apparently, despite all your good work and the wisdom you have displayed in conducting this able body, we still have a great deal of work to do. We therefore look forward to continuing our deliberations in order to arrive at a conclusion on this very important issue.

The President: I thank Ambassador Djani of Indonesia for his contribution and now give the floor to Ambassador Mikhail Khvostov of Belarus.

Mr. Khvostov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Thank you, Mr. President. I would also like to describe my country's position on the matter we are discussing today. But first of all I would like to make a few positive remarks about the way in which you have been conducting our work, expending great efforts to secure consensus on the adoption of the programme of work. I would particularly like to note the transparent manner in which you have conducted bilateral consultations with interested delegations and groups. And we would also like to note your effective and transparent cooperation with the P-6.

The Belarusian delegation supports you in tabling document CD/1889 before the Conference. This document is the result of many days' multilateral efforts to improve the March proposals on the programme of work. In our view the revisions made to the document, in particular the clarifications of mandates in paragraph 1, subparagraphs (b) and (c), have the potential to bring States' positions closer together on how they understand balance in the Conference's agenda items, and to give delegations the hope that in the course of negotiations and discussions on these items, no positions, proposals or views of any delegation will be prejudiced, in the words of the preamble to the document you tabled.

I would like to endorse the comments made by the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria that the political element should of course be brought into the Conference. However, on the other hand, we should also give positive messages to our political leaders in order that they should move towards such political decisions. It is precisely such bilateral work which will bear fruit.

Our delegation would like to express support for the adoption of this draft by the Conference. As we have already stated, this is what rule 1 of the rules of procedure, last year's report of the Conference on Disarmament and several resolutions adopted by consensus at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly encourage us to do. And we should harness any positive momentum of multilateral diplomacy for disarmament reinforced at the recent NPT Review Conference in New York and show that here in Geneva we are capable of acting constructively and successfully fulfilling our mandate.

Thank you again, Mr. President, for your efforts, and I trust that the document you have tabled will be duly considered and approved by us.

The President: I thank Ambassador Khvostov of Belarus for his intervention, and I now give the floor to Ambassador Laura Kennedy of the United States of America.

Ms. Kennedy (United States of America): I, like other speakers, wish to express our disappointment at the fact that we are witnessing the conclusion of your outstanding presidency without a consensus on a programme of work, which we would have liked very much to have seen.

That having been said, allow me to shift to a more positive note. I think, as do, I assume, many of us here, that, despite our disappointment and our frustration about the situation in which we find ourselves today, the issues before us are simply too important for any of us to allow ourselves to give way to despair. We will therefore look forward — individually, bilaterally, multilaterally — to finding a way to move ahead on these issues, which are so vital to us all.

Allow me to echo, in the warmest possible terms, our appreciation for the outstanding work of the President and of the many members of his Government, for the energy, the dedication and the full-force effort that they have devoted to an attempt to move us forward. Thank you very much indeed. We are extremely appreciative of this great effort.

The President: I thank Ambassador Laura Kennedy for her kind words, and I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom, Ms. Adamson.

Ms. Adamson (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, as others have done before me, I would like to pay tribute to you personally for the way in which you have led the session. I have had the occasion to talk to you at some length informally, and I truly welcomed that opportunity.

We would be very happy to work on the basis of the proposal contained in document CD/1889. I think that what you have proposed in that document responds to a number of different viewpoints on issues that we should get on with discussing seriously.

I do not want to enter into a debate about ripeness or other such issues. What I would like to say is that you have invited us to your house for a dinner made up of a number of courses. Clearly, with regard to some of the courses, all of us would, at one point or another, like to say: "Well, I'd like it flavoured a bit more like this, or like that, or to be served alongside the following: ...". In that regard, I agree completely with Mr. Duarte when he said that, once we reach a certain point in the negotiations, then that is the time that we will quite often be saying: "I'd like it served with this or that or a little bit different flavour." I would simply like to reiterate what I have said before in this chamber: that, at a certain point in the negotiations, my country will be pushing energetically for certain outcomes. That is the point at which we would hope to resolve the formidable difficulties that we face. I would like to repeat, once more, however, that we are very much ready to come to the dinner and partake of the menu that you have proposed.

The President: I thank Ms. Adamson of the United Kingdom for her contribution, and I now give the floor to Ambassador Pedro Oyarce of Chile.

Mr. Oyarce (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, perhaps I am being too bold, through a lack of knowledge of the issues covered in the Conference on Disarmament, as opposed to the multilateral culture, but I would like to briefly mention three points.

Firstly, I would like to sincerely thank you, the entire Mission of Brazil and your country for your efforts in tabling programme 1889. I will not go into detail, but this document contains two fundamental concepts: a gradual approach and a balanced focus. In our own small way, and within the limits of the situation — because we are realistic — we are prepared to support it.

The second point is a substantive issue and a central point that needs to be raised: whether conditions exist outside this forum — I repeat, outside this forum — for overcoming what Ambassador Duarte has very wisely called its paralysis. The Ambassador of Mexico made a good point just a moment ago when he spoke of the machinery and means. External conditions are not an institutional problem of this particular forum, but are what happens outside of it. This is my second point.

Thirdly, I believe that we have a responsibility, a political responsibility. At the high-level meeting in New York, we will have to analyse what the current external conditions are for the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament. I believe that this is an opportunity for reflection that we cannot miss. I do not know whether the meeting will consolidate the substantive issue or confirm the paralysis described by Ambassador Duarte. My boldness in speaking is simply inspired by the wish to express gratitude for an effort characteristic of one possessing an admirable multilateral professionalism and culture.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador Pedro Oyarce for his kind words and his reflections.

(*spoke in English*)

I now recognize Ambassador Hamoui of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Khabbaz Hamoui (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, I would like to welcome Mr. Duarte, Director of the Department for International Organizations of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and thank him for his excellent and important statement, which gave us, as did Mr. Amorin's statement last month, more hope. I also welcome Mr. Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, an international expert known for his expertise and experience.

Mr. President, many sincere thanks for your efforts. You and the members of your Mission in Geneva have conducted numerous transparent consultations with all countries, without exception, which have resulted in the excellent document that is before us today. This success of yours comes as no surprise from Brazil. We still remember the tremendous success that you had one and a half months ago with Turkey in arriving at the Tehran Declaration which, if applied, will prove that political dialogue is the most effective way to resolve difficult problems.

The document before us today is a step forward for us and helps to reduce the distance between us. Every additional effort brings us closer to achieving consensus, and we hope that the fact that the document has not been adopted will not lead to the frustration and despair reflected in the statements of some colleagues. More consultations and greater transparency will necessarily lead us to a programme of work that satisfies everyone and responds to everyone's concerns.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate you once again on your success and that of the members of your Mission in this work. We wish you success in the future.

The President: I thank Ambassador Hamoui of the Syrian Arab Republic for his kind words and contribution.

Document CD/1889 will remain on the table, and it is for my friend and colleague, Ambassador Gancho Ganev, to decide on the best course to follow.

I would now like to thank the secretariat in the persons of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, and the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jarmo Sareva. I would also like to express my special thanks to Mr. Valère Mantels, Ms. Charlotte Laut Hernandez, Ms. Josefina Saïd-Montiel, Mr. Hector Cruz and, of course, to the interpreters for their support and dedication.

I would now like to ask the secretariat to make an announcement.

Mr. Sareva (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference): Mr. President, I would like to announce that the next plenary meeting will take place on Tuesday, 13 July, at 11 a.m., under the presidency of Bulgaria. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, His Excellency Mr. Nicolay Mladenov, will address the Conference on the occasion of the opening of the Bulgarian presidency.

Following the statement of Minister Mladenov, a briefing on the new national space policy of the United States will be offered by Mr. Frank Rose, United States Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Defense Policy and Verification Operations. Mr. Rose will be available to respond to questions afterwards.

The President: I thank the secretariat. I now give the floor to Ambassador Rao.

Mr. Rao (India): Mr. President, I have asked for the floor on behalf of the Group of 21, and I have the honour to convey, on behalf of the Group, its sincere thanks to you for your efforts in search of an agreed, comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

Brazil is an esteemed member of the Group of 21, and the Group appreciates the manner in which you have led the Conference at this juncture.

The President: I thank Ambassador Rao of India. I recognize the representative of Australia.

Mr. Wilson (Australia): I do not wish to make a very long statement, but I do also want to put on record our thanks for your active and consultative leadership during your presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We thank you for your efforts and those of your delegation to help the Conference to do what many in this chamber and outside of it as well want it to do, which is to get back to work and get back to substantive work. I would also like to put on record that Australia supports the proposal contained in document CD/1889 and sees it as an opportunity for agreeing upon a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

Again, I would like to thank you for your individual leadership, and I hope that collective leadership can be found here in order to allow the Conference to get back to work.

The President: I thank the distinguished representative of Australia.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.