

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT  
AMBASSADOR J. ALAN BEESLEY  
AT THE PLENARY MEETING OF  
29 AUGUST 1986

In my statement at the beginning of August, I noted our determination to continue to make as much substantive progress on as many agenda items as possible during the remaining days of the session. I also noted the requirement for the complete commitment and cooperation of the Chairmen of the Ad Hoc Committees, and of their working groups, of the Secretary-General of the Conference and his able staff, and of every delegation here, in order to reach the objectives.

I am happy that, as a result of the cooperation wholeheartedly given by all concerned, further substantive progress was achieved on several Conference items and, moreover, we have adopted our report to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

I will not take your time to outline in any detail what we have achieved in this session of the Conference, as you are well aware of what has been accomplished — our hopes, our expectations, our failures, our successes.

Assessments of the results differ; if it fell short of our hopes, and even our expectations, nonetheless, there is a widespread view that there were more positive and substantive developments than in many previous years. There was less antagonism, the atmosphere was healthier, and, as a consequence perhaps, there was more business-like work, more in-depth discussions, and greater clarification of basic arms control issues, even on outer space and a nuclear test ban. There are even signs of common ground developing on these last two issues, although not, I am sure, as much as we would all wish. On the unresolved nuclear and disarmament issues, deep divergencies remain, but we have at least begun to structure our work more successfully. Progress is discernible on radiological weapons and there is little, if any, disagreement that we have made significant progress in the negotiations on chemical weapons, and that we must not only maintain but accelerate the intensity and pace of our work.

As to our report, I undertook, in my statement of August 5, to work with you to ensure the right of every delegation and every group to have their views recorded. I hope that you will agree that, together, we have fulfilled this commitment. You will recall that I drew attention

also to the improved atmosphere in the Conference and expressed the hope that this would facilitate our work. It is now quite clear that the constructive manner in which delegations and groups agreed to express their views, often on subjects on which there are quite profound differences of opinion, played no small part in further improving the atmosphere and thus in achieving an agreed report. A widespread desire to produce a more concise and less controversial report was evident. If we achieved any success to this end, it is as a direct result of the cooperative and conciliatory attitudes of delegations.

Undoubtedly, there is scope for improvement in our report-writing process. I take the liberty of commending to you for your consideration an informal suggestion by one of the most senior and distinguished members of the Group of 21 that we consider establishing a group of wise men early in the Spring Session next year to consult on means of improving the efficiency of our report-writing process.

Much has been said about the tremendous contributions to our work made by the Chairmen of the Ad Hoc Committees and there is little I can add except to say that we have been fortunate, indeed, in our choice of chairmen.

Much has been said about the tremendous contributions of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and his whole staff throughout the Conference, but most particularly in enabling us to produce a report in the time available given the serious financial constraints within which we are working. I have never encountered a more dedicated, competent and highly professional group of international public servants in my 25 years of involvement in multilateral diplomacy. I express, on behalf of all of you, our thanks to each of them.

In closing, may I add my most sincere appreciation to each of you for your cooperation, again and again, whenever it has been asked of you. More than any other single factor is the spirit that gives me reason to be hopeful for our future work.

Of course, I am fully aware that my duties as President of the Conference do not end with this statement. During the intersessional period, I shall be available here, and for brief periods in New York, for any consultation that might be desired in connection with the organization of the next annual session of the Conference. Members may rest assured that I remain at their disposal to assist in any effort intended to advance such work.