United Nations A/CN.10/PV.343

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

343rd meeting

Monday, 19 January 2015, 10 a.m.

New York

Chair: Mr. Drobnjak . . . . . (Croatia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Opening of the session

The Chair: I declare open the 2015 organizational session of the Disarmament Commission.

Draft provisional agenda for the 2015 organizational session of the Disarmament Commission (A/CN.10/L.73)

The Chair: As in past years, the Commission has convened today for a brief session to deal with its organizational matters, including the election of the Chair and of other members of the Bureau for 2015.

I wish now to draw the Commission's attention to the provisional agenda for this organizational session, as contained in document A/CN.10/L.73. If I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the provisional agenda as contained in document A/CN.10/L.73.

The agenda was adopted.

Election of the Chair

The Chair: In accordance with the established practice of rotation, it is the Group of African States that has the honour to nominate the candidate for the post of the Chair of the Commission at its 2015 session. I have received an official communication from the Chair of that Group informing me that the Group has endorsed the candidature of Ambassador Fodé Seck of Senegal for the chairmanship of the Commission for its 2015 session.

If I hear no objection, I will take it that it is the wish of the Commission to elect Ambassador Fodé Seck as the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chair: On behalf of the Commission and on my own behalf, I congratulate Ambassador Fodé Seck, Permanent Representative of Senegal, on his election to this high office. I express the commonly shared view when I say that we are looking forward to benefiting from his wide experience and diplomatic skills. We wish him success in discharging his new and important duties. For our part, we will remain at his service, ready to provide support and counsel, as necessary.

Finally, as outgoing Chair, I would like to warmly thank all those who assisted me in 2014, particularly the Secretariat, the members of the Bureau and my hardworking team in the Croatian mission. It has been a rewarding experience.

With those brief remarks, I invite Ambassador Fodé Seck to take the Chair.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) took the Chair.

Statement by the Chair

The Chair (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the members of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for electing me Chair of the Commission and entrusting me with the important task of chairing this organizational session, as well as for the kind words and wishes addressed to me. I count on

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the support and cooperation of all Member States in achieving the important goals ahead of the Commission.

Before turning to the next item on our agenda, I would first like to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak for the excellent guidance and leadership he provided as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 2014 substantive session. My gratitude also goes to other members of the Bureau for their valiant and tireless efforts. Finally, I would like to thank delegations for the constructive spirit and cooperation they demonstrated during the previous session of the Commission.

Election of other officers

The Chair (*spoke in French*): Like the Chair, the other officers of the Bureau are elected on a basis of the established principle of geographic rotation. Accordingly, it is the turn of the Group of Eastern European States to nominate a candidate for Rapporteur of the Commission for the 2015 substantive session and one Vice-Chair.

I would suggest that we proceed to the election of the Vice-Chair. In that regard, I have been informed that the consultations are still ongoing within regional groups on possible candidates for the posts of Vice-Chair and Rapporteur. We will therefore address the issue at a later stage.

Review of the draft resolution submitted to the First Committee at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly relating to the Disarmament Commission

The Chair (*spoke in French*): As members of the Commission are aware, the General Assembly adopted a resolution that has specific bearing on the work of the Commission. In the interest of clarity and for the information of the members of the Commission, I would like to briefly revisit this resolution. Resolution 69/77, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission" was adopted at the Assembly's 62nd plenary meeting, on 2 December 2014, under agenda item 98 (b). The relevant paragraphs of the resolution, namely, paragraphs 5, 6 and 7, read as follows:

> "Recommends that the Disarmament Commission intensify consultations with a view to reaching agreement on the items on its agenda, in accordance with General Assembly decision 52/492, before the start of its substantive session of 2015, providing for focused deliberations and keeping in mind the proposal to include a third agenda item;
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> "Encourages the Disarmament Commission to invite, as appropriate, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to prepare background papers on the items on its agenda and, if need be, other disarmament experts to present their views, as provided for in paragraph 3 (e) of resolution 61/98, upon the invitation of the Chair and with the prior approval of the Commission;
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> "Requests the Disarmament Commission to meet for a period not exceeding three weeks during 2015, namely from 6 to 24 April, and to submit a substantive report to the General Assembly at its seventieth session, and stresses that the report of the Commission should contain a summary by the Chair of the proceedings to reflect different views or positions if no agreement can be reached on the specific agenda item deliberated on, as provided for in paragraph 3.4 of the adopted 'Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission'".

I have just outlined the resolution containing the mandate for the upcoming work of the Disarmament Commission.

I will now give the floor to delegations wishing to make statements or comments.

Mr. Mažeiks (Latvia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

First, we would like to express our sincere thanks to the outgoing Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia, and his dedicated team for their tireless efforts during the previous session of the Commission. We congratulate the newly elected Chair, Ambassador Fodé Seck of Senegal, designated by the Group of African States. We would like to take this opportunity to assure you, Mr. Chair, of our full support. We look forward to working closely with you and firmly believe that under your leadership the Commission's work will progress.

We have always recognized the important role the Disarmament Commission was designed to play as the main subsidiary body of the United Nations on disarmament matters when it was established at the Organization's first special session devoted to disarmament. The Commission has played an important role in the past, adopting a number of guidelines and recommendations. Regrettably, that was a long time ago. Since 1999, the Commission has been unable to properly comply with its mandate and has failed to agree on any recommendations to be made to the General Assembly. Since this session of the Commission marks the beginning of a new three-year cycle, we sincerely hope that it will grasp the opportunity to agree on a more focused agenda. In our view, that could create room for consensus recommendations and enable the Disarmament Commission to once again assume its designated role.

In that context, we welcome Assembly resolution 69/77, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission", which recommends that the Commission intensify its consultations with a view to reaching agreement on the items on its agenda, in accordance with Assembly decision 52/492, before the start of its 2015 substantive session, providing for focused deliberations and keeping in mind the proposal to include a third agenda item.

We believe that the option of expanding the agenda should be further explored. An additional agenda item could create favourable conditions for overcoming the existing deadlock caused by artificial linkages between the results of proceedings in two Working Groups, as seen during the previous three-year cycle. It would also enable the Disarmament Commission to discuss new developments and challenges for international security and multilateral disarmament.

In that regard, we would like to endorse the proposal by the United States to establish a working group on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space, as recommended for the Commission's consideration by the Group of Governmental Experts in its consensus report (A/68/189).

While noting that, in accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 69/77, the General Assembly requested the Commission to meet for a period not exceeding three weeks during 2015, namely from 6 to 24 April, we continue to believe that serious consideration should be given to the possibility of reducing the duration of the UNDC's substantive sessions, in particular in the first year of the triennial cycle. We would encourage the Chair to undertake an effort to complete the 2015 substantive session as early as possible.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, we wish you every success in your work. We are looking forward to working with the other delegations to make the new three-year cycle of the UNDC a productive one.

Mr. El Oumni (Morocco): First of all, Mr. Chair, I would like to express our appreciation to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Croatia, and his team for all the efforts they made and the manner in which they led the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) during the previous session until today. We would like also to congratulate you on your election, Mr. Chair, and assure you of our full and active support.

For the first time, General Assembly resolution 69/77, on the mandate for the upcoming work of the Disarmament Commission, contains a paragraph stressing the importance of the UNDC adopting an agenda that provides for focused deliberations, among other measures that have not been set forth in the analogous resolution for quite some time.

We believe that consultations on the agenda should start at the earliest possible opportunity. Sir, I am sure that your predecessor has already informed you of the ideas contained in his report to the First Committee in which the proposals made in the consultations that preceded the work of the First Committee at its most recent session were summarized. Based on those ideas, I think we could reach an agreement at an early date. It is in our interest to do so because we do not want toopen this session without an agreement on the agenda. From past experience, we know that we have wasted precious time in trying to agree on the agenda for the Commission during the session itself. We must be particularly careful this time because we are negotiating the agenda for an entire three-year cycle.

We think that we have to be flexible in approaching this issue. We do not have to make major changes to the Commission's agenda. As we have proposed in the past, the Commission can keep the agenda as it is while remaining consistent with resolution 69/77, which provides for focused deliberations, which can be done by agreeing on sub-agenda items. We would table our previous proposal on reaching an agreement on sub-items that would fall under agenda item 1 on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Under that

agenda item, we could agree on sub-items either for a whole cycle or for more than one cycle. We could reach an agreement for one cycle and then have a gentleman's agreement for a period that goes beyond that first cycle. I believe that is approach could facilitate our finding agreement on an agenda.

We listened carefully to the statement made the representative of Latvia, who spoke on behalf of the European Union, and we find the proposal for a third agenda item very interesting. However, we need to separate two issues: first, an agreement on an additional agenda item, and, secondly, the number of working groups to be established. I hope we will not link the proposal of a new agenda item with the establishment of a new working group. We are not sure it is a good idea to have three working groups during one session. I do not think we can afford to have three groups working at the same time during the same session.

We are flexible when it comes to the new agenda item, but the question of how to handle the three agenda items during one session should be left to further consultations. I do not think we need to have three working groups. We can discuss this further at a later stage.

Mr. Aljowaily (Egypt) (*spoke in French*): First of all, Mr. Chair, I would like to congratulate you upon your election. You have all of our support, Sir, and we are confident that we will achieve tangible results under your chairmanship. I would also like to express our thanks to the representative of Croatia for the diligence and skill with which he guided the session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and, in particular, the negotiations that were held during the meetings of the First Committee this year.

We will of course leave it to our colleague, the representative of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), to express the formal opinion of NAM, but, given the ideas that you mentioned, Sir, as well as those of the representatives of Latvia, speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU), and of Morocco, I would just like to share a few of our general impressions on how we could promote the achievement of concrete results for the UNDC.

We are very open to all the proposals and ideas that have been shared, including the idea of establishing a third working group. But it is very difficult to take a position on something for which we have no specific details. For us, in principle, the starting point should always be disarmament. In other words, disarmament should always be the clearest and most concrete aspect, whether or not we establish a third working group.

The choice of subject for a third working group, if we decide to move in that direction, should have as its focus the disarmament aspect. We are very open to hearing your ideas, Mr. Chair, as well as those of our colleagues. I believe the representative of Croatia has already circulated some relevant ideas. We have even held interactive and pointed consultations during which my delegation, at least, addressed several subjects, the starting point of which was always the disarmament aspect of the subject being discussed. It has not always been the case that the subject under discussion had a clear disarmament aspect, but we hope that, under your leadership and chairmanship of the UNDC, Mr. Chair, it will, especially because this is, after all, the Disarmament Commission.

I would also like to endorse what my European Union and Moroccan colleagues said — the sooner we begin, the easier it will be. The official work of the Commission begins in April, but if we start now with informal consultations under your chairmanship, Sir, that would help us begin the actual work in April, instead of having to start with discussions on what the agenda will be and whether there will be two or three or more working groups. The earlier we begin — as we did in other processes, in particular the discussion on small arms and light weapons, which began a year in advance, which is why we had enough time to deal with the thematic and substantive aspects during the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects — the better. Perhaps that approach could also work in the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

We have full confidence in you, Mr. Chair, and we offer you our full support. We hope that we will have the opportunity to achieve concrete results in this forum. I would also like to thank the Secretariat, which has always done its utmost to support this process. I congratulate you once again, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Wensley (South Africa): I thank you, Mr. Chair, for convening these informal consultations. First of all, my delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. It is indeed a challenging position, which requires the Chair to steer us through

the work of the Commission. I would also like to congratulate the outgoing Chair, the Ambassador of Croatia, for the tireless efforts with which he tried to lead us to an outcome in the last session.

I think that taking up new issues at this time at the United Nations Disarmament Commission would be very challenging. I believe that we were very close to reaching consensus at least on the confidence-building measures issue in the working group on that topic in our last session. We were very close. We had some way to go perhaps on nuclear-disarmament issues in the working group dedicated to that topic. I just do not know how we are going to accommodate a third working group, as our colleagues from Morocco and Egypt so eloquently stated. As they have stated, while we are open to the creation of a working group on any other matter, I do not know how we are going to do so in the present climate. Having spent 15 years not reaching any agreement on anything in the Commission, it might be a little difficult.

In the context of creating a third working group, the European Union's view that we should have a shorter first session is not clear to me. I do not know how we are going to adequately cover a new topic and consider it carefully if we are going to truncate the first session. I am open to any practical suggestions as to how that might be done.

As Egypt has so eloquently said, we are open to starting informal consultations on the various agenda items, whether there be two or three, and we are open to doing so as soon as possible.

The foregoing are just my informal views. Obviously, the Non-Aligned Movement will express its more formal views to the Commission once they have been formulated.

Mr. Volgarev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, we would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, and we look forward to cooperating with you to productive ends.

Russia calls for an intensification of the Commission's work as an important element in the United Nations disarmament machinery triad. In the future, we will continue to support the forum as much as possible so it will be able to fulfil the functions mandated to it at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, namely, helping to reach agreements in the areas of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

We would like to guard against any initiatives aimed at adjusting this forum's rules of procedure, including linking it to the process of establishing the agenda. We believe that the principle of consensus must always be at the heart of any consideration of issues of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. The Commission has good experience in this work and is fully capable of delivering quality product without changing the existing rules of procedure. The problem is not the rules of procedure, but the difficulty of mobilizing the political will of States to carry out effective work.

Considering the insufficience of information on States' approaches in the annual resolution on the United Nations Disarmament Commission, we believe it advisable to underscore the importance of having States and the Commission's secretariat itself provide detailed proposals on the agenda. We therefore earnestly call upon the secretariat to prepare, at the end of today's meeting, a consolidated document containing all the proposals that have come in. We would ask that such a document be distributed to delegations so that it may be considered promptly by the capitals whose responses would then transmitted to the secretariat within an acceptable time frame, perhaps by 16 February. The Commission's main session deadline allows for final consideration of the consolidated proposals of States, but we would suggest conducting one more organizational meeting of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

For our part, we would like to propose that the topics of prevention of an arms race in outer space and of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space be included in the agenda of the upcoming session. A positive outcome could be facilitated the fact that the corresponding documents of the General Assembly, namely, resolution 69/31, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, resolution 69/38, on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, and resolution 68/243, adopted in 2013, which takes note of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (A/68/98), were adopted by consensus. In our view, this thematic consolidation could help us improve the work of the forum and, more generally, bring it out of its impasse.

We would also like to take the opportunity to thank our former Chair, Ambassador Drobnjak, for his accomplishments at the helm of United Nations Disarmament Commission. We highly appreciate the results he achieved, as well as his thorough and business-like approach to his work.

Mr. Adejola (Nigeria): I would take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, at least informally, on behalf of the African Group on your nomination, election and assumption of the position of Chair. We would assure you, Sir, of our commitment to working with you in a productive manner, and we also thank your predecessor for all his efforts.

Speaking in my national capacity, I would state that my delegation is open to proposals that will ensure that the discussions and deliberations in the months to come are unfettered. Since this is a new three-year cycle, we should also be careful not to introduce elements that might become sources of encumbrance.

The representative of South Africa just highlighted the fact that we almost reached consensus last year. And that is exactly the problem: we keep saying that every year. I recall that, during the 2011 substantive session, we also almost reached consensus in Working Group II. I still vividly recall what happened the evening consensus was almost reached. We made an appeal to everyone, including the sound engineers and the interpreters, to stay. I remember what our colleague from Iran said that day, which was quite useful. He assured the Chair of his support and said that his wife had previously called to tell him not to come home if we did not reach consensus that day. Our colleague from Portugal joined the fray, saying that, while he did not have a wife, we still had to reach consensus that day. But, sadly, we were not able to do so.

That is why we have to be careful about what we are doing. We want the period from 6 to 24 April 2015 to be meaningful, and the proposals from our colleagues from Morocco and Egypt are of course sound. Let us start on time. I do not believe that we should introduce new elements, because if we do that, as long as the reasons that the Working Groups have been failing until now remain unresolved, we risk getting muddled up again.

However, we believe the windows are now closing, so we would not foreclose any possibilities, including the new proposals. All that we ask of our colleagues is to ensure that we all come to the table with an equitable mindset and clean hands. In that way, at the end of the day, we will be able to live happily with the results.

Mr. Robatjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): First of all, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to express our appreciation for the dedicated efforts made by the outgoing Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to move forward the work of the Commission and prepare the draft resolution adopted by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the First Committee (resolution 69/77). I would also like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as the new Chair of the Commission and wish you success in this endeavour. My delegation is ready to support your work, Sir, and we can assure you of our full support in that regard. Given the developments at this stage, the Commission is, as pointed out by our colleagues, ready to begin consultations on determining the agenda items for the next session as soon as possible.

The representative of Latvia, speaking on behalf of the European Union, made some important points, including a specific proposal with regard to the Commission's agenda. At this stage, we will convey that proposal to our capital and await instructions. However, as far as our position is concerned, we have already expressed our reservations and doubt about having a third agenda item. We do not think that the inclusion of a third agenda item will be fruitful because it would likely overload the Commission's agenda. We therefore urge caution in dealing with this issue. As is clear from resolution 69/77, it is the view of only a few countries — certainly there is no consensus on the idea — to add a third item to the agenda.

At the same time, our colleague from Morocco rightly pointed to a provision of resolution 69/77 on the need to have focused discussions in the Commission's next cycle. We think that this provision is important and that it is worthy of serious consideration. We would also like to express our support for the proposal made by our colleague from Russia to ask the Secretariat to prepare a comprehensive list of current or previous proposals for inclusion in the agenda of the Commission.

Mr. Ried (United States of America): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election today. You can certainly depend on the full support of my delegation, Sir, as you take up the responsibilities of your new Office.

I will limit my remarks to the proposal to establish a third working group. As we noted in our

opening statement to the Commission last April (see A/CN.10/PV.337), the United States is committed to the stable, sustainable and peaceful use and protection of outer space to support the vital interests of all nations. Resolution 68/50, of 2013, refers to recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities to the Commission (A/68/189) for its consideration. The Group's recommendations are, in our view, an ideal topic for in-depth consideration at future sessions of the Commission. Therefore, we would be very supportive of a proposal for the establishment of a third working group.

Mr. Sun Lei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank you, Mr. Chair, for chairing the meeting today. The Chinese delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this important body, the United Nations Disarmament Commission, and will cooperate fully with you. Meanwhile, we would also like to thank the outgoing Chair, the representative of Croatia, for the important contributions he has made to the Commission. I would like to make four points.

First, the United Nations Disarmament Commission has made some valuable accomplishments in the past. The international community should continue to build on and strengthen the Commission's contributions and revitalize its work so as to make further contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Secondly, in the working cycle starting this year, discussions with a view to reaching an agreement on the agenda will be very important. China is open to considering whether we should continue the existing approach to the discussions, namely, addressing both nuclear and conventional issues.

Thirdly, in order to keep up with current developments in peace, security and disarmament, China would also suggest that we select a number of new issues from the proposed list for inclusion in the Commission's agenda. China has already proposed the following topics to the other members of the Commission.

(*spoke in English*)

The topics could be, first, factors affecting global strategic stability; secondly, guiding principles for the maintenance of international information and cybersecurity; thirdly, guiding principles for the prevention of an arms race in outer space; fourthly, ways to enhance the balance between supply and demand of sensitive nuclear materials; fifthly, the challenges to biological and chemical weapons verification against the backdrop of the integration of biology and chemistry; and, sixthly, the influence of new developments in the military field on conventional disarmament. The foregoing are the agenda items that China put forward last year, as requested by the Croatian Chair in his call for revitalizing the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

(*spoke in Chinese*)

My fourth point is that China continues to believe that, by adhering to the principle of consensus, the Commission will be able to start negotiations and discussions as soon as possible and reach agreement in order to lay a good foundation for our work this year.

Mrs. Del Sol Dominguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election and wish you every success in your work. We would also like to express our recognition of the work done by the outgoing Chair, the representative of Croatia.

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to say that we support the idea of starting our work as soon as possible in order to reach agreement on the items on our agenda. We are concerned in particular about the possibility of adding a third agenda item, and we share that concern with other colleagues for reasons of time alone. In other words, we believe that, given the time dedicated to the work of the Commission and the two Working Groups, a third group would detract from the goal of reaching the consensus that we all hope for in the work of the Commission. That is why we are also concerned about the proposal to decrease the amount of time allotted to the work of the Commission. We support the idea of keeping the agenda focused on disarmament issues, especially nuclear disarmament, and we would reiterate my delegation's support for your work, Sir, and for the Commission's success.

Mr. Hashmi (Pakistan): My delegation would also like to associate itself with others in congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of the Commission at this session. We would express our appreciation to Croatia for ably the leading the proceedings during the last session. I would like to highlight a couple of points.

Much has already been said, and it is obvious to us that what is happening in the Commission is not something that our delegation — or many others — takes

pride in. There is a lot of frustration, but we want to suggest that the inaction of the past 15 years or so within the Commission is not entirely a function of the failure of its working methods. Of course, there is always room for improvement in that regard, but that may not necessarily be the sole reason. There are other reasons, but this is not the time to go into them. We have had these discussions before.

We can support some of the additional proposals in terms of items that have been made by China. We also endorse the process that has been suggested by Russia, namely, to put all the proposals together and then have a look at them. That makes eminent sense because a lot of comments, proposals and suggestions are on the table. It would make great sense to have them on a single piece of paper, on the basis of which we would subsequently have a structured or informal discussion.

Like others, we also have questions and we would be happy to have detailed discussions on any of them. But for the sake of brevity I would mention just one — whether an additional, third agenda item would necessarily involve the structure of an additional working group, as some have mentioned. Or would it be like what we have seen in the Commission's previous practice, namely, having have the two items dealt with in two separate working groups and the third item being dealt with, not in the format of a working group, but in a different and more informal format?

There is also the element of time. Our colleagues from the European Union have indicated that the time frame needs to be curtailed. We are prepared to look at that issue, but how could the idea of a third agenda item be squared with the idea of reducing the time frame, assuming that there are two working groups with a certain amount of time to be allocated to the existing two agenda items in those two working groups. So what is the time frame that we are looking at for the consideration of the third item, with or without establishing a working group?

There are of course other questions, but at this stage, we would just endorse the Russian proposal of culling the ideas on the table into a single document and then looking at them with an open mind, with discussion and more conversation. We certainly look forward to that.

Mrs. García Guiza (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would first like to congratulate you, Sir, on your recent election and to express to you our support as you carry out your work.

Mexico would support any initiative that would make the thematic discussions more flexible and substantive and promote interactivity in the United Nations Disarmament Commission's discussions.

With respect to the possibility of modifying the substantive agenda, my delegation believes that the core problem is more than one of just agenda items, in that the Commission has not been able to make any substantive recommendations in recent years. Mexico would not be opposed to modifying the agenda, as long as we are prioritizing agenda items aimed at implementing the recommendations of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in order to facilitate the disarmament process and at adopting methods and policies that enhance international peace and security and build confidence among States.

Mr. Abhishek Singh (India): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the post of Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I would also like to thank the outgoing Chair, the Ambassador of Croatia, for his leadership. We look forward to constructively engaging the UNDC on all issues during the informal consultations, including the issue of the consideration of a third agenda item.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): We are already fully engaged in informal consultations. The Secretariat shall be requested, pursuant to the requests formulated by a number of delegations, to draw up a compilation of the various proposals. I do not know how long the Secretariat will need to do so, but the faster the better so that, on the basis of that compendium and of the most recent resolution on the Commission (resolution 69/77) and the report of the outgoing Chair, we can rapidly move to making progress in the informal consultations so as to be in a position from 6 to 24 April to make progress at the start of the new cycle of discussions in the Disarmament Commission.

I now call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Robatjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Given your request, Sir, that the Secretariat prepare a compilation of the proposals for the agenda of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, I would like to propose that delegations be given a deadline, perhaps of 31 January 2015, by which to present their proposals to the Secretariat, in the light of our discussions today. This would enable all delegations to consult with their

capitals and political groupings in order to consult among themselves before presenting their proposals to the Secretariat so as to ensure that the list to be prepared will be more effective and efficient.

The Chair: May I take it that the Commission agrees that all such proposals to be included in the compendium to be drawn up by the Secretariat should be submitted to the Secretariat by 31 January 2015?

It was so decided.

The Chair: If there are no further comments, I will take it that the Commission wishes to take note of the provisional agenda for the 2015 substantive session as contained in document A/CN.10/L.74 — with the understanding, of course, that the agenda will be revised accordingly and formally adopted after we reach consensus on items 4 and 5?

It was so decided.

The Chair: It is also my understanding that informal consultations are needed to reach agreement on the substantive items and that the Commission will act accordingly when such an agreement has been reached.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly and meets annually. Its sessions are financed from regular budgets and do not require additional funding. Moreover, in accordance with decision 52/492, of 1998, the annual substantive sessions of the Commission should last three weeks. As a result, during the 2015 session the Commission will work on the basis of our usual practice, namely, a full three-week session. With this in mind, the Secretariat has arranged that the dates for the 2015 substantive session would be from 6 to 24 April. The last day of the first week, 10 April, coincides with Orthodox Good Friday, and there will be no meetings on that day. That means that the schedule of the session will be adjusted accordingly. May I take it that the Commission takes note of those arrangements?

It was so decided.

The Chair: I should like to note that, according to established practice, all organizational matters should be concluded at the organizational session of the Disarmament Commission. Unfortunately, as I have already informed the Commission, we are not in a position to conclude organizational matters in view of the following outstanding vacancies: first, one Vice-Chair from the Group of African States; secondly, two Vice-Chairs from each of the following groups: the Group of Asia-Pacific States, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, and the Group of Western European and Other States; and, thirdly, one Vice-Chair and Rapporteur from the Group of Eastern European States.

As the Commission is aware, this is a tall order. I would like to use this opportunity to appeal to the regional groups concerned to conduct all the necessary consultations in order to enable the Commission to start its substantive work as planned, on 6 April, with a full Bureau. Accordingly, it might be advisable for the Commission to conclude this organizational session and give the Chair and delegations time to carry on further consultations on those issues and to take decisions at an appropriate time.

If there are no more pressing issues to discuss, I will take it that it is the wish of the Disarmament Commission to conclude the 2015 organizational session and to resume the unfinished organizational business at the first meeting of the Disarmament Commission, on 6 April.

It was so decided.

The Chair: I now call on the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Wensley (South Africa): Should I therefore assume that there will be no further informal consultations? I ask because we have heard a number of proposals today, including to shorten the first session and to add additional items. My assumption is that these will be dealt with on the opening day of the United Nations Disarmament Commission session and that there will be no further sessions.

In my view, there are far more issues to be resolved than can be resolved on the opening day of the substantive session. As my colleagues have done, I have sat through a number of organizational sessions, and I would hate to get into a situation where we end up with more unresolved procedural issues on the opening day than issues we actually have agreement on with regard to what we are supposed to be doing and where we are supposed to be going.

Mr. Volgarev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): My delegation has already called for the holding of one more organizational meeting for the final consideration of those proposals for additions to the agenda. If for some reason that is not possible, due,

for example, to the cost of holding such a meeting, then we would like to consider alternatives on how to get input in order to reach a common denominator among States. Agreements could be reached through informal consultations, e-mail or similar means.

We agree to reaching an agreement on the pending issues on the first day of the substantive session, as long as there would be a timely circulation by the Secretariat of a substantive document on the issues with an analysis of the proposals that have come in so that we have enough time to study it. However, it would be better to have one more organizational meeting. That would be our preferred option.

The Chair (*spoke in French*): I will ask the Secretariat if it is possible, from a practical and logistical standpoint, to hold another organizational meeting, given that between now and the end of January all the parties will have submitted their proposals to the Secretariat and they will be compiled and distributed to everyone with a view to holding informal consultations.

I now call on the representative of Morocco.

Mr. El Oumni (Morocco): Just to be clear, I do not know whether we really need another organizational meeting, because the purpose of having informal consultations is to try to reach agreement prior to the first meeting of the substantive session, so as to ensure that when we open the session we can easily approve what we would have already agreed to during our informal consultations. We do not oppose having another organizational meeting, but we do not think it is really necessary. I think the same thing happened in the past when we held an organizational meeting without the full membership of the Bureau, and we started the session and got through it easily, especially when it came to the organizational issues.

What I would suggest to the Chair is that, after you, Sir, have received all the proposals, and once they are circulated to all delegations, based on that compilation of proposals you can start your informal consultations with groups and delegations and then you, Sir, may convene informal consultations when you consider that consultations or discussions are ripe enough for another meeting, to try to reach an agreement. From there we can move to the substantive session. I do not think there is a need for another organizational meeting. That is my understanding.

The Chair: Could I ask the representative of South Africa if the summary proposal of the representative of Morocco is agreeable to him?

Mr. Wensley (South Africa): Thank you, Mr. Chair, for putting me on the spot here. I would go along with our Moroccan colleague's suggestion. I always take counsel from him. He is a very wise multilateralist. He has been around this game for a long time.

My only sense is that we need to see what the proposals are. That is all I am saying. But if you circulate them, Mr. Chair, and we can all have a look at them and meet in our political and regional groups, with ample time prior to the opening day, it would be better than for us just to walk into the opening day and see them at that particular point.

The Chair: That is exactly my understanding. We will have the compilation of proposals finalized by 31 January. We could start our informal consultations during the second half of the month of February. I think that gives enough time for delegations and groups of countries to consult with their capitals and among themselves, and for us to see how close we are to having a smooth start on the first day of our substantive session on 6 April.

May I take it that the Commission wishes to proceed on that basis?

It was so decided.

The Chair: The next meeting of the Disarmament Commission in its formal format will therefore be announced in the *Journal of the United Nations*.

Before adjourning, it is my wish to appeal to all representatives, especially to the outgoing Chair, to help the Chair.

(*spoke in French*)

I would like to have a group of friends of the Chair to assist in the smooth operation of the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. I invite kind volunteers to join the group of friends of the Chair.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.