

Delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany
to the Conference on Disarmament
Délégation de la République fédérale d'Allemagne
auprès de la Conférence du Désarmement



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S T A T E M E N T

by

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**Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany
to the Conference of Disarmament**

Geneva, February 28th, 2002

Mr President,

being new to the Conference on Disarmament, and taking the floor here for the first time, allow me to extend to you my best wishes for the important and demanding task you have taken over as President of the CD. I would like to assure you of the full co-operation and support of my delegation.

I would also like to thank all colleagues and friends in the CD for the warm welcome that they have extended to me in this body.

Allow me also to extend my greetings to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr Petrovsky, to the Deputy Secretary-General of the CD, Mr Roman-Morey, and to the members of the Secretariat.

Mr President,

In the aftermath of the horrible attacks of September 11th we all agreed on the UN Resolution "Multilateral co-operation in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation and Global Efforts against Terrorism". In this Resolution we all reaffirmed that multilateralism is the core principle of negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, leading to the strengthening of universal norms and the widening of their scope. We all emphasised that progress is urgently needed in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation in order to help maintain international peace and security and to contribute to global efforts against terrorism. All of us further agreed to call upon all Member States to renew and fulfil their individual and collective commitments to multilateral co-operation as an important means of pursuing and achieving their common objectives in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr President, it is time to implement these commitments here and now in the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr President,

I have to express my deep concern about the current state of the Conference on Disarmament which normally is characterised politely as "stalemate" or "impasse". In going through the protocols of the CD plenary meetings since 1999 and listening to recent statements here, I also came across some more drastic expressions.

Indeed, Mr President, the situation in the CD does not look very promising.

Since 1999 the Conference has been unable to effectively launch any substantial work. In document CD/1036 called "Decision on the improvement and effective Functioning of the Conference on Disarmament", the members have agreed, that at the beginning of its annual session, "the Conference, shall establish its programme of work". As in previous years, however, the first four weeks of this year's annual session - and now even more - have already passed, without a work program being in sight.

This important body once was established by the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly to be the sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations. The Conference on Disarmament has a track record of many multilateral agreements on disarmament and non-proliferation. This forum has shown that it is capable of producing concrete arms control and disarmament agreements, when the Member States have the political will.

We have to live up to our responsibility and fulfil our genuine task. Let us use the plenary of this Conference for an in-depth exchange of views on the relevant issues on our agenda with a view to overcoming the present impasse and to underscore the importance of this eminent international body.

Mr President,

The German government supports all efforts to strengthen and further develop the multilateral instruments of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation so that they continue to meet the challenges of a changing security environment. Disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation are essential elements in our endeavours to establish a co-operative security order for the 21st century.

The process of nuclear disarmament must be further strengthened and resolutely advanced. Therefore, Germany continues to attach utmost importance to the start of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material (FMCT). In this context, I would like to recall, that the NPT-Member States in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference agreed on the necessity of the immediate commencement of FMCT negotiations in the CD. Germany is also concerned about the prospects of an arms race in outer space. Therefore, we attach high importance to the establishment of an Ad-hoc-Committee on the

Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space without delay and to start substantial work on the issue. But we do think that every issue should be dealt with independently.

We agree with the position put forward by our Russian colleague in support of the re-establishment of the Ad-Hoc-Committee on FMCT with a negotiating mandate - without linkages to other issues.

Successive presidents of the CD have made tremendous efforts to bring about an agreement on a work programme. The proposal of the Brazilian Presidency, the "Amorim proposal", put forward in August 2000, contains the essence of these efforts. The German Delegation fully shares the assessment of our British colleague that "since August 2000, nothing better than the Amorim proposal has come along, nor does it look likely to." As has been eloquently pointed out by our Japanese colleague, the Amorim proposal contains the necessary degree of flexibility to allow every delegation in the CD to see its position safeguarded.

Why then, Mr President, can we not move beyond the formula "as a basis for consultation". By repeating it over and over for more than one year without any substantial result, this has become an empty shell. I suggest to make a serious effort to reach consensus on a work programme on the basis of the Amorim proposal.

If we succeed, we can engage in a working process on a number of important items on the international agenda for disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation:

- nuclear disarmament;
- a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;
- the prevention of an arms race in outer space;
- effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons;
- questions related to anti-personnel landmines;
- transparency in armaments.

That would bring the Conference back to its 'raison d'être' and respond to the call expressed in the UN consensus resolution "Multilateral Co-operation in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation and global efforts against terrorism".

Mr President, it is often stated that the adoption of a substantial work programme of the CD could be possible if good will and flexibility would prevail. Germany considers it the responsibility of all - and I repeat - of all member states of the Conference on Disarmament to make use of this body in order to advance the cause of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, especially at this critical juncture. We should not allow that future generations will reduce us to a mere historical footnote, because we did not live up to the challenges of our time.