
Conference on Disarmament

13 September 2011

English

Final record of the one thousand two hundred and forty-first plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 13 September 2011, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Rodolfo Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Good morning. As usual, we are beginning our meeting at 10 minutes past 10 o'clock, as always giving ourselves 10 minutes to imagine and hope that today we may be able to conclude our work. What do we have planned for today's meeting? The official meeting is going to be very brief today because what I am suggesting to the Conference is that we first listen to the report from the coordinator of the informal negotiations on the five outstanding paragraphs and then, once we have a clear idea of the situation, that we formulate a working proposal, now that we have our Deputy Secretary-General back with us. I understand that the secretariat would first like to explain the revisions that have been made to the document which has been distributed and which you now have before you. Mr. Jarmo Sareva will now introduce the document.

Mr. Sareva (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): What you have in front of you, document CD/WP.568, is a clean document. It reflects the secretariat's understanding of the agreements reached in the plenary on the provisional adoption of paragraphs, as well as the agreement reached on a number of paragraphs in the informal consultations held last Friday and yesterday in room I.

You will see that there is a placeholder for those paragraphs which still remain pending after the informal consultations. I will run down the list of these paragraphs. On page 2, there is a placeholder for paragraph 5. This is the old paragraph 5. Obviously, we have had to change paragraph numbering when producing this clean new version, but paragraph 5 and paragraph 7, on the next page, correspond to the old paragraphs with the same numbers.

At the bottom of page 4, there is a placeholder for paragraph 15, which is the old paragraph 19. At the top of page 5 there is a placeholder for paragraph 16, which is the former paragraph 20. Finally, in the middle of page 5, there is a placeholder for paragraphs 25 bis, 21 bis and 21 ter. These are paragraphs 25 bis and 25 ter as reflected in the most recent informal consultations.

Other than that, the draft report should reflect the tentative provisional agreement, and the secretariat apologizes in advance for any mistakes that may remain. Some editorial corrections may still need to be made.

Finally, there are placeholders for documents submitted by members under various agenda items. We have tried to include all such documents, but, in any case, that will be done automatically before the document is submitted for processing and issuance.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the secretariat once again for all the help and support it has given us in the various tasks involved in this process. We are also grateful for the support which I know it has been giving to the informal working group coordinated by our colleague from South Africa, to whom I extend my sincerest thanks for the work that is being done. I am also grateful for the active participation of a group of delegations. Although I was not with them, I am well aware that the delegates of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Germany, the Netherlands and Pakistan have been very closely involved with this group. These are some of the delegates who will be the architects of the consensus that I am sure we will achieve in our work.

Without further ado, let us proceed to the important business of this meeting, which is to listen to the presentation concerning the execution of the mandate that we have conferred upon our colleague from South Africa as coordinator of these informal meetings.

Mr. Combrink (South Africa): During the plenary meeting of 9 September, we were requested to facilitate informal discussions, open to all interested delegations, in order to work on the outstanding paragraphs for the Conference's annual report to the General Assembly. You, Mr. President, also requested us to report to the plenary today and to present any proposed text.

The President: I would like to apologize for a technical mistake. I have yet to officially open the 1241st meeting of the Conference on Disarmament and need to do so because, otherwise, this will be an informal meeting. The 1241st meeting of the Conference is hereby officially opened.

Mr. Combrink (South Africa): Thank you, Mr. President. For the sake of being sure that it is part of the formal plenary, I will repeat what I said. During the plenary meeting of 9 September, we were requested to facilitate informal discussions, open to all interested delegations, in order to work on the outstanding paragraphs for the Conference's annual report to the General Assembly.

You also asked us to report to the plenary today and to present any proposed text on the outstanding issues. In taking up this responsibility, we are focusing primarily on paragraphs 5, 7 and 19, and I want to indicate that that is the old text, or paragraphs 5, 7 and 15 of the latest text prepared by the secretariat. We also had to deal with a number of outstanding issues under paragraphs 20 and 25, which are the new paragraphs 16, 21 bis and 21 ter.

I believe that good progress has been made during the informal consultations. However, we are not yet in a position to submit any proposed text. We would therefore like to propose that we continue our efforts through informal consultations.

Mr. President, as you have done, I wish to acknowledge the constructive efforts by participants in these consultations. We remain optimistic that, with some further flexibility and a continuing spirit of cooperation among colleagues, we will be able to submit proposals to you on the outstanding paragraphs.

We propose to resume informal consultations this afternoon at 3 p.m. and would like to request that room I be made available for that purpose.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again I would like to express my deep appreciation for the work that you have been doing. The presidency would not otherwise have been in a position to carry out this work; we do not currently have a delegate with this type of expertise in disarmament who would have been able to offer the assistance that you have provided, and I therefore thank you for South Africa's international solidarity with the Cuban Presidency. Without your assistance, it would have been very difficult. For this reason, I extend my deepest thanks to you, to Ambassador Minty and to the entire South African nation for the work you have been doing. I also salute the other delegates who, alongside you, have been working long and hard to try to find the best possible consensus on these paragraphs.

Mr. Hoffman (Germany): First of all, I take it that the statement made by the Deputy Secretary-General is on the record, even if it was made before the meeting was formally opened. That is important because the records of the plenary need to reflect what was actually said.

Second, I have asked for the floor because I attach some importance to making a statement for the record here. I am very happy to continue the discussion later in an informal mode, and I will certainly make my contribution to arriving at a good outcome. But let me make a few observations here for the record.

I have to say that, in the course of the discussions on the draft report that we have had here in a formal mode, but also in an informal mode, I think we witnessed an illuminating spectacle. We have spent many hours trying to finalize the draft report, and I very much agree with the representative of South Africa and facilitator that we have made much progress in our discussions, but difficulties remain. At the heart of our differences was, and still lies, in my mind, this question: Do we describe the reality of the Conference or do we, when we write the report of what actually happened here — or did not happen

here, to be more precise — all of a sudden pretend that, by and large, things are actually quite okay here?

I would very much like to thank you, Mr. President, and the facilitator for the tremendous efforts you have made and your dedication to helping us reach an agreement.

Let me briefly recall the situation as I see it. For many years, delegations have been lamenting that the Conference has not been, and continues not to be, able to fulfil the function for which it was created, that is, to negotiate new treaties in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. I have not counted them, but I am sure that literally thousands of statements have been made to that effect in the past 10 years or so in this chamber by practically all delegations which have taken the floor.

Now, in 2010, when the contrast between the promising developments in disarmament elsewhere (I would simply recall the debate about the objective of a “world free of nuclear weapons” which everybody now says they subscribe to) and the protracted stalemate in the Conference became too stark, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, took the initiative of convening a high-level meeting designed to overcome the impasse in the Conference. If I remember correctly, about 50 foreign ministers attended that meeting. The overwhelming tenor of their statements was that it was high time for the Conference to get its act together and overcome its long-standing stagnation.

To move this matter forward, the Secretary-General also asked his Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters to undertake a thorough review of the issues raised at the high-level meeting and make recommendations.

Here at the Conference, we ourselves had many plenary meetings at which the impasse of the Conference was discussed. We met with the Advisory Board to help it gain a first-hand impression of the situation. From all these discussions, I recall a dominating theme of disappointment and frustration that, as a result of our inability to agree on a programme of work, the Conference continues to be unable to undertake substantive work on the items on its agenda.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations spoke before the Conference on 26 January of this year. After praising the Conference for its past achievements as the world’s single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, he went on to say: “However, the Conference’s record of achievement has been overshadowed by inertia that has now lasted for more than a decade. The very credibility of this body is at risk. Continued inaction will only endanger its future function as a multilateral negotiating forum.” The Secretary-General went on to say that, because the Conference had “remained stagnant”, he had convened the high-level meeting with a view to overcoming “the impasse”.

The Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Tokayev, who is with us today, said in the 27 July plenary meeting of the General Assembly, in the presence of the Advisory Board, that the “status quo” of the Conference “not only damages its credibility but also has a negative impact on the current momentum in multilateral disarmament. Worse still, the deadlock may encourage and enable further nuclear armament and proliferation. This is incompatible with the *raison d’être* of the Conference on Disarmament.” It was and still is my distinct impression that this assessment was very widely shared by delegations.

In a statement at the 1 June 2012 plenary meeting of the Conference, the Ambassador of Pakistan said: “We fully concur with the acknowledgement by the Secretary-General that ‘the CD has failed to make any substantive progress for 15 years’”. He went on to say, “It is indeed a great pity that the CD has not been able to fulfil the vision that led to its creation ...”.

(spoke in French)

In a statement made on 30 June, the Ambassador of Algeria said: "There are multiples challenges and threats to international peace and security. In this context, the protracted stalemate that has been afflicting the Conference on Disarmament is a source of real concern."

(spoke in English)

And at the 11 August plenary meeting of the Conference, in a statement on behalf of the Group of 21, the Ambassador of Pakistan expressed the Group's "disappointment that the CD has not been able to undertake substantive work on its agenda".

Mr. President, why do I bother to check the records? The answer is very simple: because when we discussed the draft report of the Conference to the General Assembly over many long hours in the last couple of days, all of this somehow seemed to have vanished, at least as far as two or three delegations are concerned. Playing the consensus rule card in our discussions (I would say, without much restraint), they effectively blocked practically all suggestions which would have made it clear in the report that the Conference continues to be in a bad state, in that it continues to be unable to agree on what it wants to do.

I will not recount the various formulations which have been suggested to give expression to the stalemate that this forum has found itself in for many years and which were debated, as I tried to show, in many meetings here. But I still hope that, at a minimum, we can, when we deal with the failure to agree on a programme of work, say something to the effect that the various views and concerns regarding this ongoing situation of impasse are duly reflected in plenary records of the Conference.

I think that is really the bare minimum one needs to be able to say: that there is an impasse and that the views on this were duly reflected in the plenary record. My statement will also be in the plenary record, and that is why I have made it: just to make the point, once again, that such expressions of disappointment were made in the plenary hall.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: Another point to bear in mind is that using quotations can be somewhat risky. I take a dialectical approach and I am well aware of past experiences and the errors committed by the Marxists in trying to transform certain quotations into dogma, taking them totally out of context and then finding themselves unable to respond to the situation at hand.

Although I fully respect the points you have made, I know that they will prompt responses and other arguments, since another thing about words is that they are uttered at a certain time and in a certain context, and the world is constantly changing. However, I believe that the points you have raised are generally concerns that we share. We all regret the fact that we have not been able to make progress in our substantive work and that the Conference has not been able to fulfil the mandate for which it was established. These are all views of the situation that we share.

Problems also arise when reflecting on this matter because the focus then shifts to the causes, which is where disagreements as to why it has not been possible to make progress arise. In any case, I know that the alternate representative of Pakistan is going to speak, as is his right, and that we will listen to him attentively, as we did to the distinguished Ambassador of Germany, whom we thank for his direct contribution to all the efforts being led by South Africa.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): First of all, thank you for convening this meeting and for the way you have steered the work, particularly with regard to the finalization of the report. In spite of what has been stated, I still think we are close to consensus on that.

Let me also express my deep appreciation for the admirable fashion in which the representative of South Africa has conducted the “informal informal” meetings to try to reach consensus. He has been open, he has been transparent, he has been constructive, and he has been fair and equitable to all delegations, and I acknowledge that with gratitude.

It was not my intention to take the floor, but since the Ambassador of Germany, in spite of the fact that we are going to meet in the afternoon, decided to record his views on the “informal informal” discussions, I think I should also, for the record, mention how the Pakistani delegation approached the discussions that were conducted with the facilitation of our distinguished colleague from South Africa.

In the first place, Mr. President, as you rightly pointed out, with your long experience (and most of the people sitting in this room are much more experienced than I), using selective quotations does not lead us anywhere. I can find many references which may have been from a certain group’s statement but may not be acceptable to a particular delegation. We approached the report as we normally have in the past, as a technical report, which basically conveys to the General Assembly what has transpired in the Conference, without any value judgement.

Regarding the fact that some delegations are very keen to report that there was a failure of the Conference, my delegation had a simple question. There has been no progress in the Conference for the past 13 years, so I asked those delegations to cite some language from the past 13 years’ reports which reflected a value judgement, and my delegation would then go along with that.

My next question was: if it has never happened in the past, why this year? There was no convincing answer. Maybe there are some hidden agendas or other pressures which we do not know about. If something has been going on for 13 years, well then, the thirteenth year, I jokingly told my friend from South Africa, may be unlucky in some cultures. Other than that, I do not find any compelling reason why the Conference should comment upon its failure this time.

In terms of the quotation from my Ambassador’s statement (and I also refer to this in the informal meetings and will refer to it for the record also), if we are going to mention statements, well, the Non-Aligned Movement is the largest group in the United Nations. The former foreign minister of Egypt, speaking at the high-level meeting, for example, while expressing his deep concern over the persistent lack of consensus on the multilateral disarmament agenda and mission, reaffirmed his country’s support for an early convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. We did not want the discussion to go towards further polarization because, when we express disappointment, the next step is: what to do? The Group of 21 and the large majority of people in this room want to see the fourth special session convened. If it is possible to craft language which blends the two together, we are ready to subscribe to it. But we knew the pitfalls and we did not want to further complicate the work of the President and the facilitator. That’s why we did not table such amendments.

But again, Mr. President, I think we are in good hands under your leadership and with the excellent work being done by the delegation of South Africa. I think we can still, in spite of whatever has been stated, move towards consensus. My delegation will participate constructively, in good faith, in the “informal informals”.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank both delegations. Your statements have of course been placed on record. Also, to forestall any uncertainty and provided that there are no objections, I will take an express decision to the effect that all statements that were made before I officially opened the meeting, and particularly Mr. Jarmo Sareva’s, will be recorded as part of the official plenary meeting. If verbatim records of our meeting have not been made, I would ask the secretariat to draft a brief summary of what has been said in

order to ensure that Mr. Jarmo Sareva's presentation, in particular, is on the record. I see Algeria; yes, that is no problem. The presentation must be recorded as part of our deliberations because it provides an explanation about the document that was officially distributed this morning.

I would be grateful if Algeria could be the last speaker so as to provide scope for the climate of reflection and give us the necessary time to unwind so that, at 3 p.m. this afternoon, all interested delegations can then take part in the discussions under the guidance and drawing on the experience of South Africa, a country that has successfully emerged from one of the most difficult periods of all history, leaving apartheid behind and building a society of consensus and tolerance. I think that this adds value to the country's ability to resolve the outstanding issues, which, by comparison with the challenge that the people of South Africa faced, I believe to be a lesser challenge.

Mr. Hamza Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): The Algerian delegation would just like to share an idea concerning the organization of the meetings. Mr. President, you have suggested that we hold an official plenary meeting next Thursday to hear the conclusions of the discussions led by the representative of South Africa and then proceed to the adoption of the report.

Would it not be possible to first hold an informal meeting to agree on a text that would then be finalized by the secretariat, so that we could then, in an official plenary meeting, move directly to the adoption of a clean text, agreed upon by all the delegations?

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Our colleague from the Islamic Republic of Iran is the last speaker on the list. Is there anyone else besides the Islamic Republic of Iran who wishes to speak? Because now, when I close the list, it will be closed definitively and will not be reopened under any circumstances. Does anyone else want to take the floor besides the Islamic Republic of Iran?

In any case, this morning I have listened to statements that support arguments and positions that were put forward in meetings held before we gave the mandate to our colleague from South Africa. What I am asking is that these be placed definitely on the record of the plenary session because they are, of course, the official positions of each of the countries.

The only thing that I am asking of all of you is that, when you meet with our distinguished friend from South Africa, you do not simply go there and repeat these same positions, because reiterating differences will certainly not bring us any closer to consensus. However, I know that we have the capacity to turn the momentum away from the recording of official positions and towards the negotiating process and the ultimate aim of achieving consensus. Since we do not have substantive results, the Conference has a responsibility to at least have a report on what has taken place so that the General Assembly and the international community can be informed about the reality of the situation in which we find ourselves.

Having said this, I will not give the floor to any other delegation. Later we will move on to decide how we should organize our work, but I now give the floor to our colleague from the Islamic Republic of Iran, who has also worked very closely with the informal working group and who I believe deserves to be heard.

Mr. Daryaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): I did not have anything to add when I heard your last intervention because that was the direction in which I wanted to move. Mr. President, we are here to finalize the report of the Conference, and the purpose of this report is to capture all the views of different delegations. It should be procedural, it should be factual and it should reflect the work of the Conference. We do not want to move in the direction of pessimism, but of optimism. So we have to choose a realistic approach, and I

think we are on the verge of consensus and that progress has been made under the leadership of the representative of South Africa, with the help of other colleagues. So it would be better to wait until this afternoon and see whether we have fewer divergent views and can manage to arrive at a consensus text which reflects the views of all members of the Conference.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): My thanks to the Islamic Republic of Iran. This is precisely what I, as your President, would like to see and what I am calling upon you to do. It had been suggested to me by the delegation of South Africa that the informal discussions led and coordinated by South Africa should continue at 3 p.m. this afternoon. Yet I see that the United States of America is proving to be somewhat of a challenge for the President, as I had said that no further delegations would speak; but since you are a great Power and have a great number of weapons, we will listen to you.

Mr. Reid (United States of America): Thank you for the opportunity to speak, Mr. President. We always look forward to the high fidelity of the conversations between our great nations, including in this disarmament forum. I look forward to our session at 3 p.m., and I certainly hope that we are as close to consensus as many are suggesting. I would certainly be very happy to go on the record expressing our great respect for the leadership and performance of our South African colleague to date, and I have every confidence that that will continue. He has really done quite a commendable job of steering us forward.

We should be very grateful to the secretariat for giving us an updated draft. The short pieces of text are, I think, just technical issues involving paragraphs we are not discussing in the informal meeting, and since we are here and those sections are, I think, considered by the group to be provisionally approved, it is really just text concordance that I want to draw participants' attention to.

The first issue appears on three pages: in paragraph 32 of section A and again in the last sentence of that paragraph. In accordance with CD/1907, we name three dates on which we have had these sessions, but we say there were four informal meetings and plenaries. I think we need to say three. The same issue arises in section C, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS).

The President: If you present your proposed amendments, the secretariat will take note of them. If there are no objections in the room, I think the changes can be incorporated into the revision of the report.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

Perhaps, in the interest of efficiency, we should proceed by presenting the proposals. I will then immediately give the floor to the secretariat so that it can respond to each proposal; this approach is easier for us. As regards this first amendment proposed by the United States, I give the floor to the secretariat.

Mr. Sareva (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): As to the point just raised by the representative of the United States, we will go back and check. Our records will probably show that on a given day there were two plenary meetings, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, and the same would be true for PAROS. But we will double-check. If you find any other inconsistencies in this text, please get back to us and we will check.

Now, to recap what I said before the formal meeting started: CD/WP.568 is a clean text which reflects the provisional adoption, in plenary, of the vast majority of paragraphs as well as the agreement reached in the informal consultations chaired by the representative of South Africa. It has placeholders for those paragraphs which are still being discussed in informal consultations, namely, paragraph 5, which corresponds to the previous paragraph 5; paragraph 7, which is the same as before; paragraph 15 on page 4, which corresponds to

the previous paragraph 19; paragraph 16 on page 5, which corresponds to the previous paragraph 20; and paragraphs 21 bis and 21 ter on page 5, which correspond to the previous paragraphs 25 bis and 25 ter, as discussed in the informal consultations.

Finally, the draft also includes placeholders for references to documents submitted by members as of this week. As always, all documents submitted by members will be referred to in the text.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you very much, Mr. Jarmo Sareva. I again give the floor to our distinguished colleague from the United States so that he may continue commenting on the paragraphs which he wishes to see amended.

Mr. Reid (United States of America): There is only one other instance of this. As I said, it is on page 10, in section D. We are talking about effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In the last sentence, we refer to two informal plenary meetings, but we only mention one date. I look forward to hearing the comments of the secretariat, and I think this is just a technical issue, but again, I appreciate the opportunity that this updated draft has given us to see these things more clearly. So I would again like to thank colleagues and the secretariat.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In any case, we have one plenary session left, which I suggest we hold on Thursday. I would ask the secretariat to analyse the points that have been raised by the delegation of the United States, and I think that on Thursday we should be in a position to respond. In any event, I hope that on Thursday we will be in a position to adopt the report as a whole, including all the agreements presented to us by the delegation of South Africa as coordinator of the informal discussions.

I understand what we need to consider at our meeting. What I am not sure of is whether these points can be considered in informal discussions. So I would ask the secretariat: can the draft resolution to be presented to the First Committee of the General Assembly be considered in informal meetings, or must it be considered in a plenary meeting of the Conference?

Mr. Sareva (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): The past practice has been for the outgoing president to conduct informal consultations in Geneva after the conclusion of the session, but before the First Committee meets, and sometimes those consultations have continued in New York. So it is basically up to the president, and we will, of course, support you in your work, as always.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): It is clear to me that my fundamental responsibility in respect of the plenary sessions is coming to an end, and I will be pleased when I have the Conference's report agreed upon and finalized.

Subsequently, of course, in line with the practices that our colleagues in disarmament have established over the years, I will convene these informal meetings in due course, after distributing the preliminary draft resolution and giving the delegations sufficient time to carry out the pertinent consultations.

I do not think that I should prolong this meeting any further. I therefore suggest the following: firstly, that we close this plenary meeting of the Conference; secondly, that we invite interested delegations to continue negotiating on those paragraphs that are still outstanding at 3 p.m. this afternoon, under the coordination of our colleague from South Africa – they will be meeting in room 1; and, thirdly, that we convene again in a plenary meeting on Thursday.

In the plenary meeting, we can listen and allow the coordinator from South Africa to give an account of his fulfilment of the mandate that we have given him. I am sure that we

will have good news and will have a report ready and fully agreed upon, after overcoming the obstacles that remain outstanding in these five paragraphs.

Also, certain delegations, including the delegation of Japan, have asked me to allow their Ambassadors to speak in the plenary on Thursday. I will give the opportunity to speak, in particular, to those ambassadors who have just joined us or who are about to leave the Conference in order to take up new responsibilities. I think that we should have the opportunity to hear them.

Therefore, we will also use Thursday's plenary meeting to facilitate their participation. To reiterate, I am not calling for an open debate. The purpose of the meeting is mainly to give this opportunity to the new ambassadors who have joined us and also to bid farewell in a fitting manner to those ambassadors who will be leaving Geneva to assume other functions. I think we should hear their reflections at the end of this period of intensive work, although I am not sure whether to call it "work", because in the Conference it has not been a question of working but rather of intensive endeavour and intensive efforts to get the Conference working.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, we would like to thank the Ambassador of Germany for his great interest in the Conference on Disarmament and in disarmament mechanisms and in giving the necessary impetus to establishing a world free from nuclear weapons.

We would also like to thank the representative of South Africa for the efforts that he has made in directing informal discussions in order to build consensus on the report of the 2011 session of the Conference on Disarmament. We think that we are very close to achieving consensus on this document. The Algerian delegation had not wanted to take the floor before, but it has done so now in order to comment on the valuable and enlightening statement made by the Ambassador of Germany, who mentioned something that Ambassador Jazaïry had said about the widely shared sense of concern regarding the current stalemate in the Conference. Nobody can deny that, but we would also like to say that all of these statements — including those of Ambassador Jazaïry, the Group of 21 and the Ambassador of Egypt, who recalled the position of the Non-Aligned Movement with regard to the high-level meeting convened by the Secretary-General in September 2010 — indicated what these groups and countries believe will enable the Conference to overcome this stalemate. There are reasons, principally political ones, why this situation exists. The report of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters (A/66/125), which it submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in fulfilment of the task he had entrusted to it and to which the Ambassador of Germany referred, perhaps makes clear, in paragraph six, what the main factor preventing the Conference from moving forward is, and that factor is political will. Therefore, if we want the report to reflect the widespread sense of concern that exists about the stalemate in the Conference, we must also refer to the views of States and groups of States regarding this issue so that we will be able to settle upon suitable wording that will broadly reflect the different ideas of members of the Conference on this issue. Lastly, we wish to express our deep thanks to you, Mr. President, for your efforts in this regard.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have no objection to your proposal. In fact, I think that it would be helpful in fostering a climate of understanding and would ensure that the plenary meeting proceeds with the proper solemnity, since we would have a document previously agreed upon by all members. It is true that not everyone has had the opportunity to contribute in the same manner, even in the informal discussions, although, as I have said before, everyone has the right to do so. However, I know that not all of you were able to be there.

I propose the following, although I am not sure if this reflects Algeria's proposal: we could meet at 10 a.m. on Thursday and begin working in an informal meeting, and an official plenary meeting could then be held as soon as we have reached agreement.

Alternatively, we could hold the informal meeting in the morning and the plenary meeting in the afternoon. However, I think it would be more efficient to dispense with the afternoon meeting and to concentrate all our energy on the morning meeting. So, to reiterate, is it agreed that we should proceed in this way, getting together at 10 in the morning in an informal meeting and doing a final clean-up of the text to make sure we have no remaining doubts? Immediately after hearing the final text, even though we would have completed the final review, I would like to give the floor in the plenary meeting to our distinguished colleague from South Africa, who has, I believe, done an excellent job and is completing a mandate that we conferred upon him in a plenary meeting.

For this reason, even if we have reached agreement on the text, we should give the floor in the plenary meeting to our colleague from South Africa so that he may give an account of the completion of his mandate and, in the certainty that no delegation has any doubt, we would then adopt the report.

Provided there are no objections, I propose proceeding in this manner. Officially we will be meeting at 10 a.m. on Thursday, and the delegations that have been participating, and any other that might be interested, can meet today at 3 p.m., in room 1, under the guidance of our distinguished colleague from South Africa, to continue with our informal negotiations.

I therefore declare closed the 1241st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.