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First Committee

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Official Records

Chairperson: Mr. José Luis Cancela (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Agenda items 86 to 103 (continued)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): This afternoon, we will continue with the round table on disarmament machinery that we began yesterday. I would like to welcome His Excellency Ambassador Christian Strohal, President of the Conference on Disarmament, and His Excellency Mr. Andrzej Towpik, Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Also with us today is the speaker from yesterday, Ms. Theresa Hitchens, Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. In order to continue the pace of the Committee's work, I would be grateful if speakers would be brief in their remarks.

Before giving the floor to speakers, I shall suspend the meeting so that we can continue our debate informally.

The meeting was suspended at 3.30 p.m. and resumed at 3.50 p.m.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall now hear further speakers in the thematic debate on disarmament machinery.

Mr. Hellgren (Sweden): I am again speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate

countries of Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this statement.

The European Union strongly believes that a multilateral approach to security, disarmament and non-proliferation is the best way to maintain international peace. As a firm supporter of effective multilateralism, the EU considers that the General Assembly and its First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and various international treaties, together with their organizations and review processes, are mutually reinforcing entities. In view of the new threats to security, the disarmament machinery has an increasingly important role to play. We should make every effort to preserve and, where possible, strengthen it.

Given its universal nature, the First Committee is one of the most important forums for discussing and drafting resolutions on non-proliferation and disarmament issues. In the First Committee, we should foster a common understanding of the current threats to peace and security and enable the international community to address them effectively in all relevant bodies.

The European Union supports the work of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), under the able leadership of the High

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Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Sergio Duarte. Inter alia, UNODA plays a key role in supporting the implementation of the mandates, decisions and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

The European Union underlines the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the single permanent forum available to the international community for disarmament negotiations. The EU warmly welcomed the adoption by consensus of the Conference's comprehensive programme of work, on 29 May 2009, and profoundly regrets that the programme's implementation did not begin before the end of the 2009 session. The EU looks forward to the early commencement of substantive work in 2010, building on the political consensus achieved this year.

The EU wishes to take this opportunity to reiterate its desire to see the Conference on Disarmament enlarged, in particular to include those EU member States that are not yet members of the Conference.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission was established to be the universal deliberative body on disarmament. The EU hopes that in the future the Commission will be able to fully resume its role of promoting the objectives set forth in its mandate and start an in-depth consideration of the key issues on the agenda adopted in 2009.

The existing disarmament machinery has produced significant obligations and commitments in the disarmament field. While there is room for improvement, the machinery continues to have the potential to fulfil its functions. Given the current security challenges and today's international relations, it is important that we effectively utilize the potential of the disarmament machinery and, where needed, improve its functioning. In the end, what is essential for any machinery of this kind to function effectively is political will, good faith, trust and the willingness of States to fully comply with obligations and commitments agreed. In that spirit, the EU will continue to work constructively in all parts of the disarmament machinery.

Mr. Perazza (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to make the following statement on behalf of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and its associated States, namely, Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil,

Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and my own country, Uruguay.

The members of MERCOSUR and its associated States reaffirm the full validity of multilateral diplomacy in the sphere of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as a basic principle that should govern negotiations on this subject in order to guarantee effective results. Progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is essential to strengthen international peace and security. In that regard, we would like to highlight the value of global and regional approaches that, applied alongside confidence-building measures, promote peace and security at the regional and international levels.

The United Nations plays a central role in this field, in line with its Charter-mandated primary responsibility in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. That was understood by all the States Members of the Organization when we reiterated our commitment to establishing a set of bodies with different but complementary functions whose goal was to strengthen the joint deliberation and negotiating efforts necessary to adequately address this matter. In that regard, the importance and relevance of the Disarmament Commission as the sole universal specialized deliberative and negotiating body of the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery are extremely relevant in the current international environment of reinvigorated nuclear disarmament efforts.

The Commission began a new triennial cycle this year, during which it agreed to address three issues: recommendations to achieve the goal of disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons; elements for a draft declaration of the 2010-2020 Fourth Disarmament Decade; and practical confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons, which will be taken up once the elements for the draft declaration are agreed. MERCOSUR and its associated States are fully committed to continuing to support the work of the Commission. It would seem that 2010 will be a year of hope for achieving the necessary consensus in addressing the issues on the agenda.

This year, the international community has witnessed the achievement of agreements by the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, which adopted a

programme of work after more than a decade of deadlock. In that regard, we express our gratitude to the members and Presidents of the Conference for their tireless efforts to achieve that goal. At the same time, we call on all members of that body to support and contribute to the beginning of substantive work on the items agreed for the agenda.

MERCOSUR and its associated States express their support for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, headquartered in Lima. We note the innumerable regional and subregional initiatives in the area of regional disarmament that are clearly focused on development. It is also worth remembering that the Regional Centre is the only one of the three Centres of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs whose mandate includes not only the implementation of peace and disarmament efforts, but also the promotion of economic and social development. That additional mandate has made it possible for the Centre to implement initiatives by States that go far beyond the field of disarmament. As a result, broad-based activities have been carried to ensure that peace and security issues are closely linked to the sustainable development and common security of Member States.

We support the draft resolution on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (A/C.1/64/L.22), to be introduced by the representative of Peru on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

I cannot conclude without affirming the commitment of MERCOSUR and its associated States to continuing to support the work of the disarmament mechanisms to which I have referred, which serve to energize our joint efforts to make progress in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation while at the same time contributing to ensuring the well-being of our peoples.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): Before we proceed with the list of speakers, I should like to request the cooperation of those in the room in maintaining the necessary order and silence so that speakers can make their statements properly. I thank members for their cooperation in advance.

I now give the floor to the representative of Peru to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.22.

Mr. Aquino (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Maintaining international peace and security is a goal that requires a series of cross-cutting efforts. One of these is linked to disarmament. Aware that such efforts, be they individual or collective, require appropriate forums for discussion and specialized support and advice, States have developed a mechanism to enable us to make progress towards the goal of maintaining international peace and security. As part of the disarmament machinery, we have established Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, with that for Latin America and the Caribbean being headquartered in Peru.

During its 22 years of existence, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC) has provided important support to the countries of the region in the promotion of security, disarmament and development. At the same time, among the many fields in which the Centre is active, it has also backed the implementation of numerous initiatives in the areas of confidence-building measures, improving public security by reducing armed violence, combating the illicit traffic in firearms, and promoting and implementing multilateral instruments for the development of a culture of peace.

Armed violence, which is continuously increasing in urban areas, has become one of the most serious security problems faced by a large part of our region. It poses a serious obstacle to social peace, good governance and the rule of law. In the context of the joint efforts of national Governments and the Regional Centre, work has been stepped up to combat the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons.

UN-LiREC undertakes numerous activities as part of its mandate to support the countries of the region in such areas as technical assistance for the reform and harmonization of their firearms laws in line with the relevant international instruments; practical measures for disarmament, capacity-building and activities to promote peace; the preparation of national reports and the establishment of mechanisms for the implementation of multilateral disarmament instruments. In addition, the Centre acts as a secretariat in organizing workshops and seminars on disarmament and the promotion of peace.

All such initiatives are being carried out with scarce financial resources. It is therefore deeply

worrisome that there is no regular budget and that voluntary contributions have now become crucial to the functioning of the Centre. As a result, the Centre's capacity to effectively carry out its mandate and to respond to the increasing demand for support is drastically limited. We hope that this situation will soon be remedied to ensure that contributions made to the Centre are fully devoted to projects linked to strategic regional disarmament issues.

For those reasons, draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.22, which is before the General Assembly for its consideration, reiterates strong support for the role of the Centre in the promotion of United Nations activities at the regional level to strengthen peace, disarmament, stability, security and development. Therefore, as in previous years, I trust that we will be able to count on the valuable support of all delegations for the consensus adoption of the draft resolution.

Ms. Skorpen (Norway): Norway is firmly committed to multilateralism in disarmament and non-proliferation. But if multilateralism is to work, intergovernmental machinery that can produce substantive outcomes is required. The structure of the present machinery in the field of disarmament was established at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978. Today, 31 years later, we live in a very different world.

In recent years, regrettably, we have seen how key multilateral bodies have struggled to live up to our expectations — or, even worse, have been completely paralyzed. Having said that, we have also witnessed some impressive achievements, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Mine-Ban Convention, which for more than 10 years have delivered results. We have great expectations that the Convention on Cluster Munitions will deliver similar outcomes.

But it is a sad fact that the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission have not delivered anything of substance for more than a decade. We are pleased to note that the Conference finally managed to adopt a programme of work this year, but we find it disturbing that it was unable to start the much-needed negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in 2009. We also question the notion that the Conference is defined as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community while more than 120 United Nations Member States are excluded from the process.

The year 2010 will be critical to the Conference. If that body continues not to deliver, we should ask ourselves whether, in its existing format, that institution serves our interests. The time is long overdue for looking into the working methods of the Conference to ensure that it becomes more inclusive and more responsive to the new currents in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Any credible and relevant multilateral negotiating body should be open to any country. Furthermore, we have to implement working methods that do not allow countries to single-handedly bring work to a standstill, which ultimately will lead to marginalization and irrelevance.

We should ask the same questions about the United Nations Disarmament Commission. That body, which was intended to be a deliberative forum, has had great difficulties in delivering substantial deliberations and recommendations for the work of disarmament. If we are to preserve the Commission, we must make it more practical, more focused and more relevant. We continue to believe that regular sessions of the Commission should be much shorter and focused on one or two topics decided by the First Committee. Given its deliberative mandate, we remain convinced that outcomes of the sessions of the Disarmament Commission could take the form of a Chairperson's summary, which could point to areas where consensus might be emerging.

Given its universal nature, we consider the First Committee to be fundamental in advancing the work on disarmament and non-proliferation. Norway has for several years advocated improvements in the working methods of the First Committee in order to make this body more relevant in addressing security challenges. While we have witnessed some progress in the way the Committee works, much more remains to be done.

In that respect, we would like to reiterate our view on some of the working methods on draft resolutions. Each year, we see huge efforts to mobilize the highest number of sponsors for draft resolutions. Is that approach the best way to make use of our time and energy? If we could agree on limiting the tradition of seeking sponsorship to only newly introduced draft resolutions, we would improve the efficiency of the First Committee.

Furthermore, it is our view that when a resolution has been adopted it will stand, unless otherwise decided. That would enable us to reduce the number of

repetitive resolutions and make more time available for substantive and focused discussions. We also note that too many resolutions have texts that are nearly identical to those adopted in previous years, and thus do not take into account emerging new political opportunities to move the disarmament agenda forward.

This year's session of the First Committee is taking place in the wake of the historic summit of the Security Council. Resolution 1887 (2009) sent a strong political message about the overall objective of creating a world without nuclear weapons. In Norway's view, this session of the First Committee should have two objectives: to build consensus on the need for the multilateral disarmament machinery to produce results, and to foster a common understanding of how existing and new security threats should be addressed. That would also give immense weight to the upcoming Review Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in May 2010.

It is not evident that the Committee has succeeded in that task. If we do not renew this body, we will continue to see other institutions, such as the Security Council, assume responsibility for disarmament and non-proliferation matters. In order to advance the First Committee's work on disarmament and non-proliferation, we believe there is wisdom in convening a fourth session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, provided that we can agree on adjusting our multilateral negotiating bodies to better respond to the window of opportunity that is now emerging. Reaching such agreement will not be easy, but it is possible, provided that all States Members of the United Nations are ready to contribute in a constructive manner.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the importance that Norway attaches to the active engagement of the disarmament machinery with civil society and non-governmental organizations active in the field of disarmament, as well as the positive role of research institutions such as the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, which has played a very important role in informing our debates. We hope to see more interaction with civil society in the future.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Austria to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.41.

Mr. Strohal (Austria): It is a pleasure to take the floor again, this time to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.41, entitled "Report of the Conference on Disarmament", on behalf of the delegation of Austria and my fellow Presidents of the Conference for 2009, the representatives of Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe. I think I can be brief, following this afternoon's informal discussions.

It is clear that 2009 has opened a new chapter in the life of the Conference on Disarmament. This year has differed greatly from previous years, as we have finally been able to adopt by consensus a programme of work after more than a decade of stalemate. At the same time, however, as has been noted, the commencement of substantive work still continues to elude us. Therefore, with some adaptations to reflect this year's developments, the structure and content of the draft resolution are largely based on those of resolutions of past years, which were always adopted without a vote.

I know that a number of delegations would have preferred a more ambitious approach that highlighted not only this year's achievements but also expectations that that consensus adoption would lead to a rapid start to negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, as foreseen in the programme of work. Those delegations would also have preferred a stronger reference to the recent Security Council summit's support for the Conference on Disarmament and, more specifically, to its call for rapid start to those negotiations.

Some other delegations preferred a more traditional approach. They wanted to proceed more on the basis of previous resolutions adopted here, underlining that it is for the Conference on Disarmament itself to determine not only its own programme but also its own progress. For us as sponsors, the most important element remains that the General Assembly continue to take high interest in the work of the Conference on Disarmament and to encourage it to proceed with work in order to reach meaningful results, while acknowledging previous achievements and its capacity to emulate them again.

As I have said, I think that the text of the draft resolution very much speaks for itself. In the preamble, we make reference, among other things, to the

addresses of the Secretary-General, ministers for foreign affairs and other high-level dignitaries, as well as to developments in the Security Council and the decision of the Conference on Disarmament to adopt a programme of work. We also reflect the collective sense of urgency in the Conference to embark on substantive work.

In the operative part, we refer to the discussions on the implementation of the programme of work, as well as to the intersessional work and the consultations between the current and incoming Presidents and members. I am greatly encouraged in that context by the strong readiness of my colleague from Bangladesh to take up the consultations already at this stage.

We are currently finalizing the text and are confident that we will be able to present a consolidated version early next week. The draft resolution on the report of the Conference on Disarmament has always been adopted without a vote. It is our belief that that should also guide us this year: a year of greater hopes for a successful resumption of the Conference's work early in 2010.

Mrs. Ancidey (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation endorses the statement made by the representative of Uruguay on behalf of the Common Market of the South and associated States.

For the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, multilateralism is the only way to ensure that the world can live free of the nuclear threat and proliferation. That principle and the principle of good faith must be the ones to guide negotiations in the area of international disarmament and security.

The priorities agreed at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament remain in full force, as do all bodies committed to advancing those issues and to strengthening the role of the United Nations as the preferred forum for negotiating such issues and for strengthening international peace and security.

Among those bodies, we underscore the Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized deliberating body of universal composition. During this year, which saw the beginning of a new three-year work cycle in the Commission, my country had the honour of being one of the representatives for Latin America and the Caribbean. We are fully committed to

the success of the Commission, and we stress its virtues as a deliberative forum in which all Member States have the opportunity to exchange our views.

Moreover, we welcome the adoption by consensus of the substantive agenda items: "Recommendations for achieving the objective of disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons"; "Elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade"; and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", which will be taken up once we have completed work on the elements of a draft declaration of the 2010s as the fourth disarmament decade. We hope that the objectives set for 2010 will be achieved and that this will result in consensus agreements.

Unlike the start of the previous session, on this occasion our discussions are taking place against the backdrop of new events that underscore the reactivation of the only United Nations body with a negotiating mandate on matters of disarmament and non-proliferation. We highlight as positive the approval of the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament after the 12 years of paralysis and stagnation that that body underwent as a result of the position held by some countries that are against the spirit of dialogue and cooperation that should guide international relations among sovereign States. Our delegation hopes that progress on the entire programme of work will begin without further delay.

Once again, we wish to underscore our support for the many subregional and regional initiatives on regional disarmament to be implemented in their proper geographical context, where all countries of an area strive to develop strategies to strengthen peace and security through their national institutions. In that regard, we voice our support for the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, headquartered in Lima, and for draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.22, prepared by the delegation of Peru.

Mr. Gartshore (Canada) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Canadian delegation, Sir, welcomes your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee for 2009. Canada is pleased that such a worthy representative of our hemisphere has been entrusted with guiding our work, and the Canadian delegation is committed to providing you our full support for a productive session.

(spoke in French)

It is important to underscore that the international community's disarmament machinery requires political will if we want to obtain results. In recent weeks, Canada has been encouraged to see political will at the highest levels, in particular within the Security Council. The adoption of resolution 1887 (2009) of 24 September, which testifies to the Security Council's commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to nuclear disarmament, should be commended. That resolution provides vital impetus to the efforts that we are making here in the First Committee and should help advance our work on the multilateral disarmament system. It highlights the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which it describes as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

With that in mind as we prepare for the NPT Review Conference, which will take place next May, Canada urges all States parties to reflect on our dependence on the NPT and on the relatively weak support that the United Nations and the Treaty's States parties grant its machinery. For the sake of comparison, let us take the example of the Biological Weapons Convention, which possesses a three-person unit to support the Convention's implementation, or that of the Chemical Weapons Convention and its Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which is much larger.

Today, the NPT does not even have one full-time person in the Office for Disarmament Affairs. The minimalist structure provided to the NPT by its States parties makes it a great challenge for almost any country to be able to chair a meeting on the NPT or, even more, to enhance its effectiveness.

Thus, Canada approaches the 2010 NPT Review Conference with the will to strengthen our existing disarmament machinery. Last May, at the third session of the Preparatory Committee, Canada circulated a working paper entitled "Strengthening the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons" (NPT/CONF.2010/PC.III/WP.8). The paper addresses what Canada terms the institutional deficit of the Treaty. It proposes three options, which, if adopted together, would not entail

additional costs for the members. The three proposals would make it possible to improve the effectiveness of the Treaty through the following measures: adopting a revised meeting schedule whereby current preparatory committee sessions are replaced by shorter and more focused annual general conferences; establishing a more responsive and more accountable governance structure through the creation of a standing bureau comprising two immediate past Chairs and the current Chair; and strengthening the administrative capacity of the Treaty's review process through the establishment of a support unit. Canada looks forward to engaging in a dialogue with the other States parties on the contents of its working paper.

I would like to conclude on a positive note. Canada's Ambassador, Mr. Grinius, had the privilege of chairing the Biological Weapons Convention meetings in 2009, and Canada is pleased to report the good state of that Convention, owing in part to the assistance of the Implementation Support Unit. The functioning of the Convention demonstrates that, with a little creativity and goodwill, our disarmament machinery can advance towards our common goal of making our world more secure and, among other things, free of nuclear weapons.

The Chairperson (spoke in Spanish): I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.51.

Mr. Ali (Malaysia): On behalf of my delegation, we would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, contained in document A/64/139, submitted under agenda item 96 (i). We would also like to place on record our appreciation to those delegations that have submitted the information requested pursuant to resolution 63/49 of 2008.

The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons* constitutes a significant milestone in international efforts aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation by lending a powerful moral argument for the total elimination of such weapons. In no uncertain terms, the world Court declared that all Member States are obliged to "pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations

leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control”.

Given the multitude of complexities surrounding international disarmament negotiations at present, it is imperative that we muster the requisite political will and moral courage to achieve the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In that regard, since 1997 Malaysia has introduced a resolution on the follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*.

It is our honour once again to introduce to the Committee a draft resolution entitled “Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*”, contained in document A/C.1/64/L.51. With a view to achieving the broadest support possible, important decisions of the International Court of Justice have been retained in their existing form, specifically in paragraphs 1 and 2 of the draft resolution, accompanied by the necessary technical updates.

On a related note, my delegation is of the view that, in supporting the draft resolution, Member States would also be reaffirming their continued commitment to the multilateral processes in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and that such expressions of commitment would go a long way towards dispelling the notion that nuclear disarmament could best be achieved through unilateral or bilateral efforts alone.

The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons* remains a significant contribution in the field of nuclear disarmament and lends much weight to the moral argument calling for the total elimination of such weapons. Support for the draft resolution is a reaffirmation of our commitment to the multilateral process in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We thank the sponsors of the draft resolution, and we invite others to join in sponsoring it. We hope that the draft resolution will continue to receive the support of all Member States.

Mr. Al-Khater (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank you, Sir, for organizing this substantive discussion on disarmament, and the President of the

Conference on Disarmament, the Chairperson of the Disarmament Commission and the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research for their participation in this very important and constructive debate.

Clearly, disarmament instruments must play a pivotal role in the United Nations in the disarmament machinery. In fact, although it has been criticized, the disarmament machinery plays an important role and is indispensable to the maintenance of international peace and security. What the mechanism needs is the political will to implement it, since each part has an important role to play. The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva is responsible for addressing such issues and is the only forum to address disarmament resolutions and decide on principles and guidelines in that context, as well as all questions and recommendations relating to disarmament.

At the national level, Qatar has played a very important role and has implemented disarmament instruments in the fields of chemical, nuclear, biological and toxin weapons and landmines. We have enacted a number of laws in implementation of our national and international commitments and in compliance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. We have also trained officials and educated our society in order to strengthen our capacity to implement those instruments, in particular with respect to human rights and international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention and its Additional Protocols.

At the regional level, we have strengthened disarmament machinery in cooperation with regional organizations, such as the League of Arab States, and have promoted disarmament controls throughout the region in coordination with defence bodies and regional organizations, which complement the work of the United Nations machinery in the maintenance of international peace and security. We also actively participate in all conferences and seminars organized by the United Nations in that sphere.

In conclusion, my country’s delegation stresses that periodic formal or informal meetings should be convened in order to contribute to the implementation of the disarmament programme and to launch open negotiations on fissile materials. We underscore the importance of the flexibility and political will of all Member States if we are to achieve our common goals,

which will be possible only by implementing the aforementioned instruments and commitments and by avoiding politicization of this issue.

Mr. Macedo Soares (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): Naturally, the delegation of Brazil endorses the statement made by the representative of Uruguay on behalf of the Common Market of the South and associated States.

(*spoke in English*)

Every year as we review the entire agenda of disarmament and related issues in the First Committee, we have a clear picture of the immense task still ahead, the complexity of issues and the variety of sensibilities, opinions and positions. Fortunately, there is a prevailing desire for a world free of war and a true commitment to the principles and ideals enshrined in the Charter. All of this effort is channelled through a machinery that is perhaps complex and heavy, but which responds to the complexity of issues and to the multifaceted international community.

Superficial critics sometimes speak of rivers of words, floods of paper and scarcity of action. In fact, it is difficult to measure the amount of violence and destruction avoided by those words and that paper. But silence would certainly not be better. Since its very first resolution, the General Assembly has been working for disarmament. For many years, the First Committee has returned untiringly to a vast agenda, actively negotiating some 50 draft resolutions at every session. The growing number of interventions cannot be seen as a sign of lack of interest.

Another element in the United Nations disarmament structure established by the first special session on disarmament is the Disarmament Commission, which, according to decision 52/492, can concentrate on deliberating two or three substantive items, such as preparing the declaration of the 2010s as the fourth Disarmament Decade.

By adopting a programme of work on 29 May 2009, the Conference on Disarmament sent a clear signal that the barriers opposing the undertaking of disarmament negotiations are beginning to fall. All of the elements for the commencement of actual work could not be put in place this year. However, the political momentum must not be lost, and Brazil favours a draft resolution on the work of the Conference that supports the adoption of a programme

of work early next year, quickly followed by the adoption of measures for its implementation.

The positive events in the Conference on Disarmament this year are especially important in that they reveal that the immobility that persisted for a number of years was not due to the working conditions of the organ as embodied in its rules of procedure. Rather, it was a political opening and flexibility, combined with diplomatic skill, that removed fears and led to consensus. In other words, it is political will and negotiations that can put the machinery into motion, not the opposite. Political will does not arise spontaneously. It is in fact the expression of a State's participation in the international community and of its obligations to its citizens and to humanity. However, the main responsibility in this case lies with the nuclear-weapon States.

The neutral and fluid succession of Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament, in alphabetical order, has proved to be a positive feature, allowing cooperation among all the Presidents during each session and a smooth transition from one session to the next, as is now taking place between the current presidency, Austria, and the next, Bangladesh.

Another important support to the work of the machinery is the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, which has opened opportunities for research, debate and action, independent of actual negotiations.

An indispensable part of the machinery is the Secretariat, and here a tribute should be paid to the Office for Disarmament Affairs, which is directed by my compatriot, the High Representative, Ambassador Sergio Duarte, and to the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament under the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Sergei Ordzhonikidze.

The machinery established in the field of disarmament does not exist in a vacuum. It must be constantly aware of and sensitive to bilateral and regional understandings and to multilateral forums, such as the strengthened review process of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It also has to be attentive to civil society, where there are institutions with great experience and expertise that produce invaluable work in support of the hard task of negotiating disarmament.

Mr. Rao (India): The United Nations, in accordance with its Charter, has a central role and a

primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament. This Committee — the First Committee — is the embodiment of our faith in the benefits of collective action and multilateral approaches in resolving global issues concerning international security and disarmament.

As the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament bears a heavy responsibility to make progress on the international disarmament agenda. We remain committed to efforts, consistent with the rules of procedure, aimed at the Conference reaching consensus on its programme of work in order to commence early substantive work. Since its decisions impact on the national security of its member States, it is logical that the Conference conducts its work and adopts its decision by consensus.

India attaches great importance to the Disarmament Commission, which is the deliberative leg of the triad of the disarmament machinery put in place by consensus at the first special session on disarmament. As the universal deliberative forum, it provides in-depth consideration of specific disarmament issues for the submission of recommendations to the General Assembly and can help bring back coherence and consensus to the currently fragmented international disarmament agenda.

The Secretary-General has made nuclear disarmament a personal priority and has put forward his five-point plan, which, *inter alia*, makes reference to a nuclear-weapons convention. The Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters should be more representative so that it can reflect on the broadest range of views and opinions. It should maintain as its focus a broader view of global disarmament issues, rather than acting as a preparatory committee for one treaty or another.

The current optimism in the field of disarmament should be backed by concrete steps to strengthen the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). In particular, we would like the Geneva branch of UNODA to be strengthened to facilitate the implementation of permanent treaty bodies under the United Nations such as the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

In a similar vein, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the United Nations entity designated to undertake independent, in-depth and long-term research on disarmament issues, deserves greater support from the regular budget of the Organization, in order to facilitate its research work with enhanced staff on a sustainable basis. We would like UNIDIR to retool itself to be in the forefront of research on nuclear disarmament, a task that cannot be accomplished when the Institute is overwhelmingly dependent on voluntary contributions. UNIDIR publications are a valuable resource base and must be widely disseminated.

We believe that United Nations efforts to promote and encourage disarmament and non-proliferation education based on the recommendations of the 2002 United Nations study (A/57/124) will foster greater awareness and strengthen global collective will in favour of global disarmament objectives.

India welcomed the opening of the new United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific in Kathmandu last year. India will extend all possible support to the Kathmandu Centre so that it may fulfil its mandate and in that regard will make a financial contribution.

Mr. López-Trigo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): On more than one occasion, the delegation of Cuba has reaffirmed the need to make concrete progress in negotiations and deliberations on disarmament and arms control. We hope that the recent announcements of changes will be reflected in real progress.

We note with optimism that a programme of work has been adopted at Conference on Disarmament this year, after so much time and so much stagnation in that important body. For next year, we hope that the necessary flexibility will prevail on the basis of the rules of procedure and that a constructive dialogue will take place, leading to the adoption of a broad and balanced programme of work for the Conference that will take into account all the current real priorities in the field of disarmament and arms control.

Cuba reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body on this subject matter. We repeat the appeal made by members of the Non-Aligned Movement that the Conference on Disarmament should agree on a balanced and broad programme of work, *inter alia*, by establishing an ad hoc committee on nuclear

disarmament as soon as possible and as a matter of the highest priority. Nuclear disarmament is, and should continue to be, the highest priority, and on that basis we should be building future consensus within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

Allow me to stress that the Cuban delegation, along with the rest of the Non-Aligned Movement, believes that we must embark as soon as possible on negotiations on a gradual programme for the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time frame, including a nuclear weapons convention.

We would also like to stress the importance and relevance of the Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. Cuba fully supports the work of the Commission and hopes that all States will demonstrate the political will and flexibility necessary to reach agreements on specific recommendations at future meetings of the Disarmament Commission. We trust that we can reach an agreement on the declaration of the 2010s as the fourth Disarmament Decade, which will play a positive role in mobilizing worldwide efforts to respond to current and emerging challenges in the realm of disarmament, arms control, proliferation and international security. Furthermore, it will help to once again place disarmament at the head of the international programme of action and establish indicative goals so as to more quickly reach the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

As the Non-Aligned Movement has repeatedly said, we reiterate our support here for a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament (SSOD-IV) and express our concern at the persistent lack of consensus to date. It is important for the General Assembly to continue its in-depth examination of this subject with a view to reaching consensus on the goals and agenda and on the establishment of a preparatory committee for SSOD-IV and that it reconvene the open-ended working group for these purposes.

We reiterate our concern at the growing trend in this Committee for the creation of groups of experts of limited composition to analyse very sensitive subjects of great interest to all States Members of the United Nations. We think that the creation of expert groups should be the exception and not the rule, and pride of

place should be given to transparent and inclusive processes in which all Member States can play a part on an equal footing.

Let me conclude by stressing that for Cuba the major difficulties confronting the disarmament machinery do not relate principally to the greater or lesser effectiveness of its working methods, but to different reasons, in particular the lack of political will that some States have shown in moving forward on important items that are key for international peace and security, such as the question of nuclear disarmament. We are optimistic about the new announcements in the disarmament field and hope we will begin to see a more positive picture very shortly that will meet the expectations of the international community.

Mr. Öskiper (Turkey): An effective multilateral disarmament machinery is essential for international peace and security. The General Assembly and its First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission are all parts of this complex machinery. Turkey supports and actively contributes to the work of those important bodies.

We consider the First Committee of the General Assembly to be an important forum for consultations on non-proliferation and disarmament issues and for the adoption of draft resolutions in this field. Likewise, we consider that the Conference on Disarmament has a crucial role to play in addressing today's global security challenges. We sincerely hope that the Conference will be able to resume its negotiating role as the primary multilateral disarmament forum.

To this end, Turkey welcomes the adoption of the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament earlier this year. We expect the remaining obstacles standing in the way of the implementation of that programme of work to be removed soon so that the Conference can embark on its substantive work on the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, parallel advances on negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Turkey's well-known position on the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. We are of the view that the question of expansion of the Conference's membership is not a priority at this stage. At a time when the Conference has not yet overcome the existing stalemate, we should all strive to work

towards ensuring its effective functioning rather than dedicating our precious time and energy to other matters of less urgency. That in no way should be construed as Turkey's categorical opposition to the enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament. However, we believe that this matter should be addressed on a case-by-case basis, with due consideration given to the contributions of candidates to international peace and security.

The Disarmament Commission is another universal body that deals with disarmament issues. We support the work of the Commission and would like that body to assume a more active role in promoting our common objectives in this field.

The current disarmament machinery has been able to develop various instruments containing important obligations and commitments in the field of disarmament. However, we believe that this machinery could and should do better. It is incumbent upon all of us to work diligently towards that goal. We believe that the emerging favourable international atmosphere presents a unique opportunity that should be seized.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the discussion on disarmament machinery. Before giving the floor to representatives of non-governmental organizations who are with us this afternoon, I shall give the floor to those delegations that have asked to introduce draft resolutions or decisions.

I give the floor to the representative of Myanmar to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/64/L.48.

Mr. Wunna Maung Lwin (Myanmar): It is indeed an honour for me to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/64/L.48 and entitled "Nuclear disarmament" on behalf of its sponsors.

The only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. Security for all can be better achieved by doing away with these weapons, not by preserving them. It is in this belief that the sponsors are submitting a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament again this year.

The draft resolution takes note of the positive signals by the United States of America and the Russian Federation on their negotiations on the replacement for the Treaty on the Reduction and

Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START I), which is due to expire by the end of 2009. The draft resolution also takes note of the recent positive statements by nuclear-weapon States of their intention to pursue actions in achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, while reaffirming the need for urgent concrete actions by nuclear-weapon States to achieve this goal within a specified framework of time and urging them to take further measures for progress on nuclear disarmament.

The important development that took place at the Conference on Disarmament this year is duly reflected in the draft resolution: The adoption on 29 May of the programme of work for the 2009 session is a welcome development for the disarmament agenda.

The draft resolution, among other things, urges the Conference on Disarmament to commence as early as possible its substantive work during its 2010 session, on the basis of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that takes into consideration all the real and existing priorities in the field of disarmament and arms control.

The draft resolution also recalls past efforts and recommendations for non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament in order to convey the message that nuclear disarmament has been the highest priority on the agenda of the international community for a number of decades. The draft resolution accordingly focuses on a range of practical ways and means to achieve the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons by different players in different forums. It also outlines the interim steps to be taken among the nuclear-weapon States to de-alert and deactivate nuclear weapons and to enhance preventive and confidence-building measures. We believe that these measures are important and necessary. More important, they are a prerequisite for paving the way to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

This draft resolution calls again on nuclear-weapon States to assure non-nuclear-weapon States through a legally binding instrument of the non-use and non-threat of use of nuclear weapons. Many States do not enjoy such guarantees, in the form of either nuclear-weapon-free zones or military alliances. The legitimate right of States that have decided to forgo the nuclear option has yet to be recognized, honoured and seriously reciprocated by nuclear-weapon States.

The draft resolution builds upon the resolutions of previous years, which set out measures to be taken by various players to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. On that note, we would like to invite all States to demonstrate their commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free world by supporting the draft resolution.

Mr. Arrocha Olabuenaga (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to announce that the delegation of Mexico has decided not to submit at this session of the General Assembly a draft decision like those submitted to the First Committee since 2002 in order to include an item entitled “United Nations conference to identify appropriate ways of eliminating nuclear dangers in the context of nuclear disarmament” in the provisional agenda of subsequent sessions.

As participants will recall, the proposal to hold a conference on this topic is reflected in the Millennium Declaration. In previous years, the decision enjoyed considerable support from the international community. However, it does not enjoy general agreement. The decision not to submit such a draft decision this year is in keeping with my Government’s determination to continue to work towards a propitious atmosphere for nuclear disarmament and, above all, to ensure success for the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

We hope that this constructive spirit will be emulated during the Review Conference by States that in previous sessions did not support the draft decision.

We also hope that in 2010 we will identify specific goals for progress in disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, thus ending the threat posed by the mere existence of nuclear weapons.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall now hear presentations on nuclear weapons and conventional weapons by representatives of non-governmental organizations. Two speakers will speak about nuclear weapons issues, and the others will address small arms and light weapons, cluster weapons and landmines. I will ask speakers to be brief in their statements. With the presentations by non-governmental organizations, we will have concluded the thematic part of the session. At our next meeting we shall begin the third phase of our work: taking action on all draft resolutions and draft decisions.

Before giving the floor to the representatives of non-governmental organizations, I will suspend the meeting, so that we can continue our discussion in an informal setting.

The meeting was suspended at 5.05 p.m. and resumed at 6.10 p.m.

The Chairperson (*spoke in Spanish*): We are well past the hour of 6 p.m. Let me therefore thank the interpreters for their cooperation in the work of the Committee.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.