



NORWAY

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STATEMENT TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

BY

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Mr. President,

Let me congratulate you for assuming the Presidency of the Conference on disarmament.

After this plenary meeting we will, under your guidance, conclude the informal consultations on the seventh agenda items of the CD. I have a few remarks in relation to this.

When we in January this year started discussing the possibility of convening informal consultations some reluctance was expressed from different quarters. There was a concern that the consultations might be unbalanced, that they might be nothing but inflammatory, that they would be limited to so-called "old issues", that they might distract us from our most important challenge: to agree on a Programme of Work. Other concerns were expressed as well.

Today I think there is almost full agreement that the consultations so far have been useful, clarifying and constructive. No ghosts appeared, neither in the dark, nor in bright sunshine. A large number of delegations have participated and contributed to fruitful discussions and exchanges of views. This augurs well if we ever are to enter a phase of real negotiations.

Mr. President,

I would like to highlight a few points from the informal consultations on the first six agenda items that were of particular interest to my delegation:

1. While several delegations, including my own, have negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty as their first priority there has been expressed a corresponding willingness on the part of many of these delegations to address also other issues, one way or the other. And those who advocate the prominence of nuclear disarmament or militarization of outer space have not rejected the importance of FMCT. We do not seem to talk to each other from different sides of the globe. This should be good news.
2. Many non-nuclear weapon states reconfirmed that they take an active interest in the issue of negative security assurances. This should not surprise anyone. It is our hope and belief that the nuclear weapon states will take the concerns of the non-nuclear weapon states seriously into account when NSAs are dealt with in the future, whether it is in the context of the CD or the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
3. Interesting and important so-called new issues have been introduced, including how to protect critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks. This demonstrates that the CD should be an arena for discussing both long-lasting and perhaps protracted problems as well as more acute concerns of today. One "old" issue, radiological weapons, was even revitalized by many delegations when we considered agenda item 5.
4. Some new and specific proposals were made during the informal consultations. These related i.a. to FMCT, PAROS, nuclear disarmament and so-called new issues.

We think all specific proposals deserve further consideration in a follow-up process after the informal consultations.

One may develop a certain introverted culture when participating in a body which, unfortunately, is somewhat shielded from the vibrant realities outside these walls. I guess interpretations of words, phrases, indications and suggestions become excessively fascinating. But the informal consultations just completed must have demonstrated that we are all capable of communication and discussion and that perhaps there are fewer secret agendas than we anticipate. We may not be closer to a Programme of Work. But my delegation hopes and believes that the informal consultations have brought the CD a small step closer to the real world and the real challenges of our time. In the follow-up process we encourage the up-coming Presidencies to exercise leadership, based on the prerogatives offered in the rules of procedure.

Thank you, Mr. President