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Disarmament Commission  
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 330<sup>th</sup> & 331<sup>st</sup> Meetings (AM & PM)

### **WITH PROFOUNDLY DIFFICULT AGENDA, DISARMAMENT COMMISSION WILL BE JUDGED**

### **LESS BY WORDS, MORE BY QUALITY OF OUTCOMES, SAYS HIGH REPRESENTATIVE**

### **As Session Opens, Chair Says Commission at 'Watershed Moment' — Disarmament High on Global Agenda, But Multilateral Machinery Still Delivering 'Very Little'**

In a “very complex” security environment — marked by diplomatic divisions between national and international interests, slow progress on nuclear disarmament, and the “relentless” expansion of military budgets — the Disarmament Commission’s record would be judged less by the volume of its words than the quality of its outcomes, said Angela Kane, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, as she opened the deliberative body’s 2013 substantive session.

To be sure, the issues on the agenda — recommendations for achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms — were profoundly difficult, she said. That was precisely why they were there. “If they were easy, they would have already been solved.” But the Commission faced the same lack of confidence it did during its cold war founding 61 years ago, a problem that aggravated the most serious peace and security challenges, and deeply divided votes on many Assembly resolutions.

Against that backdrop, she said the United Nations disarmament machinery aimed to provide a process for building confidence through the establishment and elaboration of global disarmament norms. Efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction had always been pursued alongside those to regulate — and reduce — conventional arms. “We need concrete progress in both of these fields and this Commission has its own contributions to make,” she asserted.

A positive result from the Commission’s 2013 session, which runs until 19 April, would set the stage for a new consensus on nuclear disarmament when it concluded its three-year cycle next year, she said. There also was an opportunity to build on gains made last month in negotiating the arms trade treaty, as well as in fulfilling the larger objective of regulating armaments, which would require additional confidence-building initiatives.

Indeed, it would be a “worthy goal” to revive the Commission as a resource for cultivating the seeds of future global disarmament norms, she said: guidelines, standards and recommendations, which could one day flourish into customary practices observed by all States. The Commission had an interest in determining whether there were alternative procedures to achieve results.

Broadly agreeing, Chairman Christopher Grima of Malta said the Commission was at a watershed moment. “While general and complete disarmament remains high on the agenda of the international community, the multilateral disarmament machinery continues to deliver very little.” The time for advancing the disarmament agenda was now. The challenges were unprecedented in nature and scope.

Fresh thinking was needed, he said, as was the political will to abandon intransigent positions

that had blocked the Commission's work for far too long. A middle ground also must be sought on specific areas where progress could be achieved. The Commission's value lay in its universal character and the opportunities it provided for open debate. He called on delegates to bring down the barriers to trust that had stymied progress for well over a decade.

In the general debate that followed, delegates from more than 30 countries outlined their efforts both to create a nuclear-weapon-free world and take practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. On the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation front, many echoed the calls to strengthen the global regime set up by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and emphasized the need to devalue the role and status of nuclear weapons in the security doctrines of nuclear-armed States. Speakers also stressed the right of NPT non-nuclear-weapon States parties to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination.

In that context, Indonesia's representative, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, expressed concern at the persistence of restrictions imposed on those countries, as well as over the fact that the conference aimed at establishing a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East had not been held in 2012.

Many in the Movement said the Commission could build upon guidelines agreed in 1999 on nuclear-weapon-free zones by devoting attention to a fundamental aspect of that issue: negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Voicing the views of many, Brazil's delegate said non-nuclear-armed States should be granted such unequivocal, legally binding assurances through a multilateral instrument.

For its part, the United States had taken steps to reduce the role and number of nuclear weapons in its national security strategy, said that country's delegate, stressing: "We are not developing, nor are we planning to develop, new nuclear weapons." Moreover, the life extension programmes for its nuclear weapons would not support new military missions. It was in the interest of all nations that the nearly seven-decade record of non-use of nuclear weapons be extended forever.

The issue of conventional weapons also received attention, with several delegates supporting practical confidence-building measures, as well as openness and transparency in relation to military activities, which in turn, fostered mutual understanding. Pakistan's delegate underlined the need to address the "excessive" production and sales of conventional weapons. A balanced reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments was also vital.

Cuba's representative, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States said the relationship between the international security environment and the development of confidence-building measures could be mutually reinforcing. He encouraged States to adopt and apply such measures as appropriate, and to consider providing related information.

In other business today, the Commission elected as Vice-Chairs Eleni Apeyitou (Cyprus) and Bhima Dwipayudhanto (Indonesia) from the Group of Asia Pacific States; Mislav Kolovrat (Croatia) and Dovydas Špokauskas (Lithuania) from the Group of Eastern European States; and Shorna-Kay Richards (Jamaica) from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. Charlene Roopnarine (Trinidad and Tobago), also from the last Group, was elected as Rapporteur.

The representatives of Ireland (on behalf of the European Union), Nigeria (on behalf of the African Group), Argentina, Switzerland, Brazil, Peru, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, Spain, China, Algeria, Nepal, Egypt, Iraq, Austria, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, South Africa, Kuwait and Iran also spoke.

Exercising their right of reply were the representatives of the United States, Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Commission will reconvene in plenary at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 3 April, to continue its general debate.

### Background

The Disarmament Commission met today to open its 2013 substantive session, which will run until 19 April. The Commission, which generally meets for three weeks, operates in plenary meetings and working groups, with the number of working groups depending on the number of substantive items on its agenda. The 2013 session features two agenda items: recommendations for achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation; and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

### Opening Statements

ANGELA KANE, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, said the Commission's substantive work was taking place in a "very complex" international environment, which combined both old challenges and new opportunities. The Commission was the oldest component of the United Nations disarmament machinery, she recalled, citing its founding resolution, in which the General Assembly had declared that it was "moved by anxiety at the general lack of confidence plaguing the world and leading to the burden of increasing armaments and the fear of war".

"In many ways, we are still facing this problem of lack of confidence," she said, with many of the gravest challenges to international peace and security reflecting that underlying condition, including in the Middle East, South Asia and Northeast Asia. It helped explain the slow progress in achieving global nuclear disarmament, as well as the robust growth of long-term nuclear weapon modernization programmes. It also underlay the "relentless" expansion of military budgets and accounted for deeply divided votes on many Assembly resolutions.

With that in mind, she said the disarmament machinery was not simply meant to provide various arenas for voicing insecurities. Rather, it was meant to provide a process for building confidence through the establishment and elaboration of global disarmament norms. The Commission played a vital role in developing those norms, as seen in its first agenda item — "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons". While differences persisted, there was a lot of common ground on that difficult topic.

She said that a positive result from this session would set the stage for a new consensus on nuclear disarmament when the Commission concluded its three-year cycle next year. "What a tremendous achievement that would be," she said, especially given the difficulties in launching negotiations at the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament. Efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction had been pursued in parallel with efforts to regulate — and reduce — conventional arms. Together, they created an integrated approach to fulfilling the United Nations Charter goals of disarmament and arms regulation. "The fact is: we need concrete progress in both of these fields and this Commission has its own contributions to make," she said.

With respect to the Commission's second agenda item — "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons" — she said there was an opportunity to build on progress made last month in negotiating the arms trade treaty. As efforts continued to conclude that treaty, the fulfilment of the larger objective of the "regulation of armaments" would require additional confidence-building initiatives. Many such measures related to transparency, which the Office for Disarmament Affairs had worked to improve over the years, notably vis-à-vis the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. She encouraged States to "make good use" of those transparency measures precisely because of their value in building confidence.

On other matters, she said it was always possible to improve working methods, noting that a "worthy goal" would be to revive the Commission's productivity as a resource for cultivating the seeds of future global disarmament norms: guidelines, standards and recommendations, which could one day flourish into customary practices observed by all States. The Commission — on no less than 16 occasions — had reached a consensus on such steps on a wide variety of disarmament topics. Its procedures alone did not explain why it had been unable to adopt any new such guidelines since 1999 — the differences in policy priorities must also be considered.

Even so, the Commission had a legitimate interest in examining whether there were alternative

procedures to help it achieve results, she said, stressing that: "In the end, history will judge the Commission's record less by the volume of its words than the quality of its outcomes." The issues on the agenda were profoundly difficult, "but that is why they are there", she said, noting that the Assembly was confident in the Commission's ability to reach a positive outcome.

CHRISTOPHER GRIMA ( [Malta](#)), Commission Chairman, reviewed some "meaningful" progress made recently in various areas of the disarmament agenda — including the successful completion of the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference and the reduction of strategic nuclear arsenals by the United States and the Russian Federation, as well as a number of setbacks. In that regard, he said, "the disappointment and frustration we all share following a further failed attempt to adopt an arms trade treaty is still very fresh in our minds".

Additionally, he said, serious obstacles continued to stand in the way of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Also, new levels of trust created by the successful outcome of the 2010 NPT Review regrettably had been weakened by the recent postponement of the conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, he said, urging all States in that region, together with the international community, to work tirelessly to convene that meeting without delay.

"We are at a watershed moment," he said, adding that "while general and complete disarmament remains high on the agenda of the international community, the multilateral disarmament machinery continues to deliver very little". Nuclear disarmament remained a global priority; paradoxically, however, the international community continued, "almost recklessly", to pursue a path that could lead to mankind's destruction. The time for taking meaningful steps to advance the disarmament agenda was now, he stressed.

In that context, today's meeting was taking place at a critical moment he continued. The challenges before the Commission were unprecedented, both in terms of their nature and scope. Significant progress in nuclear disarmament was urgently needed, as were more effective controls against the proliferation or possible acquisition by terrorists of all types of weapons of mass destruction. Progress was also needed to establish confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. "Let us find the right balance between the inherent right of States to defend themselves and recommended measures on conventional arms that reduce risks to international peace and security," he said.

While an agenda for the Commission had been adopted last year and a productive exchange had taken place in 2012, "we need to do much better if we are going to deliver recommendations by the end of this session or, indeed, by the end of the cycle", he said. The Commission's record in the last few years had hardly been flattering, as Member States had failed to adopt recommendations since 1999. "In our deliberations, we must inject fresh thinking and innovative ideas to register progress." A successful outcome would send a positive signal and could also spur progress in the disarmament machinery as a whole.

Indeed, he continued, "with each failed attempt to reach consensus, the risk of this body becoming irrelevant draws ever closer". He, therefore, called on delegations to muster the political will needed to abandon intransigent national positions that had blocked the Commission's work for far too long, and to identify the middle ground on those specific areas in which progress could be achieved. It was crucial not to forget that the Commission was not a negotiating body but a deliberative instrument. "Its value lies in its universal character and the possibilities it provides for frank and open debate," he said, noting that dialogue built trust, which, in turn would open doors to tangible progress. "In our deliberations over the next three weeks, we must make every effort to bring down those barriers to trust that have taken control of this Commission now for well over a decade".

### Statements

YUSRA KHAN ( [Indonesia](#)), speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, called for a results-oriented session in 2013. The Movement was deeply concerned over the lack of progress by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals in line with their relevant multilateral obligations, and he underscored the need for those countries to implement the

unequivocal undertaking to which they had committed at the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences. There was also an urgent need to commence and conclude negotiations on general and complete disarmament, without delay. In that, nuclear disarmament was the highest priority, as established by the first special session in 1978, and, as a multilateral legal obligation, it “should not be made conditional on confidence-building measures or other disarmament efforts”.

Thus, he said, negotiations must begin without further delay on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame, including a nuclear weapons convention. In that context, the Movement welcomed the convening of a meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, scheduled for 26 September, and he urged all Member States to be represented at the highest level. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the Movement reaffirmed the need to conclude a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances. Improving existing nuclear weapons and developing new types of those weapons contradicted the nuclear disarmament goals.

At the same time, he said, the Movement reaffirmed the inalienable right of developing countries to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy, including the sovereign right to develop a full national nuclear fuel cycle, for peaceful purposes without discrimination. It was, thus, concerned at restrictions imposed on those countries in that regard. The Movement’s States parties to the NPT were also seriously concerned over the long delay in implementing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and was disappointed that a conference on that goal had not been held in 2012. He urged all parties concerned to take urgent and practical steps to establish such a zone and, pending that, demanded that Israel, the only country in the region that had not joined the NPT or declared its intention to do so, renounce possession of nuclear weapons, accede to the NPT without precondition or further delay, and promptly place all its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

OSCAR LEÓN GONZÁLEZ ([Cuba](#)), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), noted that countries in the region had a long tradition of involvement in disarmament issues. At the Community’s founding summit, Heads of State and Government had adopted a special communiqué on the total elimination of nuclear weapons and participants had confirmed “the pride of our region in being the first densely populated area in the world to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone” through the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, or Treaty of Tlatelolco. The Community urged the nuclear-weapon States to withdraw all reservations to the Treaty’s protocols and to respect the region’s denuclearized character. CELAC deplored the failure to hold an international conference in 2012 on the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East, and offered to use its experience to help make such a zone a reality.

CELAC members, he said, reaffirmed that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons was a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law. It also believed it unlikely that any State or body could address the immediate humanitarian emergency that would occur if such a weapon was to detonate. The Community’s NPT States parties also reaffirmed their commitment to the full implementation of the regime’s three pillars: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It strongly supported the conclusion of legally binding instruments leading to effective, irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament. Also critical was to achieve the NPT’s universality, and CELAC urged all Governments to accede to it. The delegate also reaffirmed the region’s commitment to the application of IAEA safeguards, and called for the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by those States holding up its entry into force.

On the issue of conventional weapons, CELAC supported practical confidence-building measures as a way of strengthening international peace and security, in strict observance of the United Nations Charter and respect for the voluntary nature of those measures and the particular security concerns of States. The Community was convinced that the relationship between the international security environment and the development of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms could be mutually reinforcing. In that regard, CELAC encouraged Member States to adopt and apply such measures as appropriate, and to consider providing related information.

COLM Ó CONAILL ([Ireland](#)), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that reinforcing the non-proliferation regime should be a priority for all Member States. The Union was concerned that

non-compliance by States parties with the NPT's provisions undermined non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. Plus, States not yet party to the NPT should join as non-nuclear-weapon States and, pending their accession, adhere to its terms and pledge their commitments to its non-proliferation and disarmament principles.

He urged States to pursue the CTBT's early entry into force and universalization. Equally important was the immediate launch of negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, in the absence of which, all concerned States that had not yet done so should declare and uphold an immediate moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

To address the threat posed by mass destruction weapons, he urged States to be guided by the conviction that a multilateral approach to security provided the best way to maintain global order. It was essential to commit to uphold, implement and strengthen the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements. Committing to strong national and international export controls was also vital, as was addressing the root causes of instability.

He welcomed the outcome of the Review Conference on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. At the same time, he regretted that the Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty had not managed to finalize negotiations aiming at making trade in conventional arms more responsible and transparent. There was great momentum to be seized to conclude the treaty's elaboration, and swift action should be taken to do so.

USMAN SARKI (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the African Group of States and joining with the Non-Aligned Movement, expressed the Group's commitment to the principle and validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The African continent had remained a nuclear-weapon-free zone since the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty. He encouraged the remaining nuclear-weapons States that had not yet done so to ratify the protocols, without delay, and called for deepened efforts and unyielding determination to truly address the threat of nuclear weapons and achieve the end goal of the NPT. In that respect, the Group reaffirmed the application of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability by nuclear-armed States.

The Group, he said, also reiterated its deep concern over the slow pace of progress towards nuclear disarmament and what appeared to be a lack of concrete attempts to accomplish the goal of total elimination of nuclear arsenals. It hoped that the Commission, during the current session, would steer its deliberations towards concrete recommendations on its agenda issues, and called for more flexibility towards that goal. The Group also reiterated its commitment to the convening of a high-level conference to identify ways and means of eliminating nuclear weapons and prohibit their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use, and to provide for their destruction. "We underline that all attempts to improve existing nuclear weapons and developing new types of nuclear weapons contradict the objective of achieving nuclear disarmament as a multilateral obligation, as well as the commitments undertaken by nuclear-weapon States in this regard," he stressed.

He reiterated the need for the full implementation of the actions plans adopted at the 2010 NPT review on nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. He also recalled the consensus decisions contained in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference on convening, in 2012, a conference on establishing a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East, and expressed deep disappointment over the failure to have done so. He noted the lack of consensus on a final arms trade treaty text, and called for continued dialogue on adequate measures for regulating the global transfer of conventional arms and on preventing their diversion to the illicit market.

GABRIELA MARTINIC (Argentina), associating with the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, said that, at a time when the world was combining efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and to define the post-2015 development agenda, it could not abandon efforts to achieve disarmament. Indeed, the world could not justify trillions of dollars being spent on defence while people around the world were living in extreme poverty.

He said that his country, from the Global South and from a zone of peace, had long worked in the disarmament arena to build upon confidence and shared interests towards a common future. It was for those reasons that the two issues under consideration by the Commission were so relevant and timely. "We have to be capable of identifying measures to advance nuclear disarmament," and to pursue the goal of peace that motivated all people without distinction. She called on all delegations to adopt a pragmatic approach to achieve sustainable disarmament.

PAUL SEGER ( [Switzerland](#) ) said he hoped that the Commission's exchange of views would help it reach consensual recommendations and principles on its agenda items. The Commission must continue to reflect on the best way to approach the agenda for its cycles. One reason the machinery had halted was due to the "duality of topics": nuclear disarmament and conventional disarmament. The lack of progress in one field usually led to stagnation in the other. He proposed that the Commission focus on just one of the two topics. Also, it should open deliberations to exchanges with academia and civil society, which could "breathe new life" into its efforts and ensure all disarmament concerns were taken into account.

Moreover, he said, the Commission must give more thought to submitting its report to the General Assembly. Its paralysis had meant that such submission had been impossible. Thought must be given to the possibility of the Chairman submitting in a report in his own name to the Assembly that reflected the views and information exchanged. No effort should be spared to improve working methods, and he encouraged the Chair to find the ways and means to move forward. The frustration generated by such long-standing failures had prodded the Assembly to make decisions previously "unheard of", he said, such as creating a working group to advance disarmament negotiations. The need for action now was a priority.

"It is well known that the adoption of an outcome by consensus is always a hard endeavour," said MARIA LUIZA RIBEIRO VIOTTI ( [Brazil](#) ), adding that, nonetheless, "we must find the common ground needed to advance the discussions and produce substantive results in the field of disarmament".

She said that the Commission's working methods should be improved. For that reason, her delegation favoured the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in which the issue could be tackled comprehensively. Nuclear disarmament remained Brazil's utmost priority. It was only through a multilateral, concerted effort that nuclear weapons would be totally eliminated, in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner, according to an agreed legal framework and a specified timeframe. It was of grave concern that nuclear weapons still played a central role in the security doctrines of some nuclear-weapon States and military alliances. "This situation must change," she stressed, adding that the maintenance and modernization of nuclear weapons were costly, their use was inconsistent with international humanitarian law, and their possession by some States contributed to the risk of proliferation.

Brazil, therefore, supported immediate discussions on the principles and elements of a nuclear weapons convention and considered that the Commission could play an important role in that regard. The Commission could also build upon the guidelines agreed in 1999 on nuclear-weapon-free zones by devoting attention to a fundamental aspect of that issue, namely, negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending those weapons' total elimination, non-nuclear-armed States should be granted such unequivocal, legally binding assurances, through a multilateral instrument. Brazil fully supported multilateral efforts under United Nations auspices to build confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. In that vein, the delegation reaffirmed its support to the present draft text on the arms trade treaty, and looked forward to its adoption and subsequent implementation.

ENRIQUE ROMAN-MOREY ( [Peru](#) ), former Chairman of the Commission, said last year had marked the beginning of a new three-year cycle. Thanks to flexibility, two substantive issues had been agreed upon: nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. States had come to the Commission after two weeks of exhausting multilateral negotiations for an arms trade treaty, and while discussions had been held in both working groups, it had not been possible to achieve consensus. "We have been negotiating tirelessly for two weeks," he said, but again, agreement had not been possible.























