
Conference on Disarmament

4 August 2011

English

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 4 August 2011, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. So Se Pyong(Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

The President: I now declare open the 1231st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Before turning to our business today, allow me to seize this opportunity to express on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf our heartfelt sympathy for the families of the victims of the tragic incident which occurred on Utøya Island in Norway. I would like to ask the Norwegian delegation to convey a message of compassion to its Government.

At this time, I would also like to take this opportunity to bid a belated farewell to our distinguished colleague from Sri Lanka, Ambassador Senewiratne, and wish her success in her new assignment. I also have the pleasure of welcoming a new colleague, Ambassador Maung Wai of Myanmar. I wish to assure him of our cooperation and support in the execution of his duties. Last but not least, I congratulate Ms. Joanne Adamson of the United Kingdom, who has been promoted to the rank of ambassador and will continue to share her extensive experience and diplomatic skills with us in Geneva.

As was announced by the secretariat, today's meeting will be dedicated to an assessment of the session held by the General Assembly of the United Nations from 27 to 29 July as a follow-up to the high-level meeting held in September 2010 to address the problems surrounding the Conference. In this regard, to introduce the issue, I would like to give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Tokayev.

Mr. Tokayev (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to share with the membership my impressions of the General Assembly meeting held under agenda item 162, at the request of 49 member States, in New York from 27 to 29 July this year.

The President of the General Assembly opened the meeting, after which the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and subsequently the Chair of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters and I, as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, made statements. Fifty member States contributed to the ensuing debate.

Mr. Deiss, President of the General Assembly, recalled that the grave situation of the deadlock had caused the Conference to be put on the agenda of the General Assembly, in line with the United Nations Charter. He encouraged the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) to send out a strong signal to the Conference this year, and he agreed that the creation of a panel composed of high-level figures could have utility.

As was indicated by the number of interventions, this was a timely meeting, underscoring the urgent need to find a solution to the current state of affairs in the Conference. It also provided delegations with the opportunity to elaborate on their positions and priorities in the field of disarmament in a process that is expected to continue at the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly later this fall.

Mr. Ban Ki-moon delivered a very strong statement, which from my point of view might be considered as a milestone in the multilateral disarmament process. The Secretary-General, *inter alia*, stressed the urgent need to find a way out of the Conference's predicament. He noted that members had identified different options for revitalizing the Conference. These include the maintenance of the status quo, which risks rendering the Conference irrelevant and obsolete. The second option would be for a new fundamental approach to the disarmament machinery, although no consensus exists on the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. Lastly, there is the option of incremental changes, which have their opponents as well. To address the differences, the Secretary-General is taking a decision on the establishment of a panel of eminent persons to address the different issues, further to the recommendations of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters.

The Secretary-General pointed out that States even disagreed over where reforms should be implemented. In the Conference? In the General Assembly and its First Committee? Or outside the United Nations, in a conference on a specific disarmament issue, or in an ad hoc forum organized by like-minded countries?

The Advisory Board, in addition to the recommendation to establish a panel of eminent persons, also suggested to the Secretary-General that he should encourage progress on a programme of work based on the consensus document CD/1864 and proposed to continue raising public awareness, and to encourage civil society to offer inputs to overcome the prolonged stalemate at the Conference.

It is abundantly clear that there is no easy solution to break the impasse. The long list of speakers at the three sessions reflected the real involvement by the member States but, as expected, did not resolve the issues at hand, either in the Conference or in the larger disarmament machinery. The statements, however, convey grave concern about the lack of progress in the area of multilateral disarmament and in the Conference in particular.

It goes beyond my prerogative and role to provide a summary of all the national and group statements made. I am sure everybody is aware of the respective positions. Moreover, all statements have been put online by the Office of Disarmament Affairs in New York, and the Department of Public Information has provided extensive summaries of the three days' proceedings.

Nevertheless, I would like to reiterate my views on the current situation in this body. I continue to believe that the Conference has immense value and is irreplaceable. At the same time, it is evident that the majority of the members share frustration due to the lack of progress, which will force us to take action.

The Conference might resume its leading role as a multilateral disarmament forum, provided it is duly reformed. To that end, it is necessary to look at its procedures, membership and agenda. As I stated in New York, some of the procedures, such as the monthly rotation of the presidency and the annual adoption of a programme of work, are impairing the efficiency of the Conference. Some argue that increasing the membership would not solve our problems. That may be true, but let us not forget that a body such as the Conference on Disarmament needs to be representative of the wider international community. We must also keep in mind that the Conference is funded from the regular budget of the United Nations. The agenda dates back to 1978 and needs, in my view, to be reassessed to reflect the current international security environment. Finally, the rule of consensus should be interpreted as encouragement to come to an agreement to start substantive work.

I believe that action by the Conference is long overdue. Failure to take action will compel some members to raise the issue at the General Assembly. The future of the Conference is in your hands. Meanwhile, it is my belief that its authority and its record should not be compromised.

We should use each of the existing opportunities to revitalize the Conference. As the Secretary-General said, the problem lies not with the vehicle, but with the driver. What is needed most of all is a closer alignment between policy priorities and multilateral disarmament goals.

Mr. Wai (Myanmar): It is indeed a great honour for me to join this august body and also to deliver a statement for the very first time as the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President, first of all, please allow me to extend my warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at this critical juncture. I am confident that with your great diplomatic skills and vast experience you will

bring significant progress in our deliberations. I would also like to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in this important task. My sincere appreciation also goes to all your predecessors for their excellent work on behalf of the Conference during this year.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my warmest greetings to Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to the Conference on Disarmament, to his team and to the secretariat of the Conference. I thank the Director-General and the President of the Conference for their kind words of welcome to me.

Myanmar's participation in and dedication to the multilateral disarmament negotiations dates back to one of the predecessors of the Conference on Disarmament, that is, the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, in the early 1960s. Despite the prolonged stagnation in the Conference on Disarmament, Myanmar remains committed to the Conference as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament created by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Please allow me to briefly comment on the state of play in the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations disarmament machinery.

In my view, neither the rules of procedure of the Conference nor the positions taken by a few members of the Conference should be seen as responsible for the current deadlock that has lasted over a decade. On the contrary, we believe that the differing security priorities of some member countries have prevented us from fulfilling the Conference's mandate. Although there is room for further improvement, the existing rules of procedure have served the interest of the membership and the purpose of the Conference in the past.

We must, however, admit that the United Nations disarmament machinery has made little progress as a whole. As the Secretary-General of the United Nations put it, we are now in the midst of a growing crisis of confidence. The United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery has failed. I personally believe that the fourth special session on disarmament will have the authority and legitimacy to comprehensively review the entire United Nations disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament.

We also heard about some other options for dealing with this situation during the General Assembly meeting held recently in New York on the follow-up to the 2010 high-level meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations. Of course, these options are neither final nor exhaustive. We are open to all views and suggestions made in this regard and look forward to hearing more during this meeting.

I have heard that some of our colleagues came to the Conference on Disarmament with great expectations but left in despair. I also come with great expectations, but I would like to leave the Conference with great satisfaction. On that note, Mr. President, let me conclude this brief statement.

Mr. Danon (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I wanted to take the floor, but also to depart slightly from your agenda focusing on the meeting in New York, because I told all my colleagues in the Conference on Disarmament that I would report back as soon as possible on the meeting of the five NPT nuclear-weapon States (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council) held in Paris as a follow-up to the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

So, with my apologies for departing from the agenda, if you will allow me I will take a few minutes to give an account of that meeting, which is of course closely connected with what is happening here in the Conference on Disarmament.

On 30 June and 1 July 2011, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, represented by directors and experts, met in Paris to take stock of the commitments made at the NPT Review Conference and to prepare for the next NPT review cycle. We discussed a wide variety of topics relating to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. It was the second time that the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council have held such a meeting to examine these issues. The first meeting was the London conference on confidence-building measures, held in 2009.

The Paris conference was therefore an important opportunity to further strengthen mutual trust on nuclear issues, and, as you know, the results of our discussions were set out in the final joint press release issued at the end of the conference.

As nuclear-weapon States, we discussed how we intended to meet our disarmament obligations under the NPT, especially regarding our commitment to take the steps outlined in the 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan. We examined in particular action 5 and the obligation to report, discussing the link between action 5 and action 21. We continued our discussions on issues relating to transparency and mutual trust, including on nuclear capabilities and doctrines, and also on verification issues.

We agreed to establish a task force on definitions and nuclear terminology drawn from among the five permanent members, so as to enhance mutual understanding on a number of key terms and facilitate consultations on nuclear issues, both political and technical, among the five permanent members at all levels. These measures are important in order to establish a solid foundation for further disarmament efforts.

We also exchanged views on measures to uphold the non-proliferation aspect of NPT, and in particular ways of responding to notifications of withdrawal from the Treaty as provided for in article X. We also stressed the need to strengthen International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, in particular by encouraging the adoption of the additional protocol and strengthening the resources and capacities of the Agency to prevent and detect cases of non-compliance with non-proliferation obligations.

We reaffirmed our belief that the Conference on Disarmament — the international community's sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum — must retain the fundamental role in substantive negotiations on priority issues. With regard to the alignment between the Conference on Disarmament and policy priorities, as referred to by the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Tokayev, we believe that all States, whether or not they are parties to NPT, should help to achieve the overall objective of disarmament by creating the necessary security conditions, defusing regional tensions as much as possible, promoting collective security and ensuring that the international nuclear non-proliferation regime remains strong and reliable – in short, by making progress in all areas of disarmament.

In the view of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material is essential, both to ensure the effective implementation of article VI of the NPT and to prevent nuclear proliferation. We reaffirm our support for the immediate start of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty that provides for verification.

As for the future of our work, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council have decided to meet on a regular basis. A third conference, similar to the Paris conference, will be held within the framework of the next Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference, and we have already agreed to focus on several specific points. Thus, the issues of verification, confidence-building measures and measures to be taken in the event of a nuclear accident have already been included in the agenda.

We are working on a proposal by the United Kingdom to hold expert discussions later this year on technical issues relating to verification. More generally speaking, the five permanent members are becoming more accustomed to working together. Next week the five permanent members will work with the member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on the issue of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia, and at the end of the month we will meet to discuss matters relating to the First Committee and the future treaty on fissile material.

These are the pieces of information I wanted to pass on to the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Puentes (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba reaffirms the importance of promoting multilateralism as a basic principle of disarmament negotiations. In this regard, we welcome the broad debate that took place at the United Nations General Assembly. Solutions that have been agreed multilaterally, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, are the only sustainable means of addressing disarmament and international security issues.

Within the disarmament machinery, the Conference on Disarmament plays an essential role in the negotiation of universally acceptable disarmament treaties. If the Conference did not exist, it would have to be invented immediately. We regret that the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to carry out substantive work for more than a decade. Some insist that this is due to its working methods and rules of procedure. Cuba does not share this view. It is no coincidence that for the twelfth year in a row the United Nations Disarmament Commission has once again concluded its work this year without agreeing on any substantive recommendations.

Furthermore, every year at the General Assembly the First Committee continues to adopt dozens of resolutions that are simply not implemented, particularly those relating to nuclear disarmament. The fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament has still not been convened, despite the Non-Aligned Movement's repeated calls for such a session for many years now. Cuba supports the idea of improving the United Nations disarmament machinery, including this Conference, but we are convinced that the paralysis currently affecting a large part of the disarmament machinery is primarily due to a lack of political will among some States to achieve real progress, particularly in the field of nuclear disarmament.

We are concerned about the statements made by a number of delegations in New York claiming that the time has come to leave the Conference aside and resort to alternative negotiating processes. Cuba opposes the idea of replacing the conferences with improvised and selective ad hoc arrangements outside the framework of the United Nations, controlled by specific countries. Imposing such an approach would be a dangerous step backwards. In addition, we believe that factional agreements which do not involve the largest producers of all types of weapons have little effect. The solution is not to ignore the Conference on Disarmament or diminish its importance. On the contrary, now more than ever we all have the responsibility to preserve and strengthen it.

The Conference should adopt as soon as possible a broad and balanced programme of work that takes account of the real priorities in the field of disarmament. Cuba is prepared to negotiate in parallel within the Conference a treaty which eliminates and prohibits nuclear weapons, a treaty prohibiting the arms race in outer space, a treaty providing effective security assurances for States which, like Cuba, do not possess nuclear weapons, and a treaty which prohibits the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We believe that the Conference has the capacity to embark on such negotiations with one voice.

Nuclear disarmament is and must remain the highest priority in the field of disarmament; in the light of this, consensus must be built within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. It is simply unacceptable that there are nearly 23,000 nuclear weapons in the world today, 7,560 of which are ready for immediate use. On 22 August, Cuba will take the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament and will have the opportunity to draft and negotiate the report on the work of this body to be submitted to the First Committee at the United Nations General Assembly. We fully intend to make every effort to advance substantive negotiations in this body, in accordance with its basic mandate to negotiate international treaties on disarmament and arms control. In order to achieve this, each and every member of the Conference must do its part, as it is up to us to demonstrate our true commitment to disarmament and peace through our practical action.

Mr. Loshchinin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation thanks the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Kassym-Jomart Kemelevich Tokayev, for his briefing on the outcome of the meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York.

The Russian delegation has already had the opportunity, both here at the Conference and during the plenary session of the General Assembly in New York, to express its opinion on the current situation. Furthermore, we support the joint statement delivered at the plenary session of the General Assembly. We agree with the assessment of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, that the existing situation in the sphere of multilateral disarmament is not the result of systemic failures in the actual disarmament mechanism. The absence of negotiating activity in the Conference reflects the differing priorities of States with regard to disarmament and non-proliferation and efforts to uphold national interests.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, and the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Tokayev, rightly indicate that a situation in which one or two States hold the Conference hostage is unacceptable. We also consider that the existing concerns of States and their national interests should and can be settled in talks on the crux of the problem. Such talks, as a rule, cannot be quick and easy, and the issue of participation in an agreement is a strictly national decision.

It would, perhaps, be appropriate to refer here to the experience of holding bilateral talks on nuclear disarmament with our American partners. The series of talks on the reduction of strategic offensive arms, including the New START Treaty that entered into force in February this year, is a good example of how the national interests of two nuclear Powers can be taken into consideration while strengthening strategic stability in the world – and not only strategic stability but security. There were many critical and difficult moments during these talks, and decisions were required at the Presidential level in both countries. To everyone's satisfaction, however, a result and a compromise were ultimately reached.

There is every basis for believing that multilateral disarmament can break free from deadlock. We view document CD/1864 as the basis on which a compromise is possible, since the main priority issues it sets out reflect the balance of interests of the overwhelming majority of members of the international community. Additional efforts should be made. A compromise can and should be found within the framework of the Conference.

Universal agreements in the field of disarmament can be developed only under the aegis of the United Nations, while maintaining the principle of consensus. That is when they actually work and can be adapted to new situations and challenges. Moving negotiation processes to parallel tracks, outside the Conference, is hardly helpful to ensuring the universality and viability of an agreement.

Of course, we are not against the intention of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to establish a panel of eminent persons to review the state of affairs in the sphere of

disarmament. Certainly, a fresh perspective will not hurt. Nonetheless, let us be realistic. The decision on the programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament lies, first and foremost, in our hands. We should all take responsibility and, if possible, reach agreement by the end of the current session of the Conference, in order to signal to the next session of the General Assembly and the entire international community the ability of our body to make a real contribution to multilateral disarmament. I wish to emphasize once again that Russia is ready to play an active role in seeking compromise on the programme of work.

I would also like to thank the Ambassador of France, Mr. Danon, for the information on the meeting of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council in Paris on 30 June and 1 July. A joint statement providing information on the outcome of the meeting, the only document adopted at it, will be circulated among the Conference documents.

Ms. Arango Olmos (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by offering our condolences and solidarity to Jarmo, the Deputy Secretary-General of this Conference, on the occasion of his father's death. On behalf of all the members of the Conference and the delegation of Colombia I embrace Jarmo and pray to God that his family is much more at peace now that his father's long illness is finally over.

First of all, allow me to express my thanks to you, Sir, for convening this meeting to further reflect on ways to strengthen the Conference on Disarmament, particularly after the interesting discussion that emerged last week at the United Nations General Assembly. The fact that so many statements were made and that the meeting had to be spread over three days clearly shows the importance the international community attaches to disarmament and non-proliferation. In addition, the expressions of frustration and impatience with the stagnation in the Conference remind us of the urgent need for the Conference to fulfil its responsibilities and its mandate. For this reason, Colombia believes it is time to take action.

We cannot just keep repeating the same positions and analysing the possible ways of ending the deadlock in the Conference; we all know that this has been overdiagnosed. If we want the Conference to thrive, and if we really believe that this process should be guided by the member States, then we must start taking practical measures. There are still six weeks of work left in this 2011 session. From my delegation's point of view, it is time to start implementing some of the recommendations and ideas put forward in recent weeks. It would be unacceptable if, at the end of this session, we did not have any practical results to show or any process in place to revitalize the Conference.

If we bury ourselves in passive rhetoric during this third part of the 2011 session, this will just send the message that it is impossible to make any kind of headway within the Conference, and will strengthen the argument for making decisions about the future of the Conference outside the Conference itself. Even more worrying, if we do not come up with anything definite in the next two months, we will be condemning the Conference to suffer the same deadlock at the 2012 session.

In my delegation's view, it is clear that if by September we have still not taken measures within the Conference, then in the autumn decisions will be taken in New York to set the disarmament machinery, including the Conference, back on track. In this regard, I would like to highlight one of the lines of action that we think would be feasible and useful, namely, establishing a high-level panel or working group within the Conference to consider possible actions to strengthen the work of the Conference, based on the ideas and suggestions put forward during our recent meetings and on other relevant views. The group could work informally over the next few weeks and submit a proposal at a plenary meeting of the Conference for adoption before the end of the current session. The proposal should include actions designed to improve the Conference's procedures, but mainly to enable the start of substantive work in the Conference at the beginning of the 2012 session.

Colombia would like to hear the other member States' views on this suggestion or on other practical actions we could take in the next few weeks.

Before I finish, I would like to reiterate what Colombia considers to be some key points. Several delegations have already repeated them in this meeting room, and they were also emphasized in some of the speeches last week in New York. First, the central purpose for which we are here is general and complete disarmament, creating a world free of nuclear weapons; this is our moral and political responsibility to the citizens of our countries and to everyone on the planet. Second, a world without nuclear weapons would be a more secure world for everyone; now that we are well into the twenty-first century, nuclear weapons are no longer an effective means of addressing current security threats; on the contrary, they pose a much higher risk. With this in mind, we must adapt our security doctrines that are based on a cold war logic to the new realities of interdependence and cooperation. Third, disarmament and non-proliferation should be understood in a broad sense, not just as a matter of peace and security, but also taking into account how they relate to other key aspects of the international agenda, such as development, the environment and human rights. Fourth, discussions on disarmament mechanisms and non-proliferation should not be used as an excuse for delaying substantive discussions on the agenda items. We must move forward in our search for international instruments that will enable us to fulfil our obligations.

We reiterate these points so that they will not lose their importance, and in the hope that they will motivate us to take practical action enabling us to move forward towards our shared objective of disarmament and non-proliferation and to create a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Oyarce (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, my delegation would like to echo the expression of solidarity and condolences to the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

We would also like to express our thanks for the opportunity provided at this meeting to address issues recently raised in New York, but before doing so I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Ambassador of Myanmar, thank the Secretary-General of the Conference for his thoughts on the meeting in New York and express my sincere appreciation to the Ambassador of France for his report on the meeting of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council in Paris. We would like to share just a few points and options that it would be useful to analyse during our future work.

New York illustrated once again the concern about the current state of affairs. As has been said many times before, this situation prevents us from moving forward in multilateral disarmament, and this is incompatible with the negotiating mandate of the Conference. At this point it is probably necessary here, as the Ambassador of Colombia expressed it so well, to insist on diagnoses. But I will make just two comments on this diagnostic approach.

First, the structure of the procedure has proved to be inefficient, and we will probably have to revise — not replace, mind you, but revise — the rule of consensus. It is clear that there is no political will to depart from this practice, at least in our humble opinion. Second, the problem facing the Conference is not just a procedural one. We respect this position, but we believe that there is also an aspect of political will and perceptions, and I repeat, perceptions, of legitimate national interests.

It is clear that there is a positive trend conducive to starting negotiations on fissile material and stocks of such material. It has been repeatedly stated that the issue is ripe, and we share this view, but in practical terms the Conference has been unable to initiate substantive negotiations that include basic guarantees for all States. And continuing with

this diagnostic context, which I will move away from in a moment, we believe that what was said by Austria at the meeting on 27 July should be noted. On that occasion, the representative of Austria pointed out that the substantive issue, the substantive problem, was political will, which was a deep-rooted problem, and that there were issues that divide us, such as nuclear disarmament, prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) and negative security assurances.

It seems to us — and this is why I draw your attention to it — that this is a rather realistic and objective analysis. The ultimate problem that we must somehow address is precisely that of political will, and this was recognized by Ambassador Pellicer, Chair of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, in New York.

The conclusion to be drawn from this matter is simple. The Conference has lost its credibility as the sole multilateral forum for disarmament and non-proliferation. What is at stake here? This seems abundantly clear to us — what is at stake is its legitimacy. Meeting for 14 years without producing any results is an untenable situation; we have heard it over and over again. We would like to see the Conference regain a real capacity to negotiate multilateral instruments, but in the current circumstances we probably need to determine whether there is a true willingness to move in this direction in accordance with the Conference's original mandate. In this situation, we understand that inaction does not seem to be a reasonable alternative.

Chile continues to believe that we should preserve the Conference, as the Secretary-General has said here today. The Conference has carried out valuable work and should be irreplaceable, and for that reason we appreciate the proposed initiatives to revitalize this forum. It is clear to us that, as the Secretary-General of the Conference has said, it is not easy to overcome this impasse, and we believe that we should move beyond this phase of self-critical diagnoses and discussions about the rules of procedure and begin a new phase of practical measures to revitalize the Conference.

In this respect, we are open to procedural reforms; we are open to a twice-yearly rotation of the presidency. The rotation every four weeks — and I say this from personal experience — makes it difficult to get any actual work done. This arrangement should be reviewed and a political decision should be taken; other arrangements may also be considered. We are open to a more extensive programme of work, which in our view should include the four core issues outlined in the consensus document CD/1864. However, that political consensus also requires a working consensus, otherwise no realism is possible.

We are also open to exploring the possibility of not applying the consensus rule to procedural issues. This is a complex subject, but we need to address it. We are open to the idea of establishing a panel of eminent persons and establishing an institutional link between the Advisory Board and the panel, as proposed in the report of the Advisory Board, document A/66/125. But we agree with the statement made here by the Ambassador of the Russian Federation. I believe that ultimate political responsibility lies with us and this Conference.

We are also open to expansion, and in that regard we value the European Union proposal to incorporate the current observer States as full members of the Conference. Expansion probably will not solve the substantive problems, but we certainly have to admit that it could strengthen our representativeness, which is essential to this institution's universality and political legitimacy. This is a political issue that has to do with the continuity of the Conference.

We are open to the Conference pursuing specific arrangements that would enable it to receive input from NGOs and would increase its contacts with research institutions in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Paragraph 31 (c) of the report of the Advisory Board reflects this concern in a way that, in our view, is even more ambitious, because the

Board states that civil society and NGOs could offer input on ways to overcome the prolonged stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament and move towards the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

We are also prepared to move forward with workable proposals and realistic options that would enable the Conference and the disarmament machinery to function. If we do not manage to take effective measures and instead involuntarily get bogged down in rhetoric about revitalization, then the right — and I repeat, the right — of the General Assembly to take action in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation will probably be brought up in New York, and I am referring to action designed to have a real and direct impact on the role and mandate of the Conference.

The Secretary-General's idea of exploring the possibility of conducting negotiations in the General Assembly is an interesting one; this is a subject that we should approach with political responsibility. If our deadlock continues, it will be difficult to question the legitimacy of external channels, and those channels will be political if we are not able to conduct our work internally. Chile takes a broad and flexible position towards options that will enable us to make progress in multilateral negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation; it is not our intention to replace the Conference, but we must be clear that, faced with an extreme situation, we will be open to alternatives.

We will try to help the Conference respond to the real world, to a real world where, objectively speaking, there are diverging national interests and an asymmetric division of power and of political and strategic interests. The important thing is that the Conference should reflect those interests, the interests of everyone, in the best possible way and accommodate them. Doing so will require a new way of thinking and, undoubtedly, changes. We make these contributions because the functioning of the multilateral disarmament system is vital to our own security as a small country, but it is also vital to collective security, and we must help to further build trust so that we can strengthen collective security.

Mr. Daryaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, at the outset allow me to thank you for the manner in which you are presiding over the Conference on Disarmament. I would also like to thank Mr. Tokayev for his briefing on the meeting in New York. This meeting provides a good opportunity for the members of the Conference to again express their ideas and positions concerning the revitalization of the Conference, a topic that is nowadays hot in both New York and Geneva. As we have said many times, the Conference, like every international body, needs regular evaluation and assessment. This evaluation should be member-States-driven, fair, transparent, comprehensive and conducive to the goal of strengthening the Conference. Distrustful emotional diagnosis amalgamated with exaggeration, pessimism and prejudgment can only aggravate the situation by undermining the credibility of the Conference without providing a reasonable alternative.

The Conference on Disarmament is a well-known body in the field of disarmament multilateral diplomacy, with a good record of achievements in the field of legally binding instruments that form the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime. If this regime is important for us, which I suppose it is, we have to respect the body responsible for production of the foundation of that regime.

Multilateralism is the core principle of negotiation in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. In this regard the Conference on Disarmament remains the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. We attach great importance to this unique position of the Conference and support every measure that strengthens its credibility and its good functioning. We believe that the responsibility for respecting the credibility of the Conference remains first and foremost with the secretariat of the Conference as the

custodian of this body. In our view the radical proposal to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty outside the Conference is neither feasible nor acceptable.

We believe that promoting the work of the Conference cannot be achieved by changing the format or modality of the rules of procedure. Neither can it be achieved by changing our interpretation of these rules. It is worth recalling that not only were all existing multilateral disarmament treaties negotiated in the Conference under the same rules of procedure, including the rule on consensus, but also the sensitive nature of issues related to the security of nations and disarmament obligate us to adopt similar rules in the negotiation of multilateral disarmament treaties in other forums.

We should deal with the root causes of the problem and be careful about emotional moves that divert the momentum created recently to cosmetic change in the form and procedures, without tackling the substance. The crux of the problem of the Conference's inactivity during the last decade is the lack of political will for creating a suitable political environment for consideration of the security interests of all States, the lack of political will for the elimination of the common threat posed to the international community by nuclear weapons, and inertia in changing self-centred attitudes towards a noble approach of cooperative security.

The persistent resistance to active functioning of the Conference by starting negotiations on all core issues stems mainly from the fact that the Conference is not mandated to maintain the status quo. It is really mandated to negotiate a multilateral disarmament treaty and thus to change the status quo. If the Conference could have fulfilled its real mandate through negotiation of a treaty banning the possession, development, production and use of nuclear weapons, the status quo would have been changed and those who have the special privilege of being regarded as the "haves" would have lost this advantage.

The main task of the Conference is to negotiate disarmament. Taking into account the existence of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, nuclear disarmament remains the only top priority in the work of the Conference. The agenda of the Conference is designed to help the start of negotiation of a concerted and mutually reinforcing international instrument for nuclear disarmament. Therefore, the Conference is not a single-issue venue, and lack of consensus on the scope of negotiation on one issue cannot prevent delegations from starting negotiation on the others. On the contrary, we believe the difficulties that are facing the Conference originate from the refusal of some countries to deal seriously with nuclear disarmament.

We believe that the disarmament machinery today urgently needs an early commencement of negotiations, within the Conference on Disarmament, on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in a specified time frame, including a nuclear weapons convention. This convention will prohibit the possession, development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons, leading to their ultimate destruction. If we start this negotiation in the Conference, we would be in a position to comprehensively tackle all the core issues on the agenda of the Conference in a balanced manner. This, of course, will deal with fissile material in all its aspects in a comprehensive manner. It will tackle the legitimate right of non-nuclear-weapon States to security assurances and also the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This provides an overall broad structure that coherently preserves the security of all nations by avoiding the current piecemeal, disjointed, cost-free approach for nuclear-weapon States. We support early convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament to address challenges to the disarmament machinery created by the first special session.

In conclusion, I re-emphasize again that any work on the evolution of the Conference on Disarmament should be done by the Conference itself. Therefore we support

the self-evaluation approach, which will be inclusive and member-States-driven and should strengthen efforts aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament and enhancing the role and the work of the Conference in this regard, as mandated by the first special session on disarmament. The idea that funding for the Conference should be curtailed or reduced seems an unrealistic emotional move which is not at all useful. Applying this logic of linkage between the budget and activity or productivity may create a precedent for future closing down of several multilateral organizations which are confronted by a stalemate, such as the United Nations Security Council and the World Trade Organization. Last but not least, the Conference on Disarmament is an independent organization with its own rules of procedure. It is not a subsidiary body of the United Nations. Any recommendation of the General Assembly to the Conference would therefore be of an advisory nature, and the Conference could take its own decision, according to its rules of procedure.

Mr. Mohamad Bkri (Malaysia): Allow me to first express Malaysia's appreciation and support, through you, Mr. President, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for convening the plenary debate of the General Assembly from 27 to 29 July 2011 to follow up on the high-level meeting held on 24 September 2010 on revitalizing the work of the Conference and taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations. Malaysia highly values the rich discussion and ideas that emanated from the plenary debates. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Tokayev, for his valuable and important thoughts on that General Assembly debate.

While Malaysia acknowledges that the Conference is now in a difficult situation and the challenge ahead is huge, all is not lost. We have not explored all available avenues for moving forward the disarmament agenda. Malaysia therefore reiterates its support for the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and the formation of a group of eminent persons who will come up with recommendations on ways to revitalize the United Nations disarmament machinery. Notwithstanding this, Malaysia is ready to explore any other feasible ideas put forth.

Malaysia wishes to re-emphasize that our ultimate objective is the total elimination of nuclear weapons, an objective that, we believe, is shared by all of us. In this regard, Malaysia would like to reiterate the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists 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.

Following through on the statement by the distinguished Ambassador of France, Malaysia, as one of the Asian member States, looks forward to the upcoming consultation with the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and hopes that the consultation will be a fruitful one.

Ms. Rahamimoff-Honig (Israel): At the outset I would like to convey condolences to our Norwegian colleagues for the tragic loss of life as well as our condolences to the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on the passing away of his father. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Adamson on her promotion and express our satisfaction at continuing to benefit from her wisdom, experience and eloquence.

We will be taking this opportunity to deliver the statement which had been prepared for the informal session with the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters on 30 June, just before the break, but which we were unfortunately not given the opportunity to deliver. In respect of time considerations, as well as courtesy towards other Conference member States, we will shorten our statement so as to omit the words of welcome we had planned for the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs as well as the Chair and members of the Advisory Board.

The need to revitalize the work of the Conference cannot be disputed. The persisting stalemate in the Conference requires member States to take decisive action to promote substantive work. In this respect, Israel is of the view that the Conference has long been in need of an agreed, clear and up-to-date vision. In the current geopolitical circumstances, rehashing our well-known positions is not likely to bring us any closer to fulfilling our important mandate. Member States need to look at new ways to revitalize the Conference's work.

One such way may be not to focus solely on the four core issues of the agenda as the only possible road map for the Conference's work at this point in time, despite the fact that these issues are considered by the international community as the *raison d'être* of the Conference's work.

Substantive negotiations on issues of real value to international peace and security may be conducted while a stalemate persists over the four core issues. An agreed formula could be found which on the one hand recognizes the importance and continued validity of the four core issues, and at the same time focuses on the essential need to advance the work of the Conference. For Israel, banning arms transfers to terrorists as well as the need to give an effective answer to the threat posed by MANPADS are possible topics under agenda item 7, "Transparency in armaments". We are confident that if Conference member States cease to focus solely on the four core issues, they could similarly find issues that can realistically contribute to the advancement of peace and stability. A shared vision which does not centre only on the four core issues could and should be found.

Israel remains convinced that the Conference continues to have an important role to play in the arms control arena, being the single multilateral negotiating forum. The use of the term "single" is neither an oversight nor a sign of ignorance of other negotiating forums which address arms control/disarmament-related topics. It is, however, an indication of the singularity of this forum as well as our firm position that independent negotiating initiatives involving like-minded countries that seek to circumvent the complexities of the multilateral arena by catering to a limited group of countries which do not represent the full range of opinions and interests will not be able to achieve the same standing and authority. Their true relevance will remain contested due to their deficient membership.

While such initiatives may yield swifter results, one cannot overlook the extent of their pragmatic value and question whether they realistically promote the global arms control and disarmament agenda. The use of such practices in the past, in the conventional sphere, has not, to date, succeeded in bringing the most relevant participants into the fold. They remain outside. One cannot but wonder whether chances are any greater in the non-conventional sphere.

We encourage the Advisory Board to take into consideration, in the preparation of the recommendations to the United Nations Secretary-General, the need not to undermine the Conference. This body, with its unique membership and existing rules of procedure, including the rule on consensus, has played a vital role in the promotion of the disarmament agenda in the past, and we remain convinced that it has more to contribute in the future. Solutions for the Conference's stalemate should be found from within to strengthen and revitalize it.

Mr. Combrink (South Africa): South Africa welcomes this opportunity to once again exchange views on the challenges facing the multilateral disarmament machinery, which have prevented the relevant multilateral disarmament institutions, including the Conference on Disarmament, from making any substantive progress on issues that have a direct impact on international peace and security. During the General Assembly debate of 27 July, my delegation noted the past achievements of the Conference and its predecessors, which have illustrated the role this body can play in the negotiation of multilateral

disarmament instruments. We expressed our disappointment that this institution has for many years failed to fulfil its mandate, derived from the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. We also noted that, as a result of the continuing deadlock, many have started to question the Conference's relevance and continued value in the pursuit of disarmament goals.

We likewise expressed our disappointment that the United Nations Disarmament Commission, as a deliberative body on disarmament and a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, is also not fulfilling its mandate and has this year again failed to produce any concrete recommendations. Nuclear disarmament remains our highest priority. This is a priority shared by all members of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 21 and the vast majority of Conference members and United Nations Member States across all regions. Not only do we share concerns about the continued vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, but the very existence of nuclear weapons contributes to global insecurity. Furthermore, the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons clearly represent a serious risk to humanity. While these weapons exist, none of us will be truly secure. Only the complete elimination of all 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 South Africa has consistently argued for a systematic and progressive approach towards achieving the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. We believe that continuous and irreversible progress in nuclear disarmament and related nuclear arms control measures remain fundamental to the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation. In our view, the lack of real progress towards nuclear disarmament has weakened the global non-proliferation regime.

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 Conference's agenda since its inception, and despite the ongoing demand by the overwhelming majority of Conference members for the establishment of a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament, this has not yet materialized. This is particularly disconcerting given that all parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) committed themselves to this in the action plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. My delegation therefore reiterates its call for the Conference to establish a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament.

As part of a systematic and progressive approach to nuclear disarmament, my delegation also supports the commencement of negotiations on a treaty that would ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices and that would fulfil both non-proliferation and disarmament objectives. My delegation does not subscribe to the view that a fissile material treaty is the only item ripe for negotiations. Given the nature of the Conference as a negotiating forum, we believe that the Conference is able to negotiate on any issue under its agenda, although we acknowledge that the finalization of any internationally legally binding arrangements in the near future may be more likely on some issues than others. While we may not all agree on the issues that are either more or less ripe for the conclusion of an agreement, this should not prevent us from dealing substantively with the issues on the multilateral disarmament agenda.

The question that confronts us is whether the Conference is able to live up to our expectations or whether there are any other viable options that could be explored within the United Nations framework for taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations in an effort to revitalize the work that should have been undertaken by this body.

While some would ascribe the lack of concrete results in the Conference only to its rules of procedure, my delegation believes that the resistance by some to pursuing in good

faith and bringing to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control is the larger obstacle faced by the international community.

Many of us would like to see the Conference resume its rightful place. However, its continued failure over the past 15 years to engage in substantive work does not allow us to be indifferent to the ongoing challenges. We remain ready to consider any proposals that would help break the impasse and allow the Conference to execute its mandate as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. If the Conference continues to fail to execute its mandate, there would be no reason not to consider other options in taking forward the important work that this body has been entrusted with.

In conclusion, South Africa remains committed to a rules-based international system. We will therefore consider any further possible actions with a view to strengthening multilateral governance in the fields of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. In addition, we will examine options for taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations with the aim of achieving our goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. President, allow me to begin by expressing our condolences to the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference for his loss. I would also like to welcome the Ambassador of Myanmar to the Conference.

We appreciate your step in calling this important meeting to discuss the outcomes of the General Assembly session relating to the revitalization of the Conference. In this context the statement just made by Mr. Tokayev, Secretary-General of the Conference, is extremely useful and constructive and deserves our fullest attention.

Pakistan appreciates the efforts that are being made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to revitalize the work of the Conference on Disarmament as well as the international disarmament machinery. We note in particular the reference in his statement in New York – and I quote: “What is needed most of all is a closer alignment between policy priorities and multilateral disarmament goals”. This, in our view, is the nub of the issue, because the policy priorities of certain countries are such that they are contrary to the goals of the international disarmament machinery.

We also believe that the challenges that are facing us do not relate only to the Conference on Disarmament but go beyond it to include the entire international disarmament machinery created by the first special session on disarmament. This includes, in addition to the Conference, the First Committee and the Disarmament Commission.

In New York, Pakistan fully aligned itself with the statement that was made by the non-aligned countries, the largest group in the United Nations, comprising 118 States. In particular, we align ourselves with the emphasis that was placed in this statement on the need for convening, initiating and undertaking as a priority negotiations on nuclear disarmament. From Pakistan’s perspective, this statement by the non-aligned countries was also extremely important, in particular its emphasis in paragraph 10 – and I quote: “Promoting the work of the United Nations disarmament machinery hinges on creating a suitable political environment, taking into account the security interests of all States rather than changing ‘rules of procedure’”. In the Conference itself, the Group of 21, the largest group in this body, has spoken along similar lines relating to the emphasis on and priority of nuclear disarmament.

The overarching goal in creating the Conference on Disarmament was, as mandated by the first special session on disarmament, to negotiate a treaty relating to nuclear disarmament. In this regard, it is unfortunate that no progress has been made for the last 32 years. The Secretary-General in his seminal address in 2008, when he put forward his

action plan, also emphasized the need for nuclear disarmament and, as a first step, suggested that all States, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, fulfil their obligation to undertake negotiations on effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament.

In addition to failing to make progress on nuclear disarmament, the Conference has failed to make progress on any other issue on its agenda during the last 15 years. It is therefore astounding that the present quest for alternatives begins with the developments of only the last two years and is only fixated on one issue.

In order to clearly assess the reasons underlying the impasse at the Conference on Disarmament, it is important to acknowledge some basic facts. The first is that the Conference's inactivity is a reflection of the prevailing political realities in the world, because the Conference does not operate in a vacuum. Second, it has always been true that no treaty can be negotiated in the Conference or even outside the Conference which is contrary to the security interests of any of the participating States. Third, the Conference's lack of progress cannot be attributed to its rules of procedure, because with the same rules of procedure the Conference has succeeded in concluding international disarmament instruments such as the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

These points underscore the need to recognize the true reasons why the Conference has become dysfunctional. In our view, the reasons for this are the realities that exist in the real world outside the Conference. We cannot continue to operate in a vacuum; we have to recognize these realities. From our perspective, these realities are the discriminatory policies pursued by some major Powers regarding nuclear cooperation, which have created insecurity and imbalances. For these reasons, Pakistan has been compelled to take a stand against this kind of nuclear exceptionalism, selectivity and discrimination.

It is high time that we adopted an objective approach to the revitalization of the work of the Conference. We feel that the following steps need to be taken. First, all issues on the Conference agenda, and in particular the four core issues, need to be treated in an equal and balanced manner. The lack of progress on one issue owing to the security concerns of States should not lead to an impasse in the Conference on other issues on its agenda, which can and should be taken up for consideration. Second, in our view, nuclear disarmament remains the longest-outstanding issue on the Conference's agenda, and this issue needs to be taken up on a priority basis. Third, we believe that the conclusion of an international agreement on negative security assurances is eminently ripe for negotiation, as such assurances do not in our view undermine the security interests of any nuclear-weapon State. In fact, virtually all of them have made unilateral commitments in this regard, and therefore it should not present a problem to convert these unilateral commitments on negative security assurances into bilateral and multilateral understandings. Fourth, the Conference needs to take into account the legitimate security interests of all States in order to make progress. Fifth, we need to end double standards, selectivity and discrimination in non-proliferation and disarmament measures. Sixth, we believe that in order to deal with the factors that constitute this dysfunction — if you wish to call it that — of the Conference, it is high time to convene a fourth special session on disarmament to look at the entire international disarmament machinery and find ways to revitalize this machinery.

As we all know, the agenda of the Conference does not consist of only one issue. In fact, we consider that there are four core issues apart from other issues on our agenda, and obviously there is no agreement on which particular issue is or is not ripe for negotiations. As I have said, the largest group of countries in this Conference believe that nuclear disarmament is ripe for negotiations. It follows, therefore, that the impasse in this body is not the result of one State holding up progress by opposing negotiations on one issue.

Because we have not been able to make progress on all four core issues, it is obvious that there are other States that are opposed to negotiations on the other three issues on our agenda. So when we hear that there is only one State — and it is not a secret for me which State that is — we are rather puzzled, because there are several States which are holding up progress in the Conference because they are not willing to agree to the other elements or items on its agenda.

Let me conclude on the note on which I started — namely, by welcoming the comments made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the Conference on Disarmament. I think he has made extremely useful proposals and comments, and I also think that the Ambassador of Colombia has made the very useful suggestion that we informally discuss the issues before us rather than leave such discussions to the General Assembly or the First Committee. While obviously they are entitled to undertake such discussions, certainly the Conference itself must engage in such discussions as well. So I would like to endorse the view that we, the Conference, should formally or informally engage in such discussions so that we can have a more substantive and realistic dialogue.

Mr. Strømø (Norway): Mr. President, allow me first of all to express my delegation's support for your presidency and assure you of our full cooperation. Then let me, on behalf of my Government, express our gratitude for the condolences, support and sympathy that we have received here today and from all over the world since 22 July. The horrific and brutal acts of terrorism in Norway are a national tragedy. They are also attacks on our humanity and our fundamental values: openness, inclusion, engagement and democracy. However, we can assure you that attacks will not change our policies or the nature of our democracy. Norway will continue its commitment to the values we believe in, and continue to stand up for them internationally.

While I have the floor, let me make some points related to the discussion we have had today, points that were addressed during the debate in New York on 27 July. There is no reason to hide the fact that Norway feels deep frustration over the more than a decade-long stalemate in the Conference, and not only regarding the impasse of the last year. We are sceptical of the Conference's ability as an institution to deal with disarmament according to its mandate. We would even claim outright that the Conference is dysfunctional with respect to its mandate. The Conference needs to reform itself. The consensus rule should not be applied to procedural issues; membership should be universal; civil society should play an active role; and we should find ways to foster cross-regional cooperation. The question is whether the Conference is able to reform itself. We would question this, as it seems that the extensive views on the consensus rule will continue to hamper any attempt to revitalize the Conference.

Thus, we should consider alternative strategies towards disarmament. These strategies should be based on the fact that nuclear disarmament is a humanitarian issue which needs to be addressed not on behalf of States, but on behalf of our populations. Nuclear weapons are the most inhumane, indiscriminate and disproportionate weapons ever invented. Thus, we consider it vital to place the humanitarian imperative at the centre of our efforts, and we believe we have much to learn from other, newer disarmament processes with successful outcomes.

We urgently need to address nuclear disarmament, and if the Conference continues to be unable to deliver on the expectations, then we need to find other ways to pursue a world free of nuclear weapons. It is in this spirit that we should approach the discussion in the First Committee, so that we all do our utmost to avoid another failure in 2012.

Ms. Jáquez Huacuja (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to welcome the new Permanent Representative of Myanmar and congratulate the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom on taking up her new post.

Let me also, through you, Sir, express and reiterate to my friends and allies from the delegation of Norway, on behalf of the people and Government of Mexico, my deepest sympathy for the tragedy their country is suffering. We are confident that Norway, a country committed to the greatest of humanitarian causes, will weather this storm with dignity.

The delegation of Mexico would also like to express its sympathy towards and solidarity with the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament for his personal loss.

Mexico welcomes the attention that the Secretary-General of the United Nations has given to advancing multilateral negotiations on disarmament, especially by convening the high-level meeting held in 2010 and the meeting held last week in New York. We are very grateful to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament for the information provided about that discussion, which in our view illustrated once again the different interpretations of the dysfunctional nature of the disarmament machinery, especially the Conference on Disarmament. But going beyond the overdiagnosis mentioned by the Ambassador of Colombia, it showed the international community's great interest in this topic that is of concern to everyone, given that it impinges on collective security and the very survival of humankind.

Document CD/1931, submitted by the delegation of Colombia a few weeks ago on the basis of the exchange of views that took place during an informal meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, gives an overview of these different interpretations and of the importance and priority that we, the delegations, attach to the current situation affecting the disarmament machinery. We invited the General Assembly to examine this document, and I wish to make clear what is obvious to the delegation of Mexico: a large number of the States Members of the United Nations in the General Assembly have stated that the interests of society as a whole cannot be protected under the current situation of the disarmament machinery.

Mexico regrets that, despite the fact that in recent years the Conference on Disarmament has spent most of its time analysing its priorities, especially its rules of procedure, it has not been able to fulfil its mandate for the past 15 years, and we regret most of all that it has not been able to carry out substantive work on any — I repeat, any — of the items on its agenda, but above all on the one that is most important to Mexico, namely nuclear disarmament.

For decades Mexico has unconditionally supported the Conference on Disarmament and its predecessors, because they were established to realize a goal to which Mexico attaches the highest priority, namely, a world free of nuclear weapons. This is why we deem it inexcusable that the forum that is supposed to be concluding agreements that result in legally binding instruments in the field of disarmament and arms control should remain paralysed.

Some delegations argue that this paralysis is not new and even call this prevailing stagnation "natural", because outside factors and a lack of political will are preventing us from negotiating agreements on disarmament. In other words, they believe and reaffirm that the Conference is simply a victim of external circumstances. Mexico does not share this view; on the contrary, we urge the members of the Conference to ask themselves honestly whether, under ideal international conditions, the Conference would be able to stimulate fruitful decision-making processes and fuel political will.

Mexico reiterates that political will does not appear spontaneously; it also needs to be fuelled. We believe that the reason for the dysfunctional nature of the disarmament machinery, and of the Conference in particular, could be that it does not have the capacity to respond effectively to its members' interests because it was established in response to a

reality and a set of international power relations that no longer exist, namely those of the cold war, and not the multipolar reality of the twenty-first century.

In our view, the methods of work, and those of the Conference in particular, cater to the reality of a world that is not our current world, and they are now impeding decision-making in the Conference. Some examples include the monthly rotation of the presidency, which makes continuity impossible; the limited room given to the Presidents to seek creative solutions or engage in lobbying; the need to adopt an agenda and a programme of work in the first few weeks of each annual session; and the continuation of meetings even when we all know that there is no chance of adopting a substantive programme of work, thereby wasting human and possibly financial resources. Other outdated aspects include the composition of the regional groups, the composition of the Conference itself and the lack of any interactive participation by civil society, although it is allowed to participate in other forums.

I would also like to reiterate that the abuse of the rule of consensus, which has been strictly interpreted as absolute unanimity on both procedural and substantive matters, acts as a *de facto* veto, meaning that the 65 members of the Conference can potentially block the start of negotiations.

For more than 15 years, opposition by a minority of States to the start of negotiations in the Conference has inhibited the formation of political will and is hampering decision-making processes. Let us remember that reaching agreement is a privilege that is not always achieved in a negotiation. In the Conference, members are demanding that agreement must exist before the start of negotiations, when negotiating is the obligation and mandate of the Conference, not a prerogative. These working methods were useful and produced agreements that were of great importance for the international community in a different context from the one we live in today, in which international bodies respond to different stimuli.

The Conference does not have a life of its own, nor will it reach consensus of its own free will, or regulate itself, or change itself as if it were a body acting independently from the decisions of its member States. We the member States, firstly, have the responsibility to ensure that the Conference fulfils its mandate, and in a broader sense that responsibility lies with all States Members of the United Nations, because the United Nations gave the Conference its mandate at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The General Assembly, in various General Assembly resolutions and other important documents, also continues to urge the Conference on Disarmament to get to work. Similar appeals have been issued in other forums, such as the NPT Review Conference and review cycles.

While we continue to allow the Conference to remain in stagnation, important negotiations in the field of disarmament and arms control have been launched and continue to develop outside the Conference. This indicates the international community's interest in concluding multilateral disarmament agreements, particularly for humanitarian purposes, but it also shows that, if the international community is truly committed to negotiating on disarmament issues, then it should not be difficult to turn the Conference into an effective body. After 15 years of inaction, however, we must act urgently to move forward with these multilateral negotiations on disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, regardless of where they take place.

If the Conference continues not to fulfil its mandate, Mexico believes that we should give back to the General Assembly its right and duty to participate in decision-making in the field of disarmament. Mexico, along with other countries, has raised the possibility of

starting disarmament negotiations in the General Assembly while waiting for the Conference to adopt a programme of work and fulfil its mandate.

This plan is still active, and Mexico is ready to push it forward with flexibility, along with any other initiative that might enable us to reach our ultimate goal and to pursue collective interests rather than the interests of a minority of States. The absence of any progress in multilateral disarmament negotiations is directly harming collective security in the twenty-first century and has weakened the multilateral disarmament system; hence our concern and sense of urgency.

Once again we urge the Conference to reflect on the importance of focusing on our objective and priorities, namely that of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, rather than staunchly defending a forum that is currently unable to lead us to our final destination.

Mr. Ri Jang Gon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Today's meeting is a good opportunity to exchange views on the recent preliminary discussion of transparency and confidence-building measures during the General Assembly. My delegation hopes that the political will to collectively advance the work of the Conference in the interests of all member States will prevail.

It is true that the Conference has not started its substantive work for decades. But this does not mean that the causes lie in the working methods and the rules of procedure of this august body. My delegation is of the opinion that they are attributable to a lack of political will and the unwillingness of some States to take into account the legitimate security interests of all States and consider all core issues in a comprehensive and balanced manner.

As we all acknowledge, the Conference is a multilateral negotiating forum. It is not a place where policy is pursued unilaterally. As long as political will is not displayed by member States, the Conference will find itself in an impasse and it will be impossible to agree on any proposals, no matter how many meetings and discussions are held.

We believe that political will can ultimately make the Conference move forward towards the process of negotiations on universally accepted disarmament treaties corresponding to its main mandate. However, my delegation is particularly concerned that some member States may be pursuing or rather threatening to pursue alternative negotiation processes outside the Conference while shifting the responsibility for the current Conference's inactivity onto others.

This move no doubt hinders our consistent collective efforts to produce useful and productive results among all of its multilateral agenda items with the participation of all concerned countries.

It is high time to take decisive practical decisions or action for nuclear disarmament. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains consistent in its support for total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons in the world and remains fully committed to this goal.

My delegation is of the view that any possible follow-up on revitalization of the Conference should be inclusive and member-States-driven, strengthen the role and work of the Conference, and above all aim to achieve nuclear disarmament. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea supports the proposal for the early convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Mr. Li Yang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China has already explained its position on the work of the Conference in great detail, particularly when it held the presidency not long ago. With regard to reform of the disarmament machinery, China has also clearly stated its

position in New York, so I am not going to repeat it here. The essence is that we are in favour of beginning substantive work within the Conference as soon as possible.

As for the meeting of the five nuclear-weapon States held in Paris, as the delegation of the Russian Federation has just pointed out, the joint press release was the only document agreed upon by the five nuclear-weapon States.

Mr. Suda (Japan): I asked for the floor in order to say a few words on the important Paris meeting of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. As one of the non-nuclear-weapon States of NPT and as a member of the regional and ministerial Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, my delegation would like to express our deep appreciation for the briefing by the French Ambassador, Eric Danon, on the Paris meeting, which is an important positive step by the five permanent members in their efforts to assume their responsibility under article VI of NPT and the 2010 Review Conference action plan.

My delegation found of great interest the important joint press statement of the Paris meeting, which is clear on many important points that the five permanent members are expected to work on. We particularly appreciate their engagement as regards the important issue of transparency in nuclear disarmament processes. My delegation hopes that the five permanent members will hold constructive consultations to produce concrete outcomes in the coming years of the preparatory process of the 2015 Review Conference.

Ms. Adamson (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): I apologize in advance to the interpreters if I stray into different languages, including some which I perhaps won't understand myself.

Thank you for your kind words earlier, Mr. President, and I also want to thank the Secretary-General, who is no longer here, for his kind reception when I presented my credentials earlier this week. It was a real honour and I felt humbled to do so.

I would also like to thank the many colleagues who have passed on kind words to me on my taking up the job. *Toda raba*, Tammy, I shall try to live up to your eloquence and wisdom. I would like to thank many colleagues in the Arab world – *shukran jazilan*. You are going through Ramadan at the moment, and so we will be gentle with you for this month, but in the evenings, of course, we will not be so gentle.

I was thinking of summarizing what the United Kingdom said in New York, which is two pages long, and then I thought I wouldn't bother with that. I would like very much to pick up on the intervention from Ambassador Danon and to thank him.

(spoke in French)

I thank Mr. Danon very warmly for the statement he has given today and for the splendid commitment to and management of the Paris conference, which provided us with a real opportunity to talk among ourselves.

(spoke in English)

... and I would like to pick up on that point about talking among ourselves, because a number of colleagues have alluded to that this morning. I think we have seen another example of something that ails us in the Conference, the heart of the malaise, which is that we talk about each other and we talk across each other almost as if we weren't in the room together. And I was struck by the comments from the Ambassador of Colombia — also picked up by the Ambassador of Pakistan — that it could be useful, experimental perhaps, to try to be a little bit more in brainstorming mode among ourselves, because October is actually just round the corner and we have a lot of work to do between now and then. And I think that if we continue to use the limited time we have — maybe just one plenary a week

— to simply repeat statements, as we have done again today, this will not be a responsible way to proceed.

I would like to say on behalf of myself and my team that we would very much welcome the chance to talk informally about problems facing us and what we might do about them. I don't have any great expectations that we will find a magic solution — we have tried some of these discussions before — but I think sometimes the format of our meetings itself holds us back, and we ought to be ready to take the risk of talking outside of the chamber as well in different formats. So if anyone is willing to proceed in a constructive way without our having to constantly refer back to rules of procedure, I think that as we look to draft the report of the Conference and work towards October, that would be one thing we could take forward that is different from the meeting last week.

Once again, I want to thank everyone who has been so kind to me. I have big shoes to fill. I will not try and fill those shoes, but what I will do is take forward the legacy of activism that my predecessor enjoyed. I said to him when he left the mission last week that we would protect his legacy and build on it.

Mr. Endoni (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation would like to express our appreciation for the detailed update on the New York meeting provided to the Conference by the Secretary-General, who unfortunately is not here. I also want to thank you for your leadership, Mr. President. Nigeria sees a lot of value in the convening of a series of meetings with a view to finding lasting solutions to the current stalemate that has bedevilled the Conference on Disarmament.

We will support any positive and dynamic forward-looking exercises aimed at revitalizing the work of the Conference. To this end, we are expressing our support for calls to convene a fourth special session on disarmament. In Nigeria's view, which has been expressed over time, the dangers of the existence and the proliferation of nuclear weapons know no bounds. Their existence continues to constitute a threat to both the haves and the have-nots. And more deadly and worrisome is the fear of eventual possession and use of these weapons by non-State actors. The case or cases of the illegal use or uses of small arms and light weapons by non-State actors seen today should serve as a warning to us if that were to be the case for nuclear weapons. The question would be where we would be at that time. The case at hand is what we all witnessed in the killings in Norway, and we would also like to express our deep sympathy to the people and the Government of Norway in connection with that tragedy.

There is no doubt that the gains of multilateralism in the disarmament machinery are enormous. Therefore, any call or calls to overlook this and propose a bilateral or trilateral discussion or the setting up of other committees to discuss disarmament issues should be discouraged. The problem is not outside but within. The spirit of compromise and execution of the desired political will are the most appropriate way out of the current stalemate.

Mr. Reid (United States of America): I want very much to echo what others have been saying about the question of the revitalization of the Conference.

In the interest of time utilization I would certainly refer all members to the remarks made by Assistant Secretary for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance Rose Gottemoeller in New York just a few days ago. You can find them on our mission website and on the Office for Disarmament Affairs website.

Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Ellen Tauscher gave an even more poignant speech on the same subject just three days later, less than 72 hours ago, in Monterey. And I think we have been on the record about as much as we can on the topic.

Listening to today's discussion, I would, frankly, add to her long list of things that the Conference could do to revise its work procedures. A very frank analysis of even our

time allocation and utilization would probably be a good idea. Many of us have just repeated things that have been said over and over again here, and I really don't see many signs of progress in what has been said so far. In fact, October is just around the corner, as Ambassador Adamson has said, and I think her admonitions to us are wise ones to take into account. I also want to thank Ambassador Danon very much for giving a readout of the meeting of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

Our meeting in Paris was not just another meeting. It was, in fact, only the second time that the five permanent members have come together in such a large, systematic way. Most importantly, we determined after very in-depth talks to keep having these meetings to set up processes, to talk in a very specific and systematic way to meet our NPT action plan commitments by 2014 and 2015. And, while things here may stay at a stalemate, it is important to realize that at least the five permanent members of the Security Council are very much committed to meeting our NPT Review Conference action plan commitments. That action plan was itself a watershed, and we are very determined to live up to those voluntarily undertaken commitments. They are serious ones, they are profound ones, and they won't be easy ones to realize, but we nonetheless, despite the backwaters that we have created here in Geneva, are pressing forward and are going to seriously realize what we have undertaken there.

So, while there may not be light immediately visible at the end of our tunnel here in the Conference, that does not mean that there isn't light elsewhere on the disarmament agenda, and particularly on the nuclear disarmament agenda. We will press forward. We are determined. And at least on behalf of the United States I can say, regardless of who our President may be, that by the time we reach 2014 and 2015, that commitment to that agenda will be no different than it is today. So I hope I can at least reassure colleagues of that on a broader note.

Thank you very much, and certainly I would like to echo the very sincere condolences that so many have expressed to the Norwegian people, the Norwegian leadership. It's a horrible tragedy that they have been forced to endure, and we certainly hope that the nation can find its own way forward to heal and to go forward with a very vibrant democracy. Our hearts and thoughts are with them. In the absence of the Secretary-General himself, please convey our condolences to his family for the loss.

Mr. Sareva (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): I am taking the floor just to express my appreciation to all who have extended their sympathies to me personally on the passing of my father. Now, if I may make a few personal remarks – the passing of an elderly person is understandable and eventually can be accepted. However, I was in my native Finland on 22 July, at the time of the terrorist act and national tragedy in Norway. Having seen from close by how this terrible act affected Norway and the way it affected neighbouring Nordic countries, I wish to express my personal sympathy to Norway. The Finnish flags were flown at half mast in sympathy with the people and Government of Norway. Let me conclude these very personal remarks by saying that I was very much taken with the fundamental decency of the Norwegian people as well as their tenacity. The Finnish people have the same values of democracy and openness as Norway, and I am absolutely certain that these values will not be affected by this terrible act.

The President: Thank you. I see no delegations wishing to take the floor, which means that we can conclude our business for today. The next plenary meeting will be held on Thursday, 11 August, at 10 a.m. as scheduled, in this chamber. The meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.