

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand five hundred and ninety-first plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 26 August 2021, at 11.05 a.m.

President: Mr. Frank Tressler Zamorano (Chile)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call to order the 1591st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Distinguished delegates, allow me to lay down some rules for those taking part in today's meeting. Everyone physically present at the Palais des Nations will be required, for his or her own safety and the safety of others, to be free of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) symptoms and to maintain the recommended physical distance at all times. Participants are kindly asked to remain at the Palais des Nations only for the time strictly necessary to perform their official duties.

They are also reminded that the United Nations Office at Geneva requires all persons present in the room to use a facemask at all times, except when taking the floor. To keep movement in the room to a minimum, delegates in the room are asked to request the floor by raising their nameplate and not to approach the podium.

Distinguished delegates, we have convened this morning's plenary meeting at the request of the delegation of France, the current coordinator of the process led by the group of the five nuclear-weapon States designated as such under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which will give a statement on the group's behalf. I now give the floor to Ambassador Yann Hwang of France.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, thank you for organizing this meeting of the Conference on Disarmament at such short notice. Please know that we greatly appreciate your help.

Mr. President, dear colleagues, in its capacity as the State presiding over the group of the five nuclear-weapon States designated as such under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (P5 States), France would like to provide the member States of the Conference with some information on the process, known as the P5 process, being pursued by those nuclear-weapon States.

The P5 States have special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In a tense international security environment, the continuation and strengthening of the dialogue among the P5 States is critically important to strategic stability. Discussions on nuclear doctrines and policies enhance mutual predictability, trust and understanding within the group, thereby helping to reduce strategic risks. The P5 States are determined to pursue a constructive dialogue with mutual respect and recognition of each other's security interests.

The P5 States are strongly committed to respecting and implementing the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its three interlinked and mutually reinforcing pillars, including article VI, which commits each party "to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control". The P5 States strive to create a security environment that is conducive to progress on disarmament, with the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons and undiminished security for all.

France succeeded the United Kingdom as the group's coordinator in September 2020. The P5 States continue to implement the joint road map agreed upon in Beijing in January 2019, with the aim of making a concrete and positive contribution to the upcoming Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, as well as to the next review cycle.

Following the postponement of the Review Conference to early 2022, France decided to postpone the meeting originally scheduled to take place in Paris in July 2021. Given the importance of the group's work, which must be pursued as actively as possible despite the current public health crisis, France held a virtual meeting on 8 July 2021 to measure the progress made in implementing the road map and to maintain the momentum of the work.

The meeting, which was chaired by Philippe Bertoux, Director of Strategic Affairs of France, and attended by Fu Cong, Director General for Arms Control of China, Vladimir Leontiev, Deputy Director for Strategic Affairs of Russia, Samantha Job, Director for Defence and International Security of the United Kingdom, and C.S. Eliot Kang, Acting Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, of the United States,

represented an important milestone for the P5 process in preparing for the next Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

It demonstrated that work has continued despite the impact of the public health crisis and that the group's determination to see it through remains intact.

First, the importance of dialogue on nuclear doctrines and policies was reaffirmed. The P5 States reaffirmed their intention to hold a side event at the Review Conference to present their doctrines and their desire to continue discussions on them. Strategic risk reduction was recognized as a subject of growing importance in relation to which the P5 States are prepared to engage in long-term effort.

Second, let us recall that the aim of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices should be to produce, in the Conference on Disarmament, a non-discriminatory, multilateral instrument that is internationally and effectively verifiable and that bans the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, based on consensus and with the participation of all countries concerned. The P5 States agreed to resume meetings of experts on this critical topic in order to share their views on the subject with the Review Conference.

Third, participants welcomed the nearly complete glossary of nuclear terms presented by China, particularly the prospect of presenting a second edition of the P5 States' glossary to the Review Conference.

Fourth, the P5 States reaffirmed their support for the goals of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and their readiness to deepen their discussions with the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. The P5 States wish to express their strong political commitment to that issue.

Fifth, and last, with regard to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the P5 States lent their support to a draft joint declaration and to the side event planned for the Review Conference.

Mr. President, the P5 States agreed to continue and to intensify the experts' work on each of these issues in the lead-up to the Review Conference. This work will take the form of concrete deliverables for that Conference. The Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear disarmament verification were also discussed.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to consider proposals to strengthen dialogue with non-nuclear-weapon States and civil society. Meetings with the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament have been scheduled to that end.

France will keep the Conference on Disarmament informed of the ongoing P5 process and of the upcoming conference in Paris and is at the disposal of any delegation that requires additional information. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Ambassador, for your detailed report. I give the floor to any delegation that wishes to make a comment on the presentation that the Ambassador of France has just made.

It appears no one wishes to speak. I see Canada. Canada, you have the floor.

Mr. Fetz (Canada): Thank you very much, Mr. President, and thank you very much also to the Ambassador of France for giving us this outline of the activities of the five nuclear-weapon States designated as such under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Canada is very encouraged that those five States are collaborating and building confidence. We are hopeful that this will eventually also lead to nuclear disarmament, but as I said, it is a very positive sign to see this collaboration and to see the Ambassador of France sharing his perspective with us, since we are very much interested in this transparency and in seeing the activities of those five States and how we can collaborate with them. Thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you. The delegate of Japan has the floor.

Mr. Matsui (Japan): Thank you, President, and thank you, too, to the French Ambassador for sharing with us the outcomes of the process being pursued by the five nuclear-weapon States designated as such under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Japan, as everyone knows, promotes transparency in processes related to the NPT Review Conference, so we are very much encouraged by the dialogues held by those five States, with which we cooperate closely. Thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Japan.

I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Lim Sang-beom (Republic of Korea): Thank you, Mr. President. My delegation appreciates the briefing, given by the Ambassador of France on behalf of the five nuclear-weapon States designated as such under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, on the process being pursued by the nuclear-weapon States, known as the P5 process. We believe the leadership of the nuclear-weapon States is crucial to the success of the upcoming Review Conference and the P5 process. In this regard, we believe the briefing and the workflow explained by the Ambassador are very positive signs. We are also looking forward to working very closely with them to achieve our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons. I thank you very much.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Ambassador. As I see no one else requesting the floor, this brings us to the end of this morning's meeting. This afternoon we will hold another formal plenary meeting for a thematic debate on the participation and role of women in international security. The secretariat has informed us that we can use the same link as for this meeting.

This meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.