
Conference on Disarmament

17 May 2011

English

Final record of the one thousand two hundred and twenty-third plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 17 May 2011, at 11.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Wang Qun(China)

The President: I call to order the 1223rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

As you may recall, on 3 May 2011, I informed you that I had received a letter dated 20 April 2011 from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, addressed to me in my capacity as President of the Conference. In that letter, the Secretary-General of the United Nations informed me of his intention to appoint Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and as his personal representative to the Conference. Mr. Ban Ki-moon also requested me to seek the concurrence of the Conference, in accordance with rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the Conference. I further informed you, in this context, that it was my intention to take a formal decision on this matter during the current plenary, in the absence of any objection by any member of the Conference.

As I have hitherto not received any objection from any member of the Conference, it is therefore my intention, with your concurrence, to reply to the Secretary-General of the United Nations that this Conference concurs with the appointment of Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Director-General of UNOG, as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and personal representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage on this issue? I see none.

Accordingly, I shall write to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and inform him of the outcome of this plenary meeting, with the understanding that on this basis he will make his formal appointment.

The Director-General, Mr. Tokayev, has asked me to convey his best wishes to you all. While he had very much desired to come to today's meeting, he nevertheless fully understands and respects the proper procedure and the protocol pertaining to his appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference. He has therefore decided to wait until the above procedure has been completed before attending the Conference proceedings. I will send my letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations today, in a bid to facilitate the earliest completion of the relevant procedure so that Mr. Tokayev can come here and attend the Conference on Disarmament meetings at the earliest possible date.

I would now like to turn to the list of speakers of today.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): Mr. President, the German delegation starts this second session of the Conference with the firm conviction that 2011 is a crucial year for the Conference on Disarmament. We have already seen clear signs that the international community will not tolerate its standstill much longer.

The 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the high-level meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly resolution have clearly demonstrated that the international community expects the Conference on Disarmament to finally fulfil its tasks again, namely the negotiation of disarmament and non-proliferation instruments. After all, the *raison d'être* of the Conference on Disarmament is to be a means to that specific end.

In light of the current positive momentum in nuclear disarmament, it is even more deplorable that the Conference on Disarmament has sadly thus far not succeeded in translating this into tangible progress of its own. The year 2011 may be the last chance for the Conference on Disarmament to prove its continued relevance.

The first session of the Conference on Disarmament held this year worked at a considerable pace. We thank the previous and current presidencies as well as member States for their contributions and for their constructive and cooperative spirit. During this second session, the Conference on Disarmament needs to build upon these efforts and try to render them more effective and oriented towards the above-mentioned goal. All those among us who attach great significance to the Conference on Disarmament as an institution should have a clear interest in turning it into a working institution again.

Germany remains firmly committed to the Conference's task of negotiating disarmament and non-proliferation instruments. We start from the assumption that dedication to nuclear disarmament and the strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime is not confined to certain nations, regions or established alliances. On the contrary, it is, and should be, a truly global concern.

The consensus outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference has re-established a much-needed common denominator to strengthen the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and its three pillars. Striving to build upon this renewed momentum, in September 2010, the foreign ministers of Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates decided to form a new cross-regional initiative.

The foreign ministers and/or high representatives of these 10 States held their second meeting in Berlin on 30 April 2011. There, they decided to call this initiative the "Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative" (NPDI). In their joint statement, which will be circulated at the request of the German delegation on behalf of the members of NPDI as an official Conference on Disarmament document (CD/1908), they reaffirmed their joint intention to work towards achieving nuclear disarmament and strengthening the international non-proliferation regime, as set out in the joint statement they adopted at their first meeting, held in New York on 22 September 2010. Recognizing the danger to humanity posed by the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons and the need to address increased proliferation risks, with a view to decreasing nuclear arsenals, strengthening nuclear security and improving nuclear safety, the 10 States involved consider it urgent to reduce nuclear risks and achieve tangible progress towards a world free from nuclear weapons.

Mr. President, allow me, as the representative of the host country of this meeting, to provide delegations with a brief explanation concerning the so-called Berlin Statement. It contains four concrete proposals for action on key elements of the action plan agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. NPDI members reiterate their commitment to universalizing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and to promoting its early entry into force. They will urge States that have not yet done so to sign and/or ratify it, and will continue to support the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. Furthermore, NPDI members announce that they are preparing a draft standard reporting form for possible use by the nuclear-weapon States, as encouraged by the 2010 NPT Review Conference. They will invite the nuclear-weapon States to examine this proposal at their Paris meeting on 30 June 2011.

Moreover, underlining that an effective non-proliferation regime is in the joint security interests of all nations, and recognizing the important role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in verifying States' compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations, NPDI members will also continue to advocate bilaterally and multilaterally for the universal application of IAEA additional protocols in their respective regions. They stand ready to share their respective experiences and best practices and to provide legal and other assistance.

Most relevant from a Geneva point of view, however, is the proposal related to a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). NPDI members emphasize that negotiations on an FMCT are high on their common agenda. The Berlin Statement notes the almost universal conviction that the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons must be stopped, and that the pertinence of an FMCT towards achieving the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons can hardly be denied. While acknowledging that security concerns must be addressed in the course of negotiations, members maintained that these concerns must not prevent the start of such negotiations.

Notably, NPDI members have clearly stated their continued preference to negotiate an FMCT within the Conference on Disarmament. They see almost universal support among Conference on Disarmament member States for the long overdue start of FMCT negotiations.

It was Mr. Ban Ki-moon who, in his recent statement before the Conference on Disarmament, raised the possibility of establishing an informal confidence-building process in order to inform and facilitate a formal FMCT negotiating process. Australia and Japan, two NPDI initiators and members, have been co-hosting a series of expert meetings outside the Conference on Disarmament to examine technical aspects of an FMCT. This initiative has the full support of NPDI member delegations, and it is hoped that all Conference on Disarmament member and observer States will take part actively in the upcoming discussions from 30 May to 1 June.

NPDI members have also worked on a paper on effective verification of an FMCT, in order to contribute to laying the necessary technical groundwork for the resolution of a set of complex questions related to this issue. Some of these questions would necessitate substantial technical-scientific deliberations. The Berlin Statement therefore states that NPDI members consider that the establishment of a group of scientific experts with the task of examining the technical aspects of an FMCT could facilitate and contribute to the start of negotiations.

It goes without saying that NPDI members will continue to work towards the immediate commencement of negotiations on an FMCT within the Conference on Disarmament. At the same time, the NPDI members consider it necessary to send a strong signal of our determination to advance this issue. We are therefore of the firm view that, if the Conference on Disarmament remains unable to find agreement on launching FMCT negotiations at the 2011 session, we will ask the United Nations General Assembly, which is already seized of the matter of revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations, to address the issue and consider ways to proceed with the aim of beginning FMCT negotiations.

The Berlin Statement limits itself to a concrete proposal for action on an FMCT, but surely this does not imply that FMCT negotiations are the sole interest of NPDI with regard to the Conference on Disarmament. NPDI members would indeed welcome sustained progress, within a balanced programme of work, on an FMCT and on other agenda items as well.

The NPDI members remain of the firm conviction that renewed substantial work in the Conference on Disarmament, and FMCT negotiations in particular, will not only send a much-needed signal of encouragement to the international community but also bring with it shared security benefits for all parties involved. We would be grateful for the support of as many delegations as possible in this endeavour.

Mr. Macedo Soares (Brazil): Mr. President, I would like to address the issue of Conference on Disarmament membership. I hope that other delegations can also comment and bring ideas on this important matter.

Rule 2 of the rules of procedure establishes that the membership of the Conference will be reviewed at regular intervals. However, at least since I have been here as Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament, I do not recall the matter having been considered. This is not an issue that needs a specific agenda item, since its treatment is already ensured by the rules of procedure. Furthermore, no one can deny that it is an important matter for the functioning of the Conference.

We should first consider what a “review of the membership” means. You will agree with me, I suppose, that the expression is certainly related to the expansion of the membership, for I do not know of any member State wishing to relinquish its seat in the Conference. To review the membership means to discuss ways of admitting additional States as members.

When the Conference on Disarmament was created by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978, still under the name of Committee on Disarmament, its membership was fixed at 40 States. It represented democratization in relation to its predecessors, the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament (1959–1960), the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (1962–1969) and the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (1969–1978); the last one had 31 members. However, the idea of keeping the membership limited was inherent to the context of the cold war and the balance among East, West and non-aligned groups. Another measure in the direction of democratization worth recalling was the decision of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, contained in paragraph 120 (d) of the final document, to establish a rotation of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament among all its members.

An additional element in our discussions is that, in accordance with section IX of the rules of procedure, each year a considerable number of States that are not members of the Conference on Disarmament formally request to participate in its work. In 2011, some 38 non-member States were welcomed by the Conference on Disarmament. Those States have been showing their interest, accompanying our discussions, and many of them have made regular statements and contributions. A number of them have formally manifested their interest in becoming full members of the Conference. These facts cannot be ignored.

In principle, given the rule of consensus, our body does not need to worry about geographic representation, contrary to what happens in other United Nations forums where there is the possibility of voting. Brazil would therefore like to encourage the Conference on Disarmament to engage in this debate, starting under your leadership and pursued by the presidents succeeding you.

Brazil views expansion of the Conference on Disarmament membership in a very positive light. We understand that it would ensure a richer and broader participation in this forum. We must remember that the observer States in the Conference also participate in other forums related to disarmament, including under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and that they can make, and have made, important contributions to the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

Lastly, we have to consider the best way of ensuring the continuity of this debate, on a step-by-step basis, until we feel that a decision can be taken. Silence and immobility would be difficult to understand. The enlargement of the Conference cannot be a taboo subject. It is a discussion which is politically important and would certainly contribute to the efforts towards our *raison d'être*, that is, disarmament.

Mr. Li Yang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, the Chinese delegation has listened attentively to the statements just made by the States concerned on the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament. China is of the view that this type of open and transparent communication will help member and observer States to better understand each other on the

issue of expansion, and will create a positive atmosphere as we address this important issue. As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament, whose work has a bearing on international peace, stability and security, is highly regarded by the international community at large. It is precisely because of this that, from its inception, the Conference has always maintained its openness. According to the relevant provisions of its rules of procedure, the Conference should hold regular discussions on the issue of expanding its membership.

China values the efforts by observer States to promote international arms control and the disarmament process. We have noticed that for many years now, a number of countries have been eagerly looking forward to joining the Conference on Disarmament and have actively participated in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly and other multilateral arms control and disarmament activities. Some States have even chaired the review conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and have contributed to the final documents of those conferences. Moreover, China is of the view that extensive, transparent consultations should be held on the issue of expanding the Conference on Disarmament, and that in accordance with the principle of consensus we should seek a solution that is acceptable to all parties.

Mr. Garcia (Philippines): Mr. President, on behalf of the informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep collective appreciation to you, and to the distinguished representatives of Brazil and China, for your expressions of support for discussion of the issue of membership and its expansion in the Conference. We would also like to thank you for your initiative to meet and hold a dialogue with us on broad disarmament issues as well as on the matter of Conference on Disarmament membership expansion, together with the six presidents of the session, regional coordinators and Brazil. It was an important, invaluable and most welcome opportunity to discuss these issues. China's positive perspectives on the concerns of the informal group as well as your own leadership and dynamism as President of the Conference on Disarmament are recognized and well appreciated.

As you are aware, the informal group was formed in 2009 as a means for the Conference on Disarmament observer States to raise more effectively their collective concerns on membership expansion, and to encourage and facilitate observers' participation in the Conference. We recognize and are thankful for the support that we have received from Conference on Disarmament members and the secretariat. Starting last year, we made it a point to hold dialogues with each Conference on Disarmament president. This year we have had the honour and pleasure of engaging with China, Canada and Chile, and we look forward to working with the other presidents of this Conference.

Our specific call for the appointment of a special rapporteur or coordinator is merely to commence discussions on this issue, and not to prejudge or presume any particular outcome, following the precedent set by the Conference on Disarmament in 2001. The informal group looks forward to the early nomination of a special rapporteur. In this regard, we are deeply grateful that our good friend the distinguished representative of Brazil has agreed to be a friend of the issue of membership expansion.

The informal group notes the positions of some delegations that the membership issue may only distract from the work of the Conference on Disarmament. However, we would like to remind our colleagues that the rules of procedure of the Conference do call for the periodic review of membership, and that many do believe that this offers opportunities to help infuse this Conference with a sense of dynamism.

Mr. President, to cite one of your earlier statements, you noted that we are all “sailing in the same boat and helping each other”.

Mr. Zakov (Bulgaria): Mr. President, since this is the first time that my delegation has taken the floor under your presidency, allow me to express my gratitude to you and to the previous two presidents, as well as to all the presidents of the session, for the tireless efforts to move the work of the Conference on Disarmament forward. Bulgaria considers the discussion on expansion timely and very important, because the commitment of the observer States willing to join the Conference on Disarmament deserves to be duly recognized.

My country spared no efforts in 2001 and 2002 as special coordinator on the expansion of the membership to accommodate the requests of those observer States willing to join the Conference as full-fledged members. The Bulgarian position has not changed. Bulgaria is a firm supporter of the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament, and we consider the request from the observer States to be a legitimate one. As stipulated in the rules of procedure of the Conference, the membership of the Conference should be reviewed at regular intervals. Bulgaria believes that over the past 10 years that has not been done.

In a number of statements this year we have heard that the Conference on Disarmament does not work in a vacuum. This fact is also relevant when we discuss the question of its expansion. For more than 60 years the United Nations community has showed clearly that it is only through cooperation and mutual support that we can bring peace, security, economic growth and prosperity to society. We all have learned our lessons of the twentieth century and now, in the twenty-first century, we should build on these lessons, and make further steps to enhance cooperation, mutual trust and confidence-building.

Bulgaria firmly believes that cooperation and sharing of similar ideas and views on global security and stability are prerequisites for solving bilateral and regional issues. History has taught us that an inclusive approach is far more effective and productive than an exclusive one. Bulgaria will continue to support firmly the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament to include new members and will continue to play a constructive role in these efforts. We believe that the membership of the Conference on Disarmament should be relevant to the realities of the twenty-first century.

Let me conclude by saying that we fully support the calls for appointment of a special coordinator on the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament membership, and that we would be glad to see Ambassador Macedo Soares in this role. I would like to assure him of the full support of the Bulgarian delegation.

The President: I would now like to take this opportunity to welcome Ambassador Zappia to the Conference on Disarmament.

Ms. Zappia (Hungary): Mr. President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Since this is the very first time that I am taking the floor in this august body and in this beautiful room, and also the first time the European Union has taken the floor under your presidency, allow me first of all to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of my full support as well as the support of the European Union in your efforts to guide the work of this Conference.

Let me remind you of our long-standing attachment to the enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament. We support the call made by the informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament, including some European Union member States, to appoint a special coordinator on the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament membership in 2011.

We sincerely hope that we can make some tangible progress on this issue during the 2011 sessions of the Conference. In fact, it is important to start to reflect upon the expansion for two reasons. First, the Conference has a mandate to do that on a regular basis, as is stated in section I, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure, and we have not done it for a long time now. Second, and perhaps more importantly, we believe that the time is now right to consider the issue of expansion.

The European Union is ready to work with other delegations and in particular with Ambassador Macedo Soares of Brazil in his capacity as the likely candidate for the position of special coordinator on this issue. In this connection, we would like to stress that the nomination of a special coordinator does not prejudice any particular outcome on enlargement. It is the beginning of a process.

The discussion on expansion of the Conference is no substitute for the programme of work and substantive negotiations. In fact, by bringing new life and fresh perspectives it may well represent a positive contribution to the revitalization of the Conference.

Ms. Andresen-Guimarães (Portugal): Mr. President, distinguished colleagues, allow me to start my first statement in the Conference on Disarmament by recognizing first and foremost the Conference itself, for its contribution to the design of the current multilateral treaty architecture. My wishes are that this body will be, as soon as possible, in a position to regain the central role to which it is entitled.

Mr. President, I would like to acknowledge your leadership and praise the able and professional way that you have been steering the Conference. You play a key role in strengthening the dialogue and transparency between members and observer States. Thus, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank you and wish you a continued successful presidency. You can count on our support.

Allow me now to add a few words to the statement by the Philippines on behalf of the informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament, and the statement on behalf of the European Union, to which we fully subscribe. As I see the Conference — and I stress that this is the view of a newcomer, perhaps still benefiting from a fresher perspective — there is at least one issue on which we all can agree. The Conference on Disarmament needs to get back to its core business, that is, to negotiate multilateral disarmament treaties. An agreement on resuming negotiations remains so far elusive. What is not elusive, however, is the erosion of the Conference on Disarmament. Every day that goes by is an opportunity missed. A choice has to be made: a choice between finding a solution within this body and considering other options. Both are respectable options, but we believe that the Conference on Disarmament still matters.

It is here that enlargement comes in. Rather than a liability, enlargement will be an asset of the Conference on Disarmament. It represents a new opportunity, a fresh start. More members will make the Conference more inclusive, better reflecting today's world, more transparent and — why not say it? — more democratic. We should keep in mind that although the membership of the Conference on Disarmament is limited, its decisions are global in nature. They matter to us all. Furthermore, the simple fact that there are countries that have an interest in joining the Conference, despite the stormy waters, represents an unequivocal and powerful political statement underscoring the relevance of the Conference in today's world. We believe that this point deserves serious consideration. Enlargement is not in itself the solution, but it is part of the solution for a healthy and long-lasting Conference.

That being said, let me add that we are not seeking a decision on the expansion today or, for that matter, anytime soon. What we are discussing here today is the nomination of a special rapporteur on the expansion of the Conference, which does not prejudice any particular outcome. I recall that in 2001 the Conference appointed a special

rapporteur without any subsequent decision on expansion. This example amply proves the absence of an automatic link between the appointment of a special rapporteur and the adoption of a decision to expand the membership. In fact, the solution for this issue may reside in this understanding: the appointment does not prejudice any particular outcome.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): Mr. President, I would like to add a few remarks on a national basis to those contained in the statement already delivered on behalf of the European Union, to which, of course, Ireland fully subscribes.

Ireland is one of the most recent countries to become a member of this Conference, having joined along with four others in 1999. Our request for membership had been submitted some 17 years earlier. On 5 August 2011, Ireland will have completed 12 years of Conference on Disarmament membership. However, this will not be an occasion for celebration on our part, since it is a very great disappointment to my country that throughout our membership we have not seen the Conference on Disarmament engage in the work of negotiation for which it was established. Nevertheless, given that we ourselves were, until 1999, sitting on the observer benches, we have a strong sympathy with the countries that have not been admitted to membership of this Conference, despite having submitted their applications a long time ago – in some cases, almost 30 years ago.

The active involvement of my country in disarmament issues did not begin with our membership in the Conference. On the contrary, it dates back many decades. Similarly, there are countries today which, despite being active in a host of other multilateral forums, including in the area of disarmament, are excluded from membership in this body. My country believes that, along with efforts to resume substantive work and a re-examination of working methods, the further enlargement of the membership of the Conference is an issue deserving urgent attention. My delegation therefore fully supports the statement made by Ambassador Macedo Soares of Brazil this morning and supported by other delegations. Ireland hopes that progress can be made in this area during the current year.

Mr. Tileuberdi (Kazakhstan): Mr. President, allow me to speak on behalf of the Eastern European Group. The Group stresses the importance of the Conference's adapting to today's reality in terms of inclusiveness, transparency and broader inputs by all members of the international community to the disarmament process. The Group recognizes the legitimate aspirations of all countries to participate in the work of the Conference and to be engaged in the strengthening of global security. In this regard, the Group welcomes the initiative of the current presidency to hold a frank discussion on the enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament.

Under section I, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure the Conference has the obligation to review its membership at regular intervals. Over the past decades, the Conference has focused on the expansion of its membership several times, and since its establishment the Conference on Disarmament has been expanded six times. Different options and suggestions have already been discussed in the past when the Conference membership arose on the agenda.

In conclusion, the Group endorses calls for the appointment of a special coordinator on the expansion of the Conference membership, as reflected in the chair's summary of the high-level meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations held in New York. The Group is also committed to engaging in constructive consultations in order to address the issue of the enlargement of the Conference.

Mr. Oyarce (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, firstly, I would like to thank the Ambassador of Germany for sharing the concerns of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative with the members of this Conference. I believe that the issue is very

important not only for the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty but also to stimulate the work of this forum.

I would also like to express my appreciation for the statements made here today, in particular for that of the Ambassador of the Philippines. I would like to say that Chile has always supported multilateral forums, the universal coverage of instruments, and the power of such instruments, institutions and multilateral mechanisms. We believe that the issue of access and participation of all interested States, in accordance with the relevant rules of procedure, should be the subject of a constructive debate and assessment. We therefore see expansion in a positive light, first, for procedural reasons that have already been stated here, and second, for political reasons, which I feel are the more relevant.

The contributions of observers to the Conference on Disarmament have indisputably been important, both in this and other forums on disarmament. One could certainly argue that the critical juncture at which this forum finds itself could complicate the discussion on enlargement. I understand this argument, but we feel that it would also be useful to look at the issue from the viewpoint of reinforcing the legitimacy of this forum and increasing the international community's interest in its work. Therefore, we are in favour of holding this debate and of finding a more structured way to do it, with the appointment of a coordinator. My country would therefore like to thank the Ambassador of Brazil for his ongoing efforts.

I would like to end, Mr. President, by saying that for my country expansion is a political issue that we must address.

Ms. Dupuy (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, first allow me to welcome you and recognize your efforts on, and commitment to, the issue of expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. Your opening statement on 22 March, which highlighted the important role of contributions from observer countries, in conjunction with your invitation for an exchange of views between the presidents of the Conference on Disarmament, regional coordinators and Brazil, is something we value greatly, and this session is a fine example of that role.

Nor can we forget the rich dialogue that we had with the previous presidents from Canada and Chile, and we therefore hope that this trend will continue and develop further in the future. Uruguay endorses in their entirety the words spoken by the Permanent Representative of the Philippines, Ambassador García, on behalf of the informal group of observer States, and would particularly like to express appreciation for the statements by members having taken the floor today concerning the substantive work of this forum and its membership.

Allow us to add our voice to that of those who have mentioned the need to appoint a special coordinator to facilitate consultations and begin a serious, inclusive and transparent discussion on the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament and the different options, without prejudice to the outcome.

Sadly, we recall that the last discussion of this issue by the Conference on Disarmament took place in 2001, despite the fact that, according to rule 2 of the rules of procedure, the issue should be revisited periodically. In our view 10 years is a sufficiently long period to wait to revisit the issue. Therefore, we are pleased that current members of the Conference on Disarmament support our proposal to appoint a special coordinator to study the issue of expansion and have nominated Ambassador Macedo Soares of Brazil because of his extensive experience. This suggestion was made by the informal group of observer States on 24 March of this year and supported today by various members of this Conference.

Mr. President, we would like to add our voice to that of those countries that view with scepticism the state of hibernation that the Conference on Disarmament has been in for

more than 10 years already. We share the concerns expressed in this chamber regarding the failure to reach an agreement that would enable the Conference to break this impasse, concerns that have led many speakers here to express great frustration. This impasse also places the Conference on Disarmament in the delicate situation of being unable to effect any changes this year.

We support multilateralism, so we do not want to keep hearing statements to the effect that the Conference on Disarmament was a very important forum but is no longer one today, that it has become obsolete or stagnant. On the contrary, as Members of the United Nations interested in advancing the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation, we hope to see the Conference on Disarmament become more up to date, perhaps with an open-ended membership, with a new dynamic of actual work, dialogue and transparency, in keeping with this day and age. Therefore, we believe that one way of genuinely revitalizing the Conference would be to expand its membership. The informal group of observer States has expressed its support and commitment regarding this idea. This would undoubtedly result in an exercise of in-depth reflection on the current functioning and structure of the Conference, which could help break down the resistance to change that has caused so much damage, and revitalize the Conference by discussing current disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation mechanisms in relation to the enormous challenges of the twenty-first century, to which multilateral bodies and forums cannot remain oblivious.

Ms. Jáquez Huacuja (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President, for your efforts to include this issue in the debate. At the same time, I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the other presidents of this and previous sessions to establish contacts with observer States and those wishing to join the Conference on Disarmament.

My delegation has always been in favour of first discussing and debating in detail the changes that need to be made to the Conference. Examining the issue of Conference membership is very important, not only because it is part of the rules of procedure, but also because it should be seen as an integral part of the revitalization of the Conference that we all yearn for. In addition, I would like to reiterate that, for Mexico, the participation of all United Nations member countries, and in fact of all the world's countries, is important for making progress in disarmament. This is not solely my country's opinion but an opinion endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly. In fact, I would like to point out that paragraph 28 of the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which established the Conference on Disarmament, states that all countries consider that all the peoples of the world have a vital interest in the success of disarmament negotiations, and that all States have the duty to contribute to efforts in the field of disarmament. This view has been endorsed by all countries; it is not a question of national position. Therefore, my delegation supports the discussion of the issue within the Conference on Disarmament, as part of a comprehensive revitalization plan for the Conference. However, I cannot help but express my regret that under current conditions, with the Conference on Disarmament not having been able to do substantive work or fulfil its mandate for so many years, such a debate on revitalization would inevitably replace efforts towards substantive work. I will thus end by stressing that we should take care not to substitute one issue for another, nor to change priorities. The current priority of the Conference should be to find a way to fulfil the mandate that it has been unable to fulfil for 15 years.

Mr. Demiralp (Turkey): Mr. President, in the first place, I would like to congratulate you on the organization of the session. In the second place, I welcome the distinguished Ambassador of the European Union. I listened to her statement. I understand that this statement was not open to or discussed with candidate countries. I hope that this is not a sign that the European Union is becoming introverted. I would also like to welcome the Ambassador of Portugal – a very friendly country. Another point: I would like to

congratulate the distinguished Ambassador of Germany for the information he provided to the Conference on Disarmament about NPDI.

With regard to the Conference on Disarmament, like other members of NPDI, we would indeed welcome sustained progress, within a balanced programme of work, on a fissile material cut-off treaty and on other agenda items. On the other hand, Turkey hopes that the Conference will be revitalized by its present membership; that the concerns of all member States will be addressed; that substantive work on the core issues will be initiated; and that the long-lasting stalemate will be overcome. To that end, we should strive to maintain the focus on our main task, namely, to come up with a consensual programme of work and start negotiations at the earliest convenience. Progress in our work will not only provide a much-needed breakthrough in non-proliferation efforts in Geneva, but also have wider implications for other multilateral disarmament activities within the United Nations and elsewhere.

The President: This, I believe, concludes our business for today. The schedule of meetings for the rest of this week will be in accordance with document CD/WP.565/Rev.1: two informal meetings on agenda items 1 and 2, one at 3 p.m. today in this meeting room and another at 10 a.m. tomorrow in the same meeting room. I would like to express my sincere thanks to those countries that sent experts to the informal meeting. In addition, there will be two informal meetings on agenda item 4 on 19 May, one in the morning and another one in the afternoon. This formal plenary meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.