



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY!

STATEMENT

BY H.E. MR. NICKOLAY MLADENOV, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

AT THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT, 1190TH PLENARY MEETING

GENEVA, 13 JULY 2010

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General of the Conference on Disarmament,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the pleasure and the privilege to address the CD on the occasion of Bulgaria's presidency. This is the first time that a Bulgarian Minister of foreign affairs speaks at the CD, therefore I am particularly honored to be here with you today.

The global challenges lying ahead of our modern world require each and every state to be active but also work together with everyone else. Because today's global challenges cannot be resolved by anyone alone, they can, however be tackled effectively, if we work together. This certainly implies making concessions and compromises. Even more so in the fields of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The devastating effect of nuclear weapons does not discriminate between nuclear and non-nuclear states.

We gather here in Geneva, at every annual session, to reconfirm our commitment to the core purpose of the Conference on disarmament, namely to be a forum for negotiations of multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament problems. But most of all, we come together to seek to fulfill our mission- to work towards a world free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. I believe this is a mission above politics and diplomacy, above national ambitions and personal egos.

I am here today to state my Country's commitment to the objectives of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation. I come to reaffirm our belief that multilateralism is the most reliable mechanism to achieve long term solutions to national security concerns of every country. But also to highlight that the CD must play a primary role in this regard. I therefore feel it is my duty to add my voice on behalf of the Bulgarian government to the call for action in the CD. The protracted stalemate in the CD and its continuing failure to adopt a Program of work severely undermines the confidence of the international community in the ability of this conference to comprehensively address matters related to disarmament and non-proliferation.

Nothing, no fear, no suspicion, no perception of a single country or group of states should be in position to prevent us from undertaking most effective possible steps towards the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament.

Bulgaria's non-proliferation and arms control policy is built on the understanding that reinforced non-proliferation regime is an important prerequisite to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

Nuclear disarmament can be irreversible only if appropriate commitments are undertaken to reduce the risk of proliferation of vulnerable fissile materials. There are hundreds of tons of weapons-usable fissile material that could be potential target for sabotage, misuse, or diversion and which are not tightly protected.

Commencing negotiations on an FMCT in the CD is therefore a steady and logical step for advancing nuclear disarmament and for preventing proliferation. That is one of the reasons why an early start of negotiations on FMCT can no longer be postponed.

Early entry into force of the CTBT is another pressing matter whose solution will be a critical step on the road to nuclear disarmament. We welcome the decision of US President Obama to seek the ratification of the treaty and we hope that this will send another important signal to those countries that have not done so yet.

Bulgaria's commitment to general disarmament and non-proliferation is also based on the understanding that disarmament should serve as a vehicle to promote the principles of International Humanitarian Law. We therefore welcome the entry into force on 1 August 2010 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and hope that all states which still are outside of the Convention will join it at the earliest opportunity.

Bulgaria shares the view which has been expressed in this room before, namely that this successful example might inspire the CD to look for new approaches to reach the needed consensus.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The moment my country assumes the Presidency in the CD is particularly rich of developments in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation that seem to be at odds with what is happening in the CD. Let me try to decipher some of them.

I should recognize and welcome the positive momentum in the area of disarmament generated by the goal of "world free of nuclear weapons" announced by the US administration a year ago and followed by similar initiatives of other nuclear states. This important demonstration of good faith was echoed by the majority of the states who believed that the time is finally ripe to push disarmament forward. Even this chamber looked less somber when the CD adopted its 2009 Program of Work after 11 years of hibernation. The understanding that ensuring nuclear materials safety is a priority in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation was one of the reasons for the adoption by consensus of the General Assembly Resolution 64/29. This resolution urged the CD to agree early in 2010 on a Program of work that includes the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile

material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices. This was supported by UN Security Council Resolution 1887 adopted at its historic meeting on 24 September 2009, on which the Security Council pledged its backing for broad progress on long-stalled efforts to launch the proliferation of nuclear weapons and ensure reduction of existing weapons stockpiles, as well to control the fissile material. This understanding was reaffirmed also by the Washington summit in April this year.

The cause of nuclear disarmament received a major boost when the US and Russia signed a new START Treaty – an important step in the right direction towards reduction and hopefully total elimination of nuclear weapons. The satisfactory conclusion of new START Treaty is a good example of translating the good intentions and political will in reality.

The agreement reached in New York at the NPT Review Conference in May contributed to the restoring some of the faith in the international non-proliferation regime. Coming after a decade of decline in multilateralism and on the heels of recent achievements in bilateral arms control and nuclear security initiatives, the outcome of the Review Conference has shown that multilateral consensus in nuclear disarmament is possible. Among the other important decisions agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, a strong urge was given to the Conference on Disarmament to begin its substantive work without further delay, with an agreed, comprehensive and balanced Program of work.

Over the last year, the political will and desire to advance disarmament and non-proliferation has strengthened. Recent positive developments reveal a critical need shared by the majority of states to reach a common understanding on nuclear disarmament and to overcome differences and fears.

In spite of all the positive developments, the CD continues to be blocked by extreme precautions and mistrust that put procedural chains on its work.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The last time when the CD produced a substantive result was 12 years ago with the successful negotiations of the CTBT.

The world and our understanding of security have changed immensely in the last 12 years. The CD however has not changed. Its agenda has remained the same for the last 12 years.

We should rethink the mechanisms that the CD offers to its member states to effectively deal with the pertinent disarmament and non-proliferation issues. Questions need to be asked and answers sought - is the CD created in 1979, still capable to create and to keep the necessary amount of trust to make delegations sit down together and negotiate? Why, at a time when there is clear international

will to move forward on disarmament and non-proliferation, is the CD unable to materialise this support into specific agreements? I am certain that similar questions have been asked by many of you sitting in this room. I hope that once the questions are clearly uttered the answers will not be late.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Despite of the difficulties which have been accompanying the work of the Conference on Disarmament in the last decade, Bulgaria continues to attach great importance to the work of this body. It is our belief that successful disarmament instruments can only be based on the principle of inclusiveness as they would impose obligations upon all member states. The Conference on Disarmament has an essential role to play in this regard since it is the sole disarmament negotiating forum of that kind. It is a clear expression of the multilateralism as a tool to promote a rule-based international system.

I, therefore, strongly encourage all delegations to show the necessary level of compromise and flexibility without which multilateralism is unthinkable and to adopt a Program of work which will allow addressing in a steady and logical way the priority issues laid down in the agenda of this Conference.

The recent draft decision contained in the document CD 1889 presented by the Presidency of Brazil is a balanced and flexible updated version of the compromise reached in this body last year. It reflects the most recent developments in the CD. It offers a possibility for the concerns of all states to be accommodated in a transparent and inclusive manner.

Negotiations on the FMCT should be a key practical step for this Conference to address both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Bulgaria believes that negotiations on a FMCT, conducted in a good faith and without prejudice to the outcome, should aim at achieving a comprehensive, nondiscriminatory and verifiable treaty.

Prevention of an arms race in Outer Space is of key significance for the future work of the CD. Outer Space must be preserved from the placement of nuclear weapons and any other WMD and their means of delivery.

Reaching consensus on a Program of work in the remaining time until the end of this annual session should send a clear message that multilateralism in the CD is possible. Such a message is all the more important with regard to the upcoming High-level meeting on multilateral disarmament negotiations in September 2010. At the point we stand today, a clear and comprehensive vision on multilateral disarmament machinery is more than needed. That is why the expectations that this High Level meeting will help to make a change in disarmament are high.

The CD should be the primarily beneficiary of the High Level meeting.

Mr. President!
Distinguished Delegates!
Ladies and Gentlemen!

I state my full support for all efforts that the Bulgarian presidency will deploy to ensure continuity and carry forward the work done by its predecessors the delegations of Brazil, Belgium, Belarus and Bangladesh to which I wish to express my deep appreciations for the excellent work done so far.

In conclusion, I wish to stress the fact that this body is at a critical juncture with regard to the future efforts aimed at global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We will either seize the opportunity to reverse the spread of nuclear weapons and build a momentum for their ultimate elimination; or prolong the period of indecision, after which we will have to tackle the results of our inability to act as one in accordance with decisions and commitments we make to our selves today. We are primary responsible for this not to happen!

I thank you and I wish you the best of luck!