



General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

361st meeting

Monday, 13 February 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

Chair: Mr. Tevi(Vanuatu)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Gabriela Martinic of Argentina as the candidate for the chairmanship of the Commission at its 2017 session.

Opening of the session

The Acting Chair: I declare open the 2017 organizational session of the Disarmament Commission.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that it is the wish of the Commission to elect Mrs. Gabriela Martinic as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission by acclamation.

Draft provisional agenda for the 2017 organizational session of the Disarmament Commission (A/CN.10/L.77)

The Acting Chair: As in past years, the Commission is convened today for a brief session to deal with its organizational matters, including the election of the Chair and other members of the Bureau for 2017.

It was so decided.

I would now like to draw the Commission's attention to the provisional agenda for this organizational session, as contained in document A/CN.10/L.77.

The Acting Chair: On behalf of the Commission and on my own behalf, I congratulate Mrs. Gabriela Martinic, Deputy Permanent Representative of Argentina, on her election to this high office. I am expressing a commonly shared view when I say that we are looking forward to benefiting from her experience and diplomatic skills. We wish her every success in discharging her new and important duties. For our part, we will remain at her service with support and counsel, as necessary.

If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the provisional agenda as contained in document A/CN.10/L.77.

With those brief remarks I invite Mrs. Martinic to take the Chair.

The agenda was adopted.

Mrs. Martinic (Argentina) took the Chair.

Election of the Chair

The Acting Chair: In accordance with the established practice of rotation, it is the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States that has the honour of nominating the candidate for the post of Chair of the Commission at its 2017 session. I have received an official communication from the Chair of that Group informing me that the Group has reached agreement on the nomination of Minister Plenipotentiary

The Chair: At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the Commission for electing me Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and to acknowledge the important task I have been entrusted with in chairing this organizational session. I count on the support and cooperation of all Member States in achieving the important goals ahead of the Commission.

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Before turning to the next item on our agenda, I would like to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 2016 substantive session, Ambassador Odo Tevi of Vanuatu, for his excellent guidance and leadership of the Commission. My gratitude also goes to the other members of the Bureau for their valiant and tireless efforts. Lastly, I would like to thank the delegations for their constructive spirit and cooperation during the Commission's previous session.

We will now continue with the third item on our agenda, the election of other officers of the Disarmament Commission for 2017. I have been informed that a communication has been received from the Group of Western European and other States to the effect that the Group has endorsed the candidatures of Mr. George Wilhelm Gallhofer of Austria and Mr. Rauf Alp Denктаş of Turkey as Vice-Chairs of the Commission at its 2017 substantive session.

If I hear no comments, I will take it that the Commission wishes to elect Mr. George Wilhelm Gallhofer of Austria and Mr. Rauf Alp Denктаş of Turkey as Vice-Chairs of the Commission at its 2017 substantive session, by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chair: I congratulate Mr. George Wilhelm Gallhofer of Austria and Mr. Rauf Alp Denктаş of Turkey on their election and look forward to fruitful cooperation with both of them in the Bureau as well as in the Commission.

I have also been informed that consultations are still going on within other regional groups on possible candidates for the posts of Vice-Chairs and the Rapporteur. We can address this issue at a later stage.

Review of resolution 71/82 adopted at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly

The Chair: As the members of the Commission are aware, the General Assembly has adopted one resolution that has specific bearing on the work of the Commission. For the sake of clarity and for the benefit of the members of the Commission, I would like to refer to that resolution.

Resolution 71/82, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission", was adopted by the General Assembly at its 51st plenary meeting, on 5 December 2016, under agenda item 100 (b). The

relevant paragraphs of the draft resolution, paragraphs 5, 6, 7 and 10, read as follows. Paragraph 5 reads:

"Recalls the fact that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 52/492, at its 355th meeting, on 4 April 2016, the Disarmament Commission adopted the provisional agenda for its substantive session of 2016, on the understanding that consultations would continue on ways and means to implement resolution 69/77, and that the Commission decided that the agenda for its substantive session of 2015 should serve for the period 2015-2017."

Paragraph 6 reads:

"Recommends that the Disarmament Commission continue consideration of the following items at its substantive session of 2017: (a) Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons; (b) Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons."

Paragraph 7 reads:

"Notes the consultations with Member States conducted by the Chair of the Disarmament Commission during its intersessional period regarding a working paper containing a proposal for the inclusion of a third item on its agenda for the remaining period of the present triennial cycle in the context of considering ways and means to implement General Assembly resolution 69/77, in accordance with Assembly decision 52/492, and encourages the Commission to hold informal discussions on the subject contained in the above-mentioned working paper during the substantive session of the Commission in 2017, without prejudice to the deliberations on the existing agenda items."

Paragraph 10 reads:

"Requests the Disarmament Commission to meet for a period not exceeding three weeks during 2017, namely, from 3 to 21 April, and to submit a substantive report to the General Assembly at its seventy-second 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, which contains the mandate for the upcoming work of the Disarmament Commission.

I now open the floor to delegations wishing to make a statement or comment on anything I have said so far.

Provisional agenda for the 2017 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission

The Chair: If there are no comments, I will take it that the Commission wishes to take note of the provisional agenda for the 2017 substantive session, as contained in document A/CN.10/L.78.

It was so decided.

Organizational matters

The Chair: 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 2017 session, the Commission will work on the basis of its usual practice, namely, a full three-week session. With that in mind, and based on resolution 71/82, the Secretariat has made arrangements for the 2017 substantive session to be held from 3 to 21 April.

I should like to note that, pursuant to resolution 44/119, of 15 December 1989, 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 those organizational matters, in view of the following outstanding vacancies: two Vice-Chairs from the Group of African States; one Vice-Chair and Rapporteur from the Group of Asia-Pacific States; two Vice-Chairs from the Group of Eastern European States; and one Vice-Chair from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

As members can see, it is a tall order, and I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to the regional groups concerned to conduct all necessary consultations in order to enable the Commission to start its substantive work, as planned, on 3 April with a full Bureau. Accordingly, it might be advisable for the Commission to conclude this organizational session and give the Chair, Vice-Chairs and delegations time to carry out further consultations on these issues.

If there are no more pressing issues to discuss, I shall take it that it is the wish of the Disarmament Commission to conclude the 2017 organizational session and to resume the unfinished organizational business at the first meeting of the United Nations Disarmament Commission on 3 April.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.