
Conference on Disarmament

1 February 2011

English

Final record of the one thousand two hundred and first plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 1 February 2011, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Marius Grinius (Canada)

The President: I call to order the 1201st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. First of all, I would like to extend a cordial welcome to our colleague from Ethiopia, Ambassador Minelik Alemu Getahun — and you will tell me how to pronounce it properly, I am sure — who has assumed his responsibilities as representative of his Government to the Conference. I would like to take this opportunity to assure him of our full cooperation and support in his assignment.

Now, before we proceed with our list of speakers, again there has been some interest in what we have talked about in plenary and informally in respect of the so-called indicative timetable. I hope that my statement will clarify any remaining questions.

I would now like to review with you the indicative timetable which I proposed to you at our first plenary meeting for our work here this week and next week. In my consultations over the past months, member States expressed their clear desire for the Conference on Disarmament to focus on the four core issues as part of our efforts towards consensus on a programme of work. My indicative timetable is therefore an invitation to organize our Tuesday and Thursday plenary meetings over these next two weeks around each of the four core issues in an equal way. This suggestion is intended to give delegations advance notice to prepare their statements or their experts in advance. My hope is simply to have a useful exchange of views in plenary that may bring the Conference on Disarmament closer to a schedule and a programme of work. What I have proposed is not a schedule under rule 20 of the rules of procedure, and I have not sought a decision. There will be no report of these meetings other than the normal United Nations record of plenary meetings — the *procès-verbal*. There will be no negotiations or pre-negotiations. All our work will be done in conformity with the rules of procedure. There will be no limitation or obligation on any delegation to speak. Rule 30 of the rules of procedure is clear: any member State may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference at a plenary meeting.

So today I encourage speakers to structure their remarks around the issue of nuclear disarmament. This Thursday I will invite speakers to consider the second of the four core issues: a treaty banning the production of fissile materials. Next Tuesday it will be the prevention of an arms race in outer space and then next Thursday negative security assurances. Let me repeat, however, that any statement on any topic will be welcome at any time. I believe that if delegations focus on each of the four core issues in turn, as I have proposed, we will have a valuable substantive exchange of views.

Now I would like to proceed with the list of speakers.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. President, I have taken the floor today to speak on the issue of nuclear disarmament, the most important item on our agenda. However, before addressing the issue, I would like to make some comments regarding the statement made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 26 January 2011.

The Secretary-General noted that, as the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament has produced landmark treaties that have promoted international security while “demonstrating that multilateral collaboration can serve the global and national interest alike”. For us this is an extremely important aspect of multilateral disarmament negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament because they must serve not only global but also national interests.

It follows, therefore, that no international disarmament or arms control treaty is possible if it is counter to the national interests of any member State. This view was also clearly endorsed last week in the Conference by the representative of a major power, who stated that arms control measures relating to outer space must meet the criteria of equitability and effective verifiability and enhance the national security of the State concerned and its allies. It is on this very basis that Pakistan has taken a position with regard to negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) because, as we have

explained on several past occasions, such a flawed and inequitable treaty would undermine Pakistan's national interest.

We also welcome the acknowledgment by the Secretary-General that the inertia in the Conference on Disarmament has lasted for more than a decade. This aspect is lost on many delegations, which seem to forget now that the Conference on Disarmament has faced a stalemate, not for the last two years, but for the last 12 years. For this decade-long impasse the fault lies not with Pakistan but with certain major powers. It is therefore surprising, to say the least, that those countries which are today most vociferous in condemning the present stalemate were notably silent during the past decade and have only now found their voice to term the impasse unacceptable.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations made a welcome remark about a disconnect between the Conference on Disarmament and recent positive developments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. My delegation has also on several occasions in the past made this very point. In this Conference, as also in the First Committee, it has become habitual for certain major powers to extol their own virtues and claim at the highest levels their commitment to nuclear disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. However, in practice, their actions and policies are totally contrary to these objectives.

Within the Conference on Disarmament or in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, they have repeatedly opposed the start of negotiations on nuclear disarmament or even on the extension of negative security assurances (NSAs) to non-nuclear-weapon States. In the United Nations they have consistently opposed resolutions on these issues. They even oppose the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament that has been called for by an overwhelming number of United Nations Member States. Worse yet are their policies of selectivity, discrimination and double standards guided by great-power politics and the search for profit, owing to which special dispensations have been made for some countries in flagrant violation of the international non-proliferation regime as well as their own national political commitments and policies.

These are the reasons that explain the current impasse in the Conference on Disarmament. There is nothing inherently wrong with our rules of procedure, nor is there any absence of the so-called responsibility that the Secretary-General referred to, which must come from the privilege of being a member of the Conference on Disarmament. Privilege and responsibility must apply to all members equally, since we are all equal in this forum and nobody is more equal than others. Therefore we are also all equally responsible.

No State, no matter how powerful, can afford to pursue policies in the Conference on Disarmament that are inconsistent with and contrary to its policies outside the Conference. This is a reality which has been recognized by a number of member States in their statements during the interactive session with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as well in this forum and in the First Committee. We have all recognized that the Conference on Disarmament cannot remain oblivious to the political realities in the world. Therefore, the solution to breaking the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament is for certain States to shed policies based on discrimination and double standards and to fully honour their national and international commitments to protect and uphold the international non-proliferation regime.

The quest to change the Conference's rules of procedure extraneously is a dead end, because only the Conference on Disarmament itself is empowered to do so. The option of taking the FMCT negotiations outside the Conference on Disarmament, on the other hand, is a non-starter. A treaty that will only ban future production of fissile material will not even be an exercise in non-proliferation, let alone disarmament. A much more meaningful

objective would be a treaty that will ensure the reduction of fissile material stockpiles as well as banning future production – a goal that the majority of the international community supports. Those who favour taking the FMCT negotiations outside the Conference on Disarmament must also recognize that this option can also be used to negotiate other more pressing issues on our agenda such as nuclear disarmament, NSAs and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

This brings me to the issue of nuclear disarmament, a subject which is the *raison d'être* of the Conference on Disarmament. We are all parties to the decisions of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, on the basis of which the Conference on Disarmament was created to negotiate a nuclear weapons convention.

Since we have recently heard from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, it is also relevant to recall here the Secretary-General's address of 24 October 2008 to the East-West Institute, which was entitled "The United Nations and security in a nuclear-weapon-free world". In this seminal address, the Secretary-General presented a five-point proposal as his contribution to revitalizing the international disarmament agenda. In his very first proposal, the Secretary-General urged the nuclear-weapon States in particular to "fulfil their obligations under the treaty by undertaking negotiations on effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament". Among the means of attaining this objective, the Secretary-General suggested that "nuclear-weapon States negotiate a nuclear-weapons convention backed by a strong system of verification, as has long been proposed at the United Nations". More importantly, the Secretary-General called upon the nuclear powers to "actively engage with other States on this issue at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum".

It is regrettable that the major nuclear-weapon States have obviously failed to heed the recommendations of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, because some of them continue to block the emergence of consensus on negotiating a nuclear weapons convention in the Conference on Disarmament and have done so ever since the Conference was created several decades ago after the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Multilateral disarmament negotiations offer the only mechanism to address the threats posed to international security and stability by nuclear weapons. As I have stated before, some powerful countries claim that the global environment today is more favourable for progress towards nuclear disarmament and make tall claims about their own commitment to Global Zero, but are opposed to the Conference on Disarmament engaging in negotiations on this issue. Such double standards are inexplicable.

At the same time, and contrary to their own claims about nuclear disarmament, some major nuclear powers continue to pursue policies based on the outdated cold war concept of nuclear deterrence and mutual assured destruction. The fact that the cold war ended more than two decades ago seems to make very little difference to their commitment to acquire ever more powerful and lethal nuclear weapons.

Perhaps even more dangerous is the notion that is now being given currency that such weapons are not restricted to the role of deterrence, but can actually be used even against States that do not possess nuclear weapons. The Charter of the United Nations obligates nations not to use or threaten to use force. This obligation extends to the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Similarly, the International Court of Justice, in its landmark ruling in 1996, determined that States are obligated to "pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control".

In our view, the decisions of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament remain the only international framework adopted by consensus

governing the multilateral disarmament machinery as well as its objectives and principles. Pakistan, along with a vast majority of member States, including 118 countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, believes that the issue of nuclear disarmament is ripe for negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament. This is the principal purpose of the Conference, and it must get on with its job of negotiating a convention on nuclear disarmament forthwith.

Mr. Iliopoulos (Hungary): Mr. President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Croatia, Iceland, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia; and the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine align themselves with this declaration.

In our statement of 27 January 2011 we outlined the overall views of the European Union on the current situation at the Conference on Disarmament. We are grateful for the opportunity today and during the upcoming meetings to discuss some core issues in more detail. Today I would like to address the issue of nuclear disarmament.

The European Union is actively contributing to the global efforts to seek a safer world for all, and to the achievement of the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons in accordance with the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

With this overarching goal in mind, let me echo the congratulations conveyed by Ms. Catherine Ashton, the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, to the United States Senate and the Russian State Duma and Federation Council on their approval of ratification of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). We welcome the resolve by the Russian Federation and the United States — which possess 95 per cent of the global stockpiles of nuclear weapons — to make progress in fulfilling their obligations contained in this landmark agreement. Both countries are demonstrating their willingness to enhance global security by reducing the number of deployed strategic warheads and their delivery systems and by establishing a verification system to the benefit of both sides. We encourage the United States and the Russian Federation to implement this agreement swiftly and to continue negotiations with the aim of further reducing their nuclear arsenals, including of non-strategic weapons. We call on them and on all States possessing non-strategic nuclear weapons to include them in their general arms control and disarmament measures, with a view to their progressive reduction and their final elimination.

We welcomed the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and the consensus established on the action plan on nuclear disarmament contained in its final document. The States parties reaffirmed their shared commitment to preserving the integrity of the NPT and thereby reaffirmed its importance. The European Union calls on States that have not yet ratified it to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States. The European Union undertakes to implement, without delay and in a balanced manner, the action plan, which contains measures to strengthen international efforts regarding the three pillars of the NPT. In this context, the European Union welcomes the announcement by the five nuclear-weapon States that they will meet in Paris in 2011 to follow up on the 2010 NPT Review Conference. An important priority for the European Union is the implementation of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution on the Middle East, which includes in particular the objective of organizing in 2012 a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In support of this process, we are planning to host a seminar in 2011 with the participation of all relevant countries.

We are committed to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with the objectives of the NPT. We welcome the reduction in strategic nuclear weapons and their

delivery systems since the end of the cold war, as well as the significant steps taken by two European Union member States in this connection. We stress the need for an overall reduction of the global stockpiles of nuclear weapons in accordance with article VI of the NPT, especially by those States with the largest arsenals. In this context, we recognize the application of the principle of irreversibility to guide all measures in the field of nuclear disarmament as a contribution to the maintenance and reinforcement of international peace, security and stability, taking these conditions into account. We shall continue our efforts to promote greater transparency and voluntary confidence-building measures in order to support further progress in disarmament. Indeed, the European Union welcomes the increased transparency demonstrated by some nuclear-weapon States, in particular the two European Union member States concerned, regarding the nuclear weapons they possess. We call on others to do likewise.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and a top priority for the European Union. We are hopeful that renewed political commitments to pursue ratification, in particular within some Annex 2 States of the CTBT, such as Indonesia and the United States of America, will give new impetus to our efforts to achieve the earliest possible entry into force of this key treaty. The European Union also calls for the completion of its verification regime and the dismantling of all nuclear test facilities in a manner that is transparent and open to the international community. The European Union continues to provide significant support for the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) to strengthen the monitoring and verification system. We warmly welcome the increased level of United States participation in all activities of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO.

Last but not least, let me recall that the European Union attaches a clear priority to the start of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). An effective FMCT would constitute a significant step in the process of nuclear disarmament and strengthen nuclear non-proliferation. We will address the issue of an FMCT in a separate statement on Thursday.

Ms. Jáquez Huacuja (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, when Mexico first addressed the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva on 22 March 1962, we announced our unilateral decision not to acquire, possess or allow on our national territory any type of nuclear weapon or the means of delivering such weapons.

Mexico believes that the use of nuclear weapons contravenes all the principles of international humanitarian law and, as has been reiterated in various General Assembly resolutions, breaches the Charter of the United Nations and constitutes a crime against humanity. We question the argument that the existence of nuclear weapons can contribute to global security, and we reject the indefinite possession of such weapons for any purpose, including as a deterrent. No security measure can justify the terrible humanitarian impact of the use of such devices.

Accordingly, Mexico has argued, both individually and jointly with our friends and allies in the New Agenda Coalition, that the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination.

Ever since that first statement in 1962, Mexico has stressed that nuclear disarmament could, can and must be pursued through spontaneous decisions by States until a global multilateral agreement can be reached. We therefore welcome any unilateral, bilateral or regional measure that promotes the reduction, limitation and elimination of nuclear weapons or prohibits their use. It was this spirit that guided our own steps in promoting the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area.

However, these measures are no substitute for the multilateral negotiations we have been awaiting for decades, with no likelihood of their occurring. There is a need to build a multilateral process leading to a binding instrument or set of instruments in this area with an effective verification mechanism.

In the absence of such a process, Mexico underlines the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. As a member of the New Agenda Coalition, Mexico argues that disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes and that it is essential for both to be implemented in accordance with the principles of irreversibility, transparency and verification. Although these processes are complementary, progress in one area cannot be dependent on progress in the other.

Mexico welcomes the successful conclusion of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and the adoption of the final document and the action plan. In the final document the nuclear-weapon States undertake to accelerate implementation of their commitments made at the 2000 Review Conference, including the unequivocal commitment to totally eliminate nuclear arsenals.

In spite of this achievement, which has contributed to the momentum of the current disarmament agenda, we continue to be frustrated by the obvious lack of progress made on article VI of the NPT, which committed parties to pursuing negotiations in good faith on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Neither will we, the States parties to the NPT represented in the Conference on Disarmament, be able to deliver on our agreement to establish a subsidiary body of the Conference to address the issue of nuclear disarmament. It is clear to Mexico that the mandate of the Conference on Disarmament is to negotiate, and we therefore find it odd, to say the least, that in drawing up a programme of work the Conference on Disarmament itself takes for granted that, regarding the first item on its agenda, the Conference can only consider and not negotiate.

As we know, multilateral negotiations in the field of disarmament have taken place before the Conference on Disarmament and outside of it, which is why we have to consider whether, in the current situation, it is still feasible to expect the Conference to adopt a programme of work, which, in any case, would not open negotiations on all the agenda items.

Of course, Mexico believes that item 1 will remain the top priority until we achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

Just as we have done in programmes targeting poverty relief, development, health, education and the environment, we believe that it makes sense to impose a sense of urgency by establishing clear time frames for conducting multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations and strengthening the credibility of the disarmament machinery.

Mr. Loshchinin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, in this general statement I wish to address the issues on the disarmament agenda that are priorities for the Russian delegation. This is a shortened version and the full text can be found in an English-language document that will be distributed to delegations.

Last year we saw positive trends in non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. This included the signing in April 2010 of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START III), which will soon enter into force; the holding of the 2010 NPT Review Conference; the high-level meeting on multilateral disarmament issues held on 24 September at the initiative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations; and the consistent implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions 1540 and

1887. These examples show that the overwhelming majority of States cannot imagine ensuring security and stability in the world in any other way than through universally recognized and collectively developed legal standards, with the United Nations maintaining its leading role in that process. This trend gives reason to believe that the well-established negotiating mechanisms, and first and foremost the Conference on Disarmament, will become more important in fulfilling this role.

A priority for us on the disarmament agenda is still undoubtedly to ensure the strengthening and stable functioning of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), enhance its effectiveness, and render it universal. We are satisfied by the results of the NPT Review Conference of last May. Now it is time to put into practice the recommendations adopted at the Conference. One outcome of the Review Conference was to agree on specific steps for preparing to start the process of establishing in the Middle East zones free from weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We are ready to take immediate steps towards the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East, to implement the Programme of Action of the 1995 Review Conference, in close interaction with all interested States in the region.

Stepping up non-proliferation efforts is also dictated by the threat that weapons of mass destruction may fall into the hands of terrorists. In this respect, we need to continue work to universalize the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. We also call upon all States to participate in multilateral efforts in the framework of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

We also call for the rapid entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which is one of the most important instruments for consolidating the nuclear non-proliferation regime and limiting nuclear weapons. We call upon all countries that bear particular responsibility for the future of the CTBT, namely the remaining countries from the so-called list of 44, to sign and ratify it as soon as possible without any prior conditions. At this juncture, we take note of the positive signals from the United States of America on its intention to ratify the CTBT.

The Russian Federation is taking practical steps to accelerate the nuclear disarmament process. Our country is fulfilling its obligations in that area in good faith, both under bilateral agreements and in accordance with article VI of the NPT.

I have already had the opportunity to inform you of the completion of the ratification process for the Russian-American START III Treaty. We are convinced that the implementation of this new treaty will help to strengthen international stability and firm up the nuclear non-proliferation regime. It will also create the conditions for continuing the nuclear disarmament process in a broader context and for allowing other States with nuclear arsenals to join the Russian-American disarmament efforts. In this respect it is also important for non-nuclear-weapon countries to systematically implement their non-proliferation obligations, which will be conducive to genuine disarmament, and particularly nuclear disarmament.

With the signing and ratification of START III and the considerable decrease in nuclear capabilities, we are now at a stage where further considerable reductions are unthinkable without due consideration of all other processes taking place in the sphere of international security. I stress that further steps towards nuclear disarmament must be considered and implemented, in full compliance with the principle of equal and indivisible security and taking account of the full set of factors that may influence strategic stability.

We have fully implemented the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START I) of 1991. We believe that implementing the Russian President's proposal of 12 October 2007 to make

the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty global in scope could be an important factor in strengthening international peace and security at both the global and regional levels.

We support intensified multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, particularly within the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament. We note the major role played by the Conference in strengthening international security. We express our gratitude to all delegations, as well as to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, for their efforts to enhance the effectiveness of our forum, including their persistent efforts to build consensus on the agenda for the 2011 session.

It is in the Russian Federation's interest to see rapid resumption of the substantive work of the Conference. We would like to see the rapid adoption of a programme of work for the 2011 session, and we believe that document CD/1864 still represents a good compromise.

The Conference has already had its first important achievement of the year: it has agreed on an agenda promptly and without delay. This is an important point.

There is no doubt that our priority here in the Conference is to prevent the militarization of space. The Russia-China draft treaty of February 2008 on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space would, if implemented, undoubtedly contribute not only to preventing the appearance of weapons in outer space but also to ensuring the predictability of the strategic situation and international security. This is in the interests of all States enjoying the benefits of a peaceful outer space. Discussions on this draft in various formats, including at international conferences, have revealed a high level of interest in this issue in the international community. I would like to point out that our consent to the discussion mandate for the working group on the prevention of an arms race in outer space presupposes that in the very near future work on this issue will move into a negotiating format.

The Russian Federation is prepared to discuss the issue of nuclear disarmament. We support the start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) within a balanced programme of work and on the basis of the Shannon mandate. We believe that it would be counterproductive to launch discussions on an FMCT in parallel to the Conference if all the countries with military nuclear arsenals did not participate. The development of such a treaty would, in our view, be a multilateral measure to strengthen the NPT regime.

We also support the creation of a working group with a mandate for the substantive consideration of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We would like to see the development of a global agreement on security assurances taking into account the Russian Federation's military doctrine in this area. We support the expansion of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the context of resolving the problems related to such assurances. We welcome the creation of new zones, particularly in Central Asia.

The agenda we have adopted offers us an opportunity to discuss a broad range of key issues concerning international security and disarmament.

Mr. President, as the first president of the 2011 session of the Conference, you have the difficult duty of preparing the basic framework and organizing the practical work of the session. Our main common task is to reach consensus on a programme of work as soon as possible and to resume substantive work.

Mr. Mohamad Bkri (Malaysia): Mr. President, as this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor, I wish to congratulate you on assuming your duties as President of the Conference of Disarmament. My delegation deeply appreciates the sincere

efforts and consultations that you have undertaken thus far to ensure that the Conference on Disarmament remains relevant as the sole multilateral negotiating body for nuclear arms control.

We would also like to record Malaysia's appreciation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for addressing the Conference on Disarmament last week. We fully appreciate his words of encouragement and his proposed follow-up actions regarding the high-level meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament held in September 2010. We wish to assure you of our full cooperation and support in this regard.

Malaysia is indeed encouraged by the positive developments in various international security settings over the past year, including the Nuclear Security Summit, the New START Treaty, the high-level meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and the 2010 NPT Review Conference. These positive developments showed that there are ample commitments and political will in pursuing the disarmament agenda. It is incumbent upon us to build on this momentum and commence substantive discussions as soon as possible.

It is unfortunate that the Conference on Disarmament has still not been able to reach a consensus on a programme of work. This inability to forge a compromise is a clear setback in spite of the professed common goals of all members of this Conference. Accordingly, we urge that continued efforts be made to accommodate the concerns to arrive at a consensus, based on the rules of procedure. The legitimate concerns of member States of the Conference on Disarmament should be given the serious consideration they deserve. Such understanding would allow us to move on and focus our efforts on substantive work.

The difficulty we face in realizing the role of the Conference on Disarmament and fulfilling its agenda has come back to haunt us, as is exemplified by the newly emerging security threats seen in recent years. It is crucial that we strengthen our resolve and work towards reinvigorating the multilateral process in pursuing the aims of bringing this Conference back to substantive work. It is my delegation's sincere hope that at this year's session, the Conference will be able to find consensus on a programme of work.

Nuclear disarmament remains our highest priority. However, pending negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention, the fissile material cut-off treaty, like the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, remains one of the next essential steps towards preventing the proliferation of nuclear material that would eventually lead towards the attainment of genuine nuclear disarmament. We hope that other core issues of equal importance, namely, nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, will be addressed subsequently in the Conference on Disarmament.

In conclusion, let me assure you of my delegation's readiness to work with you and other members of the Conference with a view to achieving a positive and successful outcome to the session of the Conference of Disarmament.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): Mr. President, as this is the first time my delegation takes the floor in this year's session, allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and to express appreciation for the approach you have taken to our work and the wide-ranging consultations you have undertaken. The same support and cooperation will, of course, be extended by my delegation to your colleagues who will preside over our Conference in the course of the year.

I would like to congratulate you on having gotten our annual session off to a smooth start with the adoption of the agenda and other necessary procedural decisions. It is nonetheless extremely disappointing that, according to your report on the thorough consultations undertaken by you during the intersessional period, it appears that the Conference is no closer to agreeing on a programme of work than it was at the end of last

year's session. The remarks of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in this chamber on 26 January were a timely reminder that the eyes of the world are on us, and of the urgent importance of ensuring that the Conference undertakes the substantive work for which it was established.

Ireland welcomes your initiative to ensure that, while we make every effort to agree on a programme of work, our limited time is used to best advantage. We support your invitation to have substantive, worthwhile exchanges on vital disarmament issues. We are happy, therefore, to take up your suggestion that we should concentrate today on nuclear disarmament, and to add some remarks in a national capacity to those already made on our behalf in the statement of the European Union, to which, of course, we fully subscribe.

Ireland attaches the highest priority to the complete and verifiable elimination of all nuclear weapons. It is high time that nuclear weapons joined chemical and biological weapons among the weapons outlawed by the international community. As has been highlighted on numerous occasions over recent decades, including by the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), to which my country belongs, the only absolute guarantee against the proliferation and use of nuclear weapons is their complete and verifiable elimination. For as long as a number of States deem that the possession of nuclear weapons is essential for their security, there may be others who will aspire to acquire them. We see no justification for the acquisition or the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons, and we do not subscribe to the view that nuclear weapons — or the quest to develop them — contribute to international peace and security.

Pending the complete and verifiable elimination of all nuclear weapons, Ireland supports the taking of practical steps to prevent their further proliferation and avoid nuclear war. This has been my country's consistent policy since 1958, when, at the United Nations General Assembly, Ireland tabled the first of a series of resolutions that ultimately led to the conclusion of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The lasting achievement of the NPT has been to diminish the spectre of a nuclear war. The nuclear-weapon States made binding commitments to nuclear disarmament, and other States undertook not to acquire nuclear weapons. This is what is often referred to as the "bargain" at the heart of the NPT. This commitment to nuclear disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States was transformed into the "13 practical steps" at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, at which NAC played a central role. After a disappointing first decade in the current century, the "13 practical steps" of 2000 were reaffirmed and built upon by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which adopted an action plan on nuclear disarmament. We look forward to the early implementation of the commitments given at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and are committed to playing a full part in the implementation of such commitments as are applicable to the non-nuclear-weapon States.

The Conference on Disarmament is specifically mentioned in three of the actions contained in the action plan on nuclear disarmament adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We would see the Conference as having the potential to play a useful role in some other areas in addition. For example, the Conference could serve as a forum for ongoing exchange of information on nuclear weapons reductions, doctrines and policies, with a view to increasing trust and confidence between States and facilitating more rapid progress towards nuclear disarmament.

There are several specific steps which can be taken in the short term to facilitate nuclear disarmament. We wish to see the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the last major agreement negotiated in this forum. We call on those States on which the treaty's entry into force depends to live up to their responsibilities.

We believe that this Conference should add to its list of achievements a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The negotiation of such a treaty is long overdue. We believe that, for such a treaty to be meaningful, it should include a verification mechanism and cover existing stocks. The negotiation and conclusion of such a treaty would limit the expansion of existing nuclear arsenals and therefore can be understood as a significant step in a phased programme towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Also pending the elimination of nuclear weapons, Ireland strongly believes that those States which have become parties to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States have the right to expect legally binding assurances that nuclear weapons will not be used against them. We therefore look forward to the discussion next week on the topic of negative security assurances.

Lastly, I would like to recall the words of a former permanent representative of another country to the Conference on Disarmament, who told the Conference some years ago that the instructions under which he operated were very short and simple, and were contained in just three words: "Promote nuclear disarmament". My delegation shares the view that the promotion of nuclear disarmament is our primary objective in the Conference on Disarmament, and that this may be facilitated in a number of ways, including by the conclusion of an appropriate treaty on fissile material and of negative security assurances.

Mr. Gartshore (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, Canada is pleased to speak at this session on nuclear disarmament. You will find that much of what I say today is consistent with what Canada has said in previous years on the topic, but there are truths that need to be repeated. Last year saw several achievements outside this chamber in the field of nuclear disarmament, including a successful outcome of the NPT Review Conference and the ratification of a new bilateral agreement between the United States of America and the Russian Federation.

In March 2010, at a meeting in Gatineau, Canada, chaired by Canada, the G8 foreign ministers adopted a statement on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As part of this initiative, G8 members approached countries that have yet to sign or ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to encourage them to help bring the treaty into force. Canada remains committed to strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to the earliest possible entry into force of the CTBT.

Canada supports the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons, a goal shared by many within and outside the Conference on Disarmament. We recognize the importance of nuclear disarmament and the growing impetus for a nuclear weapons convention. Canada is not opposed to the pursuit of a comprehensive multilateral agreement banning nuclear weapons. However, we believe this goal is best built on a foundation of incremental agreements, such as the CTBT and a future treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. Coupled with recent and further achievements in bilateral arms reductions, these agreements would create the necessary framework and conditions for achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

This body has debated for decades how we can achieve the goal of nuclear disarmament, and this debate has often focused on holistic rather than incremental approaches. Understandably, countries, even those truly committed to nuclear disarmament, are reluctant to be the first to abandon their nuclear arsenals. As a consequence, Canada believes that we must first establish the necessary conditions to lead all nuclear-weapon States to take steps towards these weapons' elimination, while ensuring that no additional State obtains them to address its own security concerns.

(spoke in English)

Mr. President, Canada remains a committed member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). On 19 November 2010 in Lisbon, NATO adopted its new Strategic Concept. In it the Alliance affirmed that “as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance”. This position is neither contradictory nor disingenuous. Canada has since the dawn of the nuclear age worked towards the elimination of nuclear weapons; however, this goal cannot be achieved solely by unilateral or selective nuclear disarmament. Our NATO partners have substantially reduced their respective nuclear arsenals since the end of the cold war. We are aware, however, that much work remains to be done on all sides.

Canada also believes that the Conference on Disarmament can and should also serve as a forum for transparency, trust and confidence-building in nuclear disarmament. In recent months some nuclear-weapon States have released additional information on their nuclear arsenals and stockpiles. In this context, Canada would welcome such information from other States with nuclear weapons, as well as information on fissile material stockpiles and the progress of their dismantlement efforts.

Nuclear disarmament will not come quickly or without the efforts and dedication of those who aspire to a nuclear-weapon-free world. An incremental approach will establish verification and monitoring regimes to build trust and set the conditions for subsequent international instruments on nuclear disarmament.

My delegation is open to consideration of other ideas in the Conference on Disarmament that are practical and offer prospects for near-term multilateral action on nuclear disarmament. Nevertheless, it is Canada’s view that beginning negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is the most significant, practical advance the Conference on Disarmament can now make towards nuclear disarmament. Only once we have key elements of a framework to address nuclear disarmament can we begin a phased approach to their complete elimination.

Ms. Fogante (Argentina) *(spoke in Spanish)*: Mr. President, as this is the first time that my delegation has taken the floor during the first part of this session of the Conference, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency. The year 2011 undoubtedly represents a challenge for this body, and we are confident that under your leadership during this first part of the session all options will be explored to restore to this body the relevance it has always had.

Your invitation to structure our work in the plenary sessions around four core agenda items is opportune. While efforts continue to adopt a programme of work — and that should remain the member States’ priority — we will be able to make efficient use of the available time. This exercise is not new and we have been able to present our positions on several occasions, including during the informal substantive meetings held between 2007 and 2010.

On the basis of recent exchanges, and bearing in mind your proposal to address agenda item 1, on nuclear disarmament, I would like to make the following comments.

The aim of these discussions should take account of the mandate in document CD/1864. However, my country has always called for the resumption of negotiations on nuclear disarmament within the framework of this Conference and hopes to see a negotiating mandate in a future programme of work, about which you are ready to conduct further consultations. In the meantime we call for a flexible interpretation of the format of the programme of work for this and other agenda items.

Argentina is also of the view that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the regime and that its universality should be one of

the main priorities of this forum. Although my delegation would have preferred to see further progress in nuclear disarmament in the outcome documents of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, we consider the outcome a success. We now have a sufficiently clear road map to monitor the level of compliance of the five nuclear-weapon States, and we hope that these undertakings will also guide our deliberations in the framework of the Conference.

Argentina recognizes that the ultimate goal of completely eliminating nuclear weapons can be achieved through a gradual and phased approach. That is why unilateral, bilateral and multilateral initiatives should be welcomed. In this regard, we welcome the recent announcement by the United States of America and the Russian Federation concerning the completion of ratification of the New START Treaty. The statements by Heads of State of other nuclear-weapon countries made prior to the NPT Review Conference are also positive.

We hope that these renewed undertakings will become a growing trend and be reflected in other specific unilateral measures to facilitate the gradual elimination of such weapons, such as the ratification of the NPT by countries that are still not party to it, the reduction of the salience of nuclear weapons in the military doctrines of nuclear-weapon States and their respective military alliances, the inclusion of tactical weapons in disarmament processes, and the reduction of the operational readiness of deployed systems.

With respect to multilateral initiatives, the member States have put forward various proposals that this Conference should examine in a careful, responsible and pragmatic manner. These include the start of a phased programme of nuclear disarmament within a specified time frame and the conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, a proposal that was also presented by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his 2008 five-point plan and that was considered during the most recent NPT Review Conference.

Furthermore, any work that the Conference might do in relation to fissile material should also be seen as a concrete step towards nuclear disarmament by including existing stocks of fissile material in the scope of the future treaty. Pending the conclusion of this instrument, we call for the declaration of an immediate moratorium on production, and we would welcome the conclusion of agreements to subject material not used for military purposes to international verification and thereby ensure the irreversibility of conversion measures.

Similarly, there are other unilateral and voluntary measures that could easily be implemented in order to demonstrate the commitment of nuclear-weapon States, including those calling for nuclear disarmament to be the priority of this Conference. An example of this is the strengthening of confidence-building measures, such as information exchange on existing stockpiles, including their operational status.

Lastly, speaking on behalf of a country belonging to the largest nuclear-weapon-free zone in terms of area and population, which was established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco, I would like to highlight the substantive contribution that such mechanisms have been proven to make to the goal of nuclear disarmament. We must continue taking steps to strengthen existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and make further efforts to create new ones, including one in the Middle East. The decision taken at the most recent NPT Review Conference to convene a conference in 2012 is therefore encouraging. As part of the discussions on agenda item 4, my delegation will speak further on the growing importance of such nuclear-weapon-free zones and the relevance of a future comprehensive agreement on renouncing the first use of nuclear weapons in a multilateral framework, with a view to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Allow me to conclude by emphasizing that my delegation will support the continuation of any discussions on agenda item 1 that may be organized during plenary sessions in any alternative format that member States are willing to experiment with, pending the adoption of a programme of work for the Conference.

Mr. Jazairy (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would first of all like to thank you for your initiative, which will allow us to engage in what we hope will be a productive and frank exchange of views on the four core issues that you mentioned earlier.

I would also like to welcome the Ambassador of Ethiopia, Mr. Getahun, who has just joined the Conference on Disarmament. Lastly, I share the views of my colleague from Malaysia, Mr. Mohamad Bkri, regarding the long-awaited adoption of the programme of work of the Conference. The goal is within our reach. It is up to us to seize it while there is still time. As Goethe said, “*Gott gibt die Nüsse, aber er knackt sie nicht für uns*” (God gives us nuts, but he doesn’t crack them for us).

Nuclear disarmament meets humanity’s need for self-preservation. It is a legal obligation and a moral necessity grounded in firm political and legal foundations.

In its first resolution, adopted in 1946, the General Assembly of the United Nations decided to set up a committee tasked with, inter alia, submitting recommendations to the Security Council on the elimination of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction. Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) commits States parties with nuclear weapons to “pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament”. Subsequently, the International Court of Justice concluded that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is, generally speaking, contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict and, in particular, the rules of international humanitarian law. The Court also unanimously confirmed the existence of a nuclear disarmament obligation. It explicitly mentioned the existence of “an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control”. This obligation, as the President of the Court, Mr. Mohammed Bedjaoui, emphasized at the time, is twofold: on the one hand, an obligation to negotiate in good faith and, on the other, an obligation to achieve results.

Moreover, the final document of the first special session devoted to disarmament in 1978, the so-called Decalogue, made nuclear disarmament the highest priority of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences, the States parties committed themselves to taking steps to eliminate nuclear weapons and thereby give effect to article VI of the NPT. Specifically, they agreed on 13 practical steps, including the unequivocal commitment to eliminate nuclear arsenals.

Furthermore, during the Millennium Summit, the Member States of the United Nations reiterated their commitment to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons.

What has happened to these solemn undertakings in practice?

In recent years, we have seen renewed interest in nuclear disarmament and a multitude of initiatives in that area. For instance, the five-point proposal of the Secretary-General of the United Nations recommends, inter alia, negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention and an agreement on a framework of separate instruments in the field of nuclear disarmament.

Some positive steps have been taken in the area of nuclear disarmament. Nuclear weapons arsenals have been reduced either unilaterally or bilaterally. The New START

Treaty was recently ratified by the United States and Russia, although the documents accompanying the instruments of ratification of both parties give rise to questions about the irreversibility of these commitments. In addition, at the multilateral level, the States parties adopted an action plan at the NPT Review Conference that builds on the achievements of 1995 and 2000.

However, we consider that the progress made, while important, remains too limited in scope to meet the aspirations of all for a world truly free of nuclear weapons.

Developments in the area of nuclear disarmament raise serious concerns at the present juncture.

First, the number of existing nuclear weapons is still huge.

Second, the various nuclear doctrines and policies of the nuclear-weapon States emphasize the role of nuclear weapons as a deterrent to ensure the security of States. However, if deterrence legitimizes the possession of nuclear weapons, there is no reason why only a few powers should have a monopoly over them. In other words, deterrence would become an argument for proliferation and not its opposite. Furthermore, invoking the right to use nuclear weapons first, even against non-nuclear-weapon States, on the grounds of the vague notion of “vital interests” is not very reassuring for non-nuclear-weapon States that faithfully comply with their obligations under the NPT. In short, these doctrines are thinly disguised versions of the one presented by La Fontaine in “The Wolf and the Lamb”. In citing La Fontaine, I have in fact cited a masterpiece of Islamic culture, *Kalila wa Dimna*, which, as you know, was a source of inspiration for the French poet.

Such attitudes are therefore unlikely to add impetus to nuclear disarmament. On the contrary, they follow on from those that prevailed during the cold war, except that now the issue is now longer the balance of terror but the imbalance of terror. That does not constitute progress.

Third, in order to maintain a so-called effective and credible nuclear capability, nuclear-weapon States continue to modernize their nuclear arsenals, delivery systems and nuclear installations. Their increased destructive capacity can thus lessen the impact of reductions in the number of these weapons.

Fourth, the policy of nuclear sharing adopted by an alliance expands the scope and geographical extent of the deployment and use of such weapons beyond the nuclear-weapon States alone. This policy calls into question the credibility and meaning, in this context, of the non-proliferation regime.

Fifth, some nuclear-weapon States make nuclear disarmament subject to preconditions. This calls into question the sincerity of the commitment of those countries to renounce such weapons.

In this way, nuclear disarmament becomes an elusive or even unreachable goal on the far horizon.

That said, Algeria has welcomed the progress made so far in reducing nuclear arsenals. We call for more sustained efforts and for negotiations in good faith with a view to eliminating nuclear weapons in a verifiable, irreversible and transparent manner in accordance with existing commitments. Nuclear-weapon States should also move beyond an overcautious approach that relies on doctrines of nuclear deterrence to justify maintaining nuclear weapons, despite existing commitments.

In this context, Algeria supports the position of the Fifteenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, in 2009, and the position paper of the Group of 21 (CD/1571) of 18 February 1999. These documents call for the establishment of a subsidiary body within the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a phased programme

for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame, including a nuclear weapons convention. Accordingly, Algeria, together with 27 other countries of the Group of 21, has proposed a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons, in the framework of document CD/1419 of 7 August 1996.

Furthermore, Algeria, which co-sponsored the so-called five ambassadors' proposal and subsequently sponsored the decision contained in document CD/1864, has sought to start substantive discussions on nuclear disarmament with the ultimate objective of achieving negotiations in that area.

During the discussions on nuclear disarmament that took place at the plenary meeting of the Conference on 2 March 2006, I presented some ideas to help move our work forward on that issue. I referred to two approaches. The first favours the negotiation of a comprehensive convention prohibiting the development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons and providing for their ultimate elimination. The second is a phased approach based on a combination of three types of measures to be implemented gradually: halting the nuclear arms race; reducing the role and threat of nuclear weapons in order to build trust; and making deep cuts in nuclear arsenals with the ultimate aim of their complete elimination. The substance of that statement is reflected in document CD/1008 of 2 March 2006.

Another avenue should also be explored – namely, to adopt a comprehensive standard concerning the prohibition of nuclear weapons based on the previous undertaking by nuclear-weapon States. It would also lead to the establishment of a subsidiary body with a mandate to consider possible measures in that regard. Algeria made a proposal to that effect, contained in document CD/1545 of 31 July 1998.

Lastly, Mr. President, we hope that this first round of discussions on the four core issues will be followed by thematic debates structured around specific issues on the basis of our discussions of the last few years. In that connection, I suggest structuring discussions on nuclear disarmament around the technical and political issues mentioned in the revised version of the model nuclear weapons convention submitted by Costa Rica and Malaysia to the United Nations, which is contained in document A/62/650 of 18 January 2008.

Participants in the discussion could address the following issues: general obligations; transparency and confidence-building measures; verification and compliance with commitments; national implementation; and the relationship between this convention and other existing instruments such as the CTBT and the NPT, etc.

The draft convention was presented to us clearly and eloquently last year during the thematic debates on nuclear disarmament by the representatives of Costa Rica and Malaysia. We believe that continuing these discussions, in the framework of official or informal activities of the Conference, would be very useful for removing ambiguities and resolving remaining difficulties.

Lastly, nuclear weapons are an unnecessary evil. Admittedly, their elimination is, politically and technically, a complex, challenging and difficult task. However, South Africa, Ukraine and Kazakhstan have, by relinquishing their nuclear arsenals, shown us that it is possible, provided that the necessary political will exists.

Mr. Lauber (Switzerland) (*spoke in English*): Mr. President, like others before me, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of this Conference, assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation, and express our appreciation with regard to your efforts and the approach you have taken towards making this Conference work.

(*spoke in French*)

The past few years have seen a genuine revival of interest in nuclear disarmament.

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome parliamentary approval by the United States Senate and the Russian Duma of the New START Treaty, which should pave the way for its early ratification and entry into force. We hope that a new round of negotiations to further reduce nuclear arsenals will soon be launched and will cover all types of nuclear weapons, strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed. The same applies to decreasing their operational readiness, an issue that Switzerland has considered ripe for action for some years.

We also welcome the numerous commitments and practical steps undertaken by other nuclear-weapon States aimed at reducing their reliance on nuclear weapons. We are convinced that all countries possessing such weapons ultimately have an interest in joining this course of action.

Lastly, we are pleased that the 2010 NPT Review Conference has reaffirmed the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States to totally eliminate their nuclear arsenals. The 22-point action plan on nuclear disarmament contains some very useful benchmarks for the approach to be followed in the years ahead. Now we must honour our pledges and deliver on our commitments. In this regard, Switzerland attaches great importance to stringent implementation of the monitoring of this action plan. We are hopeful that the upcoming meeting of the five nuclear-weapon States in Paris will mark the beginning of a process of coordinated engagement and will provide some practical pointers regarding the monitoring and implementation of the action plan.

Notwithstanding these positive developments, it is clear that serious threats and challenges remain.

Thousands of nuclear weapons continue to threaten the very existence of humankind. A great many of these weapons remain on high alert, ready to be fired within minutes. Some nuclear powers are still building up their arsenals in quantitative terms and all are upgrading them in qualitative terms. We are concerned that such modernization efforts could slow down, if not jeopardize, quantitative reductions.

Accomplishments in the field of disarmament appear rather modest compared to the overall scale of the problem. Efforts are haphazard rather than systematic and coordinated. Too often, the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency are not applied. It is clear that “steps to disarmament” often result from budget cuts or changing technology rather than the development of a long-term strategy for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

Another huge challenge is that, despite long-standing disarmament obligations, the logic of deterrence has survived the cold war and is nowadays more an obstacle than a solution to ensuring equal security for all.

Lastly, our vision must be broadened to encompass the implementation of a more sustainable and forward-looking security policy that includes not only strategic and military objectives but also environmental, development and humanitarian considerations.

At the opening of the NPT Review Conference last May, our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Micheline Calmy-Rey, denounced nuclear weapons as unusable, immoral and illegal. She made clear that those weapons were fundamentally immoral because they caused massive and indiscriminate destruction in terms of human lives, material resources and consequences for the environment. She also said that the use of nuclear weapons was illegal under international humanitarian law because their effects were indiscriminate and, in any case, their use violated the fundamental principles and rules of humanitarian law.

On the basis of these clear messages, the NPT Review Conference set down a clear marker for future action: it highlighted the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons and reaffirmed “the need for all States at all

times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law”.

Looking at the renewed disarmament efforts as well as the challenges ahead, Switzerland is convinced that there is no alternative to outlawing the use of nuclear weapons and gradually and systematically getting rid of them.

First, we must speed up progress on our step-by-step approach. It is important to implement the entire NPT action plan and to identify areas where further efforts are required.

Second, we need to make sure that all steps taken are irreversible. With regard to these principles, more groundwork is needed. Switzerland, together with the Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC), is planning to make a substantial contribution to this debate and to promote understanding of the principle of irreversibility.

Third, we must ensure that all States, whether nuclear or non-nuclear, take responsibility for helping to create a world free of nuclear weapons. Compliance with existing disarmament measures and non-proliferation obligations by all is essential for further disarmament progress.

Fourth, we must place the humanitarian perspective at the heart of the nuclear weapons debate. We must move forward the process of delegitimizing nuclear weapons and initiate a meaningful debate on issues relating to international humanitarian law. In this context, Switzerland remains actively engaged and is planning to present a substantial contribution to the Conference on Disarmament in order to follow up on the results of the NPT so as to stimulate a comprehensive debate.

Lastly, Switzerland is convinced that we need to move up a gear. We have declared our support for the Secretary-General's five-point plan. In order to reach our common goal, additional legally binding instruments are needed. We believe that it is time to move forward.

Switzerland is convinced that the Conference on Disarmament and Geneva, as the centre for multilateral disarmament, can play a vital role in these efforts. The international community has called on all the member States of the Conference to resume their work and to act in accordance with the mandate of this forum. Our task is to speed up efforts and meet challenges more comprehensively and responsibly, looking beyond mere national security interests. Nuclear-weapon States have a special responsibility and should spare no effort to systematically rid themselves of their nuclear weapons and to play their part in outlawing nuclear weapons so as to ensure that they are never used.

Mr. Woolcott (Australia): Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your suggestion that Conference on Disarmament delegations may wish to focus their statements on particular core issues during each of the plenary meetings of the second and third weeks of your presidency.

Australia is committed to a world free from nuclear weapons, and we are committed to achieving this goal through balanced, progressive and reinforcing steps. Australia is proud of its strong record of promoting global engagement in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and views the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

Together with Japan, we sponsored the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, which published its major report in December 2009. Drawing on some of the Commission's recommendations, we jointly submitted a package of practical disarmament and non-proliferation measures to the 2010 NPT Review

Conference. Both ventures made a positive contribution to the outcomes of the Review Conference.

Australia is focused now on the road ahead. The 2010 NPT Review Conference adopted by consensus a set of recommendations on the three pillars of the NPT (disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses). The challenge now is to take action.

Australia and the NPT membership have looked to the Conference on Disarmament as the pre-eminent multilateral disarmament negotiating forum and, through the consensus-based action plan adopted by the Review Conference, have again given the Conference on Disarmament an important responsibility to help build the conditions for a more secure world.

Australia welcomes the initiative of the nuclear-weapon States to meet in Paris later this year to discuss their role in implementing the action plan. Australia, Japan and a range of countries in different regions have begun a disarmament and non-proliferation initiative focused on the need to promote steady implementation of the action plan.

Australia hopes that this initiative will develop creative and practical proposals, including on such broad issues as reducing the number and role of nuclear weapons, transparency measures of the nuclear-weapon States, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, strengthened safeguards and the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Australia has re-energized its commitment to working with others to identify and promote practical, results-driven initiatives to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We have our road map – the NPT Review Conference action plan. This is a complex and hard task, but that is simply a measure of how vital the objective is. It should never be the excuse not to try harder.

Mr. Duncan (United Kingdom): Mr. President, since this is the first time I have taken the floor during your presidency, let me offer my congratulations on your appointment, and equally offer the full support of my delegation in your endeavours.

The United Kingdom fully endorses the statement of the European Union, and we remain committed to the long-term objective of a world without nuclear weapons.

We have a strong record of fulfilling our disarmament commitments and meeting our international and legal obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), including article VI. The United Kingdom is committed to maintaining only a minimum nuclear deterrent; we have signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and ceased production of fissile material for military purposes.

As was just mentioned by my Australian colleague, the successful conclusion of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and its unprecedented and detailed action plan for all three pillars, together with the welcome recent ratification of the New START Treaty by the United States and Russia, have given us all a critical boost and a focus for disarmament efforts in the year ahead. The United Kingdom will continue to seek to work with the international community to build upon the momentum that these developments have generated in order to make further substantive progress.

The United Kingdom strongly believes that, despite its recent inertia, the Conference on Disarmament remains the best and the only forum for meaningful multilateral disarmament negotiations that include all the key nuclear players. However, the international community demands that the Conference on Disarmament demonstrate progress in the near future in order to prove its continuing relevance. For this reason, we again urge members to join the consensus on a programme of work and to commence

negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. The Conference on Disarmament itself is an institution which, through its rules of procedure, shows respect for everyone's security.

On 19 October 2010, the United Kingdom Strategic Defence and Security Review reaffirmed our commitment to maintaining a minimum effective nuclear deterrent, but also contained a number of new disarmament measures. In the Review we announced that by the 2020s the United Kingdom would reduce the number of warheads on board each of our submarines from 48 to 40; reduce our requirement for operationally available warheads from fewer than 160 to no more than 120; reduce the number of operational missiles on the *Vanguard*-class submarines to no more than 8; and reduce our overall nuclear weapon stockpile to no more than 180. These changes, which are in conformity with our obligations under article VI of the NPT, will start to take effect over the next few years.

We also announced a new, stronger security assurance that the United Kingdom will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States which are parties to the NPT. These complemented other commitments that the United Kingdom has made on disarmament.

In September 2009 the United Kingdom hosted a meeting of the nuclear-weapon States members of the NPT, known as the P5 conference on confidence-building measures towards nuclear disarmament, and we look forward to further engaging with those States at the 2011 conference in Paris. We firmly believe that increasing transparency and developing technical, military and political solutions to the practical challenges of disarmament are vital to making tangible progress towards our ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

As we announced at the high-level meeting held in New York last year, we have agreed to continue research with the leading non-nuclear-weapon State Norway into the verification challenges of nuclear disarmament, taking forward our long-running collaboration on this issue. We are also considering ways to expand this work in the future.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom looks forward to working with the international community to control proliferation and make progress on multilateral disarmament, to build trust and confidence between nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States, and to take tangible practical steps towards a safer and more stable world where countries with nuclear weapons ultimately feel able to relinquish them.

Mr. Oyarce (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, we join in welcoming the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia.

First, I would like, Mr. President, to welcome the opportunity given to us to use the plenary of the Conference productively, and therefore we support your initiative to conduct these debates, which could probably be further strengthened by creating opportunities for the participation of experts. In other words, we need to make realistic use of the current political situation, recognizing both its opportunities and its constraints. That would at least allow us to overcome a sense of collective frustration and also to be better prepared for the negotiations, which will certainly be complex.

We have to recognize that the Conference is a means of satisfying collective political needs and that it will be judged by its results. Clearly, the Conference is not an end in itself. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin. It is necessary to move forward in both respects, always bearing in mind that the ultimate objective is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Any proliferation is negative. Nuclear weapons pose an unacceptable risk to international security. Any policy or any diplomatic effort that ignores this essential fact will certainly engender greater distrust and frustration in our societies. It is hard to imagine that human intelligence can avert all the

risks posed by the mere existence of such weapons. The only possible course of action is to work for their elimination.

It is thus clear that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are urgent priorities and that steps need to be taken to create the conditions for success in this area. These priorities are shared by all regions and societies. This would require complementary multilateral and bilateral measures, if we would like the progress made in this area to really help us move beyond the notion of nuclear deterrence.

This would mean creating a positive climate for the start of a focused debate, following the approach reflected in the NPT action plan, namely one that is gradual, incremental and pragmatic, in some key areas: first, the value of unilateral, bilateral and multilateral processes for the irreversible reduction of arsenals and the decreasing of alert levels; second, the effective implementation of a prohibition against the testing and production of new nuclear weapons; third, negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States; fourth, the establishment of effective non-proliferation regimes; fifth, the expansion of nuclear-weapon-free zones; sixth, transparency measures and the development of confidence-building measures; and, lastly, strict multilateral monitoring, control and verification mechanisms. These are complementary and permanent objectives that are mutually reinforcing and clearly interrelated as part of a shared interest in achieving the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in the cause of peace and regional, international and, above all, human security.

For decades, the Conference on Disarmament, the General Assembly and other forums such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) have worked on this issue and made specific contributions. We must recognize that this work is a valuable heritage built on the founding instruments of the United Nations and various agreements and political and legal opinions, such as the aforementioned advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice.

In 1996, the Group of 21 submitted a proposal for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons. In 2007, at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, an updated version was presented proposing a model nuclear weapons convention, which Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon himself described as a good starting point for negotiations.

The call to make this convention a reality was repeated during the NPT Conference in New York. The final document took note of the Secretary-General's five-point proposal of 2008 for nuclear disarmament, which has been cited here as well and which proposes, *inter alia*, consideration of negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention or agreement on a framework of separate mutually reinforcing instruments, backed by a strong system of verification.

The Secretary-General also called for the implementation of NPT principles and obligations. In 2009, my country coordinated informal meetings of the Conference on this issue. New elements were presented there which require particular attention. In 2010, the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament prepared a valuable report and recommendations on various key aspects, and the Group of 21 presented document CD/1891, in which it reiterated its position, highlighting for consideration some key elements and steps to promote the goal of nuclear disarmament. It is not an exhaustive list; it only indicates that there is practice and technical jurisprudence to be considered. We believe that the Conference has a valuable heritage that can be summarized and updated in accordance with the new international context, but it is also certainly necessary to underscore the political willingness displayed at the last NPT Review Conference along with its outcomes and its plan of action, as well as the progress made, unilaterally and bilaterally, by various nuclear-weapon States in reducing strategic

weapons. The failure of this Conference is not only a waste of resources and opportunities; it also compromises the overall effectiveness of the multilateral system of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

For small countries like Chile, such inaction particularly affects national interests, since multilateral agreements provide protection and guarantees for our security and, indeed, for collective security.

Considering the complexity of this issue and the internal and external factors that are inevitably present in the Conference on Disarmament, it would be useful to prepare a list of key elements on which the Conference should focus, always with the common goal of reaching a consensus on the programme of work and being able to resume the substantive work of our mandate.

Mr. Sajjadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, I take this opportunity to congratulate you again on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I would also like to welcome the new Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to this Conference, and I wish him a very successful mission and a nice stay in Geneva.

Mr. President, let me assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation. I fully agree with the criteria you reconfirmed in your introductory statement for guiding the substantive discussion at the next four plenary meetings.

More than 65 years have elapsed since the use of the first nuclear bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki created an unforgettable human catastrophe. Nothing has been done to legally ban the recurrence of such an inhumane act. The nuclear-weapon States take the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) for granted. They have misinterpreted the commitments of the NPT in a manner that narrows down the three pillars of the non-proliferation regime to one pillar, namely non-proliferation. They have abused the confidence of the international community to perpetuate the existence of nuclear weapons. The security of the world has become subordinate to the security of those who have nuclear bombs.

In the course of the negotiations leading to the NPT, an integrated and balanced package of rights and obligations was introduced, according to which non-nuclear-weapon States undertake not to acquire nuclear weapons and to place their facilities under the safeguards agreement. In return, nuclear-weapon States undertake not to transfer or develop nuclear weapons and commit themselves to practical steps towards nuclear disarmament. Moreover, all States parties to the NPT undertake to cooperate and ensure the implementation of the inalienable rights of the States parties with respect to the peaceful use of nuclear energy in a non-selective and non-discriminatory manner. In addition, the universality of the NPT has been assumed as a common international commitment of all States parties.

Since 1978, when the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament confirmed nuclear disarmament as the highest priority on the disarmament agenda, the international community has had to wait for more than two decades to witness a comparable endorsement of its long-sought goal, as contained in the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. The "13 practical steps" adopted by consensus at the 2000 NPT Review Conference still constitute the basic commitments for achieving the international community's ultimate and urgent goal of complete nuclear disarmament. The violation of these commitments by some nuclear-weapon States should not be permitted.

The international community cannot wait forever to witness the total elimination of nuclear weapons. There exists an urgent need to commence nuclear disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament cannot be indifferent to this serious and legitimate concern of

the international community. At the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which took place very recently in New York, my delegation together with other members of the Non-Aligned Movement proposed the adoption of a legal framework with a specified timeline for the full implementation of article VI of the NPT and the total elimination of nuclear weapons, including the adoption of a nuclear weapons convention by 2025. However, it is a matter of regret that the outcomes of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, particularly in the field of nuclear disarmament commitments, are falling short of the expectations of the international community. We will resolutely follow the cause of nuclear disarmament above all in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. We request that the programme of work be prepared in a manner that will enable the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on nuclear disarmament and to conclude an internationally legally binding convention on the total banning of all nuclear weapons.

Bearing in mind these threatening and unfortunate facts, we believe that the Conference on Disarmament urgently needs to address the concerns of the non-nuclear-weapon States regarding the development and deployment of new nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States. These concerns need to be alleviated by prohibiting the development and production of any new nuclear weapons, particularly mini-nukes, and by banning the construction of any new facility for the development, deployment and production of nuclear weapons at home and abroad.

Moreover, the real concerns of the international community over the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons, the transfer and deployment of nuclear weapons in territories of non-nuclear-weapon States, the transfer of nuclear-weapon technology to the Israeli regime as a non-party to the NPT, lowering the threshold of resort to nuclear weapons, and the danger of using such inhumane weapons in conventional conflicts and against non-nuclear-weapon States still exist and need to be seriously addressed.

We continue to believe in the need for negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time limit, including a nuclear weapons convention, and in this regard we reiterate our call for the establishment, as the highest priority and as soon as possible, of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament. Such negotiations must lead to the legal prohibition, once and for all, of the possession, development, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons by any country and provide for the destruction of such weapons.

Pending the conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention similar to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, the nuclear-weapon States must honour their obligations under the NPT and immediately stop any development of and research on nuclear weapons; any threat or use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, including any action or statement which might imply such a threat; any modernization of nuclear weapons and their facilities; the deployment of nuclear weapons in the territories of other countries; and maintaining nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert.

Through the Conference on Disarmament, my delegation is prepared to work to realize the noble goal of nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We urge all nuclear-weapon States to agree on a programme of work, to be truly responsive to this subject and to enable the Conference on Disarmament to start its negotiations on nuclear disarmament. It is the right time for the Conference to take up its responsibility in this regard.

Mr. Zou Zhibo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, the Chinese delegation would like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference. As always, we will support you in your work.

In the past year, significant headway has been made in the area of international nuclear disarmament. The 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) adopted its final document, which includes an action plan on nuclear disarmament. The United States of America and the Russian Federation agreed on and ratified a new nuclear disarmament treaty, which will soon enter into force. China welcomes these developments.

The complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all nuclear weapons is the shared aspiration of all peace-loving people. China believes that, as long as each country works hard to build a peaceful and stable environment of international security, with full respect and consideration for each other's reasonable security concerns, while abiding by the multilateral process, and in accordance with a new concept of security that is based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation, we will be able to achieve our ultimate goal of completely eliminating nuclear weapons. To this end, the parties must make continual efforts in the following areas:

First, they should give full effect to the final document of last year's NPT Review Conference; remain committed to the three main goals of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy; and work towards our ultimate goal, namely the prohibition and complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The countries with the largest nuclear arsenals bear special, primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament and should go a step further by making large-scale substantive reductions in their nuclear arsenals in order to create the necessary conditions for comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament. Once the conditions are right, the other nuclear-weapon States should also join the multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiation process. Nuclear disarmament should follow the principles of maintaining global strategic stability and ensuring that the security of States is not compromised.

Second, the nuclear-weapon States should make a clear commitment not to seek to hold on to their nuclear weapons indefinitely; reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security policies; and make a clear commitment to respect the principle of no first use of nuclear weapons and not under any circumstances to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. They should conclude an international legal instrument to that effect as soon as possible.

Third, nuclear non-proliferation is an essential precondition for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. All countries must work together to preserve international non-proliferation mechanisms, strictly fulfil their international non-proliferation obligations, and step up their non-proliferation monitoring of exports. Pragmatism and double standards must be done away with, and the relationship between peaceful use and non-proliferation addressed in a balanced way. Every country's legitimate right to use nuclear energy peacefully should be fully respected, while at the same time nuclear non-proliferation obligations must be strictly fulfilled. Political and diplomatic means should continue to be pursued to resolve the issue of non-proliferation.

Fourth, the international community should continue to work together to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force as soon as possible. At the same time, it should support efforts by countries in the relevant regions to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones.

China has always conscientiously fulfilled its nuclear disarmament obligations and has made its own unique contribution to the nuclear disarmament process. It has consistently followed a nuclear strategy based on self-defence. It has not entered into a nuclear arms race with any country, nor has it formed any nuclear alliances. It has steadfastly pursued a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons and has made an unconditional commitment not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-

nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. China notes that, under the action plan on nuclear disarmament set out in the final document of the NPT Review Conference, the Conference of Disarmament must adopt a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, and on that basis a subsidiary body is to be established to deal with the issue of nuclear disarmament. We support this plan. China is willing to work together with the international community and continue its efforts to carry forward the nuclear disarmament process. Two days from now we will celebrate the traditional Chinese New Year. Next year will be the year of the rabbit, and we wish all of you and your families a lucky year of the rabbit. May all your hopes be fulfilled!

Ms. Higgie (New Zealand): Mr. President, New Zealand has consistently supported the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material treaty, given the substantive contribution to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation which we believe such a treaty would make.

When the New Agenda Coalition addressed this body some years ago on the topic, it noted that the negotiation and conclusion of a fissile material treaty would limit the expansion of existing nuclear arsenals and could therefore be understood as a significant step in a phased programme towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Promoting the objective and realization of nuclear disarmament surely represents — as much as does the outlawing of biological and chemical weapons — the very *raison d'être* of the Conference on Disarmament. It is difficult to believe that history will look kindly on the failure of this body to begin substantive work on matters so fundamentally important for international security.

My delegation's approach to the current deadlock in negotiations here is to heed the urgings of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to welcome the lead you have provided in pursuing the opportunity to address matters of real substance.

My delegation will expand on our views on the contribution that a fissile material treaty can make to the cause of nuclear disarmament when we speak during the debate here on that issue. For today, given that New Zealand's views on nuclear disarmament and our aspiration for a world without nuclear weapons are often stated and very well known, I intend to focus on what it is that this Conference could do to deepen its treatment of the topic.

The membership of the Conference on Disarmament includes all States that possess or are believed to possess nuclear arsenals. Our membership should therefore have within its power the ability to help build the confidence necessary for real engagement and progress in reducing and eliminating nuclear arsenals.

If during this session the Conference establishes a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament, as resolved by States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, that would provide a platform for our membership to deepen our treatment of the topic in a more focused manner commensurate with the significance of the cause of nuclear disarmament.

While indeed wishing to record our appreciation of recent bilateral efforts foreshadowing reductions in nuclear arsenals, New Zealand would certainly welcome the opportunity for substantive exchanges in the Conference on Disarmament on the next multilateral steps towards nuclear disarmament.

Like many other delegations, we believe that more can and should be done to capitalize on the positive changes in the global security environment since the end of the cold war. The adversarial relationships of that era are clearly behind us, and the progressive, verifiable implementation by Russia and the United States of the newly

ratified, and very welcome, New START Treaty helps provide a bulwark against any return to those bleak and dangerous times.

This forum should be able to contribute to the process of mapping out the path ahead to a nuclear-free world and to help build the mutual confidence which is an essential element of being able to carry that forward. We would indeed welcome the opportunity to engage here in depth on some of the interim and practical measures which can help move us forward to our end goal.

A lowered operational readiness of nuclear-weapon systems would represent an important interim step towards the attainment of the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Steps to reduce the operational readiness of nuclear arsenals ensure a lesser role for nuclear weapons in military doctrine. They also reduce the risks associated with their possession; reductions in alert levels would also serve as important transparency and confidence-building measures. In urging the nuclear-weapon States to do more to ensure that all nuclear weapons are removed from high-alert status, we also repeat the call to those States to report regularly on measures they have taken to lower the operational readiness of their nuclear weapons systems.

More broadly, we reiterate our call for greater reporting on other matters that are equally central to progressive, sustained nuclear disarmament. When my delegation refers to reporting, we do so on the basis that this is not some kind of end in itself, or because we are good bureaucrats attached to accounting exercises. We see reporting as a means of enhancing confidence and transparency and as a means of measuring progress towards an end – the elimination of nuclear weapons.

I have drawn attention to only a few of the possible steps which, along with the negotiation of a fissile material treaty, will help achieve nuclear disarmament. At the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the States parties to the NPT identified many more steps, or actions, which are to be taken and monitored during the course of the current review cycle. Several of these actions — and I have already referred to one of them — relate to the Conference on Disarmament and its programme of work. We remain hopeful that these actions can be given effect here.

At this point I would also like to recall that, in addition to the action plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, NPT States parties articulated a number of general principles. They expressed deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. They also reaffirmed the need for all States, at all times, to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.

I am confident that all Conference on Disarmament members must subscribe to these principles. They should serve to influence this Conference to rise above its current deadlock and address a subject on which we have the power to make a real difference, and in the manner demonstrated in the past by the negotiation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

Mr. Rao (India): Mr. President, let me begin by saying how pleased we are to see you preside over our deliberations. We assure you of our support in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Let me also welcome our new colleagues, the ambassadors of Ethiopia, Hungary, Kenya, Sweden and Zimbabwe to the Conference.

We appreciate your effort to keep the Conference on Disarmament engaged in discussions on the issues on its agenda. We participate in these discussions without prejudice to our preference that negotiations in this forum should take place as part of an

agreed programme of work. We continue to believe that the first priority should be to make every effort towards the early adoption of a programme of work so that the Conference can begin substantive work, including negotiations, at the earliest.

As a member of the Group of 21 and the Non-Aligned Movement, India has attached the highest priority to nuclear disarmament. India has been consistent in its support for global, complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament. In 1988, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi presented an action plan for a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world order to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Unfortunately, we are nowhere nearer to attaining that goal today than we were in 1988. The end of the cold war provided a ray of hope that we would be able to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world, but this hope has been belied. Negotiations aimed at ensuring the universal, non-discriminatory, time-bound, phased and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons are yet to commence in the Conference on Disarmament.

In June 2008, on the twentieth anniversary of the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh asked others to join India in taking the critical first step: a commitment, preferably a binding legal commitment through an international instrument to eliminate nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework. President Barack Obama said in his Prague speech in April 2009 that the United States would seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. Several other world leaders have also supported moving towards Global Zero. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, too, put forward a five-point proposal on nuclear disarmament. A few days ago, on 26 January 2011, he told the Conference on Disarmament that nuclear disarmament is his strategic priority for 2011.

We believe that nuclear disarmament can be achieved by a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework for achieving global and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. We also believe that the progressive steps for the delegitimization of nuclear weapons are essential to achieving the goal of their complete elimination. Measures to reduce nuclear dangers arising from the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, increasing restraints on the use of nuclear weapons and de-alerting nuclear weapons are pertinent in this regard. The two General Assembly resolutions sponsored by India in the First Committee entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the use of Nuclear Weapons" and "Reducing nuclear danger" give expression to some of these steps and have justifiably found support from a large number of countries. These steps were also a part of working paper CD/1816, tabled by India in February 2007. The intent of the working paper, which reflects the spirit and substance of the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan, was to stimulate debate and discussion on nuclear disarmament.

The countries with the largest nuclear arsenals bear a special responsibility for progress on nuclear disarmament. In this regard we welcome the ratification of the New START Treaty between the United States and Russia. The two countries still hold more than 90 per cent of the nuclear weapons in the world, and the New START Treaty is a step in the right direction. There is a need for a meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons to build trust and confidence, and for reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines.

The only document on nuclear disarmament adopted by consensus by the international community was the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The document accorded the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament. However, for the last three decades the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to make progress on this priority agenda item, despite persistent calls by Conference members and the Group of 21. As the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament has a heavy

responsibility to advance the goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons. For its part, India will continue to work with others in the Conference to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. At the same time, I take the opportunity to welcome the ambassadors of Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Hungary to the Conference on Disarmament. Your presidency comes at an important juncture in the history of the Conference. This is especially so given the deadlock that we again experienced during last year's session and the increasingly sterile debate that has characterized our work over the last number of years. We appreciate the extensive efforts that have been undertaken during the intersessional period aimed at securing an early resumption of substantive work this year, as well as the inclusive and transparent manner in which you have approached this task.

The high-level meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations hosted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in September 2010 and the debate in the First Committee during the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly have made it clear that the Conference on Disarmament cannot justify another wasted year. The Conference has responsibility for conducting multilateral disarmament negotiations, as mandated by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978. Due to its inability to fulfil this basic mandate for many years, especially after the end of the cold war and the dawn of a new international security environment, many have understandably started to question its relevance and continued value in the pursuance of disarmament goals.

The lack of progress of the last 14 years in dealing substantively with the core disarmament issues on the Conference agenda is a source of frustration not only for the vast majority of Conference on Disarmament members but also for the wider international community. Despite the shortcomings of document CD/1864, my delegation was deeply disappointed that the Conference on Disarmament was unable to implement its decision on a programme of work during 2009 and that no further progress could subsequently be achieved. The current situation in the Conference on Disarmament is particularly disappointing given the commitment by the overwhelming majority of States at the 2010 NPT Review Conference to the achievement of a better, more secure world free from the threat posed by nuclear weapons. This brings me to the core business of today's plenary debate – nuclear disarmament.

Nuclear disarmament is our highest priority – a priority shared by the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, the G21 and the vast majority of Conference on Disarmament members in all regions of the world. Since nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes, it follows logically that transparent, irreversible and verifiable measures on both fronts are required.

We welcome the progress that has been made over the last year on a bilateral nuclear arms reduction agreement between the Russian Federation and the United States in the context of the New START Treaty, and we look forward to the early implementation of the commitments made, as well as further negotiations on deeper reductions. Such measures are both vital and necessary steps towards our goal of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. However, it is important that we should recognize such efforts as complementary to, and not a substitute for, binding multilateral nuclear disarmament agreements.

For my delegation, nuclear weapons are a source of insecurity, not security. They are illegal, inhuman and immoral instruments that have no place in today's security environment. The continued possession of nuclear weapons, or the retention of the nuclear-weapon option by some States, by definition increases the risk of these weapons being used

or falling into the hands of terrorists. Furthermore, the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons clearly represent a serious risk to humanity. Only the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again can provide the necessary guarantees against their use.

It is for this reason that we are concerned about arguments by some nuclear-weapon States, even in this forum, that would appear to seek to provide rationalizations for the continued retention and even the possible use of these indiscriminate instruments. This would not only be irresponsible, but could also serve as a rationale for others that may aspire to develop such weapons. We have consistently argued that any presumption of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons will only lead to increasing insecurity and a continuing arms race. Continuous and irreversible progress in nuclear disarmament and other related nuclear arms-control measures remain fundamental to the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation.

Although nuclear disarmament was the subject of the first resolution adopted by the General Assembly in 1946 and has been the first item on the agenda of the Conference since its inception, despite the ongoing demand by the overwhelming majority of Conference on Disarmament members for the establishment of a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament, this has not happened. This state of affairs is even more disturbing given the fact all States parties to the NPT committed to exactly this less than a year ago in the action plan adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference. My delegation therefore reiterates its call to the Conference on Disarmament to immediately establish a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament.

Since becoming a member of the Conference, South Africa has consistently argued against maximalist positions, including on the issue of nuclear disarmament. This was informed by our own national experience of the political, financial and technical complexities surrounding the verifiable elimination of a nuclear weapons programme, and the necessity of a progressive, systematic approach to nuclear disarmament. However, it was also informed by our belief that a world free from nuclear weapons would require the underpinning of a universal and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument that would ban the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons, and on their destruction (such as a nuclear weapons convention), or a mutually reinforcing set of instruments.

Already in 1998, my delegation submitted a draft decision and mandate for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament “to deliberate upon practical steps for systematic and progressive efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons as well as to identify if and when one or more such steps should be the subject of negotiations in the Conference”. Unfortunately, this realistic and achievable compromise text and other constructive formulations proposed by various Conference on Disarmament members for the establishment of such a subsidiary body were consistently rejected.

During an international seminar held on 4 November 2010, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Disarmament Affairs, reminded the audience of Alva Myrdal’s 1976 book *The Game of Disarmament*, which contains her assessment of how the disarmament game was played during the cold war: “Both sides would present proposals for disarmament agreement, of often wholesale dimensions, but would be careful to see to it that these would contain conditions which the opposite side could not accept. This is the way disarmament was, and is, continually torpedoed.”

Listening to the debate in the Conference on Disarmament during the past 14 years on a so-called comprehensive and balanced programme of work begs the question as to whether anything has really changed since the end of the cold war.

What is clear to my delegation is that the rules under which the Conference on Disarmament operates provide adequate guarantees to safeguard the security interests of all members of the Conference on Disarmament, while allowing us to address our collective security concerns. What seems to be lacking is an understanding of the current international security environment, along with the political commitment to adapt to this new reality. South Africa has consistently argued that our collective security concerns require collective solutions that not only take into account the individual security needs of those that continue to hold the power in an unequal international system, but also reflect our shared security interests.

In conclusion, my delegation stands ready to work with you and all the members of the United Nations, the Conference on Disarmament and civil society with a view to supporting substantive progress on the long-outstanding objectives of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Mr. President, like others who spoke before me, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We believe that under your able guidance we will have successful deliberations. In this regard, I can assure you of my delegation's full support in discharging your duties.

I would like to reaffirm Indonesia's commitment to achieving total nuclear disarmament, which remains its highest priority. I can assure you of my delegation's cooperation and contribution in order to achieve this goal. As we have renounced the option of a nuclear weapons build-up, we insist that such weapons must be abolished once and for all.

Non-proliferation matters have had some success in containing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. However, our success does not match the existing pace of progress towards disarmament. It is important that efforts aiming at non-proliferation should run parallel to efforts aimed at disarmament. To be sure, one inviolable truth remains that nuclear non-proliferation will not be effective while there are countries that still retain their nuclear weapons. If these weapons continue to exist, the risk of proliferation remains. The possession of nuclear weapons by any State is a constant stimulus for others to acquire them. Pursuing nuclear weapons is the very rationale behind the establishment of the Conference on Disarmament. It is regrettable that this body has experienced a serious stalemate for more than a decade.

In this regard, I would like to recall that the very first United Nations General Assembly resolution, which was adopted unanimously in 1946, called for the elimination of nuclear weapons from national arsenals. I would also like to recall that the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament of 1978 accorded the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, the International Court of Justice, in an advisory opinion of 1996, concluded that "there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control". The Millennium Declaration of 2000 also reaffirmed the commitment of the member States of the United Nations "to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers". Subsequently, many plans such as the initiative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Hoover Initiative and other initiatives have been suggested on issues related to nuclear disarmament and visions of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The 2010 NPT Review Conference adopted a follow-up action plan which expressed deep concern at the humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and reaffirmed the need for all States, at all times, to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law. It also agreed on the establishment of a subsidiary

body dealing with nuclear weapons. Therefore, Indonesia is eager to see tangible actions taken to meet this commitment and, in a broader context, to put into practice the various initiatives, declaration statements and treaty obligations on nuclear disarmament.

Lastly, Indonesia will continue to cooperate with all countries in order to enable the Conference on Disarmament to embark on deliberating a nuclear weapons convention so as to address the crucial elements, such as time frame, delegitimizing nuclear weapons, reducing operational readiness, negative security assurances, verification and irreversibility in order to gradually but steadily achieve the ultimate objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and to create a safer world for all humankind.

Mr. Elatawy (Egypt): Mr. President, let me start by congratulating you on your leadership and assure you of my delegation's full cooperation with your presidency and all the presidencies during the 2011 session, a session that promises to be seminal in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Let me also take this opportunity to welcome the Ambassador of our great neighbour, Ethiopia.

It is logical that we should start our substantive discussion in the 2011 session with nuclear disarmament. After all, this weapon is the greatest threat to humanity, a fact recognized by our ultimate reference, the first General Assembly special session devoted to disarmament. I will restrict my comments to this topic.

Egypt has the honour to preside over the Non-Aligned Movement. This movement has always been at the forefront of international disarmament efforts. It also prioritizes nuclear disarmament, and consequently the Heads of State and Government of the Movement "emphasized the necessity to start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time, including a nuclear weapons convention".

Our demand for the immediate commencing of negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention takes as its premise the commitment of nuclear-weapon States to disarm their nuclear weapons in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It also takes its cue from the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which ruled that "the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law". This was emphasized again by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which expressed its deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and reaffirmed the need for all States, at all times, to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.

It is within this context that we envisage a nuclear weapons convention that would totally ban production, possession, transfer or use of nuclear weapons. We also aspire to have this concluded in our lifetime, since the spectre of nuclear weapons will always haunt us until we finally get rid of this weapon which is the most heinous of all weapons of mass destruction. This is more relevant in areas of high tension like the Middle East; thus we think the plan to hold a conference for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons would be a step in this direction.

Egypt also belongs to the New Agenda Coalition (NAC). NAC has poised all its efforts to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons and was instrumental in both the "13 practical steps" in 2000 and the NPT action plan on nuclear disarmament of 2010, including the very important action 5. May I remind you that both were accepted by all members of the NPT, including all the permanent members of the Security Council. Equally agreed to was action 6, according to which all States agreed that the Conference on Disarmament should immediately establish a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear

disarmament within the context of an agreed, comprehensive and balanced programme of work. We are waiting for the Conference on Disarmament to heed this call.

In conclusion, let me just repeat one of the NAC mantras, which we are really happy to see is now becoming a mantra of almost all statements and all conclusions: the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This is indeed our objective.

Mr. Quintanilla Román (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, nuclear disarmament is, and must continue to be, the highest priority in the area of disarmament. The mere existence of nuclear weapons and of doctrines prescribing their possession and use represents a serious threat to international peace and security.

There are nearly 23,000 nuclear weapons in the world, 7,560 of them ready for immediate use.

Certain nuclear-weapon States refuse to renounce their use in their security doctrines, which are based on so-called nuclear deterrence, and, worse still, they allocate millions to fund the development of nuclear weapons upgrading programmes.

The historic leader of the Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro, has recently warned on several occasions of the dangers that threats to use such weapons pose for the world, including the danger of nuclear war.

Cuba believes that the use of nuclear weapons is an illegal and totally immoral act that cannot be justified by any circumstance or security doctrine. The use of such weapons would be a flagrant violation of international standards relating to the prevention of genocide.

The outcomes of the 2010 NPT Review Conference are a step forward. At the same time, they must not result in complacency and satisfaction, since we are still well short of what is needed at the present time.

The Review Conference made it very clear that there is still a large gap between the repeated rhetoric and good intentions of some nuclear-weapon States and the commitments and steps they are prepared to make in reality.

We made every effort for the action plan to include a timetable with clearly defined actions and for 2025 to be set as the deadline for achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, the vehement opposition of some nuclear-weapon States prevented an agreement on the matter. Although it is a step in the right direction, the action plan that was adopted is limited and inadequate.

The modest progress made in the Review Conference should serve as an impetus to continue working for nuclear disarmament and the full implementation of all the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Nuclear disarmament cannot remain a goal that is continually being postponed and hedged with conditions.

Cuba supports the start of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, as a matter of priority, on a programme of nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons. Such a programme should include a transparent, irreversible, verifiable and legally binding timetable.

This also requires the commitment of nuclear-weapon States to halt the development of such weapons and to withdraw them immediately from the territory of non-nuclear-weapon States.

Cuba is opposed to the selective approach promoted by some, which focuses on measures against horizontal proliferation, to the detriment of concerns regarding vertical

proliferation, ignoring the fact that the real objective is the total prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

We support the inalienable right of States to research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination.

Let me conclude by saying that the enormous resources currently devoted to maintaining nuclear weapons and their technical infrastructure should be used in development programmes aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals. That would make a substantial contribution to international peace and security.

Cuba reiterates its firm commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons and its full willingness to work to turn this aspiration into a reality for all of humankind.

Mr. Marschik (Austria): Mr. President, this is the first time that my delegation has taken the floor under your presidency, and let me express great satisfaction at seeing you in the chair. We wish you the best of luck and express our sincere hope that, together with your colleagues, the other five presidents for this year, you will guide the Conference back to work and to real progress.

Austria fully endorses the statement made earlier on behalf of the European Union by the representative of Hungary. Allow me to add some comments from a national perspective. We started this year's session with lively exchanges of views, and it was repeatedly stated that the Conference on Disarmament did not exist in a vacuum. Indeed, it seems to us that there is a certain disconnect between the Conference and developments in the broader disarmament and non-proliferation arena.

First of all, we have had the success of the new START agreement. I would like to congratulate the Russian Federation and the United States for the completion of the ratification process. This is an important achievement, and it will hopefully result in further bilateral and multilateral nuclear disarmament.

Secondly, we have seen a successful 2010 NPT Review Conference and the adoption of an action plan on nuclear disarmament. The action plan has some interesting long-term provisions that come into play here. For example, for the first time, a world without nuclear weapons is articulated as the common goal of nuclear disarmament in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The recognition of the terrible humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and the need to comply with international law is an important step towards delegitimizing nuclear weapons, and Austria hopes that it will enable a humanitarian approach to nuclear disarmament. In action 1 all States commit themselves to pursuing policies that are fully compatible with the objective of a world without nuclear weapons. I realize this is programmatic language, but it should make clear that any new policy decisions, including, for example, the modernization of arsenals, must conform to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Then there is action 5, which foresees that the nuclear-weapon States will meet among themselves to discuss how to advance nuclear disarmament. This action was conceived as an incubator for future progress. It is based on the recognition that there will be no progress in nuclear disarmament without engagement by the nuclear-weapon States, that they need much more trust and confidence among themselves. This will require that they earnestly begin discussing general questions, important questions of doctrine, risk reduction, operational status, de-alerting and so on, which could also be fruitful if they do this among themselves. Nevertheless, action 5 also serves to remind the nuclear-weapon States that they are not doing this only in their own interest. They have, after all, accepted a legal obligation under article VI of the NPT, and they must bear in mind the legitimate interest of the non-nuclear-weapon States in progress on nuclear disarmament. That is why the nuclear-weapon States must report to the NPT Preparatory Committee in 2014 about

their engagement. This is, of course, both a deadline and a means to measure progress before the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

The action plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference did not forget about the Conference on Disarmament. Action 6 calls for the establishment of a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament; action 7 calls for a commencement of discussions on security assurances; action 15 calls for negotiation of a treaty on fissile materials. So there we are – there is a general positive atmosphere for nuclear disarmament. There has been some recent success, and there is clear hope that the Conference on Disarmament will also contribute, and for years there have also been ideas about what the Conference on Disarmament could do. However, will the Conference on Disarmament deliver?

I do not have to remind you, Mr. President, how disappointed Austria is that the Conference on Disarmament — an organization for which we had so much respect — remains paralysed after so many years. Foreign Minister Spindelegger warned at the high-level meeting on 24 September 2010 that the Conference on Disarmament risks becoming obsolete. I know that many colleagues here in the room share this concern. Indeed, it seems that many are no longer convinced that the Conference on Disarmament will be able to contribute to progress in nuclear disarmament by itself. Some believe it will require a nuclear incident; others believe we will only see nuclear disarmament when a new weapon type is developed that makes nuclear weapons redundant. Is this really what we have come to? There is the conviction that the current international security system, embodied, *inter alia*, by organizations such as the Conference on Disarmament, will work to ensure that the current balance of power remains static.

However, the world has changed since the creation of the system, and it is changing even more profoundly, and thus pressure mounts on the systems and on the organizations we love. Yes, we must love them. Why, otherwise, would we be here year after year playing along dutifully, making speeches, lamentations and proposals, drafting resolutions, adopting reports and changing nothing? Yet the world is changing all around us. The political landscape has been transformed; the security environment we live in has shifted; the expectations of our public have risen; there is concern that the organizations cannot deliver the security that they were created for.

In the long term only two realistic alternatives seem plausible: adapt or perish. It is basic Darwinian theory. If the environment we live in changes, we must evolve to survive. If existing nuclear security does not react to developments, or if it does not adapt, it risks becoming redundant. We have seen this in the field of conventional weapons. When the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) failed repeatedly to adapt, all interesting new developments in that field took place outside of the CCW framework: the Ottawa process to ban anti-personnel mines and the Oslo process to ban cluster munitions.

In the nuclear security area, the situation is very different, of course, but here too we have very static institutions that do not react well to change. If the system does not adapt, it will eventually give way to a new system that corresponds better to the new realities and can fulfil expectations. I honestly hope that any such development results in a new system that bans nuclear weapons rather than a system that permits nuclear weapons for all.

If we want to retain the organizations and institutions, we will have to come up with some new ideas, and there are very good ideas here in Geneva to advance nuclear disarmament. Austria sincerely hopes that we will use them. We should also look towards cooperating more closely with civil society, which rightfully demands a larger role in political security affairs. Just look at the political events of these days. If we do not reach out to civil society, civil society will reach for us. In order to improve cooperation with

civil society, and on the initiative of Foreign Minister Spindelegger, Austria supports the establishment of a Vienna centre on disarmament and non-proliferation. We will open this centre at the end of this month and hope it will contribute to the efforts on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

I know that time is short. I will therefore simply say that you know how much Austria supports a world without nuclear weapons. We share the views expressed, for example, by Switzerland this morning that this can best be achieved by a legal ban and by gradually and systematically getting rid of such weapons. Austria will participate in all organizations and processes that will constructively contribute towards achieving this goal.

Let me also mention in this context the five-point proposal for nuclear disarmament by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Austria fully supports the Secretary-General's vision and his proposal, which includes the idea of a nuclear weapons convention or a framework agreement on mutually reinforcing instruments. Last week the Secretary-General spoke in support of the work here in the Conference on Disarmament. Let me use this opportunity to commend him for his personal involvement and leadership. However, for the Secretary-General to lead successfully, he needs people to follow him. It requires active contributions by all Conference on Disarmament members. What we need, in the words of Foreign Minister Spindelegger, is "a chain reaction of disarmament steps". It is our hope that new vigorous efforts by States and civil society will ultimately lead to such a chain reaction and a world without nuclear weapons.

Mr. Getahun (Ethiopia): Mr. President, I am taking the floor to thank you for welcoming me and other colleagues and ambassadors from different countries who have expressed their welcoming words. I just want to underline that I am happy that I am coming to the Conference on Disarmament at a time when the Conference is reaffirming its vital role as the forum for multilateral negotiations on disarmament.

I just wanted to add one or two words. Ethiopia, of course, stands for a world free of nuclear weapons. We are a party to the Pelindaba Treaty making Africa a nuclear-free zone. We will work with you and your colleagues as you endeavour to adopt a programme of work. We will be guided by the decisions of the Non-Aligned Movement, the United Nations General Assembly and the African Union as we engage in the Conference on Disarmament.

The President: I hope that this exchange of views on nuclear disarmament was useful. We would certainly welcome feedback, whether bilaterally, via regional coordinators or via the other presidents of the session, and obviously, after our discussion of the four core issues, we will look towards the next steps.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting will be held on Thursday, 3 February at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.