

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 15 June 1995, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Antonio de Icaza (Mexico)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 708th plenary meeting of the Disarmament Conference.

Today I have the dual honour of assuming the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and of taking the floor here for the first time as head of the delegation of Mexico. I am aware that this dual honour brings with it a dual responsibility.

On the one hand, the international community expects concrete measures from this body in the year when we are celebrating the first half-century of the United Nations and the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the last world war. This obliges us to make additional efforts as to demonstrate our political will and our ability to reach general agreements so as to organize and conclude the tasks within our purview.

On the other, Mexico has always regarded disarmament as a priority item in our foreign policy and in this forum famous Mexicans have brilliantly promoted the best interests of the international community. Permit me feelingly to mention the names of Luis Padilla Nervo, Antonio Gómez Robledo and Alfonso García Robles, and to pay a well deserved tribute to my immediate predecessor, Ambassador Miguel Marín Bosch. The 1995-2000 National Development Plan that, pursuant to the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic, President Ernesto Zedillo submitted to the Congress of the Union on 31 May last, states that "The promotion of peace around us and in other parts of the world is both the realization of a principle and an instrument of national development. Peace presupposes respect and tolerance among nation States, adherence to international law and willingness to perform commitments entered into. Therefore, Mexico regards it as important to participate in processes of peace-making through dialogue, to build broad and viable consensus for disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear and conventional weapons, and to combat illegal arms dealings".

I should like to express my delegation's appreciation of the way in which Ambassador Don Nanjira, Permanent Representative of Kenya, conducted our business in the last few months; we are grateful for his valuable contribution. I should also like to thank all distinguished colleagues who have welcomed me here.

I am convinced that the Conference must live up to the expectations of the international community. The recipe for successful multilateral negotiations is well-known: shared objectives, understanding on priorities, frameworks for debates and timetables and, of course, cooperation with the Presidency. Regarding objectives, we all share that of eliminating nuclear weapons and achieving a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. Regarding basic understandings, we have an agenda, rules of procedure and decisions on the organization of work adopted at the beginning of the year. It is time to rise beyond the differences that have prevented us from carrying through our programme and to respond to the trust placed in us by the international community. As for the presidency, I would like to thank you in advance for the patience you will

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show to me as someone who left this forum almost a third of a century ago. In terms of a human life, this may seem a lot; unfortunately, in terms of disarmament it is not much. For my part, I promise to do my best.

It would also be appropriate to meet the aspirations of the United Nations General Assembly, which every year calls upon this Conference to negotiate a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and to consider the appropriateness of establishing an ad hoc committee to begin the major negotiations that we have been asked to undertake. In the same line of thinking, my delegation wishes to repeat the appeal it made at the recent NPT Conference to nuclear-weapon States to cease all production of those weapons within the framework of a truly verifiable ban.

Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is an issue that has caught the attention of the international community in recent months. The results of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference are closely related to the work of the Conference on Disarmament and has a major influence on our agenda. Today more than ever consideration should be given within the agenda of the Conference to all facets of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, because it would be an opportunity to give continuity to this exercise and to move towards consolidating a genuine non-proliferation regime that would be wide-ranging in its objectives, non-discriminatory in essence and universal in its effects. José Angel Gurría, Mexico's Minister for Foreign Affairs, addressed the Review and Extension Conference and described the central elements of our participation. He stated that Mexico has given reliable proof of its commitment to non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and has therefore also stressed the need for those countries that hold nuclear weapons to commit themselves specifically and precisely to the shared objective of eliminating them. Mexico has further insisted, he said, on the need to curb and reverse the nuclear arms race through agreement on specific measures, beginning with the complete cessation of nuclear testing.

The 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons decided to adopt, simultaneously and without a vote, principles and objectives for non-proliferation and disarmament that include a programme of action, strengthening of the review process for the Treaty and the indefinite extension of its validity. Obviously, the indefinite validity of a treaty means that the rights and obligations contracted by the parties do not expire on a fixed date. This, of course, does not mean that, as it seems to me I have heard, the treaty has become permanent or eternal. Few things in nature or in life are that, and certainly not an instrument conceived as a step towards a broader objective, subject to periodic evaluation and susceptible of being denounced. The Treaty will be effective in so far as all the Parties fulfil their obligations. The international community gives priority to genuine non-proliferation - in other words, to a situation where there is no increase in the dissemination of nuclear weapons or in existing arsenals and where competition for their qualitative improvement ceases. Genuine non-proliferation is an indispensable first step towards nuclear disarmament and towards the abolition of those weapons whose mere existence constitutes a threat to the very survival of humanity. If my Government subscribed to the indefinite extension of the

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Treaty, it was because it understood that decision as being linked to the decision to make concrete progress in the sphere of nuclear disarmament through a programme of action and on the basis of principles agreed upon on that occasion. We were confident, as was the international community, that the decisions taken at the Conference would stimulate our efforts to attain our shared objectives. Contrary to what was expected, the NPT Conference did not achieve the consensus necessary to adopt a declaration. The session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission immediately after the NPT Conference also proved unable to achieve consensus, and in this Conference we seem bogged down in procedural matters.

Apparently the indefinite extension of the NPT did not have the positive effect we expected. The Conference was barely over when a nuclear Power carried out a new nuclear test, and another one has just announced its intention to carry out eight additional tests in the coming months. Both have ignored the call for an end to nuclear tests as the necessary basis for the creation of an atmosphere conducive to the conclusion no later than 1996 of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty that was unquestionably one of the Conference's most important achievements. We therefore once again exhort China and France to abide by the moratorium on nuclear testing because to hold more tests would undoubtedly cause justified concern in the South Pacific countries and, generally, in all countries.

These difficulties and events, which we regret, are disappointing, but they do not alter the fact that the present international scene is highly propitious to the consolidation of our disarmament objectives and realizing the goals we have set ourselves is only a question of political will. Foremost among those goals is the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Negotiations began early in 1994 and we have to settle the fundamental elements of the treaty. The rolling text makes it easier to express the political will that prompts us all to conclude the treaty successfully and soon. Finding a solution to the question of the scope of the treaty is urgent. It is evident that a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty should, as its name indicates, prohibit nuclear tests completely. During the spring session we achieved some progress and we must reach agreements that will result in the total banning of all nuclear tests irrespective of the purpose for which it is claimed they are made. With respect to the entry into force of the treaty, perhaps a simple formula like the one used in the Chemical Weapons Convention would offer the best chance of agreement. The key decisions on the verification system are still pending. There are still large differences of opinion regarding cost-sharing and the role the Organization would have in identifying a possible violation. These are political decisions within our powers. I have merely mentioned some of the most important problems we have to resolve if we want to fulfil our task. I would like to appeal here for the intensification of efforts to conclude the CTBT this year, and to express gratitude to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Lud Dembinski, and to the Chairman of the Working Group on Verification, Ambassador Lars Norberg, and the Chairman of the Working Group on Legal and Institutional Matters, Ambassador Jaap Ramaker.

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Another of the commitments entered into during the Review and Extension Conference is the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a non-discriminatory and universally applicable convention banning the production of fissionable material for military uses. This was one of the key issues during negotiation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and has also been a fundamental element of many resolutions of the General Assembly. It is urgent for the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference to begin work immediately within the framework of item 2 of the agenda and on the basis of document CD/1299 of 23 March of this year.

Lastly I should like to refer to the question of the re-establishment of other subsidiary bodies of the Conference. We have an obligation to adopt measures to assure non-nuclear-weapon States, through a legally binding instrument, against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Mexico made a proposal during the NPT Review and Extension Conference for the annexation to the Treaty of a protocol similar to Additional Protocol II to the Treaty of Tlatelolco so as to make negative security assurances universal. Likewise, together with several countries of the Group of 21 we have put forward a draft protocol here. We must ensure that the use of outer space is for peaceful purposes only and for the benefit of all humanity. The relevant committee must resume work as soon as possible. Lastly, we all agree that the enlargement and the agenda of the Conference deserve urgent decisions. I shall begin consultations in the next few days with a view to overcoming our difficulties regarding the organization of work.

The international climate is currently conducive to consolidating our disarmament objectives. Every effort must be made to build a consensus that will enable us to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the climate of cooperation that began early this decade. We should strive to find consensus precisely now that the danger of nuclear war seems further away. We should build on a minimal basis, which could be the elements of the principles and objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament recently agreed upon by a large number of States. We should begin by achieving the practical measures that circumstances allow and that will take us closer to the common goal: the abolition of nuclear weapons and disarmament.

I have on the list of speakers for today the representatives of France, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Australia, Chile, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Ireland and Belgium.

Mr. ERRERA (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me first of all to welcome you among us and warmly to wish you every success in your important mission here in Geneva. Your country has always made it a point of honour to be represented here by distinguished persons; your predecessor, our friend Ambassador Miguel Marín Bosch, is the latest example of that and we are delighted that the tradition is being continued with you. I would also like to congratulate you on taking over the presidency of the Conference at a particularly important point in its work. I would also like to hail the efforts made by your predecessor, Ambassador Don Nanjira

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of Kenya. Lastly, I would like to bid welcome to our new colleagues, Ambassador Munir Akram of Pakistan, Ambassador Agus Tarmidzi of Indonesia and Ambassador Celso Lafer of Brazil.

The President of the Republic has just announced that France will be carrying out a final series of nuclear tests. The decision has to be seen in the light of the following considerations.

Firstly, the decision was taken because it was necessary. France suspended its tests in April 1992; that is to say, before the completion of the tests that would have enabled us to end them permanently. France was therefore obliged to carry out a final test campaign in order in particular to be able to embark determinedly on a policy of using simulation in order to guarantee the safety and reliability of its weapons. France has undertaken to end its tests permanently by 31 May 1996 and will thus be in a position to join before the end of 1996 in the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, in accordance with the objectives which the international community has set itself.

Secondly, the decision is not a surprise. On the day CTBT negotiations began we indicated clearly that we were keeping open the option of resuming tests. I myself said in this room on 7 February 1994 that "We have never agreed to establish a link between the continuation of the current moratoria on tests and the negotiation of a comprehensive test-ban treaty". I added that "for us, there is no incompatibility between the possible resumption of tests and our involvement in these negotiations". That position has been restated unambiguously since then.

Thirdly, the decision is consistent with our obligations and our responsibilities in the field of non-proliferation. I might remind you that no international text provides for an obligation definitively to suspend tests at the present stage. On the other hand, as we all know, the declaration on principles and objectives adopted at the end of the NPT Review and Extension Conference on 11 May last recommends, and I quote "utmost restraint" pending the entry into force of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. France respects that constraint. This will be the final series of tests. It will be limited in number (eight in all). It will be limited in time (from September 1995 to May 1996 at the very latest). And, of course, like the previous ones, it will be conducted in the most stringent conditions of safety and environmental protection.

Fourthly, the decision confirms our commitment to the negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. The aim of this final series of tests is precisely to enable us to end our testing permanently, in accordance with the objectives of the CTBT. Without resuming our tests we would not be in a position to adhere to such a treaty in 1996. So, the decision which we have taken is intended to enable us to comply with the schedule set forth in the declaration on principles and objectives which was adopted at the same time as it was decided to extend the NPT indefinitely. It goes without saying that

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France's commitment to join in concluding a CTBT before the end of 1996 is essential: a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty will only be meaningful if the five nuclear-weapon States adhere to it.

Fifthly, and lastly, the decision in no way affects our willingness to contribute to disarmament. As a nuclear Power, France has an essential aim: to maintain the credibility of its deterrent capabilities, the underpinning of its security and independence. It will continue to assume this responsibility. At the same time, France has a duty to take part in the movement towards disarmament. In this regard, the nature of the test series, and its end purposes, show clearly that France intends neither to design new types of weapons nor to increase the number or yield of its existing weapons, nor to develop miniature weapons, nor to modify the role of nuclear weapons in its defence doctrine. Our Prime Minister, Mr. Alain Juppé, who addressed the National Assembly yesterday, 14 June, was categorical on these points. This final series of tests fits strictly within our constant strategy of deterrence, which precludes nuclear warfare and seeks solely to prevent war. This strategy will remain purely defensive. Our means will be maintained strictly at the level of adequacy.

In introducing his Government's programme, the Prime Minister, Mr. Alain Juppé, said before the French Parliament on 23 May last, "Our duty is to ensure the credibility and effectiveness of our deterrence in all circumstances while preserving the aim of concluding a test-ban treaty by the end of 1996. Our country intends to contribute fully to the fight against proliferation, which was marked just recently by the indefinite extension of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty". This is the meaning behind the decision which has just been adopted by the President of the Republic.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of France for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair.

Mr. HO (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, allow me, at the outset, to extend my warmest congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency. My delegation is confident that under your able leadership and guidance productive results will be achieved.

I have requested the floor today to elaborate on my Government's position concerning nuclear-related disarmament issues. First of all, the Government of the Republic of Korea welcomes the decision on the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons which was adopted in New York last month. My Government's assessment is that such a decision is a great success. All peace-loving countries have demonstrated a concerted harmony in making permanent the legally-binding international norm of delegitimizing the further proliferation of nuclear weapons under any circumstances, whether it be horizontal or vertical. We believe that the indefinite extension of the Treaty will enhance its role and status as an international non-proliferation norm. Indeed, the exercise of international

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pressure and sanctions against any State failing to comply with obligations under the Treaty will be more legitimized with further strengthened justifications.

My delegation holds the view that the most important task at this stage is to continue to move with determination toward the full realization and effective implementation of the provisions of the Treaty. In this regard, my Government deems it necessary to devote our utmost efforts to implementing the decisions on the "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" and on "strengthening the review process for the Treaty". In order to maximize the benefit of the indefinite extension of the Treaty, it is necessary to, first and foremost, demonstrate our strong will to implement such decisions in good faith. The Conference on Disarmament has an important role to play as the only multilateral disarmament negotiating body. A significant portion of the follow-up measures for the effective implementation of the Treaty are to be dealt with promptly in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. The document on the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament elaborates on the main elements of the follow-up measures as follows: (a) the completion by the Conference on Disarmament of the negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty no later than 1996; (b) the immediate commencement and early conclusion of the cut-off negotiations; (c) the determined pursuit by the nuclear-weapon States of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons.

It is my Government's firm belief that the early conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty would contribute to the prevention of nuclear proliferation and to substantial progress in the fields of nuclear disarmament. Given this, the early conclusion of CTBT negotiations at the latest by 1996, will constitute a strong stepping-stone in the effort to strengthen the NPT regime in the coming decades. In this regard my delegation would like to extend again its sincere appreciation to the NTB Ad Hoc Committee and its subsidiary working groups for their unswerving efforts in having produced the second version of rolling text of the future treaty (CD/NTB/WP.235) during the first session of this year. I hope that such efforts will be continued at the same pace as before pending the eventual conclusion of the Treaty.

The NPT Review and Extension Conference emphasized that the nuclear-weapon States should exercise utmost restraint pending the entry into force of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Any nuclear testing at this stage would set back the on-going test ban negotiations. I regret very much the recent recurrence of the nuclear explosion test and the proposed tests. The Government of the Republic of Korea calls upon all nuclear-weapon States to refrain from testing, and strengthen their efforts to consolidate nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament measures.

With respect to cut-off issues, I would like to express my appreciation to the Canadian delegation, led by Ambassador Shannon, for their dedicated efforts in having achieved a consensus last March on the negotiating mandate for the cut-off Ad Hoc Committee, which is based on resolution 48/75 L of the

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United Nations General Assembly. Taking into account the fact that the cut-off treaty is expected to play a significant role in the further strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, my delegation is prepared to provide its full support for the successful negotiation of the treaty in the coming months ahead, in the hope that the cut-off negotiations will be commenced as soon as possible during this session.

As regards our efforts to strengthen the NPT regime, my delegation is of the view that the promotion of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is also important for the future development of the regime. In this connection, transparency and accountability in nuclear-related export controls should be reinforced, thereby leading to greater opportunities for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is an essential ingredient in securing peace and security in north-east Asia. The United States and North Korea issued a joint press release in Kuala Lumpur on 13 June after three weeks of negotiations to implement the Agreed Framework reached in Geneva last October. They have agreed on the major principles for providing light-water reactors (LWRs) to the North. My Government considers the Kuala Lumpur agreement as a meaningful step forward in resolving North Korea's nuclear issue, in view of the fact that the agreement has laid the basis for implementing the LWR project. According to the agreement, the LWRs will be provided to the North by the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) on a turn-key basis. The Korean Government, therefore, supports the accord with the understanding that the early resumption of dialogue between South and North Korea is indispensable to the complete resolution of North Korea's nuclear issue, as provided for in the United States-North Korea Agreed Framework signed in Geneva last October. We firmly believe that the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula will be greatly conducive to creating peace and security in north-east Asia as a whole. In this regard, we urge North Korea to come forward to South-North dialogue as soon as possible for the implementation of the 1991 Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Before concluding my statement, I would like to touch upon the issue of CD expansion. My delegation believes that we must now focus our efforts on devising a formula by which the issue of CD expansion could be solved without further delay. The decision was reached on the indefinite extension of the NPT. The remaining tasks before us should be to intensify, globalize, and revitalize our common efforts to strengthen the NPT regime in the coming century. We need to act quickly before it is too late. It is deeply regrettable that since the O'Sullivan report on this issue failed to be adopted in August 1993, we have never seen tangible efforts by the member States to find a solution to the deadlocked situation of the issue. The restructuring of the Conference on Disarmament is long overdue. The countries which have a strong will and capability to make contributions toward multilateral disarmament should be given the opportunity to join the CD as full member States. Once again, my delegation would like to draw the attention of all CD member States to the urgency and importance of concluding the issue of CD expansion.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement and for his kind words to the Chair.

Mr. AMANO (Japan) (translated from French): Mr. President, permit me first of all to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. I am certain that, with your personal ability and your long experience as a diplomat, you will help to resolve our problems by making good use of the time remaining to us in this second part of the 1995 session.

It was with profound disappointment that Japan learned of the decision by France to resume nuclear testing. It is, obviously, our country's firm conviction that nuclear testing must be stopped. Japan deeply regrets that France should have decided to resume nuclear testing although we came to an agreement at the recent NPT Review and Extension Conference in New York, an agreement which stipulates that the nuclear-weapon States should exercise "utmost restraint" in the sphere of nuclear testing. Mr. Yohei Kono, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, stated clearly in the conversation he had with Mr. Hervé de Charrette, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, that "The decision by France signifies the betrayal of the trust that non-nuclear-weapon States had in the nuclear-weapon States".

Japan would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its position concerning the moratorium on nuclear tests. It is that the moratorium must be maintained and observed by the nuclear-weapon States, including France.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Japan for his statement and for his kind words to me.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (New Zealand): Mr. President, let me first warmly welcome you to Geneva and congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Mexico and New Zealand share a strong friendship, and you may be assured of my delegation's full cooperation in all your tasks over the coming weeks.

New Zealand and Mexico have for many years worked together in this Conference and in other United Nations organizations to bring an end to all nuclear testing. That goal is within sight. For the first time the nuclear-weapon States have agreed to a deadline for the conclusion of the CTBT negotiations, to exercise utmost restraint pending its entry into force, and to pursue with determination the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. These commitments were made in the context of the decision in May to make the NPT permanent, a decision which New Zealand believes enhances the security of all countries.

Days after these commitments were entered into China conducted a nuclear-weapon test. I informed the Conference of the strong protest of the New Zealand Government and people in a statement made at the beginning of this session, which can be found in document CD/1318.

France has now announced a decision to resume testing in September at its test site on Moruroa atoll in the South Pacific. I wish to inform the

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Conference today of the outrage expressed by the New Zealand people and Government at this announcement, which runs counter to the direction in which the world is moving and counter to efforts to advance the cause of non-proliferation. New Zealand rejected the arguments advanced in the CTBT negotiations for a provision on so-called "safety tests" in the body of the treaty, and we reject now the argument that further tests are required to ensure the safety of France's nuclear arsenal before the treaty enters into force. There is no justification for a resumption of testing that can be consistent with the commitments notably, to "utmost restraint" that France made at the NPT Conference, or with its responsibility not to jeopardize progress in the CTBT negotiations.

In taking this decision France has ignored the strength of opposition to testing voiced most recently by representatives of South Pacific countries at the NPT Conference and embodied in the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone. At that Conference France agreed that the cooperation of all the nuclear-weapon States and their respect and support for the relevant protocols is necessary for the maximum effectiveness of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The decision to resume testing contradicts that position and is a serious setback to France's relations with the South Pacific region.

The New Zealand Government has announced a number of measures, mainly affecting defence cooperation, which it has taken in response to the French decision. At the same time it has urged the French authorities to reconsider their decision. I make the same call here today, for the sake of both the CTBT negotiations and of France's international standing. I will be asking the secretariat to circulate my Prime Minister's statement to the New Zealand Parliament on this question.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of New Zealand for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair.

Mr. STARR (Australia): Mr. President, I would like to welcome you to this Conference and to congratulate you warmly on your assumption of the presidency. I can assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation in addressing the formidable procedural issues facing your presidency.

It is with regret that I ask for the floor today to address the decision by France to resume nuclear testing in the South Pacific. In line with Australia's absolute opposition to nuclear testing, the Australian Government unequivocally deplores France's decision. Australia's Prime Minister, Paul Keating, has made the following statement:

"Australia deplores France's decision to resume nuclear testing in the South Pacific, announced by President Chirac on 13 June. Australia is adamantly opposed to nuclear testing by any nuclear-weapon State. In recent months we have made our opposition very clear to the French, including to President Chirac. France's decision is all the more regrettable given that the moratorium it had observed on nuclear testing, together with those of the United States, Russia and the United Kingdom,

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was an invaluable contribution to the strengthening of global non-proliferation. France last conducted a nuclear test in July 1991 and announced a moratorium on its nuclear testing programme in April 1992.

The actions of both France and China (which conducted a test on 15 May) run counter to the undertakings they made at the recent nuclear non-proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference to exercise 'utmost restraint' in nuclear testing.

Australia has welcomed the commitment made at the NPT Review and Extension Conference to the completion of the negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty no later than 1996. Any further test by any of the nuclear-weapon States would inevitably cloud the positive and constructive atmosphere of the comprehensive test-ban treaty negotiations in Geneva. While I note that President Chirac's announcement foreshadows that the number of nuclear tests will be limited to eight between September 1995 and May 1996, I emphasize that the international community is looking to the nuclear-weapon States to desist from further testing as the CTBT negotiations enter this final and critical stage.

As Chairman of the South Pacific Forum I will be in contact with my South Pacific colleagues about registering our strong objections to France's decision to resume testing and our concern about its implications, including for the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone. Australia has repeatedly urged France to accede to the protocols of the Treaty. During the negotiations at the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference in May, France undertook to give early consideration to doing so.

In the present circumstances the Government has decided to freeze cooperation between Australia and France in the defence field at its existing level while any new testing programme continues. The Australian Embassy in Paris has been instructed to convey Australia's protest to the French Government."

As the Prime Minister's statement indicates, a range of implications flow from this serious and most regrettable decision. The essential issues to address here in the Conference on Disarmament however, are the implications which bear on the Conference, and in particular on its negotiations towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Australia has placed high importance on the attainment of this objective and, in the light of French intentions and continued testing by China, now regards its achievement with even greater urgency.

In support of those negotiations and as an expression of their commitment, we have expected restraint from the nuclear-weapon States. Indeed, the nuclear-weapon States themselves endorsed the principle of "utmost restraint" only last month. As the Australian Prime Minister said, we do not consider initiation of a new programme of nuclear testing explosions as consistent with the notion of "utmost restraint". We do note, however, the commitment expressed yesterday by President Chirac to conclude these tests by

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the end of May 1996 and his commitment, without reservation, to sign a comprehensive test-ban treaty by the Autumn of 1996. We recognize the importance of those commitments and expect France to honour them.

Honouring the first commitment is solely within the hands of the French Government. As we all know, however, the second depends on there being an agreed text available in good time for signature. Only one week ago, in speaking to this plenary, I addressed key issues facing us if we, the negotiators, are to be seen as serious in our intent to conclude the CTBT as soon as possible, and certainly no later than 1996. The President of France has said he will stop testing in May and sign by the Autumn. That is by the time of the 1996 United Nations General Assembly, by September, or October at the latest. This would mean this Conference would have to complete its work by summer, by July at the latest. I emphasize, this is not what we had, or have in mind by the commitment to conclude "as soon as possible". We would hope for an earlier conclusion and will work for that. But even to guarantee completion by this mid-year target will require significant movement on key issues as we detailed in my statement last week, particularly on the scope of the Treaty. Given this decision on testing and the commitment of President Chirac, we look to France in particular to take concrete steps in the CTBT negotiating process to enable its conclusion in good time.

The answer to nuclear test explosions which have plagued the planet for decades is for the international community to adopt a verifiable, effective and comprehensive test-ban treaty, and we need more than rhetoric to achieve this. France, all nuclear-weapon States, indeed all participants in these negotiations, must combine to provide concrete results which will achieve this outcome. Quite obviously, given recent events, the need is pressing.

I would also like to bring a further development to the attention of the Conference. As a result of consultations between Heads of Government of South Pacific Forum countries, the Forum has issued a statement through the Prime Minister of Australia as the current Chair of the Forum which I would like to read to the Conference:

"On behalf of South Pacific Forum Heads of Government, as current Chair of the Forum I condemn France's decision to resume nuclear testing in the South Pacific. Individual Forum Governments have already issued statements and protests that reflect the depth of their disappointment. The immediate widespread public antagonism to France's decision right across the South Pacific reflects the resentment felt by our peoples. Forum Heads of Government understand and share these feelings. On their behalf, I express our unequivocal opposition to France's decision.

The statements that have been issued by other nuclear Powers and by other countries in Asia and in other parts of the world are welcome. Forum leaders hope that France will hear and take note of what the world is saying.

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France has exercised a choice about the nature of its engagement in the South Pacific. Forum members had welcomed the improved relations between France and countries in the region. France's decision is a major setback to this trend, which was partly founded on its 1992 moratorium on nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

The wider implications of France's decision are also of deep concern to Forum Heads of Government. France's decision undermines the outcome of the recent nuclear non-proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference (NPTREC). The decision is particularly regrettable in the light of agreement reached at that Conference, including by France, that negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT) should be completed by no later than 1996 and that, pending such a treaty, nuclear-weapon States would exercise the utmost restraint. The South Pacific Forum remains strongly committed to a CTBT as a key step in global efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons. It offers the prospect of ending testing completely - in the South Pacific as elsewhere. The Heads of Government have noted President Chirac's commitment that France would sign such a treaty. They will hold France to that commitment. Heads of Government also call on France to abide by the Protocols of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

I am in contact with my fellow Heads of Government about arrangements for a Forum delegation to convey to the French Government the depth of the Forum's concern. I envisage that the delegation would be led by the Australian Foreign Minister, Senator Evans".

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished Ambassador for the statement and for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, permit me to congratulate you on your appointment to preside over our discussions and to assure you of the full cooperation of the Chilean Mission. The friendship between our peoples and Governments and my personal esteem for your extensive diplomatic career strengthen the feeling of a shared vision that emerges from your important statement here today.

In the process of nuclear disarmament, in the development of a universal non-proliferation regime and in the expansion of nuclear-weapon-free zones we are moving within an ever wider horizon. The negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty are making headway, we have a mandate to begin negotiating an international instrument to ban fissionable materials produced for weapons purposes and the Non-Proliferation Treaty has been indefinitely extended and strengthened by a set of principles initially proposed by South Africa with contributions from other countries, including yours, Mr. President, that will undoubtedly contribute to the progress towards nuclear disarmament with effective international commitments and goals. We look forward to the entry into force of the treaty on the denuclearization of Africa and, in my own region the accession of Cuba to the Treaty of Tlatelolco opens a new and positive phase for the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear

(Mr. Berguño, Chile)

Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL). My country has associated itself with deep conviction and in its own fashion with these trends, playing a substantial role in the updating of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, completing its negotiation of broad safeguards with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Within the picture that I have sketched there also appear, as clear retrograde steps the continued nuclear explosions by the People's Republic of China and the explosions just announced by the President of France. It is true that both nations have joined fully in the Non-Proliferation Treaty and have repeated that these tests, of strictly limited duration, do not in any way alter their political will to conclude a universal convention to ban future testing, as Ambassador Errera was at pains to emphasize. But let us be precise and recognize that the tests announced will serve to delay the signing of the agreement, that they constitute a bad example incompatible with the spirit of non-proliferation, and that they offend the deep feelings of the peoples of the South Pacific, who were not consulted and do not want these tests in their geographical or natural environment.

The Ministers of the countries members of the Permanent South Pacific Commission are holding permanent consultations on this matter. My Government has issued a public statement that I will ask to be circulated in the Conference on Disarmament.

Going beyond the immediate bounds of the controversy that separates us, we should concern ourselves with the different perspective with which we approach negotiations of such far-reaching importance as those on the future comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. We need to mobilize in pursuit of a project for world coexistence that will inspire all the players in the system, we need to cross the threshold that leads from confrontation to monitoring and mutual trust. As you yourself have perceived, Mr. President, and as Ambassador Ho of the Republic of Korea has reiterated, the prevailing structure and methods of work of the Conference on Disarmament are not favourable to these lofty purposes but the Government of Chile will always be ready to move forward towards binding agreements that reduce to the utmost the nuclear risk and the risk of weapons of mass destruction by increasing the rhythm of the negotiations, as all speakers today have stressed, within the context of timetables and programmes of action that will make it impossible for us to elude responsibilities that have become unavoidable.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Chile for his statement and for his kind words to the Chair.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Canada): Mr. President, first of all let me join others in congratulating you, a NAFTA partner of Canada's, on your assumption of the presidency. I am certain we are in capable hands and that the Conference will make sustained progress under your leadership.

I have been instructed to address this plenary on the matter of nuclear testing. It was with regret that we learned of the decision of France to resume its nuclear testing programme. We recall the decision made only one

(Mr. Sinclair, Canada)

month ago at the NPT Review and Extension Conference to extend the NPT indefinitely. We also recall the commitment made by all States Parties to the Treaty to a set of Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. In these Principles and Objectives, France, along with the other nuclear-weapon States, reaffirmed its commitment to article VI of the NPT to pursue "in good faith negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament". In these Principles and Objectives we agreed that we should complete our negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty "no later than 1996" and we all agreed that, pending the entry into force of the CTBT, the nuclear-weapon States should "exercise utmost restraint". In the short time since these historic events we have already had one nuclear test by the Chinese. We now have the French decision. Both are regrettable. But they show us that our work here is even more pressing. We must redouble our efforts to conclude the CTBT and we must begin work immediately on a cut-off convention. We have noted President Chirac's firm commitment to sign, without conditions, the comprehensive test-ban treaty in the fall of 1996. We must all work together to ensure that the historic commitments we undertook at the NPT Review and Extension Conference are fulfilled. For its part, Canada is committed to a new global reality: one without nuclear testing. We must speed our work toward that goal.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Canada for his statement and for his kind words to the Chair.

Mr. NORBERG (Sweden): Mr. President, first I would like to express my delegation's warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of this Conference. I also take this opportunity to join other colleagues in welcoming you among us and I wish you every success in your present duties.

I have asked for the floor to inform the plenary that on 1 June 1995 the Prime Minister of Sweden, Mr. Ingvar Carlsson, made a statement following the announcement by France that it will resume nuclear testing. I quote the statement of the Prime Minister:

"Sweden deeply deplores the fact that France has decided to resume its nuclear testing. This we have also communicated directly to the French Government. The French decision is even more shocking since it comes only a month after the NPT Review and Extension Conference during which the nuclear-weapon States promised to exercise 'utmost restraint' with regard to further nuclear testing. The Swedish Government is anxious that the ongoing negotiations in Geneva on a comprehensive test-ban treaty not be negatively affected by the French decision. Our goal is for the treaty to be concluded at the latest in 1996. This treaty will, for all times, prohibit nuclear testing and all other nuclear explosions. I take it for granted that the United States and the Russian Federation will uphold their moratoria. It take note of the fact that France has declared that the tests that have now been decided upon shall cease in the spring of 1996. I trust that the negotiations in Geneva will be concluded as soon as possible and that France will sign the treaty".

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Sweden for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. SKOGMO (Norway): Mr. President, may I also welcome you to Geneva and congratulate you on your assumption of this high office? We feel confident that you will provide able leadership at a time when the Conference faces crucial challenges.

In a statement to the Conference on Disarmament just one week ago, State Secretary Siri Bjerke set forward the views of the Norwegian Government on current issues before the CD and related disarmament issues. On that occasion she too pointed to the successful conclusion of the NPT, which emphasized that the nuclear-weapon States should exercise utmost restraint in regard to nuclear tests. All nuclear-weapon States should refrain from further nuclear testing.

We are therefore greatly disappointed about the French decision to resume nuclear testing. I have been instructed to convey to you the reaction of the Norwegian Government after the announcement in Paris. Norway strongly deplores the French decision to resume nuclear testing. This decision represents a set-back in relation to the progress that has been made in disarmament efforts in recent years. It may put a strain on the ongoing negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. We fear that the French decision will complicate efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and that it will not be conducive to the efforts to significantly reduce the role of nuclear weapons in the world community. The Norwegian Government therefore urges the French authorities to reverse their decision.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Norway for his statement and for his kind words to the Chair.

Mr. SWIFT (Ireland): Mr. President, to begin, may I offer you my double congratulations, first on your taking up the office of President of the Conference for the present period, and secondly, even if 33 years is not, unfortunately, a long period in disarmament terms, it still has certain reverberations in human terms, and I congratulate you for being back with us once again.

I have asked for the floor this morning to inform the Conference of a statement made by the Irish Deputy Prime Minister yesterday on the question of resumption of nuclear testing. I quote:

"The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland today expressed his deep concern at the announcement that France intends to resume nuclear testing later this year. This decision will be viewed as a setback to the efforts to bring about an early and complete ban on nuclear testing.

(Mr. Swift, Ireland)

At the recent NPT Review and Extension Conference in New York, the nuclear Powers undertook to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty no later than 1996. The Conference called on the nuclear-weapon States, pending the entry into force of a CTBT, to exercise utmost restraint. In the light of the outcome of the Conference, it is particularly disappointing that two nuclear Powers, France and China, have decided to continue testing".

Lastly, I would like to associate my delegation with the views of the Korean Ambassador that the expansion of the membership of this Conference is now long overdue.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Ireland for his statement and for his kind words to the Chair.

Baron GUILLAUME (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all I would like to bid you welcome to this assembly and to say how pleased we are to see you presiding immediately over the outcome of our work. You have arrived at a crucial time for the Conference and you will need all your authority to ensure that it at last makes progress in fields other than the CTBT. You can be assured that you will receive full cooperation from my delegation.

I have asked for the floor this morning to express to you my Government's reaction to the announcement by President Chirac that France is resuming nuclear testing. Belgium is disappointed at the French decision to resume its nuclear tests in the Pacific. It understands the disappointment of those who, in the wake of the extension of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty, were counting on the non-resumption of testing. Belgium takes note, however, of the statement by President Chirac of limiting the tests to eight, the last of which should take place at the latest next May, and of his undertaking to sign the future nuclear test-ban treaty in 1996.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Belgium for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair.

Mr. GOOSEN (South Africa): Mr. President, like previous speakers, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Geneva. With the imminent arrival of our new Permanent Representative, my delegation will soon have an opportunity to congratulate you formally on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference. We would also like to use this opportunity to thank your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Don Nanjira of Kenya, for his contribution to the work of the Conference. It was a great pleasure to see a fellow African in the Chair.

I have asked for the floor in order to express the deep regret of the South African Government at the decision of the Government of France to resume its nuclear testing programme in the South Pacific. We have noted the reactions of States in that region and endorse their strong opposition to the

(Mr. Goosen, South Africa)

resumption of the French testing programme on the Moruroa Atoll. South Africa declares its solidarity with these countries in their opposition to the proposed tests.

The French decision is of particular concern coming as it does during sensitive negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty, and so soon after the successful conclusion of the NPT Review and Extension Conference. At that Conference, the nuclear-weapon States undertook to exercise the utmost restraint in nuclear testing pending the entry into force of a CTBT. The international non-proliferation regime was strengthened and added to by the adoption without a vote of the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament on 9 May 1995. We would expect all States to honour both the letter and spirit of the Principles and Objectives which they negotiated and agreed to. France in particular played an active role in these negotiations.

The South African Government urges the Government of France to reconsider its decision and to retain its moratorium on testing until the entry into force of the CTBT. Similar views have already been conveyed directly to the Government of France at a meeting with the French Chargé d'affaires in Pretoria on 14 June 1995. It is my Government's intention to have further meetings with the Government of France both in Pretoria and in Paris to express our views on this matter.

South Africa's opposition to nuclear testing was also made clear to the People's Republic of China when it conducted a nuclear test explosion on 15 May 1995. We believe that this decision by the Government of France is a step backwards in the endeavour of the international community to ban nuclear testing. In addition to urging the Government of France to reconsider its decision, we also wish to call on the other nuclear-weapon States with moratoria to continue to "exercise utmost restraint".

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of South Africa for his statement and for his kind words to the Chair.

Mrs. BAUTA SOLES (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, it is an honour for me to congratulate you on taking over the presidency of the Conference. I am sure that we shall benefit from your valuable contributions, as we have in the past from the long list of illustrious predecessors from your country. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank the distinguished Ambassador of Kenya for his efforts when presiding over the Conference and to associate myself with previous speakers who have formally welcomed the ambassadors to the Conference on Disarmament.

I have asked for the floor this morning to make a general statement. The second part of the Conference on Disarmament began against the background of the decision adopted a few weeks ago in New York whereby the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons decided to extend that instrument indefinitely. Almost all the speakers this morning have made reference to that fact in one way or another. As you are aware, Cuba is not a party to the Treaty, which it feels does not cover its fundamental strategic

(Mrs. Bauta Solés, Cuba)

interests. This does not mean, however, that we have any difficulty with the idea of non-proliferation when viewed from a comprehensive, non-discriminatory approach and applied both vertically and horizontally. Those are requirements that we see as a sine qua non to the achievement of universality and the consolidation of the credibility of the instrument. For Cuba and for other countries represented here, non-proliferation must serve as a stimulus to nuclear disarmament, which is its fundamental objective, and not to sanctify the possession of nuclear weapons. For that reason, we subscribe this morning to the appeal made here last week by the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan for the nuclear Powers to state in this body that the indefinite extension of the NPT is not synonymous for them with legitimization of the indefinite possession of such weapons.

The links that it has recently been sought to make, whereby the legitimate right of some countries to the peaceful use of nuclear energy would be held subject to their membership or otherwise of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, are unjustified and unacceptable. That is all the more so if we look at the public and warranted complaints by many States Parties to that Treaty regarding the way in which the relevant provisions of its article IV are applied to them.

Until very recently it was exceptional for any statement made here not to welcome the end of the cold war and to recognize the opportunities that offered for irreversible progress in the sphere of disarmament. Gone were the reasons that gave rise to the doctrine of nuclear deterrence and the circumstances seemed ripe for realizing the aspiration of so many of the world's great figures, including Don Alfonso Garcíá Robles, of his country, to achieve an agreement on a comprehensive programme of disarmament.

Sadly, there is no denying that events have not followed the course that then seemed so clear to logic and to reason. Today we are seeing not only difficulty in ratifying even modest arms control agreements that were once put enthusiastically before this body, but also the continuation of efforts to improve the performance of nuclear weapons. In other words, it is largely the case that there is still not the political will necessary not only to conclude nuclear disarmament agreements but also to establish a subsidiary body of this Conference to deal with this issue. We cannot but regret this state of affairs, which is adversely affecting what all here agree are our priority negotiations, namely those aimed at the earliest possible conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

Permit us to refer briefly to our aspirations for the future treaty on a total end to testing. As far as we are concerned, this would be an essentially political instrument whereby States parties would commit themselves not to continue tests to improve nuclear weapons. It would be a first step on the right path towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The treaty's verification system must be appropriate and adequate and clearly cost-effective and the organization should be a discrete body responsible for seeing that the fundamental objectives of the agreement

(Mrs. Bauta Solés, Cuba)

are met. Having an overly elaborate verification system that was 100 per cent operational on the conclusion of our negotiations does not seem essential to us.

Others have said that they do not want the future treaty for the halting of testing to be a fresh partial test-ban treaty or to set new thresholds for testing so that, in the final result, horizontal proliferation continues. We share that opinion and that it is therefore of the utmost urgency that our negotiations move on to the question of the scope of the future treaty.

There is another very urgent topic in our discussions. It is the future negotiations on fissile material. Here, the first thing I want to do is to express my delegation's appreciation of the work done by Ambassador Shannon as special coordinator on this item. It is clear in our minds that negotiations on this item that did not aim at the gradual reduction of existing stockpiles would never be negotiations on nuclear disarmament, but would rather tend to perpetuate the prevailing unequal and risky situation. It would be in the common interest for the Committee to deal with these matters to begin work. We are of the view, however, that it would not be beneficial in the long term for the Conference to begin consideration of this issue without there also being functioning subsidiary bodies on other items to which many delegations attach importance, namely negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Early agreement in this regard would not only promote the trust necessary to any negotiations and dispel any doubts there might be as to the future aspirations concerning the items of negative security assurances and the arms race in outer space, but would also break the deadlock we have been in for the past few weeks, which cannot be allowed to continue.

I purposely exclude from the remarks I have just made on the question of establishing a subsidiary body on the topic of transparency in armaments. As we see it, the repeat of the context in which this item has been dealt with for the past two years holds out no hope of progress at all. To avoid a repetition of the scenario we have already lived through, which was of no benefit whatever in advancing the item, we need joint agreement on the mandate of a new ad hoc committee. We are grateful for the consultations on the future of the mandate on this item that were held at the beginning of the current session by Ambassador Hoffmann of Germany, to whom we made known our substantive positions on this issue. We are therefore in favour of the earliest possible appointment of a special coordinator for this item, so that consultations can continue until a satisfactory outcome is reached.

In our opinion, the decision must also be taken to establish committees and begin work in the areas I mentioned earlier and we must decide to appoint special coordinators on the questions of the agenda, the functioning of the Conference and enlargement, so that consultations can be held until agreement is reached on these matters.

Before concluding, I should like to dwell a little on the question of the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament and to restate the national position that is already known to this body. We remain convinced that the

(Mrs. Bauta Solés, Cuba)

best proposal yet put before us was that made a while ago by Ambassador O'Sullivan of Australia. That was a just, fair, balanced and equitable and sensible proposal concerning the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament because it does not establish unsuitable precedents in the form of special treatment or conditions for any candidate and because it provides a comprehensive response to the aspirations of a large number of observer States that perhaps have already had too long a wait for a decision from the Conference. These are the reasons that prevent us from accepting a case-by-case approach to resolving this matter.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Cuba for her statement and for her kind words to me.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States of America): Mr. President, may I join others in expressing to you welcome and congratulations? You spoke of your double honour of assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and of representing Mexico here for the first time. I and my delegation extend to you double salutations. The warm relations between our two neighbouring nations are well known.

The United States also regrets that France intends to resume nuclear testing. The United States continues to urge all the nuclear Powers, including France, to join in the global moratorium as we work to complete a comprehensive test-ban treaty at the earliest possible time. In this regard, we take particular note of President Chirac's strong commitment to end the French testing no later than May 1996 and to sign a comprehensive test-ban treaty no later than the fall of 1996. We will continue to work with France and all other States participating in the comprehensive test-ban negotiations to ensure that a treaty is ready for signature as early as possible.

These remarks are drawn from a 13 June statement made by the Press Secretary of the White House. I will request that the text of that statement be made a CD document as was our statement last month in reaction to the most recent Chinese nuclear test.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement and for his kind words to the Chair.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to welcome you and the other new ambassadors to the Conference and to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency. We are certainly at a crucial point in the work of the Conference and we shall need your experience and wisdom. I would also like to thank the Ambassador of Kenya, Mr. Don Nanjira, for the work that he did as President.

I have asked for the floor after listening carefully to all the goals stated by the delegations that have spoken today. Everybody, including you yourself, Sir, has emphasized the work awaiting us and the fact that the international community expects a lot of this body and you made a number of

(Mr. Benjelloun-Touimi, Morocco)

very interesting suggestions. For my part, I would like to be a bit more down to earth, if I might put it that way, and to say that, while I believe traditions are worth respecting and we have every confidence in our regional coordinators who meet with you once a week, I nevertheless feel that, since the Conference has not yet done much and there are real logjams, all of us around this table are aware that there are problems and that we need very serious consultations on the matter. I think that, if we were to go on as we are every week, it would be very surprising if by the autumn we had accomplished anything at all.

Permit me to make two suggestions to you. I think I have mentioned them already. They are that we either hold an informal meeting after a formal plenary to try to discuss this issue or set up under your chairmanship a group that would, of course, be open to all in order to discuss these matters and try to find some way to unfreeze the situation, to reinstate the working groups, to be able to appoint special coordinators and to get the Conference working on the objectives which we hold dear. I personally do not think that if we continue to make fine, pre-prepared speeches about what we expect of our work we will produce any result between now and the end of the session. So, I appeal to you to try to find what may not be an orthodox or conventional solution for, after all, we are not at a conventional or normal point in the work of our Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Morocco for his kind words in my regard and for his suggestions. Rest assured that I am working on them.

Mr. OLADEJI (Nigeria): Mr. President, please allow me on behalf of my Chargé d'affaires to convey the warm compliments of the Nigerian delegation to you on your assumption of the Chair and also to express his apologies for his absence. I am sure on his return he will express formal compliments to you in a much better way.

I would like to seek the indulgence of my colleagues in the Group of 21 and inform them that there is a need for us to meet for a short time after this plenary, if this is agreeable to them. We also thank the Ambassador of Morocco for his previous suggestion and want to say that we already have that in mind for our Group.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Nigeria for his statement and for his kind words to the Chair.

Mr. NASSERI (Iran): Mr. President, I wish to express my deep pleasure to see a distinguished personality from Mexico conducting our work. I do assure you, Sir, of the fullest cooperation of my delegation.

I am taking the floor simply to reflect on some of the statements that have been made today with regard to nuclear testing and also I will have a brief remark with regard to the suggestion that has been made by the distinguished Ambassador of Morocco.

(Mr. Nasser, Iran)

On the first matter, on the question of nuclear testing, I wish to say, first, that the understanding and agreement at the outcome of the NPT Conference was that, following the indefinite extension of the Treaty, all member States would pursue with determination systematic efforts towards nuclear disarmament. I believe it is absolutely clear that attempts at nuclear testing run contrary to the basic objective of the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Second, I recall that there existed, throughout the time of the preparations, as well as at the Conference itself, two distinctively different views. One which argued that only through an indefinite extension of the Treaty could there be a climate of confidence which would lead, and be conducive, to faithful pursuance of the goal of disarmament. And there was, of course, another view, which maintained throughout that, with an indefinite extension of the Treaty, the nuclear-weapon States would enjoy much more freedom in following their own agenda on the basis of their own objectives. The fact that attempts at nuclear testing are being made after the NPT Conference, and not so much before it, signifies, I believe clearly, that it was not only the moratorium that kept nuclear tests at bay but that the concerns about the outcome of the NPT Conference also served as a very essential deterrence to nuclear testing.

I note that most of the statements made today in protest of the announcement made by France have been coming from States which were amongst the principal and most active proponents of an indefinite extension of the NPT. This group of States believed that the independent extension of the Treaty was the gate to heaven. Many non-nuclear-weapon States did not share that optimism. They were, I must say, not disillusioned. It is not surprising, therefore, that we find today this second group restrained and silent on this issue.

As regards the suggestion that has been made today by the Ambassador of Morocco, I wish to state that I find it very useful and that we wish to express our support for it.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement and for his kind words to me.

Mr. ERRERA (France) (translated from French): Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor a second time. I have listened most attentively to our colleagues' comments. It is naturally not my intention to respond to each and every one of them. I would simply like, if you will allow, to share a few brief thoughts which come to mind; they are three in number.

First, some people have spoken of a breach of trust, or a betrayal of trust, after the results of the NPT Review and Extension Conference. Since that is a conference which we took very seriously, I do not think, as I said just now, but I would like to make the point again, I do not think that things can be put in those terms. At the NPT Review and Extension Conference, we subscribed to principles and objectives which we negotiated in a spirit of seriousness, in a spirit of responsibility, in a climate of trust and

(Mr. Errera, France)

transparency, often with participants many of whom are in this room today and some of whom have been kind enough to recognize the active role that we played there. We negotiated these principles sincerely, without ever - and I emphasize the point - without ever concealing what our imperatives were, what our limits were, what our constraints were, first and foremost as regards the question of tests. Those who were present at the negotiations there will need no reminding of that: nothing was hidden at the time, and if some wording was adopted and some not, it was precisely because everyone was aware that there was uncertainty regarding the resumption of our tests. I would like to emphasize that we take these principles seriously, we respect them and we will respect them, on the question of tests and on the other questions, whether it be a matter of substance, of the timetable for the negotiation of a CTBT or, more generally, of the discharge of our non-proliferation and disarmament responsibilities.

The second point follows on from the first and relates to the link that several of our colleagues have made between the announcement made by the President of the French Republic and the negotiation of a CTBT. I said just now that for us there was no link, and that we stated on the very first day of the negotiations a year and a half ago, between either the continuation or the resumption of nuclear tests and the negotiations. If there really has to be a link, then I would say that there is a reverse link today. As my authorities at the highest level of the State have said, as I myself emphasized this morning, the announcement by the President of the Republic two days ago contains not one decision, but two. The first is the announcement of an ultimate series of tests. The second is that France has undertaken to sign before the end of 1996 a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The point emphasized on several occasions by the French Government, and by myself this morning, is that this second important decision on the commitment to sign a CTBT would not have been possible without the first.

Thirdly and lastly, I would like to remind you as regards the concerns voiced here this morning that we have listened to them carefully, that we tried to the fullest extent possible and in advance to take account of them and meet them, which is why we have in this matter done our level best to be transparent to international public opinion - transparent in the way the decision was announced, transparent in announcing in advance the number of our tests and the deadline for them and lastly, transparent in the proposal made publicly by the President of the Republic two days ago to the effect that, in the context of the completion of our tests, arrangements could be made for all the eminent scientists with knowledge in the field who so wished to come and see on the spot that there are no consequences for the environment in these tests.

That is what I wanted briefly to say in order to reassure the Conference that we shall continue to follow this course, we shall continue to follow the course of discharging our international responsibilities, we shall continue to follow the course of transparency with our partners, we shall continue to participate actively in the negotiating of a comprehensive test-ban treaty so that next year we end up with a good treaty, that is to say, a treaty acceptable to everyone.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): No one else has asked for the floor.

The secretariat has circulated a timetable of meetings of the Conference and its subsidiary bodies for next week. The timetable was drawn up in consultation with the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. As usual, the timetable is merely indicative and can be changed if necessary. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts the timetable, with the reservation that it is probable that we shall be able to take up the very timely suggestion of the Ambassador of Morocco and that the President will convene consultations, the framework and details for which have yet to be determined.

It was so decided.

I have no other business and therefore I shall adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on 22 June, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.