

# Conference on Disarmament

English

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## Final record of the one thousand three hundred and seventy-eighth meeting


Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 29 February 2016, at 3.05 p.m.

*President:* Mr. Steffen Kongstad ..... (Norway)

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**The President:** I call to order the 1378th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. We will now continue the high-level segment of the Conference with an address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina, Madam Susana Malcorra. I will now suspend the meeting to welcome our distinguished guest.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** The meeting is resumed. I would now like to extend a warm welcome to our guest, Madam Susana Malcorra, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina, and thank her for addressing the Conference. You have the floor, Madam.

**Ms. Malcorra** (Argentina): It is a pleasure to be here in my new capacity and to deliver my first statement before the Conference on Disarmament. It is a pleasure also to see so many colleagues and friends at the table. I thank you for allowing me to participate and give my perspective.

*(spoke in Spanish)*

Mr. President, allow me to begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the responsibility of leading the Conference on Disarmament during the first part of its annual session this year. You may count on the full support and cooperation of the Argentine Republic in your ongoing efforts to reach positive outcomes.

With its long-standing history of broad support for multilateralism and for the central role of the United Nations in the nuclear disarmament sphere, my country has participated actively in the work of the Conference on Disarmament ever since its inception in the conviction that the Conference is the sole multilateral negotiating forum for nuclear disarmament issues and that it should not be allowed to become marginalized. Regrettably, as we all know, the Conference remains in a deadlock and has been unable to make progress in negotiations or achieve tangible results since 1996. We need to again examine and reflect upon this situation, which is highly troubling given the multiple disarmament-related challenges facing us in the international arena. Looking around the globe, we see no shortage of situations that call for us — as members of the Conference — to assume the responsibility entrusted to us and to do so with political resolve.

Since the Conference last adopted a programme of work in 2009 — which it could not then implement owing to procedural reasons — the members of the Conference have been unable to reach the consensus necessary to agree and adopt a programme of work that would allow us to advance towards genuine and effective negotiations. We must — and we owe it to ourselves to do so — set the Conference back in motion so that it can again fulfil its mandate to negotiate multilateral instruments on nuclear disarmament.

While Argentina considers that it is a valid and potentially enriching exercise to engage in a mature discussion on the Conference's working methods and procedures, and even its membership, we ultimately believe that reactivating the Conference will depend on the political will of its members. Only then will it be possible to take the concrete steps that will yield a programme of work that is robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation and which will lead to effective negotiations.

Argentina has attentively followed the discussions over the past few years on these aspects which relate to the functioning of the Conference. My country is open to discussing and reflecting upon these issues and to working in a flexible yet practical manner towards the development of innovative proposals. Undoubtedly, this will require significant effort on the part of all those here present and engaged in the process: only thus can we provide the Conference with the dialogue, dynamism and debate, as well as decision-making capacity, that will prevent it from becoming marginalized and allow it to pursue the purpose for which it was created: to serve as a multilateral negotiating forum for nuclear disarmament issues.

I would now like to share a few thoughts on the global situation in relation to nuclear disarmament and the main challenges facing the international community in general and the Conference on Disarmament in particular.

The objectives set out in 1978 at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament remain fully valid. Against that backdrop, the Government of

Argentina has given priority to the issue of nuclear disarmament in every discussion, forum and negotiation at which it has been raised. This approach is a reflection of my country's clear and sustained commitment to nuclear disarmament. Even so, we must draw attention to the disturbing fact that, despite all our efforts over the past few years, there has been no progress with regard to non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The Government of Argentina believes that the total and comprehensive elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against the use or the threat of use of such weapons, thereby averting the irreparable humanitarian consequences that such use would entail. For that reason, we will support and participate in any multilateral negotiation process capable of leading to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in an irreversible, verifiable and transparent manner. We welcome last year's discussions at the General Assembly which led to the adoption of resolution 70/33, whereby the Assembly convened an open-ended working group to address the concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms needed for nuclear disarmament. My country supported the establishment of the group and participated actively in its first session, which ended last Friday, 26 February.

Similarly, Argentina supports the initiative launched to discuss the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. We share the concern expressed regarding the impact that the use of nuclear weapons could have on humankind, and we pledge to remain deeply engaged in that process.

At the regional level, I would like to highlight the discussions and statements of position that have taken place within the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in recent years. The outcomes have been reflected in various declarations on nuclear disarmament and a clear commitment to the negotiation of a legally binding multilateral instrument that prohibits nuclear weapons.

Mr. President, esteemed Ambassadors: as the Secretary-General of the United Nations emphasized in his message to the Conference, the international community must accelerate the reduction of existing stockpiles. In this connection, allow me to recall that the Group of Governmental Experts on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear devices, in which my country participated, concluded its discussions last year. The Government of Argentina believes that it is in a position to proceed with the negotiation of that treaty. It is our hope that, if the treaty comes to fruition, it will provide both an opportunity and a comprehensive instrument for moving closer to nuclear disarmament.

As proof of the importance of multilateral negotiations and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, we wish to highlight and acknowledge the agreement reached on the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Argentina supported the adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in July 2015 convinced that it represented a comprehensive solution and a positive contribution to non-proliferation and international security while respecting the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We welcome the announcement made in January 2016 that Iran had completed all the steps necessary for the implementation of the Plan of Action.

I reiterate our strong condemnation of the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 January. The Argentine Republic considers it imperative that obligations arising from Security Council resolutions are respected, that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea return to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and that the way be prepared for the resumption of activities and safeguards by the International Atomic Energy Agency in that country. We also condemn the launch of a space rocket using ballistic missile technology, also in violation of Security Council resolutions, as that will only lead to greater instability.

Lastly, I wish to convey my Government's regret that the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was unable to adopt an outcome document. In our view, that is not the signal we should be sending to the international community. As part of the Latin American and Caribbean nuclear-weapon-free zone established under the Treaty of Tlatelolco in 1967, which was the world's first such zone in a densely populated region, we regret as well that the conference that was

planned for 2012 to discuss the establishment of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone has not yet taken place.

Mr. President, I would like to conclude my statement by again wishing you every success in your work at the helm of the Conference, by reiterating that you and your successors at this year's session may count on the full support and cooperation of the Argentine Republic and, above all, by reminding us all that we hold the keys to get the Conference moving forward.

**The President:** I thank Madam Malcorra for her statement. Allow me now to again suspend the meeting for a short moment in order to escort Madam Malcorra from the chamber.

*The meeting was briefly suspended.*

**The President:** This meeting is resumed. This should also conclude our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held tomorrow morning.

I recognize the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Jo Chol-su** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I assure you of our full support and cooperation.

I had no intention of taking the floor today, but I was compelled to request the floor in order to exercise the right of reply to the statements made by the delegations of Slovakia and Argentina today.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea clarified its principled stand in its statement delivered on 26 January in the Conference on Disarmament plenary session: that our successful hydrogen bomb test was a just measure for self-defence to defend the sovereignty of the country and the right of the nation to existence and also to ensure peace on the Korean Peninsula and regional security. As regards the satellite launch, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea satellite launch, which was successfully carried out in accordance with the national aerospace development plan in line with its policy for the peaceful development and use of space, is the exercise of an independent and legitimate right which fully conforms to the universally agreed international laws on the peaceful use of space that no one can slander.

It is preposterous to describe a just measure for self-defence and purely peaceful satellite launch as a destabilizing factor. Therefore, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea categorically rejects the statements and irresponsible allegations made by the delegations of Slovakia and Argentina. Those delegations mentioned that trust and confidence are vital to ensuring global peace and security. I am doubtful whether condemning and finger-pointing at dignified sovereign States with falsified allegations in disregard of the root causes are the right way to build confidence and trust or the way to contribute to easing tensions in the Korean Peninsula or to promote global peace and security.

Having said this, I would like to take this opportunity to reserve the floor at a later stage to further clarify the position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**The President:** I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his statement.

As I was about to say, the next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held tomorrow morning, Tuesday, 1 March, at 10 a.m., when we will hear addresses by dignitaries from Finland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Qatar, Greece and Cuba.

*The meeting is adjourned.*

*The meeting rose at 3.25 p.m.*