

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND AND EIGHTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 13 September 2007, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Faysal KHABBAZ HAMOUI (Syrian Arab Republic)

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): I declare open the 1082nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers for today the following speakers: Tunisia, Canada, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Portugal on behalf of the European Union, Italy, Japan, South Africa on behalf of the Group of 21, Pakistan, the Russian Federation and Brazil.

I intend to give the floor to the distinguished delegates to make their statements after the adoption of the annual report and, in addition, I shall make some concluding remarks before the conclusion of the 2007 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

At this time, I should like to invite you to formalize the provisional agreement reached at the informal plenary meetings that were held on the draft annual report, as contained in document CD/WP.546/Rev.1, which is before you.

Since we were able to go through the draft annual report in great detail, paragraph by paragraph, at informal plenary meetings held on 4, 5 and 11 September, and since we considered all the amendments to the draft report, I shall now proceed to the formal adoption of our annual report, as revised, without going through it paragraph by paragraph or section by section. However, before I do so, I should like to explain that all the blanks left in the revised draft report, such as those related to the number of meetings, or the day of the adoption of the report, will be filled in by the secretariat. Furthermore, all documents that have already been submitted to the secretariat before the adoption of the report will be added to the lists of documents under the appropriate subsections.

May I take it that the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament in its entirety, as contained in document CD/WP.546/Rev.1, is adopted? I see no objections.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): The secretariat will issue the report as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament in all official languages as soon as possible. All distinguished delegates are invited to provide the secretariat with any linguistic corrections as soon as possible, if there are any such corrections.

I give the floor now to the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan. You have the floor, Your Excellency.

Mr. KHAN (Pakistan): Mr. President, I did not ask for the floor. But you announced a list of speakers and I can speak at that point.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): I apologize for this mistake. The Ambassador of Brazil.

Mr. da ROCHA PARANHOS (Brazil): Before we proceed to the adoption of our report, I would like to mention that I do not see a reference to the presence here of the new High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte. It is not referred to in the report.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): Thank you very much. The reference is contained in paragraph 35.

Before turning to the speakers of today, I would like on behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf to bid farewell to Ambassador Carlo Trezza, our distinguished colleague from Italy, who will be leaving Geneva soon to take up other important duties. Ambassador Trezza joined us in July 2003 as Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament after an impressive career with important positions both in Rome as well as abroad. In Geneva we will always remember Carlo Trezza for his unwavering support for multilateral action in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, his dynamism and leadership coupled with a genuine desire to overcome the hurdles that have been blocking progress in the Conference. Above all, his kindness and courtesy which has won him many friends. We all remember his presidency of the Conference during 2003, his willingness to work as a Friend of the 2006 presidency, and last but not least, his work this year as coordinator appointed by the six Presidents on fissile material. Outside the Conference Ambassador Trezza has displayed the same vigour and dedication in a large number of disarmament meetings and seminars. We wish him and his family all the best for the future.

In addition to His Excellency Ambassador Trezza, another colleague also will be leaving us, namely the distinguished Ambassador Seyed Mohammad Kazem Sajjadpour, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. We all know him here and we know about his active work. We also wish His Excellency the Ambassador and his family the best of success in the future.

While we regret that some colleagues are leaving us, I am happy to welcome the new Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations in Geneva, Ambassador O'Ceallaigh. On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, I would like to assure Ambassador O'Ceallaigh of our readiness to provide him with every kind of assistance and support in his work here in Geneva. We wish him every success.

We shall now give the floor to the delegations on my list that asked to make a statement. We shall start with His Excellency the Ambassador of Tunisia, the next President of the Conference on Disarmament. You have the floor, Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. LABIDI (Tunisia) (spoke in French): Mr. President, allow me to address my sincere congratulations to you on the way you have chaired the Conference on Disarmament as well as the atmosphere of dialogue which has reigned over our proceedings. Your complete accessibility during our consultations and our debates happily made a contribution to the adoption of the report of the Conference to the United Nations General Assembly.

(Mr. Labidi, Tunisia)

I would also like to thank the other Presidents of the Conference during the year 2007, the Ambassadors of South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden and Switzerland, who made praiseworthy efforts in favour of our Conference.

I take this opportunity to tell you and our assembly that the Tunisian delegation greatly esteems the honour that falls to it to preside over the Conference on Disarmament in 2008. For me this is an opportunity to assure you of the total determination of my country's delegation to conduct the consultations during the intersessional period, with the cooperation of all the member States of the Conference, with a view to taking useful steps to promote the evolution of our work.

This task will obviously be facilitated by smooth cooperation among all, particularly the Presidents for 2007 and the Presidents for the year to come. Informal meetings and contacts have already made it possible to strengthen their kind resolve to act in the framework of our preliminary consultations in a spirit of coordination and understanding.

My delegation will continue to listen to all our colleagues so as to ensure the best possible conditions for the success of the Conference on Disarmament in 2008.

Lastly, my thanks are addressed to our colleagues who are going to leave us and who have participated in our work - to our friend Ambassador Carlo Trezza and Ambassador Mohammad Sajjadpour, who are going to leave us and who participated actively in the work of our Conference. I wish them every success.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): I thank the distinguished representative of Tunisia for his kind words and wishes. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Canada.

Mr. GRINIUS (Canada): Mr. President, allow me first to congratulate you on your work and that of the other Presidents, all delegations and the secretariat on the report of the CD to UNGA62, and of course, its recent adoption.

Canada has the honour, on behalf of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, to table in the CD the report of the Conference entitled "Celebrating the Space Age: 50 Years of Space Technology, 40 Years of the Outer Space Treaty". The report of this Conference was finalized by UNIDIR only this week, and that is the reason why I am submitting it to the CD plenary today.

This Conference was the latest in a series of annual conferences held by UNIDIR on the issue of space security, the peaceful uses of outer space and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The Conference was convened in Geneva on 2-4 April 2007, with the financial and material support of the Governments of the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation and Canada and of the Secure World Foundation and the Simons Foundation.

(Mr. Grinius, Canada)

Canada would be grateful if this report were issued as an official document of the Conference and distributed to all member States participating in the CD. I see that you have already included the reference to this document in the revised report to the UNGA62, which has already been adopted.

Given the late date, there are copies of this report now available as a reference for delegations in advance of its issuance as an official CD document.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): Thank you very much, Your Excellency the Ambassador of Canada, for your kind words. I now give the floor to the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran. You have the floor, Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. SAJJADPOUR (Islamic Republic of Iran): It has been a great honour for me to work in this body, which pursues a cause that is so dear to my nation. During the course of its history, the outcome and result of the work of this body, like any other multilateral entity, has been the highly dynamic interplay of a method-defining concept, that is, disarmament, a set of procedural facilitative arrangements and a highly complex political and strategic context in which States, national and international institutions and finally, qualitative individuals and Ambassadors have all played various positive roles.

This important body, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, has played a unique role in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Some of the most important institutions and their standards in regulating the acts and behaviour of the international community were devised in this forum. Its contribution to the security of all nations is undeniable. Remarkable treaties and conventions in the area of international security have been negotiated and concluded here.

Looking at its glorious past should inject hope for the future. We have to work with hope and dedication to make this body more alive and effective in the area of multilateral international politics. Multilateralism is the key concept in the life of the CD. It should be strengthened by all means.

Today is the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan, the fasting month for Muslims. It is a period of spirituality, individual purity, positive collectivity, and more importantly, it is the month of hope and optimism. By this token, let me remain hopeful and highly optimistic for the future.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): Thank you very much, Ambassador Sajjadpour. I now give the floor to a delegation which is not a member of the Conference on Disarmament, namely the delegation of Portugal, which will deliver a statement on behalf of the European Union. You have the floor.

Mr. PEREIRA GOMES (Portugal): Mr. President, I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. As it is the first time that I take the floor under your presidency, I would like to begin by congratulating you on the assumption of the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament. And furthermore, I would like to commend most warmly you and your P-6 predecessors for the groundbreaking work done as Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament in the year 2007.

The EU recognizes the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral forum available to the international community for disarmament negotiations. We have consistently been committed to agree on a programme of work capable of overcoming the current stalemate. As the United Nations Secretary-General said in his address to the CD in June this year, an agreement on a programme of work “would have a positive impact on the international security atmosphere. It would demonstrate to the international community at large that the security challenges before us are not overwhelming, but can be addressed collectively. If ... [we] do not move forward, it would have a devastating impact on multilateral and bilateral disarmament efforts”.

The EU is greatly encouraged by the constructive, structured and substantive discussions that took place during the first part of this year’s session, and by the momentum created by these discussions. The momentum has developed as a direct result of the initiative taken jointly by the six Presidents of the CD last year. The P-6 efforts have clearly been taken up and brought to an even higher level this year, leading to the appointment of coordinators for seven items of the CD agenda and culminating in the presentation of a Presidential draft decision (L.1), and two further documents (CRP.5 and CRP.6), issued in a serious, patient and strenuous process to add clarity and to provide answers to questions raised by a few delegations as regards document L.1. These three documents have fostered our hope that finally the stalemate in the CD can be overcome. We regret that no consensus on these documents could be established so far. We continue to urge those very few remaining States members of the CD to go along with the consensus on the basis of the documents on the table: L.1, CRP.5 and CRP.6.

The new spirit that has prevailed throughout this year’s CD sessions is the result of the very efficient leadership shown by all six presidencies: South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland and the Syrian Arab Republic. In your endeavours you have been ably supported by the seven coordinators, represented by the Ambassadors of Norway, Italy, Canada, Brazil, Bulgaria, Indonesia and the United Kingdom. We would like to warmly thank the coordinators for their professional integrity and balanced guidance that, together with the active involvement of the CD member States, allowed us to hold substantive discussions on all items on the agenda during the first part of this year’s session.

The EU and its member States participated actively in all the substantive discussions. Our participation has been guided and will continue to be guided by the consideration that progress can be best achieved through a combination of prioritizing and a just and meaningful consideration of the concerns of all. At the same time, the EU recognizes that some items are riper for negotiation than others. The results of these deliberations as contained in the coordinators’ reports demonstrate the utility of the substantive work that has taken place this year in the CD.

(Mr. Pereira Gomes, Portugal)

In his address to the CD in August, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs said: “The Conference [is] one short step away from resolving its long-standing impasse.” It is the EU’s intention to cooperate closely with all delegations in order that the collective efforts of the CD membership can resolve the remaining obstacles in early 2008, so that the CD can again perform its functions.

The P-6 formula adopted in 2006 and 2007 has allowed us to make progress and brought the hope of reaching our goal. We would strongly encourage the 2008 Presidents to maintain this formula, build on this rich and positive experience and start their deliberations on the basis of document L.1, which represents a real opportunity to enable the CD to resume its negotiating role.

The EU attaches clear priority to the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices, as a means to strengthen disarmament and non-proliferation. It constitutes a priority that is ripe for negotiation.

May I use this occasion to recall the EU’s attachment to the follow-up of the enlargement process of the CD and in particular to those members of the EU which are not yet members of the CD and which have submitted a request for admission to the Conference?

Let me take the opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, for the skilful way in which you led the Conference to adopt this year’s report to the General Assembly. You have done commendable work and we thank you for it.

The EU welcomes the timely adoption of the report. The EU would have liked to have seen a more forthcoming reflection of the intensity and substance of the work undertaken by the CD membership and its efforts this year to come closer to resuming substantive negotiations. Despite this, we have agreed to the adoption of the report. We look forward to cooperating with all the other CD members to achieve our common goal of a programme of work in early 2008.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Portugal for his kind words and for wishing the presidency and the Conference success. The next speaker on my list is my very dear friend Ambassador Trezza of Italy. You have the floor.

Mr. TREZZA (Italy): Mr. President, let me start by thanking you for the kind words that you have addressed in my regard. This is also the moment to pay tribute to you for the extremely efficient way in which you have led the Conference during these delicate times and for the successful outcome of our deliberations on the report, which I think is appreciated by everyone.

I shall start by saying that my delegation fully shares the statement just made by the distinguished representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union. It is no secret that I have always been supportive of a strong role of the European Union in the Conference on Disarmament. I would not say that what is good for Europe is good for the Conference on Disarmament, but in some cases, the conclusions that we reach in the European Union are the result of a compromise between different positions, which can be useful terms of reference for the international community as a whole.

(Mr. Trezza, Italy)

Having represented my country to the Conference on Disarmament for more than four years, it is now my turn to bid farewell and make a final statement. Let me begin by reaffirming Italy's strong commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation. Italy was one of the original members of this body in the early 1960s, when it was called the "Ten Nations Committee". For many years we have had a Permanent Representative in Geneva dedicated to disarmament affairs and will continue to do so. Foreign Ministers and other cabinet-level officials have often spoken from the rostrum of this chamber. I had the honour of presiding over the Conference from my very first day in Geneva. That same semester Italy also held the presidency of the European Union, which I was proud to represent. It was a hectic period which, however, provided me with the opportunity of an immediate and full immersion in our major issues.

For the past 10 years the CD has been unable to perform its institutional negotiating task; for 10 years we and our predecessors have not been engaged in the activities we were set to perform. Instead, our diplomatic skills have been dedicated to the preliminary search for a compromise on diverging priorities: a "negotiation on negotiations".

At the time of my arrival in Geneva, all the attention was focused on the so-called A-5 proposal. It represented a laudable effort by five Ambassadors to seek compromise on a programme of work based on the seven items reflecting the CD agenda. It originally contemplated parallel negotiations on three issues, with non-negotiating mandates for the remaining ones. The proposal was ambitious, widely supported, but difficult to implement: in spite of the dedication of its authors and the efforts of those who supported it, it did not gain consensus. It remained however a useful term of reference for future endeavours.

To overcome the impasse, several succeeding Presidents promoted informal discussions on specific issues. This helped the Conference to concentrate on substance and to extrapolate from the agenda the priorities on which to engage a more focused debate: the so-called "core issues".

The brevity of the Presidential term was another reason of concern: it was detrimental to the continuity and consistency of CD work, since it allowed Presidents to pursue their individual "pet project", only to be abandoned by their successors a few weeks later. An informal "troika" composed of the outgoing, incumbent and incoming Presidents was put in place during the period of Italy's presidency; it was followed later by a proposal to prolong the duration of each Presidential mandate. This finally led to the adoption of what I believe had been one of our most useful innovations in rationalizing our method of work: that is, the coordination of the six Presidents serving during the same year, the so-called "P-6" formula which has been in force during the past two years. I recommend here that this successful formula be maintained in the future, and I am encouraged by the statement just made by the Ambassador of Tunisia in that respect.

The appointment last year of a number of "Friends of the President" was another innovative effort. It complemented "vertically" - that is, on specific subjects - the "horizontal" coordination established among Presidents. This concept has been further developed this year through the appointment of seven coordinators, each on one of the substantial items of the agenda. Having been appointed a "Friend of the President" last year and coordinator for agenda

(Mr. Trezza, Italy)

item 2 this year, I have witnessed first-hand the genuine engagement and dedication of my colleagues - Friends and coordinators - individually and as a group. I also recall the keen attention devoted by the Presidents to our work as coordinators, in particular through regular weekly meetings. The result of the substantive work done by the coordinators this year is reflected in document CD/1827, which has recently been circulated and which contains their reports.

The following logical step to the rationalization of the method of work and to the progress made on substance through the appointment of coordinators was the presentation, by the six Presidents, of a proposal which is, I think, the end result of the work done by the Conference as a whole during the past four years and especially during the 2006 and 2007 sessions. It is enshrined in document L.1, presented by the CD President last March. It is realistic, balanced and the best possible compromise to bring the CD back to work. It was drafted collectively by the six Presidents; it enjoys very large support; and it has brought the Conference, in the words of the High Representative of the UNSG for Disarmament, "one short step away from resolving its long-standing impasse".

Being close to consensus is not sufficient. A few countries still voice concerns about this document. Those concerns have to be addressed. The main one, in my view, is the question of verification of an FMCT. I believe it can be overcome. It should be made clear to capitals that the main issue is not verification as such but whether verification should be a precondition for negotiations. This was discussed at length on 6 March this year under sub-issue (viii) of the amended "Outline for discussion" on agenda item 2. Let me quote from the "conclusive synthesis" contained in annex II to document CD/1827: "Verification remains a complex and difficult issue. No delegation seems to oppose dealing with such an issue in a negotiating framework. The principle of verifiability 'per se' was not challenged, but rather its feasibility and effectiveness, including from the point of view of costs." This synthesis was read to member States and adjusted on the basis of their comments. By accepting L.1, delegations do not rule anything out. They do not exclude verification, and there is no reason to believe that deliberations on it would be rejected in a negotiation. This obstacle is surmountable and its solution could provide a key to a breakthrough. It is time to seize the opportunity offered by L.1. It has taken the CD four years of intense work to come to this solution; I do not believe that the Conference will be granted the luxury of waiting for another four years.

Let me conclude by expressing my gratitude to the 12 Presidents for 2006 and 2007 for the trust they have placed in me, to the Secretary-General and all his collaborators for the constant support I have received from them, as President, coordinator and head of delegation. Let me pay tribute to our interpreters, whose key role ensures our mutual understanding. A final word of appreciation goes to those who patiently follow our work from the gallery: a needed testimony of public interest in our deliberations.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): Thank you very much, Ambassador Trezza, for your kind words. I reiterate our best wishes to you. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Japan.

Mr. TARUI (Japan): Mr. President, first, my delegation would like to commend you on your outstanding efforts in guiding the Conference on Disarmament to the adoption of its final report, which will be submitted to this year's United Nations General Assembly. I would also like to convey my delegation's praise for the activities of all the six Presidents for pushing forward this year's substantive agenda.

Even without being able to agree to a programme of work, the Conference still carried out significant discussions on substance in the first part of the current session through the joint initiatives of the six Presidents. Because there were many informal meetings, not all our discussions are on record; nevertheless, the conduct of focused, substantial debates covering all the seven agenda items under the able guidance of the coordinators should be given due recognition.

In this connection, I would like to refer to the focused debate on an FMCT. As has repeatedly been asserted, an FMCT is a crucial measure for nuclear disarmament and the next logical step that the current CD should take. In the discussions on an FMCT during the first part of the current session, the Conference engaged in various debates without any preconditions, which would be natural for treaty negotiations, surrounding the core concepts of a prohibition on the production of fissile materials for nuclear-weapon purposes, including stocks and verification. For instance, proactive discussions were held on a verification system, with many countries stressing the importance of such a system, or deliberating on in what form verification could be introduced, while opposite positions were also provided. Thus, we would like once again to point out that there is nothing preventing us from commencing negotiations without preconditions.

The Conference also conducted significant substantive debates on nuclear disarmament, PAROS and NSA in the first part of the current session. Although we cannot perceive these items as being ready for multilateral treaty negotiations at this stage, they are nonetheless important and as such we need to further deepen our discussions on them.

From the second to the third part of the current session discussions took place on document L.1, which the six Presidents tabled as a programme of work for possible consensus adoption, in the light of the progress of discussions in the first part and each country's political situation. Given the CD's primary role of negotiating disarmament-related treaties, L.1 provides an appropriate mandate for each of the four core agenda items, as a result of careful consideration of each item's maturity, including its feasibility. Subsequently, with L.1 as a basis, this year's Presidents built on the discussions related to the programme of work and were successful in formulating a package containing L.1 and the draft Presidential statement and decision (CRP.5 and CRP.6) as the current best proposal reflecting our best possible compromise.

Even though it is a fact that no consensus exists on the draft package so far, it is also indeed a fact that through this year's discussions, we have come extremely close to reaching a consensus. Next year the CD must begin negotiations in order to fulfil its primary role. For that purpose, it is critically important that we do not render naught this year's outcomes, but aim to build consensus based on the proposal put forward by the 2007 Presidents. We strongly hope that

(Mr. Tarui, Japan)

next year's six Presidents - like the Presidents of this year and the last - maintain the coordination among them to realize the fulfilment of the CD's primary role. To this end, Japan pledges its utmost support.

Once again I would like to pay my delegation's deepest respects to the efforts and active contributions of this year's six Presidents. In addition, we ardently hope the countries that were unable to agree to the Presidents' proposal give further sufficient consideration to the strong aspirations of the international community.

Finally, allow me to take this opportunity to express my delegation's as well as my personal appreciation to Ambassador Carlo Trezza of Italy and Ambassador Seyed Mohammad Kazem Sajjadpour of Iran for their untiring efforts as representatives of their countries to the Conference on Disarmament. In particular, Ambassador Trezza, throughout his tenure here, has been an energetic contributor to our debates in the CD, very often making timely and very constructive comments. His adroit handling of the role of coordinator for this year's informal meetings on FMCT also deserves laurels. We will truly miss his presence here in the Conference and wish him the greatest success in his future endeavours.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): I thank His Excellency the Ambassador of Japan for his important statement and for the kind words that he addressed to the presidency. I now give the floor to our distinguished colleague the Ambassador of South Africa.

Ms. MTSHALI (South Africa): Mr. President, I take the floor on behalf of the G-21 to extend the Group's appreciation to you for your hard work during the last four weeks of the 2007 CD session. In particular, the Group thanks you and your delegation for the tireless efforts that have facilitated the adoption of the Conference's annual report to the General Assembly.

At the end of this 2007 session of the Conference, the Group furthermore wishes to place on record its appreciation for the equally hard work done by your predecessors, namely the Ambassadors of Switzerland, Sweden, Sri Lanka, Spain and South Africa. The Group would also like to thank the seven CD coordinators of 2007 for the contribution that they have made under the authority of the six 2007 CD Presidents.

The Group of 21 looks forward to a productive 2008 session of the Conference on Disarmament and stands ready to contribute to the success of next year's session.

In closing, allow me also to bid farewell, on behalf of the Group, to Ambassadors Sajjadpour and Trezza and to wish them every success in the future.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of South Africa for her important statement and for her kind wishes addressed to the President on her own behalf and on behalf of the Group of 21. I now give the floor to the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (spoke in Russian): It is a pleasure for me to speak on behalf of Ambassador Loshchinin.

Mr. President, first of all we would like to congratulate you on the successful completion of your mission. We have just approved the final report of the Conference to the General Assembly. I think everyone would agree that to a great extent this was achieved thanks to your wise and balanced leadership. In the context of the overall efforts of the six Presidents, the Syrian presidency faced a difficult and delicate task, which you fulfilled successfully.

We would also like to thank all the Presidents of the CD for 2007 for their well-thought-out, consensual and consistent work, as well as all the coordinators. This is certainly a positive experience which can and must be taken into account in the future. We welcome what we have just heard from the distinguished Ambassador Samir Labidi.

Mr. President, we endorse your words praising the work of the distinguished Ambassador Carlo Trezza. We too would like to thank him for his cooperation and for his great personal contribution to moving forward the situation in the Conference on Disarmament, and we wish him all the best. Equally we endorse your kind words to the distinguished Ambassador Sajjadpour, and we also wish him all the best.

We would also like to express our gratitude to UNIDIR for preparing the summary of the traditional international spring conference on security in space. We well remember how interesting, informative and topical it was. We consider that the circulation of this summary by the Canadian delegation as an official document of the CD will make a useful contribution to the work of the Conference on that subject. As you know, ensuring security in outer space is a priority issue for Russia in the CD. We are certain that the interesting and substantive ideas and proposals put forward at the spring Conference in Geneva will be taken up next year when the CD resumes its substantive work on the draft treaty to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space and the use of force or the threat of force against outer space objects.

Of course, for that we will finally have to adopt a programme of work. We believe that after all the great efforts which have been made by all delegations this year and in previous years, we will be able to do this at the beginning of the CD session in 2008.

In conclusion I cannot fail to mention the very effective and useful work done by the secretariat of the Conference this year. Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Mr. Tim Caughley and their colleagues have done much to facilitate notable progress in the Conference.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): I thank the distinguished Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation for his important statement and for his cordial words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Brazil. You have the floor.

Mr. da ROCHA PARANHOS (Brazil): Mr. President, allow me first of all to congratulate you on your leadership of the Conference on Disarmament and to thank you for all the effort and energy that were put into the elaboration and adoption of the 2007 session final report. I want also to take the opportunity to congratulate all the other Presidents of this session, namely the Ambassadors of South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden and Switzerland, and to express to them my sincere gratitude for their decision to appoint me as coordinator for agenda item 4, entitled “Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons”.

When this session began, we thought that the CD, building upon the work that had already been structured last year by the P-6 of 2006, would do justice to the murals of José María Sert that we can appreciate in this august chamber depicting the progress of humankind and finally end a long-standing stalemate by moving towards a concerted programme of work. As a collective body, however, we could not find a path towards consensus.

Since 1999, several proposals have been tabled within the CD in an attempt to move forward and regain the purpose and meaning of the CD for which the CD was created, that is, to negotiate international treaties for disarmament. My country has always shown a strong commitment and spirit of flexibility in trying to accommodate every delegation’s interests and concerns. The Amorim proposal was tabled by the then Permanent Representative to the CD and present Minister of External Relations of Brazil. We have also supported the A-5 proposal and, more recently, the P-6 proposal which became document L.1, in an effort to see the CD devote itself to substantive work and start negotiations. We could not yet reach consensus.

Despite that, at the end of this 2007 session, in Brazil’s perspective, this year was a productive year during which all of us dedicated a considerable amount of effort, time, attention and energy in order to move in the direction of the adoption of a programme of work. The structured debates conducted by the coordinators appointed by the presidency produced results in the sense that we could discuss frankly and openly in an informal setting about our interests and concerns on each item of our agenda. The debates were also constructive, as they promoted a deeper and broader understanding of our national policies and perspectives.

We must not let all this work be lost. Otherwise, like in the myth of Sisyphus, the work of the CD will be like rolling the same stone again and again to the top of the mountain and letting it fall down under its own weight. There cannot be a more severe punishment than futile and hopeless labour.

We owe it to ourselves at least to build on the foundation laid this year, and I sincerely hope that this progress will lead to the consolidation of the P-6 platform in order to allow us to build upon the important work developed in 2007, especially in the first part of the present session, and to help us to find consensus on a programme of work and the start of early negotiations in 2008.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): I thank His Excellency the Ambassador of Brazil for his important statement and for his best wishes to the President. I now give the floor to the distinguished Ambassador of Turkey. You have the floor.

Mr. ÜZÜMCÜ (Turkey): Mr. President, I would commend you on your efficiency in chairing the CD's discussions on the 2007 report that we have adopted today. This process has been relatively smooth this year. I also want to thank your predecessors and the coordinators, as well as the secretariat, for their tremendous efforts during the year.

The P-6 have indeed worked hard to bring the CD back to its substantive work, acting with creativity and applying innovative methods. In spite of all this, we have not been able to reach consensus on document L.1 and complementary statements and embark upon real negotiations.

The CD is in fact the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. We believe that all members should do their utmost to enable this forum to fulfil its functions. My country is among the six countries which will assume the presidency next year. As stated by my distinguished colleague from Tunisia, we shall spare no effort to reach a satisfactory outcome. This will no doubt be to the benefit of the CD and its members, but more importantly, multilateralism will prevail.

Finally, I want to express our best wishes to the distinguished Ambassadors of Italy and Iran and thank them for their valuable contributions, their cooperation and friendship.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to His Excellency the Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

Mr. DUNCAN (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, I will be brief, but I would like to take this opportunity to join others, notably the EU and fellow 2008 P-6 members, in congratulating you on guiding this Conference in its debate on the annual report to a successful conclusion. The year 2007 has been a significant year for the Conference on Disarmament, building, as Ambassador Trezza has so eloquently described, on the platform of the P-6 initiative. This year's P-6 have worked assiduously to build a consensus for starting work, consulting widely, encouraging compromise, cajoling members to move beyond previous positions into new territory. It is true that the work of the 2007 P-6 is a sterling example for those of us who will form the 2008 P-6. Capturing the work of 2007 in a way which did not prescribe or proscribe our future work was a major challenge for the last 2007 P-6 presidency, Syria. I am sure others would agree that you and your collaborator, Dr. Ali, have carried this out in an exemplary manner, acting as the honest broker for the views of the CD members. The report provides not only a record of work done, but a key document for the incoming P-6 to undertake renewed efforts to have the CD meet the ambitions of its membership.

Finally, I would like to join others in wishing our departing colleagues, Ambassador Trezza and Ambassador Sajjadpour, all the very best for the future.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): I thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom for his important statement and for his kind wishes and words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea. You have the floor.

Mr. CHANG (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, first of all, let me congratulate you on the successful adoption of the final report. This was possible thanks to your distinguished leadership as well as a spirit of compromise and accommodation shown by member States. My delegation also places a high value on the successful and effective operation of the P-6 system, which was initiated last year. Moreover, the appointment of coordinators by this year's Presidents for the items on the agenda provided the member States with a valuable opportunity to discuss the items more intensively and deepen their understanding of the issues at hand. However, it is very regrettable that we have spent one more year without embarking on our own business. The problems, challenges and issues we are now facing were eloquently analysed and explained by the previous speakers, especially by the Portuguese representative on behalf of the EU, by Ambassador Trezza of Italy, by Ambassador Tarui of Japan and by Ambassador Paranhos of Brazil.

My delegation sincerely hopes that we will be able to bring the CD out of its long hibernation and make a fresh start at the earliest possible date. In this sense, my delegation welcomes the determination and commitment shown by Tunisia and Turkey, the incoming Presidents.

Finally, I would like to convey my wishes for every success and good health to Ambassador Trezza of Italy and Ambassador Sajjadpour of Iran, our two cherished friends who are going to leave us soon.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): I thank the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the President. The last speaker on my list is the Ambassador of Pakistan. You have the floor.

Mr. KHAN (Pakistan): Mr. President, let me begin by paying a well-deserved tribute to you for your excellent leadership during your presidency. You listened, you consulted and you synthesized inputs. We were glad to see you acting as a catalyst and bringing year-long consultations of the CD session to an elegant end, which might well be the beginning of a genuine consultative process for exploring consensus. We appreciate the commendable work done by all the six Presidents this year.

I will be remiss if I do not compliment your able aides, especially Mr. Hussain Ali, whose facilitation supported your presidency and helped the entire Conference. Above all, we congratulate Syria.

We bid farewell to Ambassador Carlo Trezza, whose passion to succeed kept us engaged. We wish him more success in Rome. His reflections today on the current state of affairs of the CD provide sufficient food for thought.

We will miss Ambassador Sajjadpour. His judicious handling of the issues of the CD kept the dialogue on a rational plane.

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

In the past two weeks, we have passed through a phase of intense engagement on the Conference's annual report to the United Nations General Assembly. It has not been an easy task. I want to thank several delegations for their "due diligence". Their understanding, flexibility and ingenuity have helped us bridge gaps and resolve differences. We still have a long way to go and we need each other's support in this continuing endeavour.

In the past three years, the CD has witnessed increased activity and focus. The goal of reaching consensus has not been achieved. The 2008 session should make earnest efforts to reach consensus on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. In this regard we would welcome consultations by you and the incoming Presidents. Today we have heard presentations by the three incoming Presidents, Tunisia, Turkey and the United Kingdom, and we appreciate listening to their thoughts.

Document CD/2007/L.1 has raised hopes this year. Throughout this session, we have been saying that we have serious and substantive concerns. We have been ready to table our amendments to L.1 since May 2007 so that negotiations on the basis of an agreed document could be initiated. We refrained from doing so to allow for completion of our own interdepartmental review process and consultations with CD members. Now our review process is complete, and we need to intensify consultations to reach consensus.

As I stated in this chamber on 16 August 2007, the National Command Authority, the highest body responsible for the formulation and development of our strategic policy and systems, made the following announcement on 2 August: "The NCA reviewed the current status of negotiations on disarmament issues in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, including regarding the proposed FMCT. The NCA reiterated Pakistan's position in favour of a non-discriminatory multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty, taking into account the security concerns of all States."

Recent developments in the nuclear field in South Asia have serious implications for strategic stability in the region. A strategic restraint regime, which we have pursued since 1998, should not become elusive. Pakistan's brief in the CD is anchored in its core national security interests.

The decade-long stalemate in the CD has been caused by the attempts to scupper the Shannon mandate, which enjoyed universal adherence, and remove from the table the A-5 and other proposals which had near-universal support and presented a good basis for compromise.

We believe that the Conference should make a sure-footed beginning for substantive work. In this regard, we have made the following suggestions.

One, the Conference should set itself the task to negotiate a "non-discriminatory multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable" fissile material treaty. The CD should work towards a tangible and concrete goal. A weak, tenuous FMT will be neither a disarmament measure nor a non-proliferation measure. Without a verifiable FMT as an objective, the central plank of the CD's activity will be missing.

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

Two, an FMT negotiation mandate should distinctly recognize the possibility of taking up the question of the scope of the treaty and the existing stocks of fissile material.

Three, equal and balanced treatment be given to all the four core issues.

Four, ad hoc committees, as provided for in the CD rules of procedure, should conduct negotiations.

In the coming months, we are ready to hold consultations with CD members on these points. In this regard, today we have heard intently many well-meaning statements made by our colleagues here.

Our understanding on certain issues of the 2007 session is as follows: First, the coordinators were “appointed” under the authority of the Presidents; and the CD President transmitted their reports under his own responsibility. The coordinators acted in their individual capacities. They were not Special Coordinators, and thus they do not substitute or supplant existing mechanisms, as recognized by the CD’s rules of procedure. Second, the P-6 coordination has played an important role in generating activity in the CD. This arrangement remains informal. The P-6 proposals are subject to open negotiations and the concurrence of all members. Their initiatives are not a fait accompli. Third, as an exceptional measure and for practical reasons, in the first part of the 2007 session, the issues relating to a fissile material treaty were taken up by the coordinator under agenda item 2 instead of agenda item 1, where they belong. This was a one-time occurrence, and as such it does not constitute an agreed precedent.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan for his important statement and for his kind words addressed to the President and to my country. I now give the floor to His Excellency the Ambassador of China. You have the floor.

Mr. CHENG (China) (spoke in Chinese): The Chinese delegation welcomes the annual report of the CD just adopted, which on the whole objectively reflects the work of the CD in the past year. Here I should like to express my gratitude and appreciation to you, Mr. President and to your delegation for the outstanding leadership abilities you demonstrated during the drafting of the report, and to all parties for their constructive attitude. At the same time I should like to thank the six Presidents for their efforts in the past year and, of course, also the coordinators.

Just now the Canadian delegation submitted and introduced a report on the conference held last April on outer space organized by UNIDIR, and we appreciate this effort. At the conference the participants held in-depth and fruitful discussions on how to effectively safeguard outer space security, which undoubtedly helped to make the international community more aware of the urgency of a solution to the issue of security in outer space and to promote the work of the CD in that area. The prevention of an arms race in outer space is China’s priority concern in the CD. We are willing to continue our efforts with all other parties so that the CD can begin its substantive work on this item at an early date.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of the People's Republic of China for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the President and to my country. I now give the floor to the last speaker on my list, the Ambassador of Ukraine. You have the floor.

Mr. BERSHEDA (Ukraine) (spoke in French): Mr. President, allow me to take the floor not merely as a participant in our session this year but also as one of the future Presidents of the Conference. I would like to associate myself with my colleagues from the team of six Presidents for next year and convey our determination to support the efforts made by the Conference on Disarmament in 2007.

For my part I would like to thank you because I can well imagine that the role of the last President of the session is rather special, and above all it carries responsibilities. It seems to me that we can add our voice to those who have provided a positive appraisal of the work of this year's six Presidents. I would also like to inform you that the team of six Presidents for 2008 is already endeavouring to institute cooperation among its members in order to prepare for next year's proceedings. Like many other countries, Ukraine supports document L.1 and we hope that that document can provide the basis for our joint movement next year. Needless to say we are sure that the views of all countries have to be respected in discussions on that document.

Allow me to assure you that Ukraine is mindful of the responsibilities that fall on the President of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to remind you that my country has already chaired the Conference in 1998. Lastly, allow me to express our thanks to our colleagues who have concluded their missions and convey our best wishes to them.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Arabic): I thank the Ambassador of Ukraine for his statement and for his kind words. I wish him every success as a member of the group of six Presidents for the year 2008.

Does any other delegation wish to make a statement? I see that this is not the case.

Allow me to make my statement at the end of today's meeting. At the outset, I should like to thank all the delegations for their cooperation and flexibility and for the positive spirit that prevailed throughout our discussion of the Conference's report. This allowed us to adopt the final report in a form that substantially reflects the proceedings of the Conference during the 2007 session. The adoption of this important and substantive report in its current form expresses the desire on the part of the members to continue efforts to enable the Conference to achieve the objectives for which the Conference was established. I should also like to reiterate my thanks and my appreciation to all the speakers for the kind words that they addressed to the Syrian presidency this morning.

Today our Conference concludes its 2007 session. Although we all made sincere efforts, we were not able to adopt a programme of work that would allow us to commence meaningful

(The President)

negotiations on the principal issues of concern to the Conference, in particular ridding the world of the threat of nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, the progress made this year has been considerable and it allows us to hope that we will be able to continue our work and build on this progress next year. I shall continue my consultations with the future Presidents for 2008, in particular with my distinguished colleague the first of the Presidents, the Ambassador of Tunisia, during the intersessional period.

The Conference this year, in addition to the sincere efforts that were made, also heard some positive ideas reflecting the superior diplomatic skills of their Excellencies the Ambassadors and the members of the Conference.

A large number of heads of delegations whom I have met since I arrived in Geneva a month and a half ago told me that some delegations had questions and perhaps doubts about what the Syrian presidency could achieve. I replied that what matters is results. We have succeeded thanks to the wonderful cooperation that you have all shown. We have done constructive work, as all the members of the Conference have attested. For the first time in years, we have made good progress, reflecting in a very balanced way in this important and substantive report all aspects of the activities carried out and the views of everyone without exception. We have proved, thanks to your sincere cooperation and flexibility, that Syria has constructive and positive ideas and that it is part of the solution and not part of the problem, whether at the Conference on Disarmament or in other international forums.

In conclusion, I should like to express my gratitude and appreciation to all the delegations that have contributed positively and constructively to the deliberations of the Conference. I should like to convey my profound gratitude to my colleagues, the Presidents of the Conference for 2007, who provided all manner of support, cooperation, wisdom and flexibility, persuading everyone at this Conference that the P-6 is extremely important and useful for the work of the Conference. We must continue to use this mechanism, especially given that the P-6 group represents a wide range of the membership of the Conference and reflects its concerns and interests.

I should also like to thank the seven coordinators for their efforts, which were good efforts despite the shortage of time with which they had to contend. They showed a strong desire to achieve the progress that we all hope to see.

I should also like to express my sincere thanks to the secretariat of the Conference and, in particular, to the Director-General, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, for his continued support and valuable advice and for the valuable time that he devoted to us every time we needed it. I would also thank Ambassador Tim Caughley, Mr. Jerzy Zaleski and Mr. Valère Mantels, as well as the other members of the Conference secretariat, for their valuable cooperation and professionalism. I thank the interpreters who, with consummate professionalism and skill, have translated our ideas into the six official languages of the United Nations.

(The President)

Before concluding our work, I would like to inform you that we will hold an informal consultation session next Tuesday, 18 September, at 10 a.m. in this room to discuss the draft resolution on the Conference that we will be submitting to the First Committee of the General Assembly. The secretariat has informed me that the text of that draft resolution will be made available to everyone as of tomorrow, Friday.

Does any delegation wish to make any comments or observations before we conclude our work? No. This therefore concludes our business for today and the 2007 session. Thank you, everyone.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.