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# Conference on Disarmament

11 September 2012

English (Transcribed by the  
Secretariat – edited version)

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## Final record of the thousand two hundred and seventy-first plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 11 September 2012, at 10.10 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Hellmut Hoffmann .....(Germany)

**The President:** I declare open the one thousand two hundred and seventy-first plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Today's plenary meeting is again devoted to the consideration of the draft report of the Conference on its 2012 session to the General Assembly, as contained in our schedule of activities.

Before we start on today's business, I would like to remind everyone that today is 11 September, a date in 2001 which has become deeply engraved in the global consciousness because of the horror that the events on that day brought upon so many people directly or indirectly. In view of the fact that we are dealing in this Conference with security in a broad sense, I believe it is appropriate to remind ourselves of that.

Let me now make a few observations on the upcoming procedure, as seen from the President's vantage point. As I suppose all are aware by now, we will have another and final plenary meeting on Thursday 13 September. In this final plenary meeting at least two things will happen. First, I am delighted to inform you that we will hear a statement by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane. Second, it is my expectation that we will formally adopt the report of the Conference on Disarmament on its 2012 session to the General Assembly. However, before we come to the formal adoption of the report, we still have some work to do. Let me inform all of you where we stand right now with regard to the draft report.

On 23 August an advance copy of the draft report was circulated among all delegations. A first general exchange of views on this draft took place in a plenary meeting on 28 August. On 4 September there was yet another general exchange of views in formal plenary meeting on the basis of a number of amendments that had been circulated to all delegations in writing on 30 August. This debate, on 4 September, was immediately followed by an informal plenary meeting, in which a first reading of the report was completed. Since it became clear in the process that there were a number of difficult issues to resolve before consensus on the report could be reached, I invited delegations to an informal and open-ended working group to take up this matter. The working group met four times, on 4, 5, 7 and 10 September, for some 10 and a half hours. If you add to that the informal plenary meeting of 4 September, we have spent some 12 and a half hours on our drafting work so far. I think we have made good progress, the result of which was circulated yesterday via e-mail and your pigeonholes, in the form of a second draft of the entire report, contained in an advance copy dated 10 September. This should be the document before you, and there are copies over there for those of you who have not yet picked one up.

I wish to thank the secretariat for their speedy work. As President, I attach importance to giving each and every delegation a fair chance to take a look at the draft report as it has emerged from the collective work done in the course of the last 10 days or so. There are a number of textual changes in the second draft compared with the first draft, including in the numbering of some paragraphs or the order in which they appear. What is not in bold in the advance copy before you and, it is by far the bulk of the draft that is not in bold, was provisionally adopted in the meetings I mentioned. What is in bold, with the exception of the title headings of course, is still under consideration. So in view of this, I think it is fair to say that, in terms of quantity and quality, we have made good progress in our work. I suggest that we deal with the provisionally adopted paragraphs first in a formal plenary meeting, and then move on to the ones which are in bold, i.e. where we still have to find consensus solutions in an informal plenary meeting, immediately after the formal plenary one today.

However, before we start, let me make two general observations. Point number one: there is no doubt in my mind that the text before you is strictly factual, as it should be in the light of our rules of procedure. Nonetheless, the extensive discussions over the last couple of days has demonstrated that there may be differences of opinion as to the extent to which

the factuality of what actually happened should or must be reflected in such a report. This explains to some extent why we still have a few open issues.

The second observation I wish to make is to remind us of the fact that consensus does not necessarily mean that one actively agrees or even supports a given formulation, but only that one can live with the formulation or formulations. At times there can be a rather big difference between the two approaches. We are here to adopt a common report and not to write what one would like to see as one's own ideal outcome. If such an enterprise is to be successful, it requires considerable compromise and flexibility on all sides, and I trust that this spirit is here. As President, I see it as my duty to try to help to bring about a consensus outcome, but I must add that, at the end of the day, it is the member States which carry the responsibility to make this possible and to make it happen or not. My task in this is to be a fair broker, and I try to play that role to the best of my abilities.

Now can I take it that there is agreement with regard to the procedure that I have suggested? Does any delegation wish to take the floor, on the purely procedural side of this matter?

I see the flag of the United States of America. The representative of the United States of America please.

**Mr. Reid** (United States of America): Mr. President, I am not taking the floor regarding the procedure that you have outlined, I have no objection to the procedure for that matter, I am merely taking the floor to join you in your recognition that today is the eleventh anniversary of the September eleventh tragedy and the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. They were not just a tragedy for the United States of America but, in fact, a great tragedy for the entire world community. Unfortunately, the names that are commemorated on the walls that are going up in New York represent many, many passports, including many represented in this room. Sadly, the scourge of terrorism is still with the international community; we see evidence of it on a daily basis. However, we remain convinced and we hope that others will join us in their conviction that by continuing the struggle against intolerance — the very fuel that feeds terrorism — we can someday prevail against it. I thank you once again for your recognition of that today.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the United States of America and I think we can all endorse what you said.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor on the procedure that I have suggested? That does not seem to be the case. I have no speakers on the list anyway, so I would suggest that we take a look at the advance copy of the draft report of 10 September which should be before you. I further suggest that we should go through it page by page, but leave out the text in bold. Whenever you wish to raise a point or a question, please do so, and of course I hope that you have had enough time to take a look at the document which was circulated and put in the pigeonholes yesterday. I hope that we get through it rather quickly. I see that Algeria has asked for the floor. The representative of Algeria please.

**Mr. Khelif** (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, with your permission, the Algerian delegation would like to make a general comment, if that is possible.

**The President:** Yes, by all means. I am not quite sure what to expect; so please do make a general comment.

**Mr. Khelif** (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, first of all, the Algerian delegation would like to endorse what you and the representative of the United States said concerning the events, tragic events of 11 September. Algeria fully understands the significance of terrorism, having lived with it since 1991. Algeria also attaches importance to the symbolic date of 11 September. This date will have no effect unless it allows us to

reach agreement on a global approach to combat all forms of terrorism in a comprehensive manner.

Mr. President, the Algerian delegation would like to pay you the tribute you deserve for the efforts you have made throughout the consultations on the draft report, which, generally speaking, reflects the items addressed and considered by the Conference this year. However, the Algerian delegation considers that the report could be toned down so as to be less critical of the Conference, including of the deadlock – a phenomenon that affects not only the Conference, but all of the multilateral disarmament mechanisms. We therefore request our colleagues to reflect carefully on the approach to be followed in the report, particularly in those paragraphs on which consensus has not yet been reached, because their tone seems to be preparing us for or hinting at other initiatives that might be taken elsewhere, outside the framework of the Conference.

That is why we consider that these paragraphs should merely state the facts and not give the impression that we are going to relinquish our mandate and confer it on another multilateral organization or entity, which would take decisions in our place.

**The President:** Might I just say that we have had rather extensive discussions on this issue, well over 12 or 13 hours, and it is my distinct impression that views are very mixed, but it is not for me to go further into this issue. Maybe others would like to respond? I leave it to delegations.

Are there any other general comments delegations want to make? The representative of Canada please.

**Ms. Goldberg (Canada):** Mr. President, I had not intended to speak, but I think that, generally, it is useful at this point to make a number of reflections. The first is that all of us are very keen to see the conference fulfil the mandate laid out for it and, over the course of the past year, we have collectively worked very hard to try to find a way forward; and we will continue to work very hard in the years ahead to find a way forward so that this Conference can fulfil the expectations that the international community has set out for it. The dialogue that we have had in respect of the report in the informal consultations over the past 17 hours or so, as you have noted quite rightly, has been a very useful and very fruitful exchange of perspectives and views. However, what a number of delegations, including my own, have stressed is that the report must accurately reflect the perspectives that have been outlined to this body in particular by the Secretary-General, and his representative here. Moreover, very firm views have been expressed over the course of the last year on the work that needs to be done within this body. That is what the report has been seeking to do, to find the right balance, so that we convey the facts that have occurred over the course of the year, the attempts to find a way forward, but also the recognition that we have yet to find that way forward. I think that you have been diligently working to try to accommodate a variety of perspectives and that all delegations have been working in that spirit to find a way forward that accommodates the variety of perspectives. I believe that we are almost there and that we have come a long way. We would have preferred your original draft, which we thought had in fact found that correct balance. However, we also believe that the text before us is pointing in a direction that we may collectively be able to accept in the end.

**The President:** I thank Ambassador Goldberg for her statement. If there are no more speakers, I would suggest that we go through the second draft before us again leaving out the bold parts so that we can establish whether the provisional adoption of these non-bold parts stands.

Are there any comments on page 1? Since there are no comments on page 1, can we move on to page 2 please? So, nothing on page 2. Actually my numbering is not correct, I am literally on page 3. If you look at the number of the page at the bottom right-hand side, I

am on page 3, that is from paragraph 7 right down to paragraph 10. Is everybody with me? So let's move on to page 4. Since there are no comments, let's move on to pages 5 to 12.

Since no questions were raised or comments made, I take it that members wish to provisionally adopt the non-bold paragraphs in the draft report on the 2012 session to the General Assembly.

*It was so decided.*

As announced, I will now suspend the formal plenary meeting and reopen it as an informal meeting. The next formal plenary meeting should be on Thursday, 13 September at 10 a.m. Although, actually, I might even reopen the formal meeting after the informal meeting depending on how it goes.

I now suspend the plenary meeting, which means that I will reopen it formally at a later stage. I suggest that we break for a few minutes and come back to start the informal meeting.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.40 a.m.*

**The President:** So the formal plenary meeting is resumed. Let me just say again that we will meet on Thursday 13 September at 10. a.m. I thank you for your cooperation. It was quite some work. You cannot make everybody happy, but I hope that we have found a middle ground where everybody can walk away and say that this is what was achievable. We will see each other on Thursday to hear Ms. Angela Kane's statement and to adopt the report on the 2012 session to the General Assembly.

*The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.*