

# Conference on Disarmament

English

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**Final record of the one thousand five hundred and twenty-eighth plenary meeting**


Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 11 February 2020, at 10.05 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Rachid Belbaki ..... (Algeria)

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**The President** (*spoke in French*): Ladies and gentlemen, Madam Director-General, I call to order the 1528th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like first of all to welcome the Director-General, who has kindly agreed to participate in this morning's meeting. This is a good sign for us.

I invite the Conference to consider the requests from non-member States to participate in its work that had been received as of yesterday, Monday, 10 February, at 3 p.m. The requests are contained in document CD/WP.625, copies of which are available on your tables. Any requests from non-member States received after that date will be presented for your consideration and decision at future plenary meetings. May I take it that the Conference decides to invite these States to participate in our work in accordance with the rules of procedure?

*It was so decided.*

**The President** (*spoke in French*): At this meeting, I would like first to give the floor to speakers who wish to make statements to the plenary. Once there are no names left on the list of speakers, I intend to move to an informal setting to allow an exchange of views on the package of documents that was sent out yesterday by the secretariat on behalf of the six Presidents of the 2020 session of the Conference. Hard copies of the documents will be made available to you for the informal meeting. The package includes a draft presidential statement on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, a working paper on a draft proposal for a programme of work of the Conference for 2020 and a draft decision on the implementation of the programme of work for 2020, including the appointment of coordinators of the subsidiary bodies and the establishment of a timetable.

Delegations may take the opportunity to exchange views on the appointment of the coordinators of the subsidiary bodies and on the timetable. I will then close the informal meeting to return to the formal plenary meeting and give the floor to delegations that request it.

Distinguished colleagues, I give the floor to the Ambassador of Kenya.

**Mr. Mailu** (Kenya): Thank you, Mr. President. Kenya is delighted to join this august assembly of the Conference on Disarmament during the first part under the presidency of Algeria.

As this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor, allow me, Mr. President, to extend to you our sincere congratulations on your assumption as the first President of the Conference on Disarmament for the 2020 session. I assure you of our full support and cooperation during your presidency. In this regard, Mr. President, allow me also to commend you for your steadfast guidance of the deliberations in this chamber thus far. Kenya lauds your efforts in submitting a non-paper on draft proposals for a programme of work for 2020. We have carefully studied the elements contained therein and submitted them to the capital for further consideration.

Mr. President, Kenya reaffirms the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. Since its recognition in 1979, at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Conference's unique mandate on multilateral arms control and disarmament issues has made it an integral forum for the maintenance of global peace and security. And despite the challenges that this Conference has faced in the past two decades, we remain hopeful that in 2020, we can achieve substantial progress in adopting a programme of work.

We owe it to future generations to put in place disarmament frameworks that will enhance international peace and security for humanity, as the global trends we are currently witnessing leave a lot to be desired. The increasing production of weapons and their great destructive firepower, including nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, is a big threat to a peaceful and secure world.

The deterioration of the international security environment characterized by heightened tensions, crumbling arms control architecture, modernization of defence systems, as well as increased spending on sophisticated weaponry, attests to a new age arms

race and poses a real threat to international peace and security. Against such a global backdrop, the relevance of the Conference on Disarmament is unquestionable.

Mr. President, Kenya's long-standing commitment to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and a world free of nuclear weapons is unwavering. At the global level, Kenya voted for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We are convinced that this Treaty is a crucial milestone in achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. This is why its full implementation and that of other international conventions and treaties banning nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction remain an imperative for member States.

Additionally, Kenya, a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty since 1970, supports the peaceful research and development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty and in line with the framework and protocols of the International Atomic Energy Agency. As provided in article VI of the Treaty, all countries should promote and cooperate in the peaceful exploitation of nuclear energy, while at the same time working towards complete nuclear disarmament. In this regard, we look forward to the 2020 Review Conference, which, we truly hope, will pave the way to a world without the threat of nuclear weapons. We hope that the 2020 Review Conference later this year will reaffirm the indispensable role of the Treaty in promoting non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Mr. President, my delegation notes with concern that the illicit transfer of and trade in small arms and light weapons continue to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. The effects of the widespread availability of small arms and their misuse have long contributed to many unnecessary conflicts, especially in Africa. In this regard, we welcome the African Union theme for 2020, "Silencing the Guns".

We note that Kenya is the Chair of the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which will be held from 15 to 19 June 2020 in New York to review progress in implementing the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the International Tracing Instrument. As Chair, Kenya affirms its commitment to doing more, together, in current efforts to implement the Programme of Action.

Mr. President, allow me to conclude by reiterating the importance of the Conference on Disarmament in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is therefore incumbent upon us, guided by the spirit of constructive engagement, to redouble our efforts so that we can, through consensus, agree on a programme of work and take the work of the Conference on Disarmament forward. I thank you.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador of Kenya for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? That does not appear to be the case.

Before moving on to the informal meeting, I would like to share a few thoughts on the work that the six Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament's 2020 session, acting in a collective, transparent and inclusive manner, have done. The Algerian Presidency has worked in good faith with all delegations since it took office. Although it has opted, as part of the group of six Presidents, for the longest and most arduous and perhaps even the most complicated path in carrying out its work, it has done so with a view to contributing to efforts to preserve the Conference on Disarmament. It has done so in good conscience and in a spirit of commitment, because it recognizes, along with all member countries, the responsibilities and duties arising from the principles adopted in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in particular paragraph 28, in which it is emphasized that "all States have the duty to contribute to efforts in the field of disarmament", and paragraph 41, in which all States are called on to refrain from actions that might adversely affect efforts in the field of disarmament.

I am certain we all share the view that the first steps to contributing to those efforts must be taken here in this chamber. The perfect, as the saying goes, is the enemy of the good. It is because we want to attain perfection in the Conference that we pay less attention to good things. In this respect, I would like to stress that even the General Assembly, in the Final Document of its first special session devoted to disarmament, acknowledged that

there were negotiations at different levels. For that reason, we are still convinced that in the current situation, the Conference can maintain its role only by returning to normal work – in particular through the systematic consideration of substantive issues and the negotiation of agreements on recommendations and effective action.

We believe that the package of document includes all the components of genuine groundwork for an advanced stage of negotiations. Lastly, we are persuaded that these documents, which we have been able to put together after painstaking consultations, are a good platform for the work of the Conference on Disarmament. As the vital interests of member States are defended in these documents, we appeal to all delegations to act in defence of the vital interests of the Conference in this, the beginning of its annual session.

Distinguished representatives, I shall now suspend the meeting and move to an informal setting. For technical reasons, the secretariat will need a few minutes before moving to the informal setting, and I ask for your indulgence in this regard.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.20 a.m. and resumed at noon.*

**The President** (*spoke in French*): Distinguished representatives, I give the floor to the Ambassador of Bangladesh.

**Mr. Ahsan** (Bangladesh): Mr. President, thank you very much for allowing me to deliver this statement on behalf of my delegation. Let me again, in a formal setting, congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency. We thank the secretariat for its continued support for the Conference on Disarmament and the members.

Mr. President, Bangladesh remains a staunch supporter of a multilateral approach to general and complete disarmament. This is our constitutional commitment. We believe that the Conference, as the sole multilateral disarmament body, must continue to uphold its legitimacy and credibility by breaking out of its current stalemate and engage in substantive work. Unfortunately, year after year, the Conference has remained hamstrung, making no significant progress to adopt a programme of work. We have remained, all this while, concerned that despite efforts made by all successive presidencies, the consensus to begin substantive work has eluded the Conference.

Mr. President, you and the other five members of the group of Presidents of this year's session deserve our appreciation, as this year began differently – with hope. The unique approach of having the six member States that will occupy the presidency this session make collective efforts under your leadership is groundbreaking and much appreciated.

Mr. President, the member States of the Conference have long been advocating for a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. We believe that the package provided by the six Presidents, including the working paper containing a draft proposal for a programme of work that is before the Conference today, is a good basis for that. The document is a result of a series of consultations among the six member States that will occupy the presidency this session, preceded by numerous informal consultations that you conducted with a large number of member States. As one of the members of that group of six delegations, and in its national capacity, the delegation of Bangladesh supports the content of the draft proposal. We welcome any constructive contributions by the member States to the achievement of a consensus on the document and its implementation this year, so that the Conference can begin meaningful work.

Mr. President, our task is ever more difficult, given the unmistakable signs of the unravelling of multilateral understanding. The resulting upswing in the proliferation of weaponry, the development of insecurity, particularly for those who cannot rely on security assurances, is a dangerous dichotomy that is incompatible with the commitment to global goals and burgeoning inequality. We should seize this opportunity that presents itself today to do our best to secure and sustain a peaceful world, which alone can assure us of sustainable development in the truest sense.

In conclusion, let me, on behalf of the delegation of Bangladesh and all six member States that will occupy the presidency this session, ask the member States to place their trust in the 2020 presidencies and this novel approach of making collective efforts to

revitalize the Conference's work this year. I would also like to assure you of the fullest support of my delegation. I thank you, Mr. President.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank the Ambassador of Bangladesh for his statement and for his kind words for the presidency and the group of the six Presidents of the annual session, of which he himself is a member. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? That does not appear to be the case.

Dear colleagues, I would like to thank you once again, on my own behalf and on behalf of the other five Presidents of the session, for your comments and suggestions, and to assure you that, together with my colleagues, the five other Presidents, I will endeavour to take them into consideration. I also invite delegations to contact me at the bilateral level if they have any issues that they would like to discuss in more detail. Depending on the outcome of my consultations, I will inform you through the secretariat on how I intend to proceed at the next plenary meeting, which will take place on Thursday, 13 February, at 10 a.m. Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

*The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.*