Closing Remarks

By

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I thank the Chair for this opportunity to say a few words at the close of the 2012 substantive session of the UN Disarmament Commission.

All delegations are aware that WMD disarmament and the regulation of conventional armaments have been goals of the UN for many decades—technically, since 1946, although these goals are based on language found even earlier in the Charter.

Delegations also know well that the race to the finish line for achieving these goals is certainly better described as a marathon, rather than a sprint. Everybody understands that the greatest steps forward in disarmament rarely come as discrete events, and more often emerge over a long and at times difficult process of deliberation and compromise leading to consensus.

It is in this spirit that the work of this Commission is best viewed, and it remains to be seen what the future will hold for the Commission and for the results yet to be achieved over the course of its current three-year cycle.

We can all certainly agree that the willingness of delegations to deliberate in good faith, with a genuine desire to achieve a consensus outcome, will be crucial in shaping the future work of the Commission.

As I look at the diligent work of the distinguished Chairman of this session, as well as the many contributions of the Chairs of the Working Groups and the Friends of the Chair, I can only express my deep appreciation for their efforts to find some common ground among the variety of national policies and priorities that have been set forth in this room during your deliberations.

Ultimately, the future of this Commission, and disarmament itself, will depend most critically upon the readiness of States to harmonize those policies and priorities to achieve common ends. Institutional reform remains important at the United Nations, but the political will needed to achieve real progress remains in the hands of the Member States themselves.

A noted educator, William Arthur Ward, once wrote that “The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails.”

The existence of some persisting disagreements in this Commission must not obscure the many issues upon which delegations were in full agreement, especially on some of the most solemn goals of disarmament and arms control. This offers something solid upon which to build. I wish to thank all delegations for their contributions, which I hope will sustain a realistic prospect for smoother sailing at the Commission’s next session.