

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY!

**Introductory remarks
by Amb. András Szabó, Permanent Representative of Hungary
to the Conference on Disarmament
on the occasion of the beginning of the Hungarian Presidency**

Geneva, 22 August 2002

Mr. Secretary-General, Distinguished Colleagues,

At the moment when Hungary has the honour and privilege to take over the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, allow me to share with you some considerations on the state of affairs in this body and on possible future actions. Before turning to the substantive points I wish to pay tribute to and commend the efforts of my predecessors from Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France and Germany. All of them steered the work of the Conference with high professionalism and determination to find a way out of the deadlock prevailing for the fourth consecutive year. I am confident that in carrying out my duties I will be able to rely on the well-known expertise and dedication of the Secretariat headed by Secretary-General, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze and Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Enrique Roman-Morey.

Our deliberations this year have demonstrated a strengthened sense of solidarity. New, unprecedented patterns of international co-operation, *inter alia*, on security matters, have emerged, particularly in the aftermath of the events of September 11. These may have a positive impact on the trends in the CD's activities. Though we have been navigating in troubled waters, we should never forget that we are in the same boat. In a boat, where the steersmen may change, where the motion towards the declared destination should remain the same we need joint efforts, the understanding of the reliance on each other because only such an attitude can guarantee to accomplish our common goals. Failures and setbacks should not overshadow the overarching sentiment that this boat has a destination to reach.

Excellencies,

Hungary served as President of the CD last time in May 1994. This was a period when this sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament matters worked almost to its full capacity. It had just successfully completed the negotiations of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and already was about to start negotiating the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Much has changed within and outside this forum. New risks and challenges have unfolded, profoundly shaping the way we perceive what constitutes a real threat to peace and stability in our world. The challenge of successful adaptation to the changing security environment still lies ahead of us.

The dynamic evolution of the world around us lends added urgency to the task of breaking the lasting stalemate in the CD. This is highlighted even more by parallel new initiatives aimed at meeting the new challenges. The signing of the Strategic Offensive Reduction (SOR) Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation marked a qualitatively new beginning in the strategic relationship of the two major powers by paving road to substantive reductions of their respective nuclear arsenals. Diplomatic efforts to curb the proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction have gained new momentum this year. The new NPT review cycle has made a promising start which bodes well for a successful continuation during the second PrepCom next April/May here in Geneva.

The Conference is entering the last month of the 2002 session. We have four weeks at our disposal to live up to the expectations of the international community to reinvigorate the central role this body is duty-bound to play in negotiating global legal instruments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The Presidency cannot be but optimistic in this regard. A recurrent feature of all statements, without exception, in the plenary meetings this year has been the reiteration of the commitment to multilateralism as "a core principle in negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation with a view to maintaining and strengthening universal norms and enlarging their scope". To continue in the words of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 56/24 T, submitted by my distinguished colleague, Amb. André Erdős in his capacity as Chairman of the First Committee, "progress is urgently needed in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation in order to help to maintain international peace and security and to contribute to global efforts against terrorism." I am hopeful that this sense of urgency still exists and will drive the last part of the 2002 session under the Hungarian Presidency to a smooth transition to continued work next year.

Dear Colleagues,

The last Presidency of the annual session has to carry out a two-fold task. First, it should wrap up the work for this year in an orderly manner. It is part of the routine of this Conference to inform the international community at large about our proceedings in the form of an Annual Report to be submitted to the UN General Assembly. The drafting of this document will certainly take up much of our time. I will propose to you to follow the pattern of the previous years in this respect and prepare the Report for this year on that basis.

In addition to this what I would call house-keeping exercise, it is my intention to address also the until now unresolved issue of the Programme of Work. I invite you to do so for several reasons. First, it is never too late to explore new possibilities. Second, even in the closing phase of the session we can do a useful job with a view to preparing the smooth commencement of the next annual session. Third, recent proposals and initiatives have brought renewed dynamism to our deliberations reflecting unrelenting search for compromise. While the Conference seems to be out of reach of a new beginning, we can not afford to lose the momentum created over the last weeks. In this respect I wish to refer to the informal steps undertaken by a group of former Presidents, as well as to the initiative by Germany to have a fresh look at the issue of radiological weapons.

At the present stage it is up to the proponents of these new initiatives to promote their acceptance. Both in procedural and substantive terms the time is not ripe for the involvement

of the President. At the same time I encourage my respective colleagues to continue their efforts. My consultations until now have convinced me that they are pursuing their objectives with the sincere desire to present us with a realistic and balanced approach which takes into account the interests of all CD members.

The three Special Coordinators will submit their reports today. I attach great importance to their work in further developing certain organisational aspects in the life of the CD. I am sure that their respective reports will provide us with useful ideas concerning possible reforms in this forum.

In conclusion I wish to call on each and every delegation to use the remaining time as effectively as possible and continue our efforts aimed at devising a viable way out of the long lasting stalemate. I hope to rely on the collective wisdom of this body and will conduct a number of bilateral and multilateral consultations. On the other hand I will be available to groups and individual delegations which might want to meet with me. The President's efforts can yield viable results if they grow organically out of broadly based discussions. With this in mind I am looking forward to a constructive co-operation with all delegations in this room.

Thank you.