



General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

328th meeting

Friday, 20 April 2012, 10.55 a.m.
New York

Chair: Mr. Román-Morey (Peru)

The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

Report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): The Disarmament Commission will now consider agenda item 6 in order to be able to adopt the draft reports of the subsidiary bodies on agenda items 4 and 5, as well as the draft report of the Commission, as contained, respectively, in documents A/CN.10/2012/CRP.3, CRP.4 and CRP.5. Those documents have been circulated to delegations. Thereafter, the Commission will hear concluding statements by delegations.

To start the process of considering and adopting the draft reports of subsidiary bodies on individual agenda items, I shall first call on the Chairs of each Working Group to introduce their respective reports.

I now give the floor to Mr. Naif Bin Bandar Al-Sudairy, representative of Saudi Arabia and Chair of Working Group I, on agenda item 4, namely, “Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons”, to introduce the draft report of the Working Group, as contained in document A/CN.10/2012/CRP.4.

Mr. Al-Sudairy (Saudi Arabia), Chair of Working Group I (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to introduce the draft report of Working Group I (A/CN.10/2012/CRP.4). I would first like to thank my colleagues, the

members of the Disarmament Commission, for the trust vested in me to preside over the negotiations of this important Working Group. I would also like to thank the secretariat and the Bureau of the Commission.

Although the Working Group started its work late, it held seven meetings to consider the item entrusted to it. I provided general recommendations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the form of a non-paper reiterating elements from work done in 2008, 2010 and 2011. Although we did not reach consensus on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the report draft before the Commission was agreed by consensus. As in previous years, the draft report is strictly procedural. The lack of time — not the lack of effort — led to the lack of consensus. Discussions were very interesting.

I would like to conclude by expressing the hope that the draft report of Working Group I will be adopted by consensus.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): There being no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the draft report of Working Group I, as contained in document A/CN.10/2012/CRP.4.

It was so decided.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I would now like to move on to the draft report of Working Group II, on agenda item 5, entitled “Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons”, as

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contained in document A/CN.10/2012/CRP.5. I give the floor to Ms. Véronique Pepin-Hallé, representative of Canada and Chair of Working Group II, to introduce the Working Group's draft report.

Ms. Pepin-Hallé (Canada), Chair of Working Group II: It is my honour to introduce the draft report of Working Group II. At the outset, I would like to thank the members of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for the trust they vested in me to lead the discussions of that important Working Group.

Working Group II, which dealt with agenda item 5, entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", held seven meetings from 9 to 18 April. I submitted for the Group's consideration a non-paper and two revised versions based on the text circulated by last year's Chair, the subject of which led to constructive discussions.

I should especially like to thank you, Mr. Chair, for your support and tireless efforts in helping move the process forward. I should also like specifically to thank the Secretary of the Working Group, Ms. Christa Giles, and her team, as well as Ms. Pamela Maponga and Mr. Hideki Matsuno, representatives of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, for their assistance.

I should also particularly like to express my gratitude to delegations for their contributions. I believe that it was a very useful and substantive discussion with active participation on the part of everyone. It will, I hope, form a good foundation for the work of the next two years of the UNDC cycle. I am grateful to them, and to you, Sir. I very much hope that the Disarmament Commission will be able to make further progress on the issue of confidence-building measures, as there is so much agreement in so many areas.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the draft report of Working Group II, on agenda item 5.

It was so decided.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): Now that the Commission has adopted the reports of its subsidiary bodies, I would like to thank the Chairs of the two Working Groups for their tireless efforts and dedication. The Commission is deeply indebted to them for their effective leadership in guiding the deliberations of the Working Groups on those very complex issues. The Chair would like to add its voice to the gratitude and congratulations for the very professional work done,

particularly as it was undertaken, to the greatest extent possible, in an atmosphere of cooperation. I thank both Chairs of the Working Groups.

I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Farghal (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I fully concur with you, Mr. Chair. However, I would like to make a small request of the Secretariat. Would it be possible to provide us with a revised final version of the report of Working Group II, without any brackets?

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): We will ask the Secretariat to once again cooperate with us as efficiently, as it has done throughout the session.

We will now begin our consideration of the draft report of the Disarmament Commission, as contained in document A/CN.10/2012/CRP.3. I now give the floor to Mr. Fikry Cassidy of Indonesia, Rapporteur of the Commission, to introduce the draft report of the Commission.

Mr. Cassidy (Indonesia), Rapporteur of the Commission: It is my great honour and pleasure to introduce to the Disarmament Commission the Commission's draft report, contained in document A/CN.10/2012/CRP.3. The draft report contains the following four chapters: "Introduction", "Organization and work of the 2012 substantive session", "Documentation" and "Conclusion and recommendations". Allow me now to address the text of the draft report and draw delegations' attention to paragraphs 10, 15, 16, 17 and 22.

In accordance with the oral amendment presented by the Chair, paragraph 10 should read as follows:

"At the same meeting, the Chair of the Disarmament Commission informed of his decision of designate Mr. Bouchaib El Oummi (Morocco) and Ms. Lachezara Stoeva (Bulgaria) as friends of the Chair, to conduct, on his behalf, two informal meetings during the general debate, one on the working methods of the Disarmament Commission and another on elements for a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth Disarmament Decade."

Paragraph 15 should read as follows:

"In accordance with the same decision, the issues of the working methods of the Disarmament Commission and elements for a draft declaration of the fourth Disarmament Decade, were considered by the Commission at its two informal meetings under the chairmanship of the friends of the Chair,

Bouchaib El Oummi (Morocco) and Lachezara Stoeva (Bulgaria), respectively.”

Paragraph 16 should read as follows:

“The Commission held extensive discussions on the non-paper on the working methods of the Disarmament Commission, prepared by the friend of the Chair and under his own responsibility and without prejudice to the position of any delegation. The revised version of the non-paper is dated 19 April 2012.”

Paragraph 17 should read as follows:

“The Commission also held extensive discussions on the non-paper on elements for a draft declaration of the fourth Disarmament Decade, prepared by the friend of the Chair and under her own responsibility and without prejudice to the position of any delegation. The revised version of the non-paper is dated 17 April 2012.”

Paragraph 22 should read as follows:

“At the same meeting, the Commission adopted, by consensus, its report to be presented to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. The Commission expressed its appreciation to the Chair and the Secretariat.”

As is customary, the final report is a factual description of the Commission’s work and proceedings during the session. The substantive part comprises the two reports of the Working Groups, which the Commission just adopted.

The Commission held no parallel meetings. I was privileged to watch closely at first hand the Chairs of the two Working Groups trying skilfully, painstakingly and step-by-step to craft consensus on the substantive agenda items. The inability to adopt the recommendation as an outcome document by consensus is due to the complexity of the issue and not to the lack of effort on the part of delegations.

Given the deliberate mandate of the Commission, all of the oral and written comments that were submitted constituted a rich background against which the group operated. I wish to emphasize that the valiant efforts of the Chairs of the Working Groups were rooted in their unfailing belief in the possibility of success and their readiness to act on that conviction. I wish to take this opportunity to say that it has been a great honour to serve as Rapporteur at this session, and particularly to work

under the able leadership of the Chair, His Excellency Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey.

Finally, allow me to express my gratitude to Ms. Angela Kane, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for the counsel and support that her Office provided to the Bureau and to Member States. Allow me also to express my sincere appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management, Mr. Shaaban M. Shaaban, for having so excellently organized and provided services for the Commission’s meetings.

I wish to commend all members of the Secretariat for their tireless efforts and kind assistance. I would also like to express our thanks to Ms. Sonia Elliott; Mr. Ioan Tudor, Special Assistant to Ms. Kane; and Ms. Christa Giles, Secretary of Working Group II; as well as to members of the official development assistance staff, supporting the deliberation of the Working Group. With those brief remarks, I recommend that the Commission adopt the draft report, as contained in document A/CN.10/2012/CRP.3.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): We will now consider the draft report of the Commission, chapter by chapter.

If there are no comments on chapter I, “Introduction”, paragraph 1, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt that paragraph.

It was so decided.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn next to chapter II. Are there any comments on chapter II, “Organization and work of the 2012 substantive session”, paragraphs 2 to 18, as orally amended?

Mr. Bavaud (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I have comments to make on paragraphs 16 and 17, as presented. I need a bit of clarification. If I understand correctly, in paragraph 16, we end the paragraph with the words “the final version of the non-paper” and in paragraph 17, we end the paragraph with “the revised version of the non-paper”. Is there a particular reason for that? My delegation would prefer to see uniformity in the wording used in the two paragraphs.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): To clarify, in both cases the wording should be “revised version”.

If there are no further comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt chapter II, paragraphs 2 to 18, as amended by the Rapporteur here in the room and as presented.

Paragraphs 2 to 18, as orally amended, were adopted.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall now turn to chapter III, "Documentation", paragraphs 19 and 20. If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt chapter III, paragraphs 19 and 20.

Paragraphs 19 and 20 were adopted.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): If I hear no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt chapter IV, "Conclusions and recommendations", paragraphs 21 to 24.

Paragraphs 21 to 24 were adopted.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the Commission, having adopted all paragraphs of the draft report, to adopt the draft report of the Commission as a whole, as contained in document A/CN.10/2012/CRP.4, as orally revised?

The draft report, as orally revised, was adopted.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): Now that the report of the Commission has been adopted and as the 2012 session of the Disarmament Commission is coming to a close, the Commission will hear the concluding statements of delegations.

Mr. Cassidy (Indonesia): On behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), I would like to thank you, Sir, and the Bureau for the able leadership, dedication and hard work throughout the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. I would also like to express the Movement's great appreciation to the Chairs of Working Group I and Working Group II, as well as the two friends of the Chair, who did an impressive job to promote constructive debate during the first session of this cycle.

NAM reiterates its long-standing position on the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, the group reaffirms the relevance and centrality of the Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, which provides for in-depth deliberations on specific disarmament issues and the submission of concrete recommendations to the General Assembly.

In that context, NAM, for its part, remains ready, as it was at this session of the Disarmament Commission,

to continue to engage in a constructive manner with other groups to ensure a successful outcome of the next session in order to achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. NAM hopes to have a constructive Disarmament Commission session in 2013 and urges greater political will, flexibility and cooperation on the parts of all countries.

Before bidding farewell and wishing a safe journey to all colleagues who came to New York to participate in this year's session, let me also thank the staff of the Secretariat for their assistance to delegations.

Mr. Ishigaki (Japan): On behalf of the Japanese Government, I would also like to join colleagues from the Non-Aligned Movement in expressing our appreciation for your strong leadership, Mr. Chair, in guiding this year's three weeks of deliberations of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I would also like to express our appreciation to the Chairs of the two Working Groups, the friends of the Chair and the Secretariat for their commitment and devotion.

We believe that the UNDC has achieved a great deal in the first year of this three-year cycle. Of course, some may argue that it may have been able to achieve a bit more, but I think we have laid very solid groundwork for the next two years. Similarly, people may argue that it would have been better to have the formal papers to be presented and adopted. But I think that, through these very intensive discussions, we have been able to share many views, especially on working methods, the disarmament decade and how to move forward. I believe that this will guide us in the right direction.

I would also like to add that our humble contribution of sponsoring the well-organized event by the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, in an attempt to stimulate the discussions of the UNDC, provided, in our view, another opportunity for much more interactive and fruitful discussions. Japan would also like to express its strong commitment to be as active as possible in the next two years of this cycle.

Once again, thank you very much, Sir, for your strong leadership and visionary guidance to all Member States. We very much look forward to next year's session.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the representative of Japan for the side event sponsored by the Japanese delegation and the United Nations

Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. I think that it is a good model for future sessions of the Disarmament Commission.

Mrs. Ledesma Hernández (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank you, Sir, for your efforts to reach consensus on the issues on the Commission's agenda. We also appreciate the positive spirit that generally prevailed in the course of our work.

We associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

For Cuba, the existence of more than 23,000 nuclear weapons is a source of serious concern. No effort must be spared to definitively prohibit and eliminate that enormous destructive arsenal. That is why the fact that the Disarmament Commission would deliberate nuclear issues with a view to issuing recommendations on how to achieve the goal of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is an important achievement.

Cuba will work actively during this new cycle so that the Disarmament Commission can recommend concrete measures to be taken towards nuclear disarmament. Nuclear-weapon States have a fundamental responsibility to work towards those objectives. It is not enough to express the desire to create a world free of nuclear weapons. A statement of that type should lead to negotiations and legally binding measures that would fully ban nuclear weapons and provide for the destruction of existing weapons.

The draft recommendations put forth in each of the Working Groups referring to nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and practical confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons need further development, but they can be taken into account in order to continue discussions on those important items next year.

We also recognize the efforts undertaken on your behalf, Mr. Chair, by the facilitators of the debates on the issues concerning elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade and the methods of work of the Disarmament Commission. Consensus was not achieved on the documents presented on those items, but we support further consideration of the items.

In our delegation's opinion, the time dedicated to consideration of the item "Elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade" was not sufficient. In that regard, the political will demonstrated by various delegations was also insufficient. The dynamic of negotiations impeded the incorporation of agreed upon language on priorities in the area of nuclear disarmament, among others.

For Cuba, the declaration of the fourth decade on disarmament might positively contribute to mobilizing international efforts in order to respond to current and emerging challenges in the area of disarmament. That would certainly be a step forward in promoting multilateralism as a basic principle for negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation in all their aspects. That is why we do not oppose achieving that objective.

Much of the discussion on the Commission's working methods revolved around the same elements as in previous years. For example, no consensus was reached on how to reflect the priority of nuclear disarmament in deliberations that should continue within the Commission. As we have already stated, we do not share the position of some delegations that question the relevance of the Commission on account of the lack of concrete results owing to its supposedly inefficient working methods.

While such methods can be improved, they are not the real obstacle facing us. What is really happening is that some nuclear-weapon States refuse to eliminate those weapons and to discuss such matters. They are not showing the political will needed to resolve one of the greatest problems facing humankind.

Allow me to highlight the importance and relevance of the Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. It benefits us all to have a universal deliberative body, such as the Commission, that enables us to discuss important issues in depth. However, that is not enough. Our mandate includes not only discussing issues, but also making specific recommendations.

In recent years, the multilateral disarmament agenda has not made significant progress. The Disarmament Commission has not been blameless in that reality. However, we hope that, in this new cycle of sessions of the Commission, we can achieve concrete results.

The importance of nuclear disarmament cannot be ignored or minimized. Nuclear-weapon States have

the legal obligation to hold and conclude negotiations in good faith in order to achieve verifiable, transparent and irreversible nuclear disarmament. We reaffirm the position set out in the Final Document (resolution S-10/2) of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which regards nuclear disarmament as the highest disarmament priority.

The Non-Aligned Movement submitted a proposal that deserves attention and contains a plan of action that sets out a specific time frame for the gradual reduction of nuclear weapons until their total elimination and prohibition no later than 2025. In May 2011, during its sixteenth Ministerial Meeting, held in Bali, Indonesia, the Movement adopted a declaration on the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which reiterates the commitment to work towards holding an international conference to decide the ways and means to eliminate nuclear weapons.

The mere existence of nuclear weapons and the doctrines that describe their possession and use are a serious threat to international peace and security. The sole guarantee that nuclear weapons will not be used by States or anyone else is their complete elimination and prohibition. There must be an end to political manipulation of the non-proliferation issue on the basis of double standards and the existence of a privileged club that continues to improve its nuclear weapons, while trying to undermine the inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy by countries of the South.

We propose that we agree to hold an international convention without further delay to facilitate the elimination of nuclear weapons within a period of no more than 25 years and to prohibit them forever. It is unacceptable that, according to the most recent figures produced by experts of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, military expenditure in 2011 totalled \$1.738 trillion. With the resources devoted to weapons today, it would be possible to tackle the extreme poverty affecting 1.4 billion people in the world today, to feed the more than 1 billion hungry people on the planet, to prevent the deaths of the 11 million children who die of hunger and preventable diseases every year, or to teach the 759 million illiterate adults to read and write.

With regard to the issue of confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons, Cuba supports such measures as a way to strengthen international peace and security, as long as they fully

respect the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. On account of their voluntary nature, confidence-building measures cannot be imposed, nor are there any one-size-fits-all solutions. As a genuinely effective confidence-building measure, Cuba has proposed starting with the immediate creation of a United Nations fund comprising at least half of current global military expenditure so as to meet the economic and social development requirements of countries in need. Cuba is prepared to continue working actively in order to achieve concrete results in the work of this important Commission.

Finally, we should like to express our gratitude to you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau for the work achieved. We also acknowledge the efforts of the Chairs of the Working Groups and the two facilitators for their important work. We also thank the entire Secretariat team for its valuable support.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): Although there are still four speakers on my list, I should like first to give the floor to Ms. Angela Kane, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, who needs to speak before leaving for another important meeting.

Ms. Kane: I am grateful to you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity. I came here because I wanted to listen to the closing statements. I am sorry to miss some of them, but I will be briefed later on, since I have to leave. I would like to thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to say a few words at the close of the 2012 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

All delegations are aware that eliminating weapons of mass destruction, disarmament and the regulation of conventional armaments have been goals of the United Nations for many decades, technically, really, since 1946, although such goals are based on language found even earlier, in the Charter.

Delegations also know well that the race to the finish line for achieving such goals is certainly better described as a marathon, rather than a sprint. Everyone understands that the greatest steps forward in disarmament rarely come as discrete events, but that they more often emerge over a long and, at times difficult, process of deliberation and compromise, leading to consensus.

The work of the Commission is best viewed in that spirit. It remains to be seen what the future will hold for the Commission and for the results still to be achieved over the course of its current three-year cycle. Certainly,

we can all agree that the willingness of delegations to deliberate in good faith, with a genuine desire to achieve a consensus outcome, will be crucial to shaping the future work of the Commission.

As we look at the diligent work of the Chair of this session, as well as the many contributions of the Chairs of the Working Groups and the friends of the Chair, I can only express my deep appreciation for their efforts to find some common ground among the range of national policies and priorities that have been set forth in this room during the deliberations.

Ultimately, the future of the Commission, and of disarmament itself, will depend most critically upon the readiness of States to harmonize those policies and priorities to achieve common ends. Institutional reform at the United Nations remains important, but the political will needed to achieve real progress remains in the hands of Member States themselves. A noted educator, William Arthur Ward, once wrote that

“The pessimist complains about the wind, the optimist expects it to change and the realist adjusts the sails.”

The existence of some persisting disagreements in the Commission must not obscure the many issues upon which delegations were in full agreement, especially on some of the most solemn goals of disarmament and arms control. This offers something solid upon which to build. I wish to thank all delegations for their contributions, which I hope will sustain a realistic prospect for smoother sailing at the Commission’s next session.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, in particular for her presence, her motivation and her support. They have been very important for the Commission and for this chairmanship, and I believe that is how members view it as well. I thank her and look forward to continuing to work with her.

I apologize for not having followed the order of speakers, but I believed it was important to hear what the High Representative had to say.

Mr. Adejola (Nigeria): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the African Group. First and foremost, I wish to thank you, Mr. Chair, for your service and able leadership during the 2012 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission (UNDC), as well as to commend members of the Bureau for their dedication and hard work throughout the session.

The African Group wishes to express appreciation to the Chairs of the two Working Groups, His Excellency Mr. Naif Bin Bandar Al-Sudairy and Ms. Véronique Pepin-Hallé, for their excellent work and the impressive manner in which they facilitated the debates. We wish to commend their commitment and efforts to moderate the course of discussions.

The African Group associates itself with the closing remarks made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The debates in Working Group I, on recommendations for achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, were passionate and engaging. We wish to commend the Chair, who, despite the variety of opinions on agenda item 4, worked so tirelessly to provide the required leadership. We reiterate our hope and desire to contribute to achieving more progress on this item in this cycle of the UNDC.

In Working Group II, on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, there was much hope that the enabling climate would facilitate more progress and lead us to consensus. We note the efforts of the Chair to achieve a positive outcome. Notwithstanding the absence of consensus on agenda item 5, however, we look forward to a brighter, more effective and fruitful session in 2013 and wish the Chair of the Group the best in her future endeavours.

The African Group also identifies with the efforts of Mr. Bouchaib El Oumni and Ms. Lachezara Stoeva, friends of the Chair, who facilitated our debates on the working methods of the Commission and on the elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade, respectively. They provided a platform for delegates to constructively engage in the discussion of ideas with a view to moving the efforts of this deliberative body forward. We thank them for their service and commitment.

The African Group wishes to commend other representatives for their courtesy and professionalism. We wish to underscore the need to look to the future with hope, even as we prepare for the next UNDC session in 2013.

Furthermore, the African Group wishes to stress the importance of multilateral diplomacy on the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation. Our commitment to the role of the UNDC as the singular deliberative institution within the United Nations machinery for

this purpose remains unyielding. It is our fervent hope that more progress will be achieved in this cycle of the UNDC.

Finally, we wish to express appreciation to the entire staff of the Secretariat for their support and assistance to delegations. To all who contributed to enriching our knowledge of issues at this session, we wish to say thank you.

Mr. Estreme (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank you, Ambassador Román-Morey, in particular for your work as Chair of the Disarmament Commission for the 2012 substantive session. When you took on this responsibility, you took on an important challenge, in starting a session without a defined agenda on substantive items.

All of us here have witnessed your efforts to reach agreement on the topics before us, as well as the transparency with which you conducted that process. We know that it is important to highlight your innumerable efforts. Argentina very much appreciates your work. We would also like to express our gratitude to your delegation for its efforts throughout this process. We also express our gratitude to the Secretariat for its support.

Thanks to your efforts to move us closer to agreement, Sir, we were presented with two items and options for the Commission to consider in informal meetings. Unfortunately, not all delegations agreed on the consideration of those items. My delegation regrets that, despite your untiring work and efforts and those of the two facilitators, whom we would also like to congratulate for their work, the Commission was unfortunately not able to achieve agreement on the basis of the two informal papers, which my delegation believes were of great value and represented a basis on which we could have begun our work and reached agreement.

In that regard, we also very much regret the fact that the Commission was not able to adopt recommendations on substantive agenda items. We know that 2012 is just the beginning of the current cycle of the Disarmament Commission, and so we continue to harbour the hope that we will be able to achieve some substantive progress in the next two years.

On that point, I would like to highlight that Argentina believes that there is no inherent flaw in the working methods of the Commission per se. There is nothing in the working methods that is preventing us

from making progress and achieving agreement. On the contrary, we believe that experience from previous sessions shows that it is possible to reach agreements on recommendations in the area of disarmament. We believe that the Commission still has a central role to play as a deliberative body, and we believe that the best way of revitalizing it is through the Commission itself, by examining issues of substance, exchanging views on those issues in an exhaustive manner and adopting recommendations. The adoption of recommendations is especially important. To that end, what is necessary is political will and flexibility on the part of delegations. Unfortunately, those two elements seem to have been absent during this session. That is why we would urge all delegations to work, in upcoming sessions, towards achieving concrete results so that we are able to preserve the central role of the Commission in the area of disarmament.

In that regard, my delegation agrees with the statement made a few moments ago by High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Angela Kane, namely, that the future of the Commission depends on all of us. Of course, we need to be aware that flexibility and political will should allow us to achieve agreements, so that the Commission can continue to be as relevant as we all believe it is.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. Chair, on behalf of the Government of Argentina, for all of your efforts, your commitment and your flexibility. We commend you on your leadership throughout this session, and we would like to reiterate Argentina's willingness to continue work to preserve the relevance of this body.

Mr. Kvarnström (Sweden): First of all, I wish to start by thanking you, Mr. Chair. I think that with your deep expertise in disarmament and non-proliferation you have ably led us in a manner that has been both flexible and ambitious. Thanks to you, to your team and to the Secretariat for all the hard work that you have done.

As Vice-Chair, I would also like to express my deep appreciation for the efficient and very collegial cooperation in the Bureau. Also, our special thanks go to the Working Group Chairs and to the friends of the Chair. With this type of professional stewards of the highest possible calibre, we were assured that the maximal chance of success was afforded to delegations.

Despite that top-quality guidance, however, we again find ourselves with a substantive session that has led to no concrete recommendations. At least we have some documents to keep working on, even though, as usual, we cannot even refer to them with document references. Some will say, of course, that the lack of outcomes is due to the lack of political will. But I must say that when it comes to the Disarmament Commission (UNDC), I think that almost all delegations, save for a very small number, did show significant political will and flexibility to compromise, to try to take us forward on agreeing on some papers. In that sense, I believe we were close.

To be further positive, which I believe we must, I would highlight one aspect of this year's session that at least heightened the attention and participation level in what was perhaps the most interesting and well-attended discussion that we have had in the four years that I have been here. That, of course, was the discussion on working methods. We did not agree, but the discussion was relevant and lively.

Still, as I said before, Sweden regrets the fact that this deliberative body — the only one we have on disarmament — sometimes behaves as a treaty-negotiating body. That is a deep problem, and is due primarily to a failure in properly and correctly interpreting its mandate. That is why those who care about disarmament issues should seek to continue to renew efforts to save the UNDC from being a half-empty room that never communicates in substance with the rest of the disarmament machinery or for that matter with the very strong world opinion that demands progress on these important issues. To borrow a metaphor used by High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Angela Kane, I think what we must do in the UNDC is adjust our sails.

Having said all of that, Sweden does look forward to engaging constructively on the two very broad agenda items chosen for the remainder of the cycle and the upcoming discussion of the UNDC in the First Committee. I thank you again, Mr. Chair, for your outstanding work.

Mr. Koller (Austria): Austria would like to wholeheartedly thank you, Mr. Chair, for your excellent stewardship of this year's session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). Your engagement in, and commitment to, our collective deliberations during the past three weeks was not only inspiring, it was a remarkable contribution to our collective efforts to

revitalize the global disarmament and non-proliferation agenda, as set out by the Secretary-General in the five-year action agenda.

My delegation also very much appreciates the constructive atmosphere in which our deliberations were conducted. For my delegation, presenting our own positions and understanding the positions of other delegations are of equal importance.

I would also like to thank the Secretariat, the Chairs of the two Working Groups and the facilitators on the two informal topics for their excellent work in moving forward.

We have just concluded three weeks of deliberations on important issues on our disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. Given the overall state of affairs with regard to the multilateral disarmament machinery, we assess this UNDC session in a positive and constructive manner.

Nevertheless, we also need to be mindful of the fact that it has been many years since substantive disarmament negotiations have taken place in the structures foreseen by the General Assembly at the first special session devoted to disarmament.

My delegation would like to reiterate that, according to Article 11 of the Charter of the United Nations, the General Assembly bears a responsibility to address this fact and should therefore explore options for taking forward the multilateral disarmament negotiations as set out in resolution 66/66.

Mr. Pintado (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, I would like to thank you, Mr. Chair, for the manner in which you have conducted our work. I would also like to thank the Secretariat for its support throughout this substantive session. I would also like to thank my colleagues in the Bureau for their cooperation and all delegations that have participated over the past days for the constructive spirit that prevailed during our deliberations.

I would like to more specifically highlight the fact that, for my delegation, it was a source of pride to have such a distinguished representative from our region guiding our work. We are particularly grateful for his firm determination to achieve substantive results during this session of the Commission, especially at a time when we are beginning a new cycle of work.

I would also like to thank the Chairs of the two Working Groups and the facilitators of the informal

discussions for their efforts and their commitment to achieving progress on each of the topics under their responsibility. While the results did not meet our expectations, we must acknowledge that the discussions were extremely beneficial. From them, we noted that, above and beyond fundamental differences, there is a collective will to reactivate the Disarmament Commission so that it can produce the recommendations that it has for many years been unable to agree upon.

This year marks the start a new cycle in the Commission. It is clear that there is a broad, but not a universal, desire for an agenda that will enable the achievement of concrete results — not only with respect to nuclear and conventional weapons, but also in the discussions on the fourth disarmament decade and the Commission's working methods. In that context, Mr. Chair, your efforts deserve our profound appreciation.

The discussions should be continued in future substantive meetings based on the documents that have been distributed. However, they should not be based solely on the simple desire to continue the discussion, but with a view to adopting specific recommendations. The deliberative mandate of the Commission and its universal membership should not impede the achievement of results; to the contrary, that should lead us to adopt recommendations that are acceptable to one and all.

Multilateralism is based on agreements and not on objections. Consensus should be a common goal, not an impediment to action. Mexico will continue to make every effort necessary to reactivate the disarmament machinery. We do so not only because we are convinced that the current situation is unsustainable, but because we strongly believe that certain significant points of convergence exist that have not been fully explored due to the current impasse.

Mr. Yermakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the Russian delegation I would like to thank Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, Chair of the Disarmament Commission, as well as the Chairs of the Working Groups and the friends of the Chair, for their contributions to our important work.

I wish to note that the entire leadership of the Commission has shown professionalism, courage and selflessness in assuming a heavy load of responsibility in order to conduct this session of the Commission at a

difficult time of increasing strategic unpredictability in international relations.

Over the course of three weeks, we have debated important themes that have a direct impact on the maintenance of international peace and security. Ambassador Churkin, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, articulated our delegation's approach during his statement to the Commission in the first days of our work.

Overall, we enjoyed very productive and, frankly, very candid discussions. That is very important. We are all in favour of disarmament — on that there is no contradiction. We all require national security as a minimum condition. The problem lies in the methods of achieving that security. We envision those methods differently. It is unfortunate that not all States are convinced that global security can be equal and indivisible for all. It is clear that, in such circumstances, we have been unable to agree on all elements of all of our documents.

I want to end on a positive note. We each resemble members of a single family of experts in the field of disarmament. All of us will see each other again in the year to come at various forums. Many will attend the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Then we will all meet again at the Conference on Disarmament. We will, of course, return here for the next session of the First Committee to resume our productive discussions.

I would therefore like to propose — by no means forgetting our great hopes of complete disarmament — that the main focus should be on specific realistic issues, even if they seem simple and less ambitious. The main point is that the recommendations we propose be based on consensus in order to unite us all, rather than divide us. They should also serve to bolster the national security of each and every State in the world. All of that will contribute to creating conducive conditions in the future for tackling more ambitious goals, including in the sphere of nuclear disarmament.

For now, let us not create illusions. I will say frankly that the new Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms represents a maximum and miraculous achievement in modern day conditions that is now truly being implemented.

Nothing further is being considered, and we all know the reasons for that. The Russian Federation has repeatedly set out those reasons in the highest-level forums as well as the lowest-level forums at the expert level. We will all have to make a very great effort to create conducive international conditions for further steps in the field of nuclear disarmament.

The Russian Federation is ready for that kind of work. Let us make additional efforts and, as Ms. Kane has said, let us all work hard to ensure that we can take advantage of the unique experience of the Disarmament Commission as the United Nations negotiating body in the field of disarmament.

I would like once again to thank all my colleagues for their collaborative work here over the past three weeks, and to thank the Secretariat for its impeccable organization of this session. I would particularly like to thank the interpreters who, for now, are better than all of us at finding a language common to us all.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his important message and for his support for the Chair. He should rest assured that we will continue our efforts to make progress in an area of interest to the entire world community.

Mr. Vipul (India): My delegation joins our colleagues in thanking you, Mr. Chair, and your delegation for your excellent leadership of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) this year. Through you we would also like to thank the Chairs of the two Working Groups and the two friends of the Chair for their diligent and sincere efforts to move our work forward. We would also like to thank the Secretariat for its support for our work. We believe that we have been able to give this new cycle of UNDC meetings a constructive start, and we hope that it may result in the Commission's achieving concrete recommendations at the end of the cycle.

My delegation would like to recall that the first two sessions of the Disarmament Commission in its current incarnation, following the recommendations set out at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, were chaired by Mr. M. A. Vellodi of India. It is with profound regret that I have to announce that Ambassador Vellodi passed away earlier this year. In Indian circles he continued to maintain a keen interest in disarmament issues and to guide many of us on those issues during his last days. Although he

is no more, the body of work accomplished under his leadership remains available to all of us, and we believe that we could all benefit by building on the legacy of that work under his chairmanship of UNDC in its early days.

India, for its part, continues to attach great importance to the work of the Disarmament Commission as the specialized deliberative body of the General Assembly on disarmament. With its universal membership, the Commission provides a unique platform for Member States to bridge differences and reach common positions on important disarmament issues. We, as Member States, must help it realize its full potential.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): Ambassador Vellodi was indeed one of the great diplomats in the area of universal disarmament. I offer my condolences to his family.

There are no more speakers on the list for this morning. I would like to genuinely and heartily thank all the delegations who have participated, as well as those who are present but did not participate, and who doubtless agree with much that has been said here this morning.

Other business

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): If I may, I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to all delegations for the constructive spirit in which we have worked and for the support they have shown me and the other members of the Bureau and Working Groups. All of us share the responsibility for the smooth functioning of the Commission, for which I am very grateful. It is difficult to find the words to express my gratitude to the Secretariat for its support, and to our friends, the interpreters and the conference officers, who have given us continued support in our work. I should now like to make some closing remarks.

Allow me to express my personal gratitude to members for the confidence they have shown in me by entrusting me with the task of directing the work of the 2012 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I should also like at the outset to extend my warm personal gratitude to the Vice-Chairs of the Commission and the other members of the Bureau, as well as to the Chairs of Working Groups I and II and the friends of the Chair, for their steadfast support, dedication and professionalism. My thanks

also go to all the representatives of States members of the Disarmament Commission; and special thanks go to Ms. Sonia Elliott and the rest of the secretariat of the Commission.

Today we are concluding another session of the Disarmament Commission and beginning a new cycle. As always with this type of event, we would have liked to see more and better results, but, as I said at the beginning of the session, in matters of disarmament one must be realistic while remaining positive. In that sense, I believe that, thanks to the professional work done by all, we have achieved the minimum necessary to consider this session of UNDC relatively successful. While we did not achieve consensus in our deliberations, once again we came close to doing so.

Nevertheless, we have had an open and transparent debate on all the items on the agenda: both the substantive items, such as those on nuclear and conventional weapons, and others that, while less formal, are no less important to the interests of the international community, such as the Commission's working methods and items relating to the declaration of the fourth disarmament decade.

But we must ask ourselves why — despite our personal efforts, our demonstrated flexibility, despite drawing some strict lines — we still failed to reach consensus in a forum such as the Disarmament Commission, which, as a body dedicated to deliberation and policymaking, is expected to achieve the desired consensus that would allow us to move matters forward to other forums, in other words, to recommend to the negotiating forums those items whose vital importance should be agreed on by universal consensus — so that we might then move on to forums for negotiating and drafting international legal instruments that should and indeed do have different mechanisms for their consideration.

The Commission has another characteristic that reflects its importance: its universality, which makes it, along with the General Assembly and the First Committee, the only deliberative disarmament forum in which all Members of the United Nations are represented. In fulfilling the duty that all entrusted to me during this session and at the start of a new cycle of the Disarmament Commission, I have had the opportunity

to see, hear, analyse and consider some of the elements that have meant that this time we must return to our usual responsibilities in New York or in our capitals with the sense of a job almost done.

“Lack of political will” is an old phrase, a product of the Cold War, which is over. It is also a phrase much repeated in the language of the United Nations when we want to justify the lack of international agreement. My view of this supposed lack of political will is actually quite the opposite. My disappointing but no less enriching experience at the Conference on Disarmament, coupled with the experience of these past three weeks, makes me think that what we are facing today might be more a definitive political will not to pursue the all-important themes of universal disarmament. Frankly, I hope that I am completely wrong in this perception.

For the Chair, positive political will, which I do believe exists, at least partially, in the Commission, is demonstrated by Member States participating in these debates when we see their positions come closer together. Yet there is an additional element that introduces a certain amount of discord and change in tone. I refer to the sense of mistrust that I have noticed in this room, a mistrust that keeps the debating parties apart and divides their positions. I believe that to be an issue on which we must work henceforth.

We have had exhausting discussions on purely procedural issues, such as the symbols used for our documents, which seems to me an innocuous issue, yet it has provoked such differences of opinion that it can even lead to the destruction of any consensus. For the deliberative Disarmament Commission, such symbols should be no more or less than a means of identifying documents and should not be seen as some sort of analysis of the DNA of the documents.

Another issue that should be of concern to us is the various interpretations that can be given to the term “consensus”. In my 40 years as a diplomat, nobody has been able to square the circle in that regard. In my rich language, in Spanish, “consensus” means “to consent”, that is, “to accept”. But the question is: acceptance by whom, or by how many? In a universal forum such as this one, is it to be interpreted as the sum of 192 plus 1, or perhaps as the sum of 1 plus 192, or as a numerical majority over a more active minority? One

thing it definitively cannot mean is the imposition of the will of a few over the large majority. We may hope that forums like this do not try to mimic the practices of forums with less universal membership and completely different mandates.

Ultimately, what I am trying to convey here is that I believe we are very close to reaching universal decisions, the initial and final objective of which is exclusively to support a good cause for the benefit of the entire international community.

For example, as an example of this progress, I believe that the First Committee of the General Assembly might consider, at its next session, the possibility of modifying the procedural arrangements of the Commission. A session of three continuous weeks of meetings is a bit long and, as we have demonstrated again and again over more than a decade, it has not helped us to achieve the positive results we all hoped for. Perhaps, and I stress the word “perhaps”, a substantive session of the Commission lasting three weeks, but divided into two parts, two weeks in spring as we have done now and one week in autumn, when the First Committee begins its work, might be more productive for the items on our agenda. I am sure that we will be taking up issues like that next October.

In short, I beg members’ forgiveness if these ideas of an old disarmament diplomat, who is also still both an optimist and a realist, strike them as unworkable, but, as they know, I set great store by transparency

and professionalism. Accordingly, I ask members to accept my congratulations for a job that, while perhaps not finished, was very well done. If nothing else, their deliberations have confirmed the relevance of the Disarmament Commission to the interests of the entire international community. Without their intelligent participation and support for the Chair, even that modest success would not have been possible.

I cannot fail to recall that, on 24 January 1946, the then-newly created United Nations adopted its very first resolution, entitled “Establishment of a commission to deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy” (resolution 1 (I)). In paragraph 5, subparagraph (c), the resolution stipulated that the Commission should make specific proposals “for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction”. Will the Commission one day be able to make similar proposals? I leave that question for members’ consideration and deliberation.

Closure of the session

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): With my renewed thanks to each and every member who stood by me over the past three weeks, and with my hope and fervent wish that we can continue to work together for a better world, I declare closed the 2012 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.