

**Statement by Permanent Representative of Mexico,
Ambassador Jorge Lomónaco, at the 2016 Session of the
Conference on Disarmament on the Draft Decision
for the establishment of a Programme of Work**

Geneva, 16 February 2016

Mister President,

We all are aware of the urgency to begin negotiations. As the Secretary General reminded us during his message on 20 January 2015 “ultimately, the effectiveness of the Conference will be judge on a single criterion: its ability to **conclude** disarmament treaties.”

Moving forward in fulfilling the mandate of this body, requires compromise from everyone, but that does not mean that we could or should ignore the nature of this forum. The mandate of the Conference was set by SSOD1 and there is absolutely no need for redefining it. Taking up substantive work at the CD means to **negotiate**.

Allow me remind you that on the SSOD1 it was agreed that “for maximum effectiveness, two kinds of bodies are required in the field of disarmament-deliberative and negotiating”. It was also agreed that “all Member States should be represented on the former, whereas the latter, for the sake of convenience, should have a relatively small membership.”

The distinction between a deliberative and a negotiating body is clear and there is no doubt that the Conference on Disarmament is the negotiating body in the disarmament machinery. There are other bodies which are meant to function as deliberative organs.

Mister President,

Despite the good intentions behind the proposal on a “draft decision for the establishment of a Programme of Work for the 2016 Session” presented by the current presidency, it has the potential to damage the CD not only for the 2016 Session but for many years down the road.

After twenty years of paralysis, supporting a proposal on a Programme of Work which does not contain a negotiating mandate would not contribute to break the paralysis on disarmament negotiations, and would undermine, even more, the credibility of the CD as a negotiating forum. The challenge is not just to adopt a programme of work as an end in itself. The real challenge is to start disarmament negotiations on the items of our agenda.

On the other hand, the current “draft decision for the establishment of a Programme of Work for the 2016 Session” does not represent substantive work of the Conference. This proposal is a way to keep the diplomatic community busy in discussions, not working on multilateral disarmament negotiations. It would therefore formalize the demise of the CD for the year only in its third week of sessions.

The proposal is at best what we have called in the CD a schedule of activities. To call it programme of work is misleading and would therefore set a terrible precedent, creating incentives for future presidencies to settle for non-negotiating mandates in the programmes of work for many more years to come, abandoning the mandate of the CD for good.

If the current presidency does not believe it can achieve the adoption of a Programme of Work with a negotiating mandate, it should allow for the next presidencies to exert all efforts towards this end.

The only way in which the CD will recover its relevance as a negotiating forum is by starting negotiations on disarmament not by keeping it busy.

As is well known by the Membership, my country believes that initiatives which do not contribute to the relevance of the CD as a negotiating forum, such as this one, are a distraction and constitute a simulation of work.

In conclusion, my delegation considers that adopting a decision on a Programme of work with a deliberative mandate will not only create a harmful precedent for the CD as a negotiating body but prevent other presidencies from making any progress.